

Why the Holiday Bowl Matters¹
<http://www.holidaybowlcrenshaw.com>

Sharon Sekhon
Researchers: Laura Barraclough, Kristin Hargrove, Edward Mejia, Nicole Padilla, Katherine Seymour, Pragma Tomar.

Introduction

This essay and its accompanying website invite you to explore the subject of the Holiday Bowl through the history of postwar Los Angeles, the building and continuing evolution of the Crenshaw,² the role of sports in negotiating culture and politics, as well as looking at different models of history and community. In some ways, the Holiday Bowl's story is the one of many Los Angeleses. Of many Americas. As George Sánchez's work on Boyle Heights informs us, multicultural neighborhoods in Los Angeles are not anathemas but the product of specific historical contexts and bring about compelling histories. George Lipsitz's pathbreaking work on segregation shows they are communities often relegated to the bottom both in terms of federal funding and as paradigms of community-based studies when we choose to study one group over another instead of heterogeneous communities as a whole.³ Investigating a place that no longer exists and one so dear presents challenges to historical memory, and I seek out models of community and proffer them not with nostalgic overtones, nor just as ways to complicate the historic terrain. For those of us who live in Southern California, our landscape is much more than episodes of loss and devastation and studies of how groups contest power within the region, though clearly these are important to understanding the place. Conversely, Southern California is more than festivals and parades with which we can celebrate our past, present, and future. This project, in the melancholia and morass that the Holiday Bowl was left, attempts a recreation of some sort of middle ground in the spirit that the Holiday Bowl achieved. Most importantly, I want

¹ I would like to thank Laura Barraclough, Karen Beavers, Caroline Bracco, Kristin Hargrove, and Elizabeth Ramsey for their careful reading of this essay and their contributions to its revisions.

² For purposes of this essay the Crenshaw area surrounding the Holiday Bowl is designated at Wilshire to the north, Slauson to the south, Arlington to the east, and La Brea to the west.

³ George J. Sánchez. Creating Multiracialism on the Eastside during the 1950s. *American Quarterly* 56.3 (2004) 633-661. George Lipsitz. *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics*. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998.)

to show how the Holiday Bowl was a manifestation of the people who lived and continue to live in the Crenshaw community and who shaped the spirit of the place.

Launched in the Spring of 2004, the Holiday Bowl History Project began as a series of conversations about Los Angeles history, bowling, preservation, and the Holiday Bowl in discussion with John Guzman and Sojin Kim of the Japanese American National Museum; Alexis Moreno of the Southern California Library; Arthur Hansen and Stephanie George of the Center for Oral and Public History at California State University Fullerton, La'Tonya Rease Miles of the University of California, Los Angeles, and Dace Taube of the Regional History Collection at the University of Southern California. The Holiday Bowl features significantly in the memories of those who frequented the place and there were many who were touched by it enough to share their memories here. In addition to one-on-one interviews, the Project included many shared experiences from the Forum and Collection Day at the Japanese American National Museum, a Film Screening at the Southern California Library, a Walking Tour of the former site of the Holiday Bowl, to a Lecture Series where Nina Revoyr read from her novel *Southland*.

The construction, development, and ultimate destruction of the Holiday Bowl represents different arcs in L.A.'s past and through the Holiday Bowl we can trace multiple histories tied to postwar industry, the post internment experience, the role of segregated housing markets in Southern California, the growth of Crenshaw Boulevard for multiracial communities, and the politics of preservation for a place that consistently cuts its cultural affairs budgets. As Phil Ethington's animated Census maps illustrate, where Los Angelenos live has been linked to racial and ethnic and economic demographics rooted in the development of the region, the enforcement of racially restrictive covenants, and global and local crises from the emergence and decline of postwar industry to the 1965 Watts Riots that caused immediate and long term changes. For the Crenshaw community that served the Holiday Bowl, this included a post Internment experience, the Baldwin Hills Flood of 1963, the Vietnam War, the Watts Riots of 1965, the mass exodus and arrival of many in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, and the 1992 Riots. It would be an

understatement to observe that the communities frequenting the Holiday Bowl and the larger Crenshaw community itself underwent change. Yet, in the midst of such change, the Holiday Bowl and its outlying Crenshaw community reappear in historical memory a constant, and in that constancy there lies comfort and stability for the teller of the event.

And while the Holiday Bowl offers a very unique place within the larger body of scholarship on Los Angeles, I have learned through the research of La'Tonya Rease Miles that the multicultural bowling alleys like the Holiday Bowl were not a unique feature to the Southern California landscape. Bowling alleys like it were significant to many people and that cut across class, generation, racial, and through league behavior, city boundaries. Robert Putnam's influential *Bowling Alone* explores the manner in which sport, specifically bowling, has provided venues that allow communities room for conversation, that demand competition and engagement, where excellence was acknowledged, rewarded, and celebrated in a public and shared space.⁴

A Nexus of Communities and Contexts

In December of 1957 the *Los Angeles Times* announced the construction of a new bowling facility at Crenshaw and Rodeo Road that briefly outlined the management of the place:

The 36-lane facility will feature a restaurant and bar, billiard room, nursery, and parking for 200 cars. Design and construction are by Ted R. Cooper Co. Inc, with interiors by Armet & Davis, architects. Structure is owned by Crenshaw Park, a copartnership, and is under lease to the Nisei Corp. It will be all-nisei operated. The new structure will be called the Holiday Bowl.⁵

When the Holiday Bowl was built in the late 1950s, the Crenshaw area was heavily populated by whites but was also a cultural and commercial center for many Japanese Americans. Katsumi Hirooka Kunitsuga recalls:

There were apartments, of course, but single families that the whites were moving out of were sold to Japanese. The Japanese just sort of moved in wholesale in the Crenshaw area. At one time, Crenshaw Square [one block south of the Holiday Bowl] was like the second little Tokyo. All the stores and professional men in that were Japanese. They used to have—what's Miss Nikkei Pageant now started out as a Miss Teen Sansei, and it was

⁴ Robert D. Putnam. *Bowling Alone: the Collapse and Revival of American Community*. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001).

⁵ "New Bowling Facility." *Los Angeles Times*. (12/1/1957).

like a rivalry between Little Tokyo and Crenshaw.⁶

The Holiday Bowl undoubtedly was built to meet this Nisei population. Begun by Harry Oshiro, Hanko Okuda, Paul Uyemura, and Harley Kusumoto, the Holiday Bowl was financed in part by selling shares of the business in the community. Oshiro put in \$20,000, and according to John Saito, Jr, “The other three partners put in about \$10,000 each. Needing a total of \$300,000, the founders sold shares in blocks of \$500-\$400 of which was regarded as preferred stock that was paid 8 percent return and \$100 of which was referred to as common stock.” The net profit at the end of the year was divided and dispersed among those holding common stock.⁷

The predominance of Japanese Americans in the area shaped the visuality of the boulevard and of the larger city scape. One current resident observed, The architecture of Crenshaw Boulevard is connected. I mean I didn't realize that if you look at the sign on what was the Holiday Bowl and the sign of what was Tokai Bank--a long time ago, there was a bank right on the corner of Jefferson and Crenshaw—with similar writing and it tied that whole block together with the sign for Crenshaw Square.⁸ The homes around the Holiday Bowl reflected a Japanese aesthetic with sculptured gardens and paneled framing. Such markers are discernible in the interiors of buildings as well. In Crenshaw Square, for example, the soul food restaurant, Mama's House, is clearly a former Japanese restaurant with the tell tale sushi boat motif still in place.

The 1965 Watts Riots often is the marker for Japanese and Anglo flight from Crenshaw and the influx of African Americans to the community. A 1967 *Los Angeles Times* article documents the massive change:

In 1959, the total population was 93% Caucasian, 5.3% Negro and 1.5% Oriental.
By 1962, the respective figures were 76.3%, 16.8%, and 6.7%.
For 1967...the community is 56.1% white, 33.% black, and 10.4% Oriental.⁹

⁶ Excerpt of interview with Katsumi Hirooka Kunitsugu. *Regenerations: Rebuilding Japanese American Families, Communities, and Civil Rights in the Resettlement Era*. Japanese American National Museum, 259- 260

⁷ John Saito, Jr. “The End of An Era.” *Rafu Shimpo*. (5/12/2000).

⁸ Renee Gunter, interview notes

⁹ *Los Angeles Times*. (11/2/67).

The passage of the California Rumford Fair Housing Act in 1963, which was overturned by voters in 1964 but reinstated in 1967, also encouraged the move of African Americans from poorer areas of the city to the Crenshaw area, precipitating flight. Also known as the "fair housing act", Rumford declared racial discrimination in sales or rentals of housing to be against the law. This transition in demographics was challenged and contested by different groups for both material concerns rooted in property values and social services but also cultural ideals.

One significant group that challenged how integration and flight from Crenshaw would take place was Crenshaw Neighbors, founded before the Watts Riots. Historian Josh Sides notes, "Multiracial but predominantly black, Crenshaw Neighbors met with school administrators and white parents in an effort to prevent racial conflict in the area's schools and worked with local apartment owners and managers to prevent rapid tenant turnover and property deterioration."¹⁰ In a letter to the *Los Angeles Times*, President Ann Post outlined the group's goals:

Crenshaw Neighbors was organized last fall out of our growing realization that neighborhoods like ours do not long survive. Our purpose is to let all of Greater Los Angeles know that this is a place with great advantages for all people; a place where the ole predictions no longer are pertinent; and a place where people of good will and respect for themselves and others have learned to share a beautiful community and its great resources with others of many different backgrounds.¹¹

In the 1960s Crenshaw Neighbors maintained its own quarterly magazine, *The Integrator* (archived at the Southern California Library for Social Studies and Research) held its own real estate brokerage license and sponsored home tours.¹² In 1966 Crenshaw Neighbors, also known as United Neighbors, along with similar groups aimed at supporting integration, formed the Council of Integrated Neighborhoods (COIN). The explicit goal of COIN was: "Open housing throughout the county and dissolution of the solid ghetto with its built-in tension, hatreds and property decay."¹¹ After 35 years, Crenshaw Neighbors still exists today and has been active in trying to recruit businesses to the area in the aftermath of the 1992 Uprisings.

¹⁰ Josh Sides. *L.A. City Limits: African American Los Angeles from the Great Depression to the Present*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004) 191.

¹¹ Ann Post. "Letters to the Editor." *Los Angeles Times*. (4/24/65).

¹² "They Are Showing It Really Works." *Los Angeles Times*. (9/5/66).

Racial diversity was an ideal explicitly celebrated in Crenshaw's schools, particularly in the 1960s.

Ken Hamamura remembers:

At the time I don't think we really thought about it much, but it was a pretty diverse neighborhood even back then. On the Asian side Japanese Americans and Chinese Americans probably predominated the area with the African American community and the Caucasian community. There were some Latinos in the neighborhood but I don't remember as many as there certainly are today.

I do remember when I was in high school at Dorsey...talk about Dorsey being the ideal high school because the population I think at that time was pretty evenly split into thirds in terms of Asian Americans, African Americans, and Caucasians. So it was almost held up as a role model.¹³

Judy Heimlich who also attended Dorsey High School in the 1960s recalls how this diversity influenced student body activities: "At Dorsey I'd say at the time it was a third African American, a third Japanese, and a third white or Anglo. The cheerleading groups would be two girls, you know, [representing each group] there were six of us."¹⁴ Dorsey High School extended a rhetoric of integration into its practices of cheerleading and the election of student body presidents, as its yearbooks demonstrate. Heimlich participated in a Japanese club and later in college spent a summer in Japan, undoubtedly influenced by her early exposure to Japanese Americans in school.

While many cite 1965 as the year in which the community went into decline, especially after the Watts Riots, Crenshaw retained its charms to many in the 1970s and beyond. In the 1970s, Crenshaw Boulevard was known for its electricity and many African American owned businesses in the area. One interviewee recalled that in 1971, "Crenshaw Boulevard was really the *in* place. It was *the* street. There were quite a few night clubs." By the late 1990s, as the Holiday Bowl neared its decline, she recalled, "I kind of sensed that something was going on...it just didn't have the same kind of ambience."¹⁵ The change in ownership of the Holiday Bowl directly shaped its upkeep and ability to attend to customer needs. As it declined, its new owners decided to sell it.

¹³ Ken Hamamura, interview notes.

¹⁴ Judy Heimlich, interview notes.

¹⁵ La Verne Hughes, interview notes.

Shortly after, the Holiday Bowl was destroyed, leaving a small section of the coffee shop requisitioned as a cultural monument, after a three-year effort to preserve the entire site.¹⁶

An L.A. Place In A Southern California Style

The Holiday Bowl is one of many bowling alleys to be destroyed in Los Angeles in the last decade. One aficionado notes that over ninety bowling alleys have closed their doors in the greater Southern California area since 1976. Of these, nearly 1/3 (26) occurred within the last five years.¹⁷ The loss of these places wreaks permanent havoc on the physical make up of the region, and one of the main arguments for saving the Holiday Bowl related to its architectural style, Googie, a Southern California tradition.

As architectural historian Alan Hess observes, Googie was defined by its upswept roofs, domes, large windows, organic shapes like "amoebae," "starbursts," and "atomic models."¹⁸ The Googie style was a product of the postwar experience that survived atomic annihilation but had its sites firmly on the future with perhaps an overly optimistic outlook. The style fell out of popularity in production rate after the mid -1960s. This style originated in coffee shops in Los Angeles and is commonly associated with the original design for the Denny's chain of restaurants, as they were designed by the architects who helped shape the Holiday Bowl look as well, Armet & Davis. While Googie has received some attention in recent years in Los Angeles preservationist circles, specifically the Los Angeles Conservancy's Mod Com, when it first emerged it was snubbed by architectural enthusiasts for its superficiality. As a result, examples of the style are increasingly more difficult to find in the Southern California landscape. But the loss of these places has a far-reaching impact on the existing community and future exchanges in the place, as the Holiday Bowl's struggle revealed.

¹⁶ John English, interview notes. John English co-lead the Coalition to Save the Holiday Bowl.

¹⁷ Website "Bowling Gone Bye-Bye." At <http://home.pacbell.net/othas3/web-personal/bowling/deathofbowling.htm> visited on February 2, 2005.

¹⁸ Alan Hess. *Googie Redux: Ultra Modern Roadside Architecture*. (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2004).

In the fight to save the Holiday Bowl, preservationists fought an uphill battle rooted in public policy to preservation practices and the hierarchies of what is worth securing within preservationist circles. As a recent illustration of these battles, former Mayor James Hahn's budget for the 2004-2005 fiscal year dismantled much of the Cultural Affairs Department's historic Preservation Program, reducing it to one full time salaried position from an office of three full time employees with several part time employees. Voicing the fears of many in preservationist circles, the Los Angeles Jewish Historical Society, prior to Hahn's budget being implemented, worried:

(t)he City of New York's Landmarks Commission has a staff of over 50. Pasadena, a city about 1/20th the size of Los Angeles, has a staff of six for its preservation program. Los Angeles, a city of nearly 4,000,000 residents, may soon match the preservation staffing of the City of Vernon, a tiny industrial city of only 91 residents!¹⁹

Under this sparse management, the preservation program's ability to oversee its existing landmarks and implement new ones is severely challenged. The preservation program is now housed under the Department of City Planning instead of its Cultural Affairs Department, indicating a different understanding of the role of preservation for the city. And as the City's Report on Historic-Cultural Monuments (HCM) indicates, Los Angeles is more likely to acknowledge and preserve churches, residences, and parks over commercial spaces like the Holiday Bowl.

Though the city does list the Holiday Bowl as one of its Historic Cultural Monuments (#688) and has retained the Holiday Bowl's façade and coffee shop for a Starbucks, the lot remains empty.²⁰ A banner conflictingly advertises it is "For Lease" as well as the future arrival of a Walgreen's drugstore and Denny's restaurant (one of the original examples of the Googie style) to the former site. Across the street from the former Holiday Bowl sits a Sav-on drugstore and there is a Rite-Aid in the next block. Does this area need another drugstore?

Social Capital and the Politics of Place

¹⁹ Jewish Historical Society website located at <http://www.jhsociety.igetnet.com/> visited on February 25, 2005.

²⁰ Los Angeles City Planning website located at <http://cityplanning.lacity.org/> visited on February 25, 2005.

The loss of bowling alleys, and specifically league behavior has been illustrative, according to Robert Putnam, in his 2000 book *Bowling Alone*, of the disappearance of social capital. According to Carmen Sirianni and Lewis Friedland of the Civic Practices Network, social capital, "refers to those stocks of social trust, norms and networks that people can draw upon to solve common problems." Because social capital works to create reciprocal networks to benefit specific groups, traditionally, it is created through neighborhood association and cooperatives, like the Crenshaw Neighbors, where immediate expectations and benefits are clearly drawn out. However, sports clubs and bowling alleys are ripe places for creating social capital.²¹

From its onset the Holiday Bowl generated social capital. It included a nursery in its initial plans, attending to the family needs of its bowlers. The Holiday Bowl held fund raising drives to find a Cure for Cancer in the 1960s and Sickle Cell Anemia to programs with the Martin Luther King Therapeutic Recreation Center helping autistic children through bowling in the late 1990s. Usually, people recall it as being full, as a 'vibrant' space. In 1973 George Takei ran for City Council when Tom Bradley, who was the area's City Councilman was elected mayor. George Takei remembered politicking there: "I went down there and I leafletted, engaged people in conversations and issues about the community and it was a great place to campaign because there were so many socially involved, community involved people that hung out there." When asked what type of political parties frequented the place, Takei responded that it was a bipartisan space and explained:

You know there are many Japanese Americans who are Republicans because it was a Democrat who put us in internment camps. It was a Democrat who dropped the bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. You know, that generation still had many close relatives in Japan so that generation became Republicans simply as a reaction to Democrats who did those things to us.²²

The Holiday Bowl's political atmosphere reminds us the diversity of its community travels through their collective histories and the Holiday Bowl's politics reflected this diversity. When both political parties may disappoint prospective voters and cyclically neglect or target entire communities, the

²¹ Civil Practices Network website located at <http://www.cpn.org/tools/dictionary/capital.html> visited on February 25, 2005.

²² George Takei, Interview notes.

Holiday Bowl's history reminds us how culture forges communities and reinforces the notion of social capital.

The Holiday Bowl's coffee shop provided a significant space where disparate forces were able to connect in what would seem an unlikely place. While some scholars snub the power of food in politicizing communities, the menu in the coffee shop was as delicious as it was comforting. Food brought many people to the Holiday Bowl who would not have gone there otherwise. Up until the 1980s, in part to cater to the shifts of the aerospace industry, the Holiday Bowl and its coffee shop were open 24 hours, and many recall the coffee shop being the place to go after one danced the night away. The spectrum with which interviewees recalled the coffee shop's menu is a discovery of the fine lines of historical memory. Many Los Angelenos cite the coffee shop for the diversity of its cuisine; Tony Nicholas recalls it as the place where he first tried sushi and loved it. One person regularly went to the restaurant regularly for its chicken gravy and rice. In high school Ugene Song used to stop there after high school with his friends to eat its "good junk food." Renee Gunter ate at the coffee shop in the late 1960s and remembers how the rice was always perfectly presented and delicious. Barbara Fuller ate there alone often as a young, first time teacher. She thoughtfully remembered: "When you go eat by yourself, you know you want to go to a place where you feel comfortable. You felt very comfortable in there."

The Persistence of Place: Fictional Incarnations

While the Holiday Bowl may no longer exist in a physical sense, it lives on in two fictional pieces; Lisa Loomer's 1999 play *Broken Hearts (A BH Mystery)* and Nina Revoyr's 2003 novel *Southland*. Each text treats the Holiday Bowl as a familial space and present day protagonists must travel to it, and back in time, to stabilize the present in order to recover a moment when Los Angeles was full of multicultural cooperation and promise in the midst of chaos and outside oppression. *Broken Hearts (A BH Mystery)* was commissioned for The Cornerstone Theater company as part of a larger "Bridge production" and links four "BH" communities in Los Angeles represented in Boyle Heights, Baldwin Hills, Broadway Hill, and Beverly Hills. The tone for the play borrows

humorously from film noir, and the main character, Joaquin, provides a voice over and asides to the audience throughout the play. For example, at the play's conclusion, Joaquin allegorizes Los Angeles to his run-down car in conversation with his assistant, Nancy. When she asks why he doesn't just buy a new one, Joaquin responds:

Because that car's just like this city, baby. Shot up, souped up, and still can't pass a pinche smog test. You got to be cold to junk it, stupid to forget where it's been, and crazy to try and clean it up. And I'm not cold or stupid.²³

At once Loomer summarizes her bridging of community and the recovery of place amidst sadness and loss. Because of the play's project the Holiday Bowl cannot be understood without rooting it to Broken Hearts larger Los Angeles sensibility and it exists on a continuum of sorts. But the refrain of family echoes in her account of the place. When Joaquin visits the Bowl, the place transforms itself to the late 1950s. He encounters Toshiko a waitress who leads him through the space and back in time. Seeing its multicultural, multigenerational environment he comments to her, "Nice place. Friendly." Toshiko, who remains at the Holiday Bowl in the present day, responds wistfully, "'Almost like...a family. But it wasn't easy keeping it going all by myself,'" alluding to the trials that time would bring.

In Nina Revoyr's 2003 *Southland* the Holiday Bowl is a recognizable place in the novel and Revoyr actually renames the Holiday Bowl, the Family Bowl, invoking a framework for viewing the space. Taking place in 1994, Revoyr's Jackie Ishida visits the Family Bowl to find her now deceased grandfather's friends and learn more about a man she from whom she had grown apart and to unpuzzle a crime that occurred in his Crenshaw corner store during the Watts Riots. When a patron tells her that her grandfather had brought her to the Family Bowl when she was a child, a memory she has long suppressed, the patron recalls that Jackie's mother thought the Bowl an unsafe space, mirroring the white and Japanese American flight of the post 1965 Riots, and Jackie's own ambivalence to her history.

²³ Lisa Loomer. *Broken Hearts (A BH Mystery)*. (1999).

The Family Bowl exists as a refuge for Kenji Hirano, one of Frank's friends from the early 1960s. It is here where Revoyr taps into the power of sports in providing agency, especially to marginalized groups. Hirano, who is described as a pious but delusional man (he occasionally hears the voice of God), becomes a fixture at the Family Bowl after experiencing terrible tragedy with no ability to respond in the very racially charged worlds of World War II. His wife Yuki and he are interned at Heart Mountain and hearing rumors that Nisei men may be forced to be sterilized, they decide to start a family and Yuki becomes pregnant. Like many interned Nisei men, Kenji signs up for enlistment but is allowed to return to Heart Mountain for the birth of his child. At the camp, Yuki's complicated pregnancy is exacerbated by a sparse medical staff and a drunk physician, who makes racial slurs. In delivery, the doctor cuts Yuki open to find the baby has died and in his wide, reckless slashes, she dies from loss of blood. Revoyr writes,

Twelve years later, Kenji didn't know what to do with his hands, which still shook from not strangling the doctor. They quivered and jumped all they way back to Camp Shelby, and then over to Italy, where the hakujin [caucasians] they did kill didn't satisfy his rage. They shook through the year his family lived in a government trailer in Lomita, where they were sent after the war because their neighbors in Boyle Heights, upon receiving word of their return, promptly set fire to their house. And they shook for eight years after Kenji's parents bought the new place in Angeles Mesa. The only way he could keep them still was to give them an occupation, which was why he had so enjoyed holding guns, and then his father's gardening tools. And then one afternoon outside of Frank's store, Jesus came up to him again, dressed in normal white robes this time. He looked at Kenji and pointed over toward Crenshaw Boulevard. "You must bowl, my son," He said. "Fill your hands with the nourishing weight of sport."²⁴

Southland shows, that in addition to giving Kenji something to do with his hands, bowling also gives him a place to be and a sense of purpose. He is a great bowler. When Jackie finds him, she has to bowl to spend time with him and he coaches her on her form, chiding her sloppiness and lack of attention to her game. Bowling, he learns, is something he can control.

Bowling, Sports, and the Fire of Competition

The popularity of bowling sprang forward after World War II among Japanese Americans after the American Bowling Congress lifted its ban on non-whites playing the sport in 1950 after Wisconsin fans rallied behind bowler Kenneth Koji who had been evicted from a tournament based on

²⁴ Nina Revoyr. *Southland*. (New York: Akashic Books, 2004) 156-157.

race.²⁵ According to John Saito, Jr., "By 1950, there were already several hundred JA bowling leagues on the mainland, whose participants in September of that year had cheered the lifting of the color ban."²⁶ From the beginning, the Holiday Bowl was a place to witness bowling in action, from professional to amateur, young and old, and it sponsored various leagues. Renee Gunter described the scene in the late 1960s:

It was always interesting to watch all the leagues come in there with different colored shirts, different logos and the names across the back, and the seriousness with which they came in. And there were certain nights for certain leagues.

I would sit in the cafe, and there was a place that I sat where I could actually watch the leagues come and go when I ate. I was fascinated with the different races of people that came and the groups. I mean there was maybe a senior citizens group, there were guys that were in their forties or fifties, there were a lot of Japanese bowlers and it seemed like the balls were heavier than they were because these balls were, I don't know how much a bowling ball weighs, but some of these women were not even five feet tall and they had these huge balls and I thought, 'Wow, how do they do that?'

Different groups would come at different times and it was almost like looking at Bower ware in action, you know Bower ware being all colorful, all these shirts were different colors--turquoise and black with yellow writing on it.²⁷

In 1962, Richard Weber, whose father worked the desk at the Holiday Bowl, won the National All-Star at Miami Beach. Ken Hamamura recalled Lloyd Taneshiro bowling a 750 series in three games in the Junior Leagues, the first to do it in the nation and setting a Junior League record. When asked what he enjoyed about the Holiday Bowl and bowling, Arthur Sutton responded immediately and bemoaned the changes in today's sport:

Well, mostly the competition. Holiday Bowl had the capacity to attract a lot of the better bowlers in the area. And if you want to be the best you have to compete against the best. And I loved that competition. There were a lot of 200 plus average bowlers there. And for me that was great.

Now the game itself has changed a lot because years ago we used to use rubber balls on wooden lanes and now its plastic balls on synthetic lanes. When they had the wooden lanes you had to use a lot of precision. Now you don't have to because of the way the balls are made you can almost area bowl and become a good bowler, you don't have to really get into the true basics of bowling. Now I see guys out there that on good old wooden lanes they'd average about 160, they're carrying 200 averages now. In the old days, guy that carried a 200 average was somebody. Now, you're just another bowler. (laughing)²⁸

²⁵ "Wisconsin Stories: Let's Go Bowl." Website at http://www.wisconsinstories.org/2002season/bowling/closer_look.cfm visited on February 25, 2005.

²⁶ Saito, Ibid.

²⁷ Renee Gunter, interview notes.

²⁸ Arthur Sutton, interview notes.

Arthur Sutton's passion for bowling and his expertise in the sport were things he learned from an early age. He grew up in New Jersey and bowled at the local YMCA, the only place where African American were allowed to bowl, and worked as a pin setter before the implementation of automatic pinsetters. In addition to the development of expert skill and comraderie, bowling, as does all sports activity, required performance. To not seek out excellence runs counter to the goals of competition and often eligibility to participate. For groups, particularly those who frequented the Holiday Bowl, activities that not only allowed public achievement but acknowledged and celebrated were important arenas for expression. The wide audiences that Holiday Bowl served, from it many generations, bowlers and non-bowlers alike, provided an important stage for performance and celebration.

The Digital Bridge

Working with various digital technologies and grappling with different questions about preservation made this project richer and worth pursuing. Who gets to be included in history "worth preserving?" How does that list dwindle in a region already financially strapped? Can the digital and the web in its disseminating force provide pathways to future scholars? Indeed, social movements today require such avenues of exploration and as this project's Resources page demonstrates, preservation movements as well as scholars are taking more heed of this new information pathway. How does one approach a place that materially may be gone but whose memory abounds? The website where this essay is housed (<http://www.holidaybowlcrenshaw.com>), rich in multimedia, reveals only one facet of a broader project that strives to invoke memories and install more complex and different paradigms in regional representation and to do so without digressing into nostalgia. Likewise, this project hopes to root the history of the Holiday Bowl within its immediate context; to those who went to the place and made it a viable space. It is for this reason that oral history has served a central role in the documentation of the Holiday Bowl.

This site hopes to broaden contemporary understandings of Los Angeles community both in subject and in medium. Using multimedia and the web, I have shown how the internet may democratize the process in which historians make arguments by placing most of my sources front and center to allow readers the ability to explore evidence further in a more immediate way, to contest the viability of my claims, and to create a larger arena for discussion about this subject. Showing different types of sources - both oral and visual - demonstrates the role of popular culture in building this story and the basis for this social history. Further, because we learn history, particularly urban history and local history in many ways, this site became a powerful to demonstrate how to read the city as a text. Next, the collaborative nature of this journey both in building this website in its database, 3-d model, and oral histories provides another way of doing historical research which typically consists of the lone researcher in the dusty archive.

As oral historians readily admit, the perils of historical memory often provide much food for thought and the refrain of the Holiday Bowl as a space for family is a theme that is repeated throughout the interviews conducted for this project. Undoubtedly, the Holiday Bowl attracted a multigenerational space and that its owners constructed a nursery to meet the needs of its clientele attests to this atmosphere. But the Holiday Bowl existed over time, and it would be too easy to only say this place replicated family. The Bowl reflected tensions within the community and offered different diversions for different ages; Janice D. Tanaka's documentary *When You're Smiling: the Deadly Legacy of Internment* on Nikkei suicide rates noted the Bowl as a place where youth gathered after getting high.²⁹ Former waitress Clara Harris recalled missing a bullet one day coming in to work at the Coffee Shop in the 1980s, reflecting the demise of the Crenshaw district in this period of high gang activity and violence.³⁰ George Furukawa, according to John Saito, Jr., was mugged and shot outside the Holiday Bowl in 1986, though this did not stop him from returning to the place on a daily basis.³¹ While this project celebrates the family that

²⁹ *When You're Smiling: the Deadly Legacy of Internment*. Janice D. Tanaka writer and director.

³⁰ Clara Harris, interview notes.

³¹ Saito, *Ibid*

the Holiday Bowl created, it fosters other visions of the Holiday Bowl to complicate our histories and our understanding of how we approach the verbal and written record.

Finally, in using the web to invoke the Holiday Bowl, I hope to show past models of social capital in order to foster contemporary ones, to provide a window into this community which is beginning to be documented in important ways, and to encourage more ways of seeing community. Not only did the nature of the work in this project lend itself to multiple parties with specialized talents, but creating sense of place often occurs in the purposeful deployment of skills towards the betterment of a community. As Dolores Hayden and the California Council for the Humanities has carefully documented, telling stories about local history is not only good for the ultimate article, book, or website and the documentary process, it is a beneficial experience for the person recounting the story as well as the person recording it—in the process creating community and bridging generations and time.³²

The Personal is Political

I came to the Holiday Bowl through A People's Guide to Los Angeles, a poster and web project (<http://www.pgta.org>) which documents 23 different sites often overlooked in larger narratives of Los Angeles history by activist and geographer Laura Pulido. There were many sites that are great on the Guide—but my favorite was by far the Holiday Bowl. It appealed to me for many reasons but I think the biggest reason was because it reminded me of my mom who passed away in 1999 and who I miss. We bowled together and through this activity bridged moments in our lives when we didn't get along or when the stress of life seemed too much. The Holiday Bowl reminded me that bowling was something done as a family unit, as I did, or on dates, or leagues.

³² Dolores Hayden. *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History*. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1995), 227-228. "Survey Finds Californians Feel Disconnected From Their Communities and Each Other. But Californians Think Telling Their Stories Will Help Bring Them Together." The study surveyed 404 English speaking adult heads of household. At website for the California Council for the Humanities at <http://www.calhum.org/> accessed on December 17, 2001.

This project is in part a memorial project to forge another model of remembrance; We live in a society that does not mark loss and in a political atmosphere where as one of my students noted, our president doesn't attend funerals of slain soldiers. Remembering the Holiday Bowl where so much happened honors life and the human experience. Not only do we need to mark the loss of people and places, but we need to remember them as models for exchanges and relationships.

History Does Repeat

by Nicole Renee written for the Holiday Bowl History Project

Were you alive during the Civil Rights Movement?

Did the first wave of feminism get covered in your U.S history class?

Do you know the name of the first president congress tried to impeach?

Have you heard of the "Bay of Pigs?"

What do you know of the events occurring between 1941 through 1992 in our country?

Are you – white, black, brown, yellow, red?

Are you – male, female, gay, straight, young, old, rich, poor?

Are you – a high school graduate, a college grad?

Do you - pay taxes?

Are you – married, single parent, baby boomer, generation x, generation next, or my generation?

Do you care that more than thirty years ago I'd have no right to my body?

That I'd have no right to a college diploma?

No right to have a career?

No right to be single?

Do you care that more than forty years ago our American boys were sent away from their moms and dads only to be forever gone from them?

Do you care that you may be taken away from your mom and dad by a man who never had to leave his?