

George Washington Carver Middle School

Black & Latinx History: Timeline & Culture



1889

School first opens as East Vernon School
1889 - 1912

1930

Pueblo of Los Angeles is renovated and opens as Olvera Street, across from Union Station (which opened in 1880)



1912

School is renamed to William McKinley Jr. High
1912 - 1943

1943

School is renamed to George Washington Carver Jr. High
1943 - 1992

1960s

Activists like Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X, and others are involved in the national civil rights movement



1973

Tom Bradley becomes the first African American mayor of the City of Los Angeles

1970s

Social studies building named Malcolm X and math & English building to Martin Luther King Jr.

1981

California African American History Museum opens and student demographics changes at Carver JH

1984

Los Angeles host the Summer Olympics again at LA Memorial Coliseum (first time in 1932)



1992

School is restructured to George Washington Carver Middle School
1992 - Present



1991

Buildings named after Cesar Chavez,
Father Luis Olivares, and Ruben
Salazar

1992

The decision of the Rodney King trial
causes a four-day riot, deaths, and
other damages around Los Angeles

2001

World Trade Center attacks happen in New York on September 11, which affected the nation

2020

COVID-19 pandemic forces all schools to do online education (transitioning back to in-person around spring of 2021)

2005

Antonio Villaraigosa becomes 1st mayor of Los Angeles with Latinx descent (since 1872)

2022

Carver MS host the Latinx Heritage Festival (in Sep. 2021) followed by the Black Excellence Festival in Feb.



Culture

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Black History at Carver MS

Over 50% of the first settlers in the California pueblo originally named Nuestra Señora la Reina de Los Angeles de Porciúncula were of African descent or mixed-races (SurveyLA, 2018). In 1850, when California joined the Union, this pueblo was renamed to the City of Los Angeles and has not changed its name after that (SurveyLA, 2018). Over the years, the city developed from being a small rural town, to a ranch-based economy, to later becoming a business enticing location leading with entrepreneurs and the entertainment industry. Although the African American population was involved in the development of the city from its early beginnings, it was not until 1870 that people of color were allowed to vote. The city's population exponentially grew over the years but the African American population did not grow as fast. Due to various factors such as access, mobility, and sense of belonging or community the population was centralized in particular areas of the city.

Since the beginning of its existence, East Vernon School (in 1889) that later became William McKinley Junior High (in 1912) served primarily African American families who lived around the area. Similarly to the early beginnings of the city development, over 50% of the student demographic was African American or of African descent. In order to acknowledge the African American community the school campus was renamed to George Washington Carver Junior High in 1912. This new name honors the contributions of Dr. Carver as a scientist in American culture as well as a major representative of the African American community.

During the 1950s and 60s the civil rights movement was happening across the country led by African American activists. It is no surprise that in the 1970s the students and families at Carver Jr. High School wanted to commemorate the efforts by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm Little (more famously known as Malcolm X) by naming the English/math building after Dr. King and history building after Malcolm X. Up to this day, the Carver community still refers to these buildings as the King Building and Malcolm X Building.

Over the years, the predominantly African American community of Carver has dwindled down to become closer and closer to 50%. In 1980, for example, the number of Carver students who identified as African American was over by about 55% but it then dropped to 48% in 1981 and has continued to become less and less (LA Times, 1991). Although the Carver community is not predominantly African American anymore, it is important to note that Central Avenue was the hub for famous Jazz and Blues musicians, which served as the center for the African American community for entertainment and culture.

The community has changed over time, but the history does not change and is still honored today. At Carver Middle School, we honor that rich history with numerous murals showing the periods, musicians, and activists of that time on our walls. Some African American families are present and actively involved in the community, but others have opted to move to Moreno Valley, Inland Empire, or other states outside of California. In February of 2022 a new tradition was born, the Black Excellence Festival, which embraces all cultures to celebrate and acknowledge the African American community.

The next chapters of Carver Middle School's Black history are still being written ...

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Latinx History at Carver MS

The Latinx community had been represented as a minority group on Carver Jr. High campus until 1980. In 1981 the student demographics at Carver Jr. High had a balance shift that saw the Latinx community go from 43% to 51% of the total population (LA Times, 1991). This paradigm shift in the student population remained the same and has continued to grow ever since. The current student population is made up of 90% Latinx, 8% African American, and about 2% other ethnicities.

Latinx culture has evolved to a vibrant mix of various ethnicities among the Latinx community. It is not just Mexican, it is also a combination of Central America and South America. The Latinx community is primarily made up of Mexican-American students or families of Mexican descent, that also includes families from the Central American diaspora, especially countries like El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala. Additionally, there have been sprinkles of students from Ecuador, Peru, Colombia, and other South American countries. Lastly, we must highlight that Carver is also home to Afro-Caribbean Latinx communities from Belize and Honduras, which is special because they demonstrate the diversity and overlapping history of our cultures.

Referring back to 1981, the Carver student demographic had a significant change due to students moving away from the community, but also the new wave of immigrants escaping hardships from Central America (The Guardian, 2018) and making South Central Los Angeles their new home. Families from Guatemala, for example, had to escape the aftermath from their civil war in 1954, which resulted at targeted violence and genocide toward indigenous people. Similarly, in El Salvador families were escaping a civil war and asking for refuge in the United States due to the constant violence and militarized society (The Guardian, 2018). Families from other countries were facing similar challenges and chose the United States — Los Angeles, to be specific — to have a brighter future. They settled down in areas where they could connect with their culture, and enrolled their children in nearby schools, which transformed Carver Junior High into their school of choice.

The same way Carver Junior High had buildings named after African American leaders, in 1991 the community decided to name buildings after Latinx historical figures (LA Times, 1991). The science building was named after Cesar Chavez for his efforts with the agricultural workers movement. Another building after Father Luis Olivares who was a faith-based leader focusing on social justice for Central American immigrants. Lastly, another building after Ruben Salazar who was the first Mexican journalist in

mainstream United States media who covered stories of the Chicano community. Up to this day, Carver continues to commemorate these Latinx figures with murals and recognizing the names of the buildings. This sparks an interest in new generations to learn about who these historical figures are. Although they are no longer alive, their legacy continues at Carver Middle School.

The Latinx community continues to grow at Carver each year. Even though most of the immigration occurred in the 1980s, Carver continues to serve incoming students from El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico. They have a large group of students who have not reclassified, according to the district's language proficiency standards, therefore you may hear Spanish speaking throughout the campus with accents from various regions of the world. The cultures are celebrated during the Latinx Heritage Festival, which also embraces all cultures to celebrate and acknowledge the various Latinx communities that exist.

The Latinx history at Carver Middle School *se sigue escribiendo cada dia ...*

Collaborators

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