

# **BRUCE'S BEACH PARK**

**After being turned away from other coastal cities, Willa and Charles Bruce acquired property along the Strand in Manhattan Beach to create a beach resort for the Black community on February 19, 1912. By 1916, the resort known as "Bruce's Beach" was a thriving fixture for the Black community, with a restaurant, dancehall, changing rooms, and showers.**

**Soon after, several other Black families purchased property in and near the current location of the park. Major George Prioleau and Mrs. Ethel Prioleau, Elizabeth Patterson, Mary Sanders, Milton and Anna Johnson, John McCaskill and Elzia Irvin, and James and Lula Slaughter built homes on their property.**

**Unfortunately, not everyone in Manhattan Beach welcomed the Bruces' enterprise and its crowds of Black patrons in that era of Jim Crow and racial segregation.**

**The Bruces, their patrons, and the other Black property owners faced harassment, intimidation, and discrimination by some, including City Hall. These actions aimed to make Manhattan Beach inhospitable to Black residents and visitors.**

**Enough White residents ultimately pressured the City Council to exercise its power of eminent domain to acquire the land for use as a public park. As a result, the City condemned the properties of the Bruces, the Prioleaus, the Johnsons, Ms. Patterson, and Ms. Sanders. In addition, twenty-five White-owned properties that sat undeveloped among the Black-owned properties were also condemned.**

**The City's actions at the time were racially motivated and wrong. Today, the City acknowledges and condemns those past actions, and empathizes with those whose property was seized. We are not the Manhattan Beach of one hundred years ago. We reject racism, hate, intolerance, and exclusion.**

**This park is named in memory of Bruce's Beach and in recognition of Manhattan Beach's next one hundred years as a city of respect and inclusion.**