

La Jolla Black Pioneers

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The brief rise of the town's African-American Community

- The rise of this community started in the 18th century until 1974. They own their own property and managed businesses.
- Thomas Debose, a African-American born in time of slavery, was the first black person to buy land here in La Jolla (two lots on the corner of Thomson Avenue and Draper Avenue.).
- The first African-American female in La Jolla, Henrietta VanHorn owned a large portion of Draper Avenue as well as a laundry business.



Why La Jolla?

- During these times, the city had about 4 streets where black families were able to settle. There were many economical restrictions as many worked for 50 cents per hour.
- La Jolla was a huge attraction to black migrants as the city promised an abundance of jobs in domestic services,
- For example, the Tanner family. They set up a shop in the sea side of town where Mr. Tanner a barber, and his wife a hairdresser had a good business.
- The shop became popular as they worked on both black and white hair.
- In 1926 the first black church in La Jolla called the Union Mission Church.



Ed Coleman

- Moved into La Jolla around 1917 where he lived there his whole life
 - His house was designated historical by the San Diego Historical resources Board in September 2016.
- His business involved moving cottages from places where they were not needed to the “black quarters” to sell it or rent it to other African Americans.
- Coleman helped increase the African-American population in La Jolla in the early 20’s by telling friends and relatives about the high demand for work.
- By the 1930’s, 207 African Americans were registered in La Jolla Community.



A tight-knit community in the Great Depression era

- Slowly the community grew, most black families were able to own homes and others rented in the black quarters.
- During these times, other community service workers (Mexican, Chinese, Japanese etc.) came to La Jolla settling in. However these community members did not have the same land that the black community had.
- As the black community grew so did the demand for homes and places to live. However, as generations would pass by, they would make more space for incoming black families to reside in close proximity to one another.



The Great Depression

- Although the country suffered from the great depression, La Jolla seemed to not be affected at all.
- The pioneers when interviewed suggested that the black community was not a part of the needy.
- As mentioned before, La Jolla was full of jobs for people to take. The black community was never unemployed.



Education & Religion

- Due to La Jolla not having a segregated school, any child of any race was able to attend the same schools.
- AS mentioned before, in 1926 the first black church was created in La Jolla. When the church was created, the black community
- The first settlers whom called themselves the founders of the first black church in La Jolla took the initiative to set the standards for who was allowed to attend their church.
- Without any funding from white benefactors, in 1944 the New Holiness Church was created also known as Saint John Church of God in Christ,

