



PROMISED LAND, HALLOWED GROUND:

**Commemorative Justice and Making
Change in Community Heritage Preservation in
Southern California, Part 1**

ISLA
INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF LOS ANGELES
Occidental College

**Saturday, March 20, 2021
1:00pm to 5:00pm**

**This program, our Scholar in Residence, and the Institute
for the Study of Los Angeles at Occidental College is
generously funded by**

Howard and Roberta Ahmanson

with additional support from the

**Andrew W. Mellon Foundation
Arts and Urban Experience Grant**

**We are grateful to those who have generously agreed to
co-sponsor and help promote our program:**

18th Street Arts Center

California African American Museum

California Coffee Company

California Historical Society

Center for the American West, University of Colorado Boulder

Huntington-USC Institute on California and the West

Los Angeles City Historical Society

Pacific Ancient and Modern Language Association

Pacific Coast Branch of the American Historical Association

RAP (Race, Arts & Place) USC

Santa Monica Conservancy

Sea of Clouds

UCLA History-Geography Project

Institute for the Study of Los Angeles (ISLA) staff:

Jagmit Dhami Coordinator of Community Programs

Christian Rodriguez Operations Coordinator

WELCOME

Jeremiah B.C. Axelrod

Director, Institute for the Study of Los Angeles



The nexus of place and shared memory lies at the heart of our mission at the Institute for the Study of Los Angeles. Connecting the Occidental College community to the diverse communities of greater Los Angeles through reciprocally rewarding, sustaining relationships has been our passion for five years now.

This is why we have been so thrilled to have Dr. Alison Rose Jefferson as our Andrew W. Mellon Institute for the Study of Los Angeles Scholar in Residence this year. Dr. Jefferson has built her entire career on a shared ethic of keeping vital community history alive in Southern California, often in places built up on a thick foundation of erasure and forgetting.

Indeed, her expertise in the field is astonishing: an accomplished historical preservationist (with an MHC in Heritage Conservation from USC) and a professional UC-trained Ph.D. historian, Dr. Jefferson brings a wealth of experience, an empathetic ear, and incisive, often brilliant analytical skills to her work of recovering the living stories of our shared past.

These traits are all beautifully displayed in her landmark new monograph, *Living the California Dream: African American Leisure Sites during the Jim Crow Era* (University of Nebraska Press, 2020), which is already transforming how historians think about the fluid and ambiguous gray areas between freedom and apartheid in the leisure spaces of twentieth century Southern California. All too sadly, this contingent, shifting history of an alternatively, unpredictably joyous and oppressive everyday world resonates with us powerfully today. Indeed, Jefferson's work spotlights the many ways African American Angelenos have always sought out and enjoyed spaces where they might feel free and at ease, at least for a moment. Never on offer, however, was that

essential freedom from fear: the assurance that one's full citizenship, or even basic humanity, would be respected in any given space or at any specific time.

The Belmar History + Art project highlights that range of highs and lows, hope and unease, that Black Angelenos grappled with in daily life, focusing on the exemplary beachside community of Santa Monica. As a fellow historian of the Southern California experience in the twentieth century, I was immediately struck by this brilliant model of community-based memorialization. I hope you will join me in discovering meaning, inspiration, and insight in these resilient stories and testimonials to family, place, and community that Dr. Alison Rose Jefferson and her partners have so vividly and creatively brought to our awareness through this landmark local history project.

ISLA dedicates our programming this year to the warm memory of Dr. Robert Winter (1924–2019), who so deeply enriched our understanding of the built environment of Southern California and whose love of place has inspired us all.



PROGRAM SCHEDULE

1:00pm Welcome and Land Acknowledgment

Jeremiah Axelrod

Director, Institute for the Study of Los Angeles;
Professor of History
Occidental College

Erica Ball

Mary Jane Hewitt Department Chair in Black
Studies; Professor of History and Black Studies
Occidental College

Poetry Reading

Lynne Thompson

2021 Poet Laureate
City of Los Angeles

1:15pm Part One: Belmar History + Art

Film Introduction

Film by **Rhasaan Nichols** featuring living
memories of the Santa Monica South Beach
African American experience

Keynote

*“Belmar History + Art: Reconstruction and
Reinsertion of the Public Meaning of the
African American Experience in Santa Monica’s
Urban Landscape and Heritage Conservation”*

Alison Rose Jefferson

Scholar in Residence, Institute for the Study of
Los Angeles
Occidental College
Belmar History + Art project historian

2:05pm 5 Minute Break

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

2:10pm Belmar History + Art Artwork

April Banks

Artist and Community Engagement Facilitator
Belmar History + Art project

Belmar History + Art Lesson Plans

Daniel Diaz

Lesson Plan Development Manager
Belmar History + Art project
UCLA History Geography project

Reflections

Patty Limerick

Historian and Director
Center of the American West, University of
Colorado, Boulder

Audience Questions & Answers

Jeremiah Axelrod

Moderator

2:55pm 5 Minute Break

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

3:00pm Part Two: Commemorative Justice and Community Empowerment

A conversation about the significance of the Belmar History +Art project, with panelists offering a unique perspective from their professional purview, as well as a discussion on the larger national and regional context

Frances Anderton

Moderator

Segment One: Public Policy & Cultural Programming

Effie Turnball Sanders

Environmental Justice Commissioner
California Coastal Commission

Shannon Daut

Manager, Cultural Affairs Department
City of Santa Monica

Barry Snell

Santa Monica College Trustee
Former Board Member, Santa Monica-Malibu
Unified School District
Parent who raised children in Santa Monica

Segment Two: History, Art and Heritage Conservation

Susan Anderson

History Curator & Program Manager
California African American Museum

Sarah Marsom

Heritage Conservation Consultant

Jeremiah Axelrod

Director, Institute for the Study of Los Angeles;
Professor of History
Occidental College

Erica Ball

Mary Jane Hewitt Department Chair in Black
Studies; Professor of History and Black Studies
Occidental College

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

4:30pm Audience Questions & Answers

Frances Anderton
Moderator

4:40pm Closing Remarks and Poetry Reading

Alison Rose Jefferson
Jeremiah Axelrod
Erica Ball

Natalie Patterson

Poetry Contributor and Workshop Instructor
Belmar History + Art



ALISON ROSE JEFFERSON

Spring 2021 Scholar in Residence,
Institute for the Study of Los Angeles at Occidental College
Project Historian, Belmar History + Art



A third generation Californian, Alison Rose Jefferson, M.H.C, Ph.D. is a historian and heritage conservation consultant. She reconstructs the stories of the African American experience which have been left out or marginalized in the telling of American history as a tool in the struggle for social justice. She is currently working on Applied History projects dealing with the African American experience during the Jim Crow era. Working with Santa Monica's Belmar History + Art project and the Central Avenue heritage trail with Angels Walk L.A, Jefferson is drawing on her research to guide and enrich these public programs at these

Southern California locales that feature historical significance as well as contemporary consequence. Both projects are becoming available for public consumption in early 2021.

Jefferson as a Scholar in Residence with the Institute for the Study of Los Angeles at Occidental Colleges for the Spring 2021 semester has been doing virtual campus and public programs to share her work to re-center the African American experience in local history and heritage conservation efforts.

Her recent book, *Living the California Dream: African American Leisure Sites during the Jim Crow Era* (University of Nebraska Press) was honored with the 2020 Miriam Matthews Ethnic History Award by the Los Angeles City Historical Society for its exceptional contributions to the greater understanding and awareness of Los Angeles history. Her work has been noted in KCET, LAIST.com, Los Angeles Magazine, the Los Angeles Times, The New York Times, CBS LA and ABC LA news programs, among other media outlets. Learn more about Jefferson's work at: www.alisonrosejefferson.com

PARTICIPANTS



Frances Anderton

Frances Anderton covers Los Angeles design and architecture through print, radio, podcasts and public events. She is currently writing a book, *Common Ground: Multifamily Housing in Los Angeles*, for Angel City Press. A series she produced and co-hosted, “Wasted: Neat Solutions to the Dirty Problem of Waste,” aired in early 2021 on Greater LA. on Santa Monica’s public radio station, KCRW. Anderton also produces talks and events

at Helms Bakery District. She curated the exhibition, “Sink Or Swim: Designing For a Sea Change,” about resilient architecture, shown at the Annenberg Space for Photography. For many years she hosted KCRW’s “DnA: Design and Architecture” radio show and before that Warren Olney’s current affairs shows “Which Way, LA?” and “To The Point.” She was honored with the 2020 ICON Award from the Los Angeles Design Festival.

www.francesanderton.com



Susan D. Anderson

Susan D. Anderson is the history curator and program manager at the California African American Museum and a member of the editorial board of the journal *California History*. She has brought her scholarly interest in California’s hidden African American history to her writing, lectures, and public history projects, and as a former director at the California Historical Society, interim chief

curator for the African American Museum & Library at Oakland, and curator at UCLA library’s special collections. Susan’s book, *Nostalgia for a Trumpet: Poems of Memory and History* was published by Northwestern University Press. Her forthcoming book, *African Americans and the California Dream*, is under contract with Heyday Books.

www.caamuseum.org

PARTICIPANTS



Jeremiah B.C. Axelrod

Dr. Axelrod is Adjunct Professor of History, Art History, Urban & Environmental Studies, and Cultural Studies at Occidental College, as well as director of the Institute for the Study of Los Angeles. Before arriving at Occidental in 2005, he taught several years in the Film Studies and History Departments at UC Irvine and served as Kevin Starr Fellow in California Studies at the University of California Humanities Research Institute. He received his Ph.D. in

American History from the University of California, Irvine, in 2001 after having graduated from Williams College in 1992, where he majored in History, Political Science, and Women's Studies. Professor Axelrod is the author of *Inventing Autopia: Dreams and Visions of the Modern Metropolis in Jazz Age Los Angeles*, published by the University of California Press in 2009, as well as several articles and book chapters. His research generally probes the connections between visibility, urban topography, memory, gender, race, and transportation in twentieth century urban environments, with an emphasis on Southern California.

www.jeremiahaxelrod.com



Erica Ball

Dr. Erica L. Ball is the Mary Jane Hewitt Department Chair in Black Studies at Occidental College. She is the author of *To Live an Antislavery Life: Personal Politics and the Antebellum Black Middle Class* (2012) and *Madam C. J. Walker: The Making of an American Icon* (2021). She is co-editor, with Kellie Carter Jackson, of *Reconsidering Roots: Race, Politics, and Memory* (2017) and co-editor, with Tatiana Seijas and Terri L. Snyder, of *As*

If She Were Free: A Collective Biography of Women and Emancipation in the Americas (2020). She is currently writing a book examining the contested public memory of slavery in twentieth-century U.S. history.

www.oxy.edu/academics/faculty/erica-ball

PARTICIPANTS



April Banks

April Banks is an artist, educated as an architect. Her conceptual art sits between photography, installation, and collaborative experiments. Recent projects time travel through archives and memories, questioning what we think we know of the past and how it informs our cultural positioning systems. Her social practice engages communities and seeks to amplify and preserve lesser known stories.

In pursuit of joy, yet often enraged, her work usually begins with a question. April's art has been shown in Los Angeles, the San Francisco Bay Area, Chicago, Minneapolis, Cleveland, Daytona Beach, New Hampshire, Maryland, New York, Switzerland, Colombia, Brazil, United Arab Emirates, Senegal and Ethiopia.

www.aprilbanks.com



Shannon Daut

Shannon Daut leads Cultural Affairs for the City of Santa Monica, where she works to integrate the arts into all aspects of life in the community. She conceptualized and led the implementation of two significant projects: Belmar History + Art, a Civic Commemoration Project, and Art of Recovery, which supports artistic efforts that address recovery needs. She was previously the Executive Director of the Alaska State Council on the Arts, after

serving as the Deputy Director of the Western States Arts Federation (WESTAF). Daut has served on the boards of the National Performance Network and WESTAF. Daut received her bachelor's degree in Communication Arts/Film from UW-Madison and her graduate degree in Communication/Rhetoric from CU-Denver.

www.santamonica.gov/arts/belmar

PARTICIPANTS



Daniel Diaz

Daniel Diaz is the Director of UCLA History-Geography Project and a former high school history teacher, as well as the former director of Project Deviate, Inc., a non-profit he founded to support foster youth in the San Gabriel Valley. As Director of the UCLA History-Geography Project, Daniel provides professional development opportunities, workshops, and institutes for K-12 history-social science and ethnic studies teachers that

emphasize local history and are guided by social justice and cultural responsiveness. Daniel's research interests include the impact of local history on student engagement, the K16 continuum, and how to best support history teachers new to ethnic studies.

centerx.gseis.ucla.edu/history-geography/people/



Patricia "Patty" Limerick

Dr. Patty Limerick is the Faculty Director and Chair of the Board of the Center of the American West based at the University of Colorado, Boulder where she is also a Professor of History. Limerick has dedicated her career to bridging the gap between academics and the general public and to demonstrating the benefits of applying historical perspective to contemporary dilemmas and conflicts. In January 2016 she

was appointed to the National Endowment for the Humanities advisory board, the National Council on the Humanities and served until October 2019. Among her many books and articles, Limerick's best-known work, *The Legacy of Conquest*, an overview and reinterpretation of Western American history redefined an entire field of academic and public debate. Limerick has received a number of awards and honors recognizing the impact of her scholarship and her commitment to teaching, including the MacArthur Fellowship (1995 to 2000).

www.centerwest.org/about/patty/press-kit

PARTICIPANTS



Sarah Marsom

Sarah Marsom is a Heritage Resource Consultant based in Columbus, Ohio. She is the founder of the Tiny Activist Project and organizer behind #DismantlePreservation. In 2018, Sarah was recognized by the National Trust for Historic Preservation as the recipient of the American Express Aspire Award during the 2018 National Preservation Awards and as an honoree of the inaugural 40 Under 40: People Saving Places list. Marsom's work

has been featured in *Curbed*, *Traditional Building Magazine*, and the National Parks Service's LGBTQ America Theme Study, amongst other publications and podcasts.

www.sarahmarsom.com



Rhasaan Nichols

Rhasaan Nichols is a creative producer and entrepreneur straight from the heart of North Philadelphia. Upon graduating from Yale University with a B.A. in Film Studies, he founded Nichols Makes Sense Productions with a vision to produce innovative media that seeks truth, inspires viewers and demands change. In 2020, he founded the California Coffee Company ("C3") out of a desire to share a new story about Black people— through the

world's most beloved beverage. The e-commerce venture is a lifestyle brand offering roasted-to-order coffee and stylish apparel.

calicoffee.co

PARTICIPANTS



Natalie Patterson

Natalie Patterson is bold, honest, and in pursuit of liberation for the human spirit. She is a humanist, poet, teaching artist, and mental health advocate. She was the first female producer and host of the nation's largest poetry venue, Da Poetry Lounge. She is currently consulting for Art With Impact and BEAM- the Black Emotional and Mental Health Collective to reduce stigma around mental health for all people. Her most recent

work can be found on the streets of Los Angeles as co-founder and curator of A Love Language Project, a public art project using murals as protest posters to center and amplify black voices, for the purpose of inspiring meaningful conversation around Black liberation.

Natalieispoetry.com



Effie Turnbull Sanders

Effie Turnbull Sanders is a leader with more than two decades of experience advancing the rights of underserved Los Angeles communities. She currently serves as the University of Southern California vice president of civic engagement and economic partnerships, where she directs the University's civic stewardship and initiatives to promote economic opportunities that support communities surrounding the

University campuses. Active in public and nonprofit service, Turnbull Sanders is currently a governor's appointee and environmental justice commissioner for the California Coastal Commission. She received her Bachelor of Arts and her JD from UCLA and is a graduate of the USC Ross Minority Program in Real Estate.

news.usc.edu/174212/effie-turnbull-sanders-usc-vp-civic-engagement-economic-partnerships/
www.coastal.ca.gov/env-justice/

PARTICIPANTS



Barry Snell

Barry Snell is a certified public accountant and business leader with extensive ties to the Santa Monica community and its educational institutions. Snell is a member of the Board of Directors of Downtown Santa Monica, which works to develop planning, development, and services policies to promote the area's economic stability, growth, and community life. He also serves on the financial advisory board for the Santa Monica-Malibu Education

Foundation, the treasury of the Community for Excellent Public Schools (CEPS), and the steering committee of Santa Monicans for Renters Rights (SMRR). A member of the Board of Education for the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District from 2006 to 2010, Snell served as its President in 2009. Snell is a certified public accountant with his own firm in Culver City and more than 25 years of accounting experience. Snell received his bachelor's degree in accounting from Morehouse College in Atlanta, Georgia, and a master's of science in taxation from Golden Gate University in Los Angeles.

www.smc.edu/directory/snell-barry.php



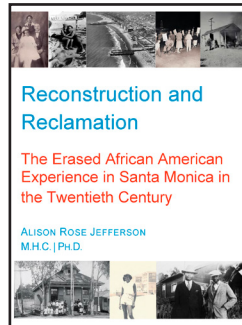
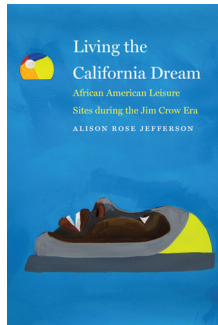
Lynne Thompson

In 2021, Lynne Thompson was appointed Poet Laureate for the City of Los Angeles. Thompson's most recent collection of poems, *Fretwork*, won the Marsh Hawk Press Poetry Prize. A multiple Pushcart Prize nominee, Thompson is the author of *Beg No Pardon*, winner of the Great Lakes Colleges Association's New Writers Award, and *Start With A Small Guitar*. Her work has been widely published and anthologized including in *New*

England Review, *Ploughshares*, *Poetry Northwest*, *Colorado Review*, and *Best American Poetry 2020*, among others. Thompson serves on the Boards of Cave Canem and Los Angeles Review of Books.

www.pw.org/directory/writers/lynne_thompson

RESOURCES



Jefferson, Alison Rose. “[Belmar History + Art, a Santa Monica Commemorative Justice Initiative Continues Rolling Out 2020-2021](#).” [alisonrosejefferson.com](#), First published January 6, 2021 | Update March 15, 2021.

Banks. April. [aprilbanks.com](#).

[Belmar History + Art webpage](#), City of Santa Monica.

Jefferson, Alison Rose. [Living the California Dream: African American Leisure Sites during the Jim Crow Era](#). University of Nebraska Press, 2020.

Jefferson, Alison Rose. “[Reconstruction and Reclamation: The Erased African American Experience in Santa Monica’s History](#).” Belmar History + Art Project, 2020.

Marantos, Jeanette. “[Tour Santa Monica’s once-vibrant Black neighborhoods, nearly erased by racism and ‘progress’](#).” Los Angeles Times, March 6, 2021.

PHOTOS

Cover: Black beachgoers from Los Angeles at the Bay Street Beach, 1926

(Left to right) Grace Williams, Albert Williams, Mary Mingleton, Willie Williams

Black visitors to Santa Monica swam and socialized at the beach at Bay Street and Ocean Front Walk until the 1960s. Like these beachgoers in 1926, African Americans found less anti-Black hostility at the Bay Street Beach than at other Southern California beaches. Still, Whites called it “the Inkwell,” in reference to the color of Black beachgoers’ skin. Shades of L.A. Photo Collection/Los Angeles Public Library

Page 2: Verna Dekard and Arthur Lewis at the segregated section of the Santa Monica beach in 1924, shortly before they married. They are in front of a fence with a sign for Club Casa, a private beach club. Shades of L.A. Photo Collection/Los Angeles Public Library.

Page 6: Crowds gather in Santa Monica to buy lots in “The City by the Sea,” 1875

After Robert S. Baker and John P. Jones acquired the land that would become the City of Santa Monica from the California Mexican-era ranching families, they initially hoped to make the area into a seaport and railroad terminus. They subdivided part of their holdings to create a town and constructed the Los Angeles & Independent Railroad from Santa Monica to Los Angeles to bring people out to their new town fronting the ocean. Land sale advertisements appeared in newspapers all of the country. Los Angeles African Americans Jeremiah Redding, Charles Owens, and George Smith were among those buying lots and this dream. Only a year after their purchase, they were forced to sell their lots, a result of the national economic panic of 1876 and Santa Monica’s failure to recognize its dream as a port city. Despite setbacks, Santa Monica’s population would continue to grow and its beach amenities would eventually make it known throughout the nation. Security Pacific National Bank Collection/Los Angeles Public Library

Back Cover: Photos of Alison Rose Jefferson and April Banks at Santa Monica’s Belmar History + Art exhibition at the Historic Belmar Park at Fourth Street and Pico Boulevard. After your exhibiton tour, learn more about the history revealed by reading Alison Rose Jefferson’s book, *Living the California Dream: African American Leisure Sites during the Jim Crow Era* and her essay, “Reconstruction and Reclamation: The Erased African American Experience in Santa Monica’s History.” Links to access these manuscripts can be found at alisonrosejefferson.com Photos courtesy of Adrienne Alpert, Host, Eyewitness Newsmakers/Reporter, ABC7/KABC-TV Los Angeles.

NOTES



Visit Santa Monica's Belmar History + Art exhibition at the Historic Belmar Park at Fourth Street and Pico Boulevard