

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Fire Station #30, Engine Company #30

other names/site number The African American Firefighter Museum

2. Location

street & number 1401 South Central Avenue N/A not for publication

city or town Los Angeles N/A vicinity

state California code CA county Los Angeles code 037 zip code 90021

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title _____ Date _____

California Office of Historic Preservation
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official _____ Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register
 See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the
National Register
 See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the
National Register

removed from the National
Register

other (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Fire Station #30
Name of Property _____

draft

Los Angeles, CA
County and State _____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
2		Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

Historic Resources Associated with African Americans in Los Angeles

0 _____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

GOVERNMENT – Fire Station

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION & CULTURE – Museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE 19TH & EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS – Prairie School

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Concrete
roof Synthetic
walls Stucco, Brick

other _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Ethnic Heritage - Black

Social History

Period of Significance

1913 - 1956

Significant Dates

1913 – Building Constructed

1923 – Fire Department Segregated

1956 – Fire Department Integrated

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Backus, James, Superintendent of Building, City of Los Angeles

Primary Location of Additional Data

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

City of Los Angeles, Office of Historic Resources

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property

Less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	—	_____	_____	3	—	_____	_____
2	—	_____	_____	4	—	_____	_____

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Assessor Parcel Number 5132-023-901, which corresponds to the attached map.

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.) The legal lot the building historically and currently occupies.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Teresa Grimes and Jay Fantone

organization Christopher A. Joseph & Associates date 6/01/08

street & number 523 W. 6th Street, Suite 1134 telephone (213) 417-4400

city or town Los Angeles state CA zip code 90014

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name City of Los Angeles

street & number 111 E. First Street, Suite #201 telephone _____

city or town Los Angeles state CA zip code 90012

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

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Fire Station #30
Los Angeles, California

DESCRIPTION

Fire Station #30 is located 1401 South Central Avenue in downtown Los Angeles. The property is oriented perpendicular to the cardinal points. East 14th Street on the northeast, South Central Avenue on the southeast, an industrial property to the southwest, and an additional industrial property on the northwest bound the property. The Fire Station is the primary historic building on the lot and sits directly on the northeast corner. A small Cook's House sits behind the Fire Station, at the rear of the lot. The Fire Station is oriented southeast towards Central Avenue. Fire Station #30 retains its integrity of setting, location, design, feeling, and association. The integrity of workmanship and materials have been diminished by fire and water damage, as well as rehabilitation work.

The two-story fire station building is of masonry construction and sheathed in stucco. Two driveways, one on East 14th Street and the other on South Central Avenue, allow visitors and employees access to a small surface parking lot, which extends the length of the Fire Station. Behind the parking lot and Fire Station, is a former Cook's House. A stucco wall surrounds the perimeter of the property. Two identical wrought iron gates allow entrance into the parking lot. They are located on Central Avenue, just south of the building, and the other is located on 14th Street, just east of the building. Next to the Central Avenue gate is a pedestrian entryway that is situated under a pointed archway and guarded by a wrought iron gate in a similar style. A short iron fence element sits atop the stucco wall, providing additional security. The Fire Station, Cook House, and property line wall were all constructed in 1913.

The primary facades of the Fire Station are oriented towards Central Avenue and 14th Street. The Central Avenue façade is the more decorative of the two facades. The ground floor consists of two large double doors that are recessed below a protruding cornice that has been painted and reads, "ENGINE No 30 LAFD TRUCK No 11." The modest projecting cornice runs the length of the entryway. Slightly recessed above the cornice, are three pairs of pilasters with inset panels. The pilasters frame three large rectangular windows and extend to the roofline. The large rectangular windows are arranged vertically two-over-five. Wall brackets located above the windows support another projecting cornice, several feet below the roofline. The same decorative arrangement is found on the 14th Street façade. However, the windows are double-hung and arranged in a three-over-two pattern. The other facades lack decorative elements except cornices and stepped parapets along the roofline. The remaining windows are double-hung and consist of four-over-four, four-over-six, and six-over-six configurations. Other exterior elements include stepped walls, cornices, stepped parapets, and a small rectangular crenellated tower at the northeast corner of the building.

The interiors are modestly decorated consisting of plaster walls with wood trim and wainscoting. An apparatus room, located on the ground floor, housed the fire engines and fire equipment. A dormitory,

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Fire Station #30
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locker room, bathroom, and captain's quarters are located upstairs. A modest wood staircase at the rear of the building and three iron fire poles connect the second and ground floor.

Interior perimeter walls are plastered throughout. The ground floor interior walls consist of tile covered wainscot on the bottom three feet. A wooden wainscot trim is situated above the tiles. Seven full-length wooden lockers are located along the south wall of the ground floor. The ceiling is made of lacquered pine and two wooden trusses traverse the ceiling as well as the north and south walls.

On the second floor, partition walls of wood frame construction are plastered. The doors are made of paneled wood. Wainscoting is used along the interior walls and partitions. Wood wainscot trim tops the wainscoting. Wood molding lines the room on the second floor, approximately a foot below the ceiling. The ceiling is also lacquered pine. Two wooden trusses traverse the ceiling as well as the north and south walls on the second floor.

Prior to a full rehabilitation of the building from 1995 to 1997, significant alterations had occurred. In 1941, the two sets of main doors were moved forward, flush with the façade, to accommodate modern fire trucks. The doors have since been removed and new doors representative of the original design were installed in 1997. The parapet, and bracketed cornices were removed in 1966, but have also been restored. The tower's cupola was removed in 1966 and has not been restored. Seismic improvements in 1976 involved the removal of cornices as well as the remaining smaller tower and have since been restored.

In 1985, an arsonist set fire to the abandoned building. In addition to previous neglect, the building suffered heavy fire and water damage. From 1995 to 1997, the building was rehabilitated according to the Secretary of Interior's Standards in order to house the African American Fire Fighters Museum. Building details were carefully reproduced, according to original designs, in sheet metal, cast concrete, and wood. Interiors have been restored from the open railing at the stairway to wainscot and paneled doors. Additionally, the fire poles were left in their original position. In order to comply with A.D.A. disability requirements, the old hose-drying tower at the southwest corner of the building was converted into an elevator shaft. The restoration faithfully reproduced the entire fire station to its original condition based on original designs, with the exception of the tower's cupola.

The Cook's House is a supporting structure for Fire Station #30. It is located at the rear of the lot and forms part of the rear perimeter fence. It is oriented towards the southeast. A small grass lawn and a couple mature trees line a concrete sidewalk between the building and Fire Station. Ivy covers the majority of the primary façade, hiding the stepped parapet and cornices. The building maintains its integrity of setting, location, design, feeling, and association.

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The Cook's House is a small (405 sq. ft.) single-story building of stucco and wood frame construction. It is rectangular in shape and modest in design. Its lack of ornament is representative of its supporting role and is stylistically congruent with the Fire Station. On the primary façade, a pair of windows flank the centrally located door. A simple corniced lintel and jambs surround the paneled door. The windows are double-hung and consist of a three-over-two configuration with slightly protruding sills. Single identical windows are found on the northeast and southwest facades. The parapet is slightly stepped in various locations and cornices line the perimeter.

The Cook's House has undergone several alterations since its construction. In 1941, improvements were made to presumably accommodate modern kitchen needs. From 1995 to 1997, the building was rehabilitated as part of the larger project on the property.

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Fire Station #30
Los Angeles, California

SIGNIFICANCE

Fire Station #30 is eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A as it is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. It meets the registration requirements for fire stations outlined in the Multiple Property Documentation (MPD) Form for Historic Resources Associated with African Americans in Los Angeles. Constructed in 1949, Fire Station#30 is significant as one of two segregated fire stations in Los Angeles.

All-black fire stations were simultaneous representations of racial segregation and sources of community pride. The first African American member of the LAFD, Sam Haskins, was hired in 1888. Born a slave in Virginia, he was assigned to Engine Company #4. He died in the line of duty in 1895. George Bright became the second black fireman in Los Angeles when he was hired in 1897. By 1902, he had attained the rank of lieutenant and the department was faced with a dilemma – segregate crews or allow a black man to supervise white men. In 1924, the department decided to assign all of the black firefighters in the city to Fire Station #30 under Bright’s supervision. Fire Station #30 was a popular assignment and the white firemen threatened to strike. Racial tensions mounted. Nevertheless, on April 26, 1924 the white firemen were removed and the black firemen from Engine Company #4 were transferred in.

As more blacks joined the department, Fire Station #30 became crowded. The department's wrecker (heavy rescue) was assigned to Fire Station 30, simply because there was insufficient riding room for all the firemen on the engines and truck. Another station was needed. In 1936, Fire Station #14 was open to black firemen creating two additional captain and engineer positions along with ten additional firemen positions.

Civil service regulations were regularly violated to maintain the segregated system and retain captain as the highest rank open to African Americans. By 1953, the NAACP was pressing for equality in hiring, transfers, and promotions in LAFD. An alternative put forth to integration was to convert Fire Stations #20 and #21 to all-black companies to open up promotional opportunities. The idea, however, was rejected in favor of full integration. African American members of the Los Angeles County and City Fire Departments founded the Stentorians organization in 1954. Their purpose was to band together to address discrimination. In 1956, all the fire stations were finally integrated, but not without conflict.

REFERENCES

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Fire Station #30
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Building Permits

Sanborn Map, 1950, vol. 4

Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument Application, 19
African American Firefighters Museum, www.aaffmuseum.org

Los Angeles Fire Department Historical Archive, www.lafire.com

Flamming, Douglas. *Bound for Freedom: Black Los Angeles in Jim Crow America*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005, p. 77, 376.

Gebhard, David, and Robert Winter, *Los Angeles: An Architectural Guide*. Salt Lake City: Gibbs Smith Publisher, 1994.

Gleye Paul, *The Architecture of Los Angeles*. Los Angeles: Rosebud Books, 1981.

Pitt, Leonard and Dale, *Los Angeles A to Z: An Encyclopedia of the City and County*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997.

Sides, Josh, *L.A. City Limits: African American Los Angeles from the Great Depression to the Present*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003, p. 148-49.

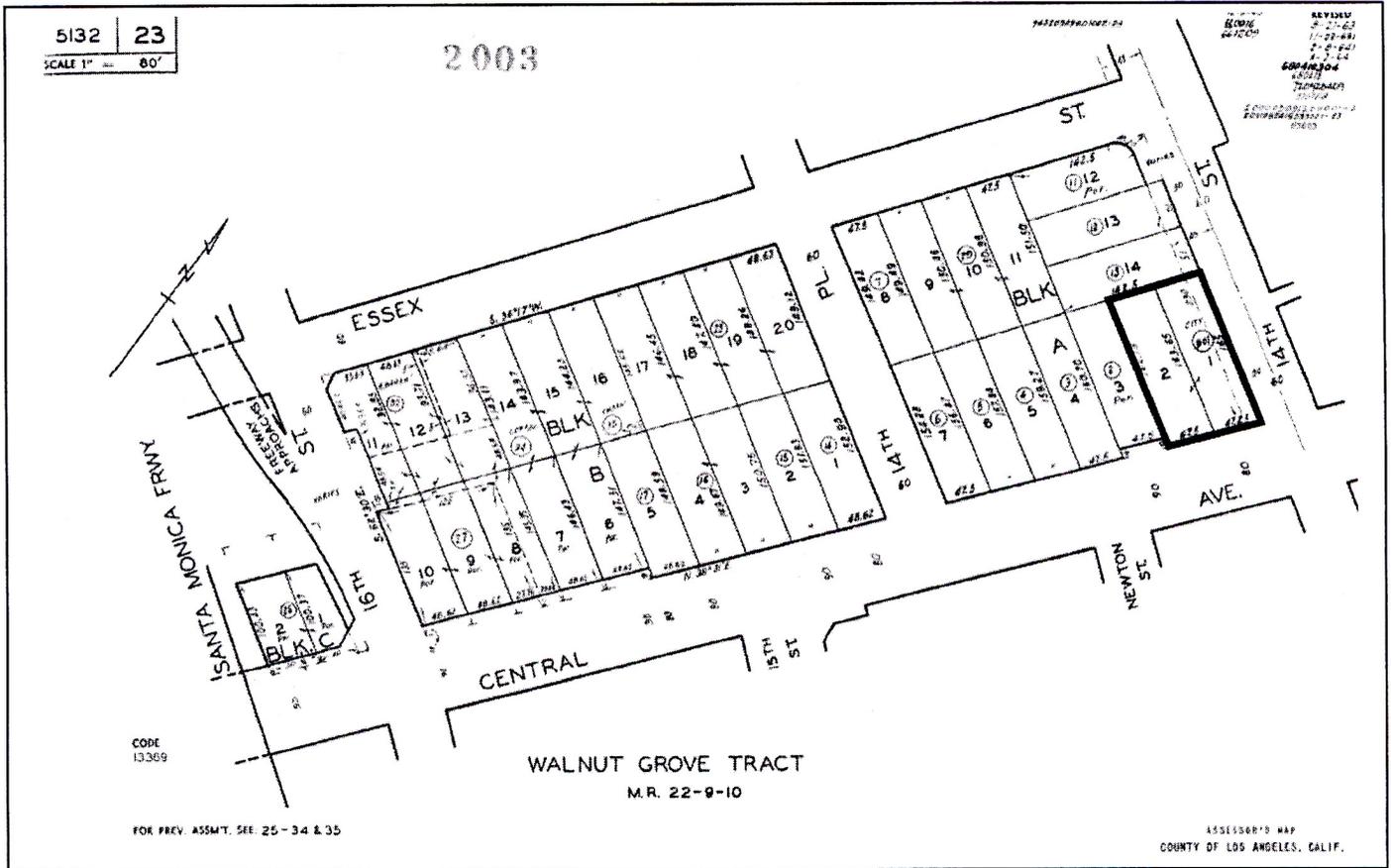
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Fire Station #30
Los Angeles, California

SKETCH MAP



Property boundary outlined in bold
Source: Los Angeles County Tax Assessor

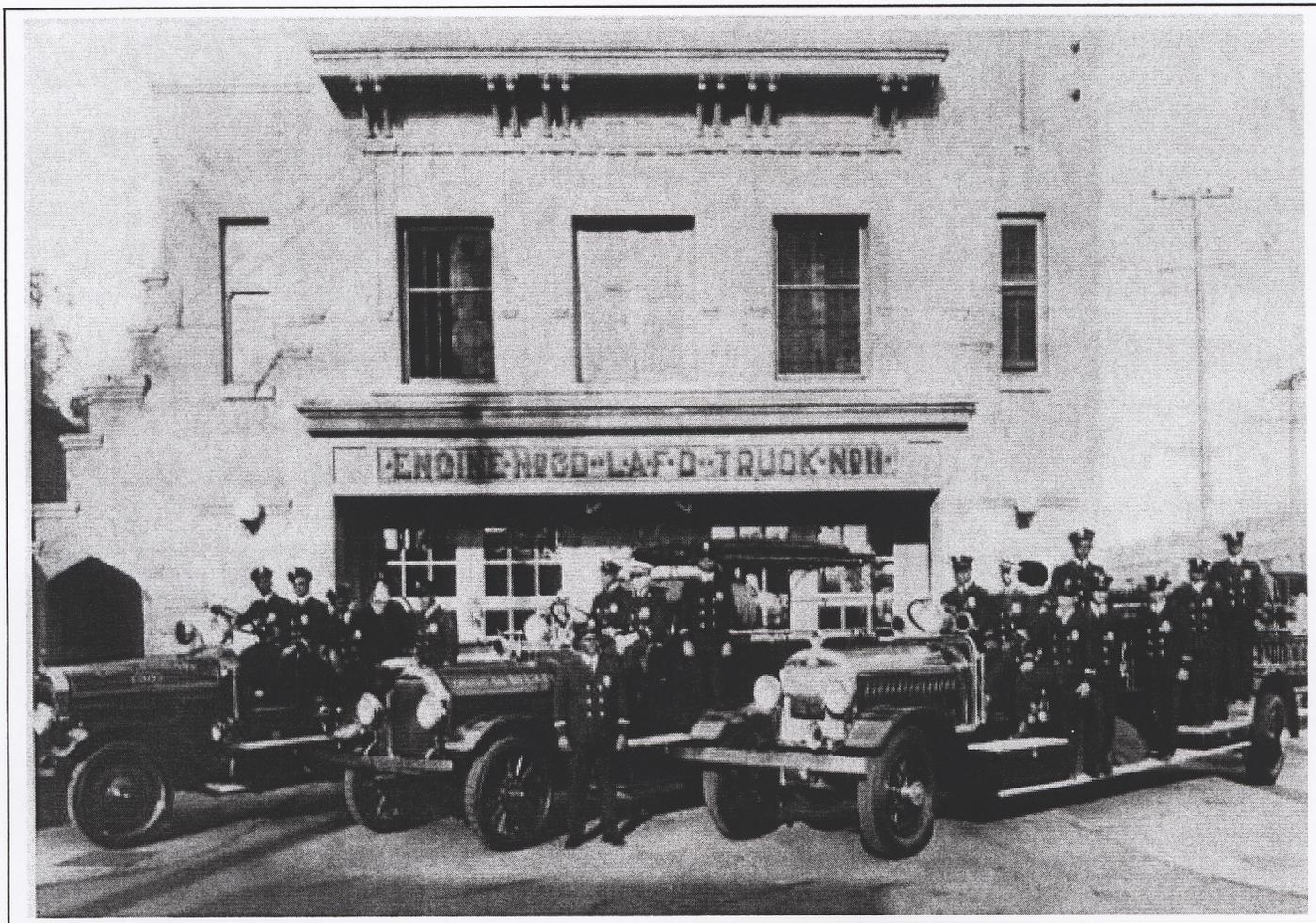
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HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPHS



Source: University of Southern California, Digital Archive, 1931/32