PLACEMAKING THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS IN FLORENCE-FIRESTONE

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Adult Services Symposium: Power of Partnerships
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We know much more, it seems, about ancient cities and dead civilizations—the chalices the elders drank from or the raiments warriors wore—than we do about day-to-day life in ‘South-Central Los Angeles,’ beyond the term, beyond the trope.

Lynell George

WE CAN DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT

1932 Florence-L.A. district: Brick kilns at corner of Slauson and McKinley Avenues

Courtesy of California Historical Society, Anton Wagner Collection
This book was published as part of the Some Place Elsewhere, a project of the Los Angeles County Arts Commission in partnership with the Temporary Institute for Contemporary Studies at the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts) and East of Borneo, funded by the Office of Los Angeles County Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas.

Este libro se publicó como parte de Some Place Elsewhere, un proyecto de la Comisión de Arte del Condado de Los Ángeles, en colaboración con el Instituto Temporal de Estudios Contemporáneos en el Instituto de las Artes de California (CalArts), y el East of Borneo, apoyado por el Departamento de Supervisión del Condado de Los Ángeles, Mark Ridley-Thomas.
Some Place Chronicles is a series of 5 creative placemaking projects set in 5 unincorporated communities located in the Second District of Los Angeles County.

It features the people, histories and cultures of Athens, East Rancho Dominguez, Lennox, Ladera Heights-View Park-Windsor Hills, and Florence-Firestone.
NAME ORIGINS

Florence & Graham townships
(1830s to 1930s)

Florence-Graham district
(U.S. Census designation)

Florence-Firestone
(L.A. County & Constituents' identity)
Florence-Firestone
Developed 1890s-1940s
Unincorporated community
Working-class neighborhood
Arrival point for new immigrants
Battles poverty & social ills BUT . . .
Florence-Firestone

... is also historic, vibrant, colorful, diverse, accepting, strong, & resilient!

All people are welcome

Everyone finds community

We work together through partnerships

Photo: Jonathan P. Bell
Creative Placemaking

Artists, government, & community stakeholders partnering to shape a neighborhood’s physical & social character through art & documentation practices that celebrate local history, community, & The People.

Photo: Jonathan P. Bell
Creative Placemaking Methods

➔ Bilingual survey
➔ Archival excavation
➔ Library history
➔ Oral history
➔ Architectural history
➔ Community meetings
➔ Book launch party
bilingual survey of the good things
A Popular Survey of Good Things in Florence-Firestone

A popular neighborhood takes time to count its blessings. We know that things could always be better, but they can't get better unless we speak up to celebrate the good things we already have.

As someone who lives or works here, you can help make the good things about Florence-Firestone better known to everyone by answering a few questions. Be as personal as you like and as precise as you can.

**A TIME AND A PLACE TO GATHER**
A good neighborhood makes you feel part of something bigger than yourself.

Where in Florence-Firestone can you find good times and places to gather?

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**A HELPING HAND**
People look out for one another in a good neighborhood.

Where in Florence-Firestone can you always find a helping hand?

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**A TASTE OF HOME**
A good neighborhood makes your mouth water no matter how long you've been gone.

Where in Florence-Firestone can you find a taste of home?

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**SAFE & SOUND**
A good neighborhood welcomes you with places to relax and feel at peace.

Where in Florence-Firestone do you feel safe and sound?

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**SOMETHING USEFUL**
A good neighborhood has what you need when you need it.

Where in Florence-Firestone can you find something useful?

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**SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL**
A good neighborhood nourishes the soul and provides moments of delight and wonder.

Where in Florence-Firestone can you find something beautiful?

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The following personal information is optional:

Gender: 

Age: 

Your responses will become part of A Paseo for Florence-Firestone, a creative place-making book focused on the neighborhood's past and present, and pointing toward its future.

For more information or to get involved, email FlorenceFirestone-Chronicles@colarts.edu

Thank you for sharing the good things that help to make Florence-Firestone a stronger community!
Una Encuesta Populares acerca de las Cosas Buenas en Florence-Firestone

¿Hoy algo más que te gustaría decirnos acerca de Florence-Firestone?

... 

La siguiente información personal es opcional:

Genero: 
Edad: 

Tu respostas serán parte de Un Paseo Por Florence-Firestone, un libro de poesía creativa que se enfoca en el presente y pasado del vecindario, apuntando hacia su futuro.

Para obtener más información o para participar, envíe un correo electrónico a florence-firestone@chroniclesquare.com

¡Gracias por compartir las cosas buenas que ayudan a fortalecer la comunidad de Florence-Firestone!
archival excavation
Archival discoveries
library history
Florence & Graham branch histories

Los Angeles County Public Library
1939-1940
Annual Report

Photos: Jonathan P. Bell
oral history interviews
William Allen
architectural history
Originally, all field services handled by the Sheriff's Department were concentrated from headquarters in downtown Los Angeles. Resident deputies, then referred to as the Constabulary, were based at various geographic locations throughout the county. In the early thirties, due to a population influx caused by the great depression, branch offices became necessary. The first of these, Firestone Park (Sub-Station Number One), operated from a leased storefront on Florence Avenue near Maize Avenue. Its authorized strength consisted of two sedans, two motorcycles, and 25 deputies.

In the mid-thirties, the second, and larger, leased facility was opened on the corner of Firestone Boulevard and Juniper. The building remains occupied by private industry. Geographic area patrolled by Firestone Station included that presently within the boundaries of Carson and Lynwood Stations as well as the City of Cudahy.

The present station facility was dedicated in 1955. With the opening of Carson Station, territory patrolled by Firestone was halved. It was again divided when Lynwood Station was established.

Today, the policing jurisdiction of Firestone Station is approximately 4.22 square miles. This includes the unincorporated areas of Florence-Firestone and Walnut Park. The southern portion of this area borders upon and is generally considered a part of Watts.

This area consists of older residential, commercial and heavy industrial zones, all poorly defined and intermixed. The population density of 14,270 per square mile is ethnically identified as a polyglot community, consisting of Blacks, those with Latin surnames, Caucasians, and others. Although the total patrol area is the second smallest in the Department, Firestone Station ranked number three in felony arrests during fiscal year 1979-80.

The men and women who work at Firestone Station are proud of the Station's past and present-day accomplishments, and are fully aware of an obligation to carry on the Firestone tradition of well-trained professionals delivering the highest quality services to the citizenry.
community meetings
Florence-Firestone Community Leaders
book launch party
Paseo through Time in Florence - Firestone

Photo: Alejandra Bell
3 key takeaways
#1 POLITICS of placemaking are inevitable
Embrace public libraries as CIVIC SPACES

Photo: Angel Origgi
#3 Move from engagement to EMPowerment
APPENDIX: Community & demographic data on Florence-Firestone
Florence-Firestone Demographics

Population: 62,815 persons

Income: $33,992 median household income

Poverty: 33.4% individuals below poverty level

Age: 26.9 median age

Source: U.S. Census 2014 American Community Survey
Florence-Firestone Demographics

Gender: 49.2% male, 50.8% female

Education: 41.9% graduated high school

Foreign born: 27,141 persons

Spanish at home: 86.8% of population (5 years or older)

Source: U.S. Census 2014 American Community Survey
Florence-Firestone Population

90.1% Latino

8.4% Black

0.7% White

0.8% Other

Source: U.S. Census 2014 American Community Survey
Rest in Power
Uncle Joe Titus
1928-2018

Mary Rose Cortese  Joseph J. Titus  Jonathan P. Bell
Launch of County of L.A. Public Library’s “Florence-Firestone: Stories of Everyday Heroes” oral history website, June 24, 2015
Takeaways
At least three major lessons for LIS audience

1. here
2. here
3. here

Thank You y Muchas Gracias!