On September 4, 1981 Los Angeles, the nation's third largest city, celebrated its 200th birthday. In the past several years a considerable volume of literature about the city and its environs has been published.

**Background**

When I began teaching a California course in 1950, geographically-related materials about Los Angeles and the surrounding area were somewhat limited. Anton Wagner's *Los Angeles*, an early-1930's German dissertation had been published but there was no English translation. The volume on Los Angeles in the *American Guide Series*, especially Part III, a series of seven tours, was helpful. Popular works, such as those of McWilliams and Robinson, plus the efforts of such historians as Dumke and Cleland and planner Mel Scott were useful. A few geographers, principally Clifford Zierer, Ruth Baugh and Hallock Raup, had written professional articles about the Los Angeles area. Yet much of the material on Los Angeles in my class resulted from field reconnaissance, involving many field trips with students (usually World War II veterans knowledgeable about their own communities), scores of interviews, considerable walking and some thousands of miles driving different routes. Finally, after three years, I had gained sufficient confidence to address an audience of peers. That paper was followed subsequently by a booklet, and then a *Focus* article.

Beginning in the 1940's a series of master's theses in geography were prepared at U.C.L.A. and some years later at some of the regional universities, particularly California State Universities, Northridge and Los Angeles. Too often these were neither published nor abstracted as papers at meetings. Thus

---

*Dr. Lantis has been Professor of Geography at California State University, Chico since 1957. He served as president of C.C.G.E. in 1953 and as a member of the Executive Board that established The California Geographer proposed the name of the journal.*
the only way they could be used was through campus library perusal or interlibrary loan. An occasional dissertation was written on the area; one that I found helpful early dealt with the San Fernando Valley.\textsuperscript{13}

As the number of professional geographers in metropolitan Los Angeles increased, additional work was undertaken on the conurbation. Especially appreciated was the work of Richard D. Preston between 1964 and 1972 and that of Robert Durrenberger over a longer period of time.\textsuperscript{15} Their relocation in other states represented a real loss.

\textbf{Mostly Popular Literature--Chiefly Historical}

Most of the recent books about the metropolis take a historic approach. It is appropriate that part of the Los Angeles bicentennial literature should be Art Seidenbaum's pictorial extravaganza, authored by the book editor of the Los Angeles Times.\textsuperscript{16} Each of the city's 200 years is represented by an eye-catching photograph by John Malmin with an accompanying commentary. For 1980 there is a picture of the sun setting into a smogbank; the prose poses a series of questions, such as "When and where will the next major earthquake shake?" (p. 320). Less sensuous photographically but more valuable to the geographer is a volume of aerial photographs by Cameron; it is already a collector's item.\textsuperscript{17}

A work by David Lavender is one of a series entitled The American Portrait Series (other include books about San Diego and San Jose) which are subsidized by local merchants and industrialists.\textsuperscript{18} When I first skimmed the book I was disappointed. Yet the volume has much to recommend it, including a well-selected consultant list (without a single geographer). The photographic coverage, both black and white and color, it commendable. Numerous boxed-in topics concern such diverse things as The Harbor, The Plaza and Rancho San Pedro. There are many photographs with captions about individuals. The final chapter, "Ferment" (pp. 141-165) is lengthier and covers a broader range of contemporary thoughts than do most of the history-oriented volumes. I was interested in the vignettes about the 50 sponsoring organizations (pp. 175-231). While there is no bibliography, this is not too serious an omission, since there are bibliographies in other works.

Henstell's history too is less showy than the Seidenbaum volume.\textsuperscript{19} For example most of the photographs are in black and white rather than color. The
author considers Los Angeles by periods rather than individual years. In essence his book is a series of well-chosen photographs with lengthy comments. Like the Seidenbaum opus it is disappointing as regards the contemporary city. The final chapter, "Modern Mecca" (pp. 207-216) is well illustrated but weak on analysis of the metropolis today. The bibliography cites better-known popular works.

The latest contribution by Jack Smith, much-enjoyed Los Angeles Times essayist, is an assemblage of 65 of his newspaper columns. Each selection covers a different topic, including people (such as author Norman Mailer, muralist Leo Politi and actress Joan Crawford), buildings (including the Biltmore, Rosslyn and Baltimore hotels), places (including Catalina Island, the central district and Hollywood Cemetery) and events. Obviously Smith, like this reviewer, loves Los Angeles. The book provides a feel for the city that one does not find elsewhere.

Geographers will find the bicentennial volume of California History one of the more worthwhile volumes on the city. Compiled by the former editor of Westways magazine, its principal authors include John Caughey, Leonard Pitt, John D. Weaver and Richard Lillard. There are vignettes by such well-known historians as T. H. Watkins and W. H. Hutchinson. Almost every page includes a marginal quotation from prominent writers from Fray Crespi to Carey McWilliams and Neil Morgan. While much of the material represents reworking of familiar history, it is well presented. Probably most valuable to geographers is the contemporary scene as described by native son Richard Lillard. This section could qualify as an additional chapter in his widely-praised Eden in Jeopardy (Knopf, 1966). Lillard writes well (he is a professor of English!) and with long-time knowledge of the subject. (Many will recall that Lillard was the luncheon speaker when CCGE met at Los Angeles City College, May 6, 1967.)

Weaver has reworked his 1973 history of Los Angeles, with a new final chapter and another title. He has had much experience with popular writing and uses words cleverly, reflected in the opening sentence, "Angelinos, as all the world knows, are conceived on freeway off-ramps..." (p. 9). While the book affords impressions of the highlights of the past two hundred years, it certainly is not a very complete history. For recent decades the author relied considerably upon ideas in widely-read sources, especially the Los Angeles Times. And the reader who seeks a comprehensive view of Los Angeles today will not find it in the final chapter, "Present Indicative, 1970-1980" (pp. 177-199).
Unlike a reviewer for New West I was unable to obtain an advance copy of a volume on Los Angeles freeways. From the published critique it is assumedly a worthy addition to the literature about a much-discussed Los Angeles phenomenon.24

**Popular Magazines**

A sampling of articles listed in the Readers Guide, 1979 to 1981, provides clues to transitions in metropolitan Los Angeles. For example, evidence of "Mexicanization" of Los Angeles is reported in signs, foods and films, U.S. News and World Report, Jan. 29, 1977. Even in Anglo majority areas supermarkets now sell corn husks and other tamale ingredients. The article predicted that half of California's people may be Hispanic by 1990.

In a lengthy article in Audubon, Sept. 1980 Peter Steinhart discussed the declining level of Mono Lake and urged Angelenos to reduce their export of Mono water. This topic has appeared in a variety of magazines in the past few years.25

Newsweek, Sept. 24, 1979, observed that Los Angeles had suffered its worst smog attack in 24 years. The topic of smog appears again and again, of course.

Richard Reese, in the New Yorker, Dec. 24, 1979, discussed inflated house prices in metropolitan Los Angeles and noted that adding a Beverly Hills postbox will inflate the price of a house as much as $100,000. He adds that the housing spiral is a statewide problem. More recently Ben Stein in New West, Sept. 1981, optimistically proclaimed that the real estate "bubble has burst" in western Los Angeles.

R. W. Dellinger, Human Behavior, May 1979, quotes a physicist at University of California, Los Angeles, as claiming that jet noise near Los Angeles International Airport causes some strokes, as well as excessive drinking and nervous troubles. Aviation Week, March 31, 1980, hints at consideration of a new "oceanic" (i.e., offshore) airport.

Relative to downtown Los Angeles Architectural Record, Sept. 1980, noted plans for the California Center on Bunker Hill, construction of which will take eight years. It will include offices, residences and a hotel. Meanwhile Business Week, Sept. 17, 1979, indicated progress on a "people mover" in the central district and observed that there is only one (in Morgantown, W.V.) currently

Magazines seem less likely than newspapers to discuss social problems such as crime. Yet *Time*, Aug. 24, 1981, identifies hundreds of teen-age gangs in Los Angeles County, responsible for nearly two-thirds of the "violent street crime." The article emphasizes troubles associated with Saturday night "cruising."

**Geographers’ Contributions**

Steiner has provided us with the first book-length geography of Los Angeles since Anton Wagner. A native Angeleno and former journal editor, Steiner is respected for his scholarship. Like many other treatises on the city, his work concerns the geographic rather than the political city. While his writing style is less glamorous than that of some historians and others, it is quite readable. The first half of the study is topical and coverage is quite satisfactory. Steiner considers successively location, physical environment (with problems), urban evolution, housing and people, employment and circulation (transit). As expected in a geographer’s study, the maps are praiseworthy. I made a mental note to "steal" some, especially the one of neighborhood affluence (or lack of it) on page 52. Photographic coverage is good; unfortunately the publisher's paper dulls some of the pictures.

The reviewer has assumed for some years that Steiner is not a regional geographer. yet he anticipated more extensive regional discussion and description. I was puzzled a bit by inclusion of the Oxnard Plain and exclusion of the San Jacinto Basin. More detail, too, regarding larger communities was expected. Too many are merely named. I know how complex metropolitan Los Angeles is and admire Steiner's achievement.

**Field Trip Guide** 1981, fittingly edited by Logan for the national meeting in April 1981 is not restricted to the Los Angeles conurbation; places as distant as San Francisco and Flagstaff are included. Only nine of the 19 field trips relate directly to metropolitan Los Angeles. My favorite trip in the Logan opus is probably the self-guided tour of downtown Los Angeles (pre trip 1), partly a reflection of admiration for Salter, as well as fondness for an area I have walked around, through and across many times in the past 32
years. This readable tour gives a good "feel" for the central district. Plaudits are in order also for the little sketches. Logan allowed individual authors freedom yet one wishes that either Carthew or O'Leary (trips 6 and 13) had given more attention to the cultural geography of the Santa Monica Mountains (the physical environment is covered well). While it probably was not german to the intent of the guidebook, I would have appreciated personally more information about the recently-created Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. I became fascinated with house types of the Los Angeles area early in my residence there and sometimes thought of preparing an article on this subject. Thus I had personal interest in Brown's description of Greene and Greene houses in Pasadena (trip 15) and reminded myself to explore this locale again in the future.

This reviewer enjoyed the other Logan-edited tours too. In the 1950's I witnessed agriculture decline in many parts of the Los Angeles Lowlands. Thus I had particular interest in Reith's "Agricultural Responses to Urban Pressures in Southern California (trip 11). Beaton's "Tour of the Hollywood District" (trip 14) updates "what happened then" to the motion picture industry and cognate activities. I personally would have welcomed more insight into the total Hollywood District but doubtless Beaton satisfied the interests of visiting geographers. Falick's "The Twin Ports: Los Angeles and Long Beach" (trip 17) is quite brief yet provided visiting geographers an image of the waterfront. He shows the variation in development and contemporary activity of the twin ports. This would make a worthy topic for a monograph. Orme's "The Ventura Coast" (trip 10) and "Central Transverse Ranges and San Andreas Fault System" (trip 16) marginally relate to the conurbation but are well done. The latter tour especially is most helpful in terms of background setting.

This reviewer would encourage two authors in the Logan guidebook especially to expand their brief tours into longer works. McIntire's "L.A. by Freeway" (trip 7) could become a booklet that would complement the Los Angeles Geographical Society's Day Tours. Dagdag's "Ethnic-Racial Communities in Los Angeles" (trip 9) is a concise commentary of Little Tokyo, Boyle Heights and Watts. I would be delighted to see him expand this to an ethnic geography of metropolitan Los Angeles—including Little Saigon, of course. In conclusion the geographers of the Los Angeles Lowlands provided a worthy tour guidebook. It could have been improved a bit if each trip had contained a map (eight of the 19 did) and bibliographic listings (five of the 19 trips did).
The second edition of Day Tours, like the first edition published in 1964, is a valuable source of geographic information about metropolitan Los Angeles. Introductory sections of varying length and relevance set the stage for each of the 14 "journeys." The authors were chosen well; they are long-time residents of metropolitan Los Angeles, long familiar with the conurbation and its changing aspects. Spencer warrants praise for his editorial expertise. For a non-local geographer who has the time to take each of the trips, Day Tours provides a means of acquiring a good knowledge of the area in less than a week. A salute to Los Angeles Geographical Society for its achievement!

Perhaps no geographer has studied Los Angeles more diligently since 1950 than Howard Nelson. Thus it is fitting that he and a colleague at University of California, Los Angeles, W.A.V. Clark, should have written the article on Los Angeles in Contemporary Metropolitan America. The two begin by identifying Los Angeles as the urban focus of a traditional 11-county southern California; subsequent discussion deals with the accepted Los Angeles Basin (or Lowlands). Although content is well selected there is an absence of areal correlation between various maps.

Nelson and Clark succinctly provide a good systematic review of Los Angeles. The introduction is enlivened by several humorous quotes. The physical setting summarizes the problems (water, floods, winds and fire, earth movements and earthquakes, sun and smog). In discussing the city and its satellites, concern is shown for community interrelations (including perception and quality), minorities (Hispanic, Black, Japanese and Jews). Economic opportunities (including finance, government, manufacturing and transport) are considered. In the conclusion the authors suggest that dissatisfaction with Los Angeles may result from differing physical and cultural environments, as contrasted with the eastern United States megalopolis.

The study just described differs considerably from Nelson's The Los Angeles Metropolis, a good collection of readings with the author's comments. It deserves to be better known than it has been beyond the Los Angeles area.

Lamentably I did not see all of the available literature on Los Angeles. For example I have not seen a study by an Italian which reviewer Zelinsky places with Reyner Banham's Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies (The Penguin Press, 1971).

Cultural Change

Recent influx from Latin American and Asia, coupled with a large black community, is creating a new cultural milieu rather unique among American cities.
(although approximated with lesser numbers in San Francisco). This transition outdates some views expressed by Gastil.\textsuperscript{35} Perhaps unknowingly Zelinsky in 1973 anticipated this with his statement, "The cultural personality of Southern California is decreasingly defined by its nineteenth century infancy; instead, there is a constant redefinition with the arrival of more strangers and formulation of new attitudes and cultural amenities . . ."\textsuperscript{36}

One wonders how many United States geographers, assembled in Los Angeles in April 1981, were aware of what is happening ethnically to Los Angeles. Doubtless it will be some years before American geographers generally recognize the alteration. For example, Birdsell and Florin, in their regional geography of Anglo-America (1981), are mesmerized by earthquakes and water problems, but completely ignore the new ethnic patterns.\textsuperscript{37}

Lantis, Steiner and Karinen, in a revision of their California text,\textsuperscript{38} recognized ethnic changes in the San Gabriel Valley, Inland Valley and San Jacinto Basin (through field work in 1980) but elected to await the final 1980 census data and publication of the 1982 County and City Data Book before making modifications relative to the more complex Los Angeles Coastal Plain (anticipated fourth edition, 1984).

Increasingly the southern half of the political city, south of Wilshire Boulevard, is becoming a Hispanic-black-east Asian city, surrounded sometimes by more affluent Anglo areas.\textsuperscript{39} Meanwhile the San Fernando Valley, traditionally Anglo and suburban, is becoming more of an ethnic hodgepodge.\textsuperscript{40} Ethnic transitions, revealed so well in the 1980 census, have only become recognizable in the past few years.

Desbarets recently examined the small Thai community in Los Angeles.\textsuperscript{41} She gives only limited space (pp. 314-318) to her title topic. Since there is no documentation of the Thais in Los Angeles, it is presumed (but not stated) that her information is based upon field research. Her article amplifies the richness of the topic (i.e., Asian residence in metropolitan Los Angeles) for additional investigations.

Allen, in his well documented article on the Filipinos in the United States,\textsuperscript{42} indicates that the largest concentration is found in Los Angeles, on the western side of the central district. With the knowledge acquired from this study it is hoped that the author is making a more detailed study of this group in Los Angeles.

Griswold Del Castillo's study of the beginnings of the Los Angeles barrio\textsuperscript{43} provides good background but the work scarcely touches on the Spanish-speaking
concentration in East Los Angeles. The author merely notes in "Conclusion" that it evolved after 1900. Essentially the book concerns the transition of the original pueblo site around the Plaza into a late 19th century barrio. One hopes that Del Castillo, a member of the Mexican-American Studies faculty at San Diego State University, will collaborate with one of Southern California's able geographers and update his investigation into the 1980's.

Conclusions

The literature concerning metropolitan Los Angeles has been much expanded over the past quarter century. Despite the plethora of recent books and the continuing publication of articles in popular magazines, a tremendous opportunity for geographic analysis remains within the Los Angeles conurbation. No other metropolitan center in United States has a comparable quantity of professional geographers available to investigate the local scene. This reviewer appreciates their past efforts and anticipates the published research of his many colleagues in the Los Angeles area, plus their students, many of whom do not yet realize they will be studying Los Angeles and environs. The primary needs seem to be in human (especially cultural and economic, including industrial) geography. It is anticipated that eventually there will be separate regional studies, too, of Long Beach and other cities, Orange County, the San Fernando Valley, the San Gabriel Valley, the Inland Valley and the San Jacinto Basin. It is hoped they will be written in a sufficiently folksy style to have broad appeal to lay Angelenos and others—we geographers tend to write too much for ourselves. Fortunately the geographers of metropolitan Los Angeles have a newspaper of the caliber of the Los Angeles Times to help alert them to the changing landscape.
NOTES


2. Bibliographies Instit. Ag., Leipzig. Segments in English translation were available at the U.C.L.A. geography department. I have yet to see J. Garth, A Geographical Study of the Los Angeles Region of Southern California, doctoral dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 1931.


9. On one occasion, after spending the day at the Los Angeles Harbor, I had a late afternoon appointment with the Harbormaster, a retired admiral. I was still relatively young, attired for field work. I had difficulty at first convincing him that I was a university professor.


17. Robert Cameron, Above Los Angeles, (San Francisco: Cameron, 1976).


27. Hopefully there will be a second edition. Steiner is urged to seek as collaborators some of the younger "experts" now active in metropolitan Los Angeles.


33. Editor Lockmann provided the reviewer with an article by Gloria Lothrop, a history professor at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, and a member of the Los Angeles 200 executive committee, published in the Los Angeles Times, Sept. 6, 1981, which lists 65 books about Los Angeles! Not all of these are new. Unfortunately the submission date for this article had already passed and it would have taken additional weeks to months, in
the California backlands of Chico, to obtain some of these works. I par-
ticularly would have liked to have seen the following works: Brian Berger, 
**Los Angeles 200 Years: Official Commemorative Book**, Beautiful America Pub-


40. Telephone conversation with Professor William Bowen of California State University, Northridge, April 6, 1981.


44. Besides those previously noted, professional geographers in metropolitan Los Angeles who have recently or are currently doing research on the conurbation include Warren Blan, David Hornbeck, Crane Miller, Barbara Weightman, Richard Outwater, Gary Peters, Clem Padick, Richard Raskoff, and Ron Lockmann. There are probably a number of others whose activities are unfamiliar to me.

This invited paper is his first article in this publication. The author acknowledges editorial review by his colleagues, professors Bruce Bechtol and Arthur Karinen and by his wife Helen.