

303

PUBLIC WORKS

MOTION

The 1870s saw the first immigration of Japanese people to Los Angeles and by the late 1920s the Japanese and Japanese-American population of Los Angeles had grown to 30,000, with a majority living in and around the area known today as Little Tokyo.

In 1924, Yasuasaburo Fujimoto and Katsugoro Kawase, working with local shop owners, secured enough funding to open a new movie theater to screen silent films: the Fuji-kan Theater. The theater held its grand opening on October 20, 1924 and was quoted in a Japanese-language newspaper at the time as being the "one and only entertainment venue" in Little Tokyo. The Fuji-kan Theater screened Japanese silent films and continued showing Japanese films through the 1920s and 1930s.

The forced removal and internment of the west coast Japanese and Japanese-American population into concentration camps began in 1942 following the signing of Executive Order 9066. Little Tokyo was emptied out as residents and business owners were forcibly relocated and the Fuji-kan Theater was closed.


During this period of World War II, many African-Americans began moving into the neighborhood, which became known as "Bronzeville." The Fuji-kan was reopened as the Linda Lea Theater in 1945 and screened films and hosted live shows that were catered to the predominantly African-American audience that now lived in the neighborhood.

Following the end of World War II, the displaced Japanese-American population began returning to the area and in 1955 the Fuji-kan was re-acquired by the Nichibei Kinema Company. The theater was reopened as The Kinema and operated until 1963 when it was acquired by the City for redevelopment and demolished the following year.


In recognition of this site's historical significance as a Japanese-owned and -operated movie theater in Little Tokyo, it is appropriate that the City erect permanent signage recognizing this important location in the City of Los Angeles.

I THEREFORE MOVE that that Department of Transportation be instructed to erect permanent ceremonial sign(s) at 324 E. 1st Street in recognition of the historical location of the Fuji-Kan Theater.

PRESENTED BY


YSABEL JURADO
Councilmember, 14th District

SECONDED BY



MAY 23 2015

majs

ORIGINAL