

# THE KAVANAUGH REPORT

## Do You Recognize?



The Los Angeles Biltmore Hotel 1929



Angel's Flight 1940



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Surprisingly missing today is this city's early, innovative, private and municipal railway lines that rivaled New York City's mass system in its extensive mileage. In that early developmental history, Los Angeles rail lines "connected four counties with over 1,100 miles of track" The famous Angel's Flight Funicular, which opened again in 2010, was built in this era of development! Early visionaries were transforming this land into a center with planning and forethought that would span into the future.

Spring Street became "the Wall Street of the West" with corporate headquarters for Bank of America, Crocker National Bank, Farmers Bank and others forming the Spring Street Financial District. The original Los Angeles Stock Exchange was located here (until 1986) and a financial world busily grew.

## The Historic Core

The downtown of today is an energized zone of newly built residential lofts, a busy Staples Center and LA Live, a bustling and alive financial district and a skyline of exemplary buildings which accommodate visitors to our revitalized Downtown Los Angeles. But...this is today, and yesteryear was a very different picture.

The earliest settlers known in this area were the Tongva, who are a Native American people. It wasn't until 1769 that Father Juan Crespi, who was exploring sites for missions in California, found this area and decided that it would meet all of the necessary requisites for a significant settlement. The original pueblo lands were granted by Spain to the City of Los Angeles in 1781. Thus, downtown transformed into a European settlement and on September 7, 1781, the City of Los Angeles was officially founded at La Placita Olvera (now Olvera Street).

During the late 1800s and early 1900s street grids and infrastructures were built just south of the original settlement, making way for more development and creating The Historic Core and Civic Center areas. In 1866 a 5 acre area was dedicated as a public park (La Plaza Abaja) and in the 1880's City Engineer Fred Eaton officially laid it out. In 1910-11 John Parkinson redesigned it in a Beaux Arts style and in 1918, at the end of World War I, the original La Plaza Abaja was renamed Pershing Square in tribute to General Pershing. The area around the square is known as The Historic Core and includes the Bradbury Building and The Biltmore Hotel.

These early years were the golden years for downtown. Broadway had shopping by day and night life by dark. Hotels like the Alexandria (1906), The Rosslyn (1911) and the still beautiful and famous Biltmore (1923) were built to accommodate the burgeoning city. Innovative retailers opened their flagship stores... JW Robinson's, May Company, and Bullock's were among those to serve a wealthy residential population. High end jewelers like the original Laykin Diamond Company (Laykin et Cie) and Harry Winston & Co opened in the Alexandria Hotel.

The Historic Core of the City of Los Angeles was a west coast tour de force and we once again are enjoying the revival of its historical treasures!

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Broadway and 3rd, Original City Hall 1920



Union Station, 1939

*Leslie Kavanaugh:*  
*"People and Properties are my Profession and my Passion"*