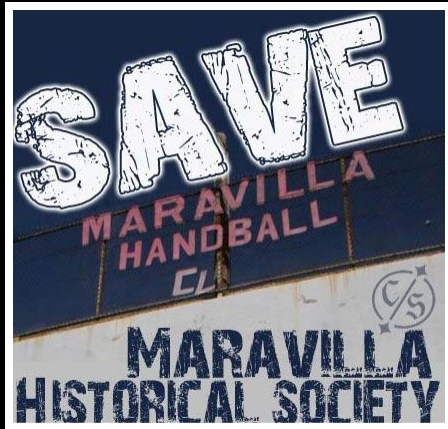
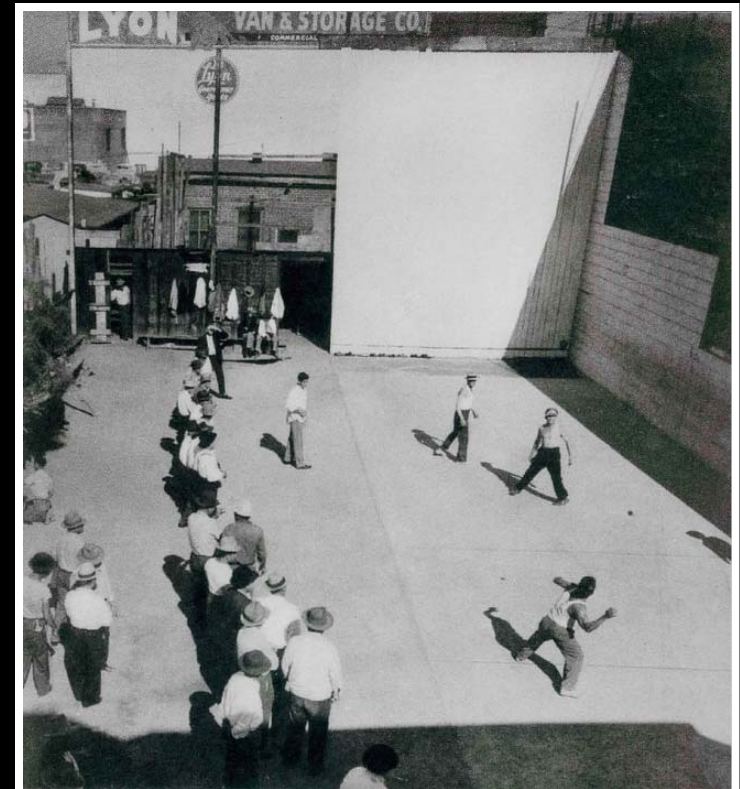


Maravilla Handball Court and El Centro Grocery California Register Nomination



LOS ANGELES
CONSERVANCY

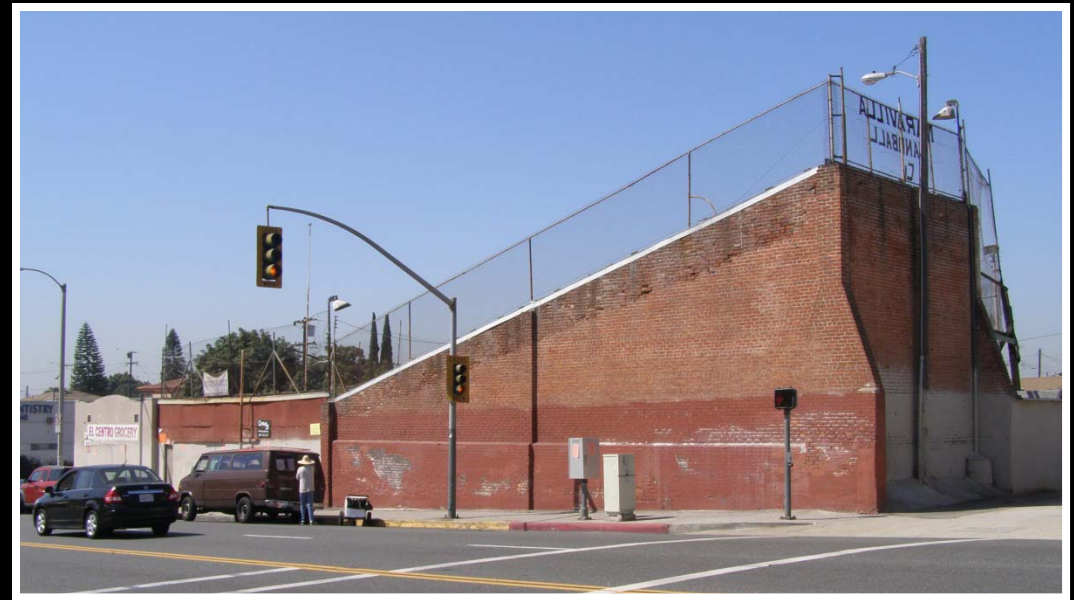
ASM Affiliates



Maravilla Handball Court and El Centro Grocery— three distinct components

- *Handball Court (1928)
- *El Centro Grocery (1946)
- *adjoining residence (1946)

Period of Significance:
1928 - 1989



California Register of Historical Resources Designation Criteria

Criteria for Designation

- Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history or the cultural heritage of California or the United States (Criterion 1).
- Associated with the lives of persons important to local, California or national history (Criterion 2).
- Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of construction or represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic values (Criterion 3).
- Has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California or the nation (Criterion 4).

California Register of Historical Resources

Subject property eligible under following designation criteria:

- (Criterion 1): Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history or the cultural heritage of California or the United States.

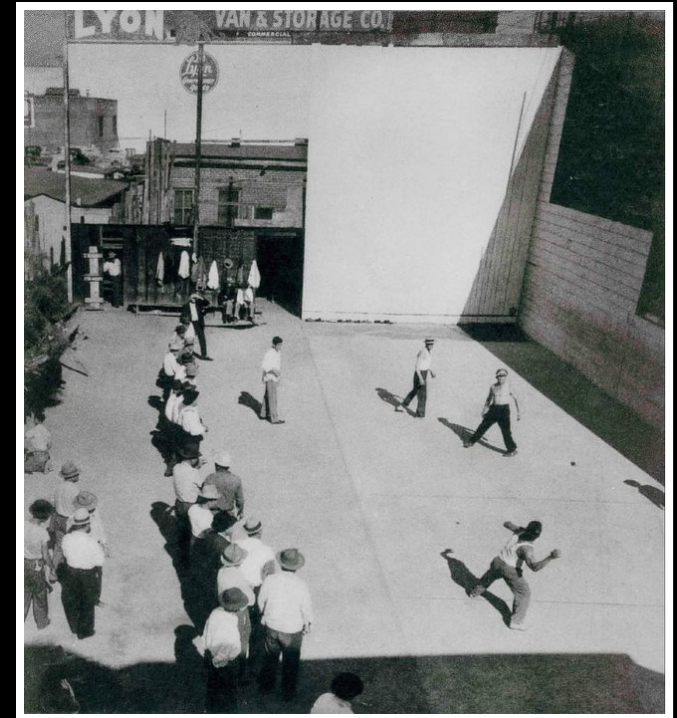
- * as an important social center for the multi-ethnic Maravilla community from 1928 through 1989. The store, handball court, and activities that took place there were a focal point for the community. The property exemplifies the cultural layers important to the history of East Los Angeles, including its association with the Japanese American Nishiyama family.

- (Criterion 3): Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of construction or represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic values.

- * as an excellent, rare, and well-preserved example of a vernacular recreational resource type—a handball court. It is the oldest known handball court in Los Angeles.

Maravilla Handball Court

- * Oldest known handball court in Los Angeles region, and a remarkable record of this vernacular recreational building type
- * History of the court illustrates the multi-cultural and multi-ethnic nature of the sport of handball
- * Court became a focal point for the Maravilla community



ForumJournal

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What's Next for Preservation?



Maravilla Handball Court as a cultural resource

History-laden court a 'beacon' for development in East L.A.

Tournament sparks interest among a new generation

The L.A. Conservancy is working with the Maravilla Historical Society, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, to preserve the oldest handball court in East Los Angeles.

Built brick by brick by East L.A. residents in 1923, the Maravilla Handball Court reflects the rich layers of history common in Los Angeles.

"It is my passion to save the legacy of my people, my community and our Chicano culture," says MHS president Amanda Perez, who grew up in the Maravilla neighborhood and has garnered broad support on this preservation issue. "We want this place to be a beacon for all to come and step into the past, present and future."

In December, the MHS organized the court's first coed youth handball tournament. Attended by more than 25 local boys and girls, the event helped introduce the sport and the historic court to a new generation of players.

Veteran players attended to mentor participants, including young girls eager to learn the sport.

The effort to preserve the Maravilla Handball Court is part of the National Trust for Historic Preservation's This Place Matters campaign, spearheaded locally by the conservancy, which identifies important historic sites that merit national attention. The National Trust for Historic Preservation profiled the Maravilla Handball Court on its Web site during Latino Heritage Month in September.

A photo of Michi and Tommy Nishiyama hangs inside the handball court.

From 1923 to 2007, the court was home to the men's-only Maravilla Handball Club. In the early 1940s, Michi and Tommy Nishiyama bought the land after Michi's

PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

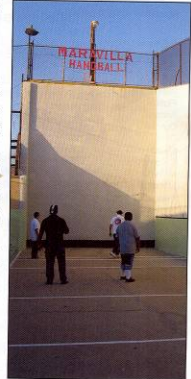
internment at a Japanese relocation camp. The family opened a local El Centro grocery store next to the court. The store and court together became an important historic and cultural landmark to East Los Angeles residents.

Maravilla was also the only court in East Los Angeles where players still played bola, basca, also known as Basque pelota. This court sport, played with one's hand or a racket, is commonly seen in Basque communities throughout Oregon and Idaho.

In 2006, Michi passed away. Tommy followed a year later, and the court and store were closed. The site was boarded up for a year, until Amanda Perez and the Maravilla Historical Society began efforts in 2008 to restore the court and store for community residents to appreciate, use and learn about an important part of their neighborhood's history.

Residents and handball veterans who remembered the legacy of the court took up the cause to save the building.

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Efforts are under way to preserve the Maravilla court, an integral part of Chicano culture in East Los Angeles.



'It is my passion to save the legacy of my people, my community and our Chicano culture.'
—Maravilla Historical Society president Amanda Perez

72 APRIL 2010

IN LOS ANGELES the relevance and future of historic preservation depends on recognizing the validity of multiple perspectives and associated places.

Nishiyama family played important role in the history of the property and community

- * Tommy and Michi Nishiyama, a Japanese American couple, operated El Cento Grocery from mid-1950s through 2006
- * Under their stewardship, the store and court evolved into a community focal point and gathering place
- * They sponsored community functions at the court, posted local announcements, and extended store credit to regular customers



El Centro Grocery

* Grocery market operated by Nishiyamas served as de facto social center for local community of Maravilla



Retains integrity of design



California Register of Historical Resources

Subject property eligible under following designation criteria:

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- * as an important social center for the multi-ethnic Maravilla community from 1928 through 1989. The store, handball court, and activities that took place there were a focal point for the community. The property exemplifies the cultural layers important to the history of East Los Angeles, including its association with the Japanese American Nishiyama family.

- (Criterion 3): Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of construction or represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic values.

- * as an excellent, rare, and well-preserved example of a vernacular recreational resource type—a handball court. It is the oldest known handball court in Los Angeles.

We urge the Commission to recommend designation of the subject property to the State Historical Resources Commission for listing in the California Register.

