

Los Angeles City Profile

Written by Olivia and Samantha
Wednesday, 07 January 2015 23:42

We've all heard stories about big cities. New York City and Los Angeles, those are the places where celebrities live, where fortunes are made, where fame breathes, where light and noise and excitement throbs beneath the pavement. But stories are fiction. What about the city during the day, when the fluorescent nightlife pales and gives way to the same sun that shines down on every city in the world? What about the people who are not rich, are not famous, but are living their lives, collecting paychecks from the tourist traps, going to school and to the grocery store, doing the same normal, everyday things that we all do, no matter where we live. Beneath the veil made of smoke and camera flashes, there is life. There is routine. There is a town, more than a city. After all, Los Angeles didn't spontaneously pop up out of nowhere complete with The Chinese Theater and The Hollywood Walk of Fame. Before that, there was a history.

It's a long history, too: It's approximated that indigenous peoples of the Americas first inhabited the Los Angeles region around 6000 B.C., and lived there until the late seventeenth hundreds when Spanish explorers colonized the region. (Lonely Planet). The Spanish settlers named the region El Pueblo de Nuestra Señora la Reina de los Angeles sobre el Río Porciúncula, which means "The Town of Our Lady the Queen of Angels on the Porciuncula River," which was a bit of a mouthful, so the official name of the region was simply El Pueblo de la Reina de Los Angeles ("Where Did the Name 'Los Angeles' Come From?").

El Pueblo de la Reina de Los Angeles continued for about half of a century as a small but successful farming community, but isolated from others cities and towns until Mexico took the region over from Spain in 1821, inciting a population increase as an influx of new people moved into the town ("History of Los Angeles"). In 1850, Los Angeles once again changed hands when it officially became a part of the United States as a result of the Mexican-American war, which ended two years prior (History of Los Angeles).

Since its induction into the United States, the population of Los Angeles has boomed, and is currently has the largest population in California ("California- Largest Cities"). By 1930, two million people were living in Los Angeles ("History of Los Angeles)-- a far cry from that small farming town it had once been, and the change didn't take place overnight. January 1848, a gold nugget was discovered in the American River in California, and the news spread so far so quickly that thousands of immigrants came into California in hopes of finding gold for themselves ("California Gold Rush"). The economic stimulation and population increase led to the development of all of California as new roads, schools, and other public services (Wilson). Although Los Angeles had been steadily growing, the population boom that affected all of California helped Los Angeles rise up even higher. The introduction of the transcontinental railroad in the 1870s furthered this by increasing mobility within America, and throughout the country people began traveling more and relocating, which subsequently led to a population

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increase in Los Angeles ("History of Los Angeles").

On Los Angeles' path to becoming one of America's great city was the birth of the citrus industry ("History of Los Angeles"). Spanish missionaries had been growing citrus fruits since they had colonized the area in the 1700s, but the gold rush spurred a new demand for oranges as word got around that citrus combated a Vitamin-C deficiency known as scurvy (Lee). The market grew, and a new industry appeared on the map.

Later, in 1892, a new industry once again appeared, once again advancing Los Angeles to another level with the discovery of oil in Dodger Stadium in Los Angeles ("25 Facts About Los Angeles You Probably Never Knew"). Los Angeles quickly grew into the market, producing one-fourth of the world's oil by 1923 and currently contains the third largest oil field in the country ("25 Facts About Los Angeles You Probably Never Knew"). In fact, an oil derrick on the property of Beverly Hills High School earns the school \$300,000 in royalties each year in exchange for the production of 400 barrels of oil each day ("25 Facts About Los Angeles You Probably Never Knew").

The Los Angeles Harbor Department, better known as the Port of Los Angeles, was launched in 1907 ("History of Los Angeles"). Since, it has become one of the largest, busiest, and most successful ports in the world ("Timeline of Historical Events"). Business growth did slow substantially during World War II to a sluggish standstill, but picked up again after the war just as the national economy grew during the same time period ("Timeline of Historical Events"). Also after the war came the advent of "containerization," which led to higher productivity and a significant new degree of national importance for the port ("Timeline of Historical Events").

Regardless, there is no industry in Los Angeles that can compete with the American movie industry, practically synonymous with the iconic Hollywood sign. Funnily enough, the movie industry might never have settled in Los Angeles if not for Thomas Edison, who held so many patents that it was difficult for directors to make movies without infringing on his intellectual property ("25 Facts About Los Angeles You Probably Never Knew"). Moviemakers fled to the West in 1907 ("History of Los Angeles") and set to work making silent movies (because "talkies" or movies with sounds did not develop until the late 1920s) and the rest, as they say, is history.

Los Angeles's history has shaped it into the cultural hub it is today, creating an intensely diverse atmosphere. Today, Los Angeles has had a growing emphasis on public transit, making a conscious effort to cut down on gas emissions.

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It is easy for the stars in Hollywood to get swept up in the glitz and glamour of the city, but the advice that most of them receive is not to forget their roots, where they came from. But who remembers where the city came from? Who remembers the people hunting and gathering around the Los Angeles River before it had ever been given that name? Who remembers the small farming town it had been for years under Spain, Mexico, and finally the United States? Who remembers the swarm of immigrants flooding into the city in droves in search of gold? Who remembers the introduction of the transcontinental railroad, the citrus industry, the oil market in California, or the Port of Los Angeles? Who remembers the directors trying to find ways to make movies despite astringent patent laws? If we are to understand the city as it is, we need to remember the place it once was.

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