

Communication from Public

Name: Kim Cooper & Richard Schave, Esotouric

Date Submitted: 10/02/2026 07:16 PM

Council File No: 24-0751

Comments for Public Posting: Attached is our Demand to Cure and Correct the City Council's September 4, 2026 action on Council File 24-0751, which directed the renaming of Pershing Square to "Biddy Mason Park." It is delivered on the 28th day after the action via email and placement in the Council File. The demand rests on two problems with the September 4 proceeding: 1. The vote was preceded by a false statement of fact. Councilmember Jurado told her colleagues that General John J. Pershing "never [set] foot into the city of L.A." He was received here on January 26, 1920, and rode in a parade on Broadway beside Mayor Meredith P. Snyder. The City Council named the square for him on November 12, 1918, one day after the Armistice. 2. Speakers were not afforded equal time. The meeting announced one minute per item. Four supporters of the renaming then spoke a combined 7 minutes 27 seconds without interruption, while opponents were held to the allotment and Courtland Jindra was cut off. Virtual comment closed with callers, including us, still in the queue. We ask the City to: - rescind the action - instruct Recreation and Parks to take no action pending a corrected record - preserve the meeting records - rehear the item under a single time allotment applied equally to every speaker Please respond in writing within 30 days. We hold Biddy Mason in high regard. This demand concerns the integrity of the process, not her legacy. Sincerely, Kim Cooper & Richard Schave Esotouric - Looking out for Los Angeles Pershing Square Restoration Society
<http://www.esotouric.com/historicpreservation>
<http://esotouric.substack.com>
<https://restorepershingssquare.blogspot.com/> Attachment: Cure_and_Correct_CF_24-0751_Pershing_Square.pdf (27 pages). It contains the letter and Exhibits D, E, G and K; the remaining exhibits are linked within.

Demand to Cure and Correct and Request for Rehearing

Council File 24-0751 (Biddy Mason Park / Pershing Square Renaming / 532 South Olive Street)

Agenda Item No. 5, Regular Council Meeting of September 4, 2026

October 2, 2026

Via email and filing in Council File 24-0751

Los Angeles City Council
c/o Office of the City Clerk, Council and Public Services Division
200 N. Spring Street, Room 395
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Council President Marqueece Harris-Dawson, Council District 8
(councilmember.harris-dawson@lacity.org)
President Pro Tempore Bob Blumenfield, Council District 3, presiding officer on September 4, 2026 (councilmember.blumenfield@lacity.org)
Councilmember Ysabel Jurado, Council District 14 (councilmember.jurado@lacity.org)
Office of the City Attorney (cityatty.help@lacity.org)
Deputy City Attorney Strefan Fauble, moderator of public comment on September 4, 2026 (strefan.fauble@lacity.org)

Dear Council President Harris-Dawson, President Pro Tempore Blumenfield, Councilmembers, City Clerk and City Attorney:

We write to demand that the Los Angeles City Council cure and correct its September 4, 2026 action on Council File 24-0751, in which the Council adopted the report of the Arts, Parks, Libraries, and Community Enrichment Committee and instructed the Department of Recreation and Parks and the Board of Recreation and Parks Commissioners to rename Pershing Square, 532 South Olive Street, to “Biddy Mason Park.” This demand is delivered on the 28th day after the action.

We hold Biddy Mason in high regard. Her courage, enterprise and philanthropy deserve accurate and meaningful commemoration, and the City already honors her at Biddy Mason Memorial Park on the site of her homestead, a few blocks from Pershing Square. This letter does not ask the City to silence anyone who supports the renaming. It asks the City to repair a legislative process that rested on a demonstrably false factual premise stated by the motion’s author on the Council floor, and on a public comment period in which speakers were not afforded equal time.

1. The record

- **June 21, 2024:** Motion (de León - Price) introduced proposing the renaming.
- **June 26, 2026:** Council File expired per Council policy (CF 05-0553).
- **July 1, 2026:** Councilmember Jurado introduced a new motion (seconded by Councilmember Hutt), referred to the Arts, Parks, Libraries, and Community Enrichment Committee.
- **August 25, 2026:** That committee approved the item.

- **August 28, 2026:** The City Clerk re-referred the item to the Arts, Parks, and City Facilities Committee pursuant to CF 26-2000.
- **September 1, 2026:** The City Clerk scheduled the item for Council on September 4, 2026, without consideration by the committee to which it had been re-referred three days earlier.
- **September 4, 2026:** Council adopted the item 11-0 (Harris-Dawson, Padilla, Park and Yaroslavsky absent), subject to reconsideration under Council Rule 51.
- **September 8, 2026:** Council action final.

All times below refer to the City Clerk's official recording, "Regular City Council - 9/4/26," LACityClerk YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/live/aEnW1ldTlqc>), and each links to that point in the recording. President Pro Tempore Bob Blumenfield presided; Council President Harris-Dawson was absent.

2. The Council acted on a materially false statement of fact

At 3:22:34 of the official recording (<https://www.youtube.com/live/aEnW1ldTlqc?t=12154>), immediately before asking her colleagues to vote, Councilmember Jurado stated that General John J. Pershing had "never [set] foot into the city of L.A."

That statement is false. General Pershing was received in Los Angeles on **January 26, 1920**, during his national tour as General of the Armies. He rode in a parade on Broadway beside Mayor Meredith P. Snyder, a personal friend of Biddy Mason who spoke at the pulpit when her memorial window was dedicated at the First AME Church (Exhibit K), and whose own fallen WWI soldier son Ross would lay in state in Pershing Square in 1923, after his body was repatriated from France (https://restorepershingssquare.blogspot.com/2016/11/in-honored-memory-ross-snyder-comes_10.html). General Pershing received a key to the city, toured the Goldwyn studio and spoke at Exposition Park, the Hotel Alexandria and a Merchants' and Manufacturers' Association banquet. The visit was covered at length in the *Los Angeles Times* (January 26 and 27, 1920) and the *Los Angeles Evening Express* (January 26, 1920), and is documented in the photograph collection of the Homestead Museum (object 2007.447.1.3). See Exhibit F.

This was not an innocent slip. The identical claim appeared in the 2024 version of this motion, and was publicly refuted at that time, with photographic evidence of General Pershing riding in an open car waving at Los Angeles crowds. The Council was on notice and the false claim was removed from Councilmember Jurado's new motion. Yet the falsehood was still repeated as partial rationale for removing the name of a World War I memorial, on Council floor, during Councilmember Jurado's call for her colleagues to vote in favor.

The name was conferred by the City Council itself on November 12, 1918, just one day after the Armistice, to honor General Pershing and the Americans who served under his command. This makes Pershing Square in Los Angeles quite likely the very first World War I memorial to be so designated in the United States of America. The original resolution, from the collections of the Los Angeles City Archives, is reproduced as Exhibit E. That resolution itself invited General Pershing to visit Los Angeles for the dedication. A legislative body may debate how a civic memorial is named. It should not undo a 108-year-old act of its own predecessors on the strength of a factual premise that is untrue.

3. Speakers were not afforded equal time

The Rules of the Los Angeles City Council (Chapter II, Public Notice, Attendance and Comment) permit the Presiding Officer to provide additional time to a member of the public only “as long as other speakers are afforded equal time.” That did not happen on September 4.

- **2:30:45** (<https://www.youtube.com/live/aEnW1ldTlqc?t=9045>): The public comment instructions announced one minute per item and listed the items open for comment as 7 through 13. Item 5 was not on that list. Comment on Item 5 was nonetheless taken, beginning with supporters of the renaming.
- **2:33:26 to 2:41:16** (<https://www.youtube.com/live/aEnW1ldTlqc?t=9206>): Four speakers in favor of the renaming, each affiliated with First AME Church or the Biddy Mason Charitable Foundation, spoke for 1:47 (Rev. Dr. Timothy E. Tyler), 2:00 (Jackie Broxton), 2:03 (Michael Ellison-Lewis) and 1:37 (Erma Bernard Gibson). Together they used 7 minutes 27 seconds against a four-minute allotment. When the first passed one minute he was invited to “finish your thought” (2:35:02). The next three were not interrupted at all.
- **2:45:24 to 3:00:38**: Speakers opposed to the renaming or critical of the process were held to the announced allotment. Courtland Jindra, who identified himself as former co-director of the California task force commemorating the First World War, spoke against the renaming beginning at 2:45:24 (<https://www.youtube.com/live/aEnW1ldTlqc?t=9924>) and was cut off at 2:46:39, after 1:15 that included the moderator confirming Item 5 had been reopened for him. Supporters’ clocks ran as long as 2:03 without interruption. An unidentified opponent spoke 0:52 on Item 5 and Tom Grode 1:11 for Item 5 and general comment combined.
- **3:03:53** (<https://www.youtube.com/live/aEnW1ldTlqc?t=11033>): Daniel Guss, calling in, warned the moderator on the record that the Council could lawfully reopen comment on Item 5 but could not let the clock run past a minute for supporters while cutting off opponents, which he identified as viewpoint discrimination. The Council proceeded without correcting the imbalance.
- **3:20:22** (<https://www.youtube.com/live/aEnW1ldTlqc?t=12022>): The Clerk announced that all time allotted for virtual public comment had been used. Virtual comment closed after six callers and about 18 minutes, while in-person comment had run about 27 minutes. We were in the telephone queue to comment on Item 5 in opposition and were never called.
- **3:25:25** (<https://www.youtube.com/live/aEnW1ldTlqc?t=12325>): Council voted 11-0.

The full speaker-by-speaker record is set out in Exhibit D.

The imbalance did not arise in a vacuum. Records produced by Council District 14 under the California Public Records Act show that on July 17, 2026, CD14 Senior Legislative Deputy Davida Koren emailed Mr. Ellison-Lewis noting that opposition letters had been filed and inviting his organization to submit supportive comment, with a direct link for doing so. The records show no comparable outreach to known opponents. Mr. Ellison-Lewis’s own comment on September 4 ran 2:03. See Exhibit G.

When a public body opens its meeting to hear the views of citizens, it may regulate time and decorum, but it may not treat speakers differently based on the content of what they say. *City of*

Madison Joint School Dist. No. 8 v. Wisconsin Employment Relations Comm’n, 429 U.S. 167, 175-76 (1976) (when a board sits in public meetings to conduct public business and hear the views of citizens, it may not discriminate between speakers on the basis of the content of their speech); see also U.S. Const., amend. I; Cal. Const., art. I, §§ 2-3. Granting supporters roughly double the announced allotment while holding opponents to it is unequal treatment by viewpoint, and it undermines both the fairness of the hearing and the integrity of the resulting vote.

4. The process disregarded the City’s own guidance on renaming

The Civic Memory Working Group’s *Past Due: Report and Recommendations* (April 2021), produced at public expense, concluded that “the naming of sites and commissioning of monuments should not fall to individual elected officials.” The Civil + Human Rights and Equity Department’s *Proposed Community Informed Framework and Process for Renaming Cesar Chavez Named Assets* (CF 26-0430), transmitted to Council on September 4, 2026, the same day as this vote, cautions against “establishing a predetermined replacement name before community engagement is completed.” See Exhibits H and I.

Here the replacement name was fixed by the motion itself, no community engagement process preceded the vote and the Council heard a public comment period weighted toward one side. The City’s own frameworks describe the opposite of what occurred.

The Council’s action instructs the Department of Recreation and Parks and its Board of Commissioners, who retain authority over the naming of City parks. No park sign has changed. The Council has a full and practical opportunity to correct its own record before that body acts.

5. Legal basis

This demand is made under the Ralph M. Brown Act, including Government Code sections 54954.3 and 54960; the First Amendment to the United States Constitution; Article I, sections 2 and 3 of the California Constitution; and the Rules of the Los Angeles City Council. To the extent any violation identified here falls within Government Code section 54960.1, this letter also constitutes the written demand required by section 54960.1, subdivisions (b) and (c), served within 30 days of the action.

6. Demand

We request that within 30 days of receipt of this letter the City:

- 1 **Rescind or vacate** the September 4, 2026 action on Council File 24-0751 and return the matter to committee.
- 2 **Instruct the Department of Recreation and Parks and the Board of Recreation and Parks Commissioners** to take no action on the renaming pending a corrected record and a new hearing, and transmit a copy of this letter to the Board.
- 3 **Correct the record** in writing in Council File 24-0751, acknowledging that General Pershing visited Los Angeles on January 26, 1920, and supplying an accurate account of the City Council’s November 12, 1918 dedication of Pershing Square as a World War I memorial.

- 4 **Rehear the item** at a properly noticed meeting at which the Presiding Officer announces a single time allotment, applies it equally to every speaker regardless of position and calls telephone commenters in the queue.
- 5 **Preserve all records** of the September 4, 2026 meeting and of Council File 24-0751, including video and audio, the speaker queue and telephone call log, any public comment timer data, speaker cards and any instructions to Clerk or Council staff concerning the handling of public comment on this item.
- 6 **Disclose the policy rationale** for the renaming, including any planned application for Proposition 4 Statewide Park Program funds and any communications with the DTLA Alliance or other outside parties concerning LA28 programming, sponsorship or rebranding of Pershing Square.
- 7 **Refer the matter to a community engagement process** consistent with *Past Due* and the Civil + Human Rights and Equity Department's renaming framework before any recommendation reaches the Board of Recreation and Parks Commissioners.

Please respond in writing, as Government Code section 54960.1, subdivision (c)(2) contemplates, stating the corrective action the City will take or its decision not to act. If the City contends that the September 4 public comment period complied with the Council Rules and with state and federal law, please identify the specific rule and facts on which it relies, including the basis for the unequal time afforded to speakers.

This letter is a request for prompt correction and preservation of the public record. It does not waive any right or remedy available to us or to any member of the public.

Sincerely,

Kim Cooper & Richard Schave
Esotouric - Looking out for Los Angeles
Pershing Square Restoration Society
<http://www.esotouric.com/historicpreservation>
<http://esotouric.substack.com>
<https://restorepershingsquare.blogspot.com/>

cc: Board of Recreation and Parks Commissioners (rap.commissioners@lacity.org)
Jimmy Kim, General Manager, Department of Recreation and Parks (jimmy.kim@lacity.org)
Council File 24-0751

Exhibits

- **A.** Council File 24-0751 record and Official Action of the Council (September 8, 2026): <https://cityclerk.lacity.org/lacityclerkconnect/index.cfm?fa=ccfi.viewrecord&cfnumber;=24-0751> and https://cityclerk.lacity.org/onlinedocs/2024/24-0751_CA_09-08-26.pdf
- **B.** Motion (Jurado - Hutt), July 1, 2026: https://cityclerk.lacity.org/onlinedocs/2024/24-0751_misc_07-01-26.pdf
- **C.** Speaker Request List, Item 5, September 4, 2026: https://cityclerk.lacity.org/onlinedocs/2024/24-0751_SC_09-04-2026.pdf
- **D.** Timestamp index of the official recording (attached).
- **E.** Los Angeles City Council Resolution 2218 (1918), renaming Central Square to Pershing Square, adopted November 12, 1918 by a vote of 9-0. Council minutes, pages 582-583, Los Angeles City Archives (attached, with transcription).
- **F.** General Pershing in Los Angeles, January 26, 1920: *Los Angeles Times*, January 26 and 27, 1920; *Los Angeles Evening Express*, January 26, 1920; Homestead Museum photograph 2007.447.1.3, reproduced at <https://homesteadmuseum.blog/2020/01/26/here-his-fame-is-secured-general-john-j-black-jack-pershing-tours-los-angeles-26-january-1920/>. Captain Ross Snyder lies in state in Pershing Square, 1923: https://restorepershingsquare.blogspot.com/2016/11/in-honored-memory-ross-snyder-comes_10.html
- **G.** Council District 14 records produced under the California Public Records Act, including emails of June 22 and July 17, 2026 (attached).
- **H.** Civic Memory Working Group, *Past Due: Report and Recommendations* (April 2021): <https://civicmemory.la/PDF/>
- **I.** Civil + Human Rights and Equity Department, *Proposed Community Informed Framework and Process for Renaming Cesar Chavez Named Assets*, CF 26-0430 (September 4, 2026): https://cityclerk.lacity.org/onlinedocs/2026/26-0430_rpt_chred_9-4-26.pdf.pdf
- **J.** Rules of the Los Angeles City Council, Chapter II (Public Notice, Attendance and Comment): https://clerk.lacity.org/sites/g/files/wph1491/files/2021-02/lacityp_026042.pdf
- **K.** “Memorial to Biddy Mason, Mayor Snyder in Pulpit,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 7, 1904 (attached).

Exhibit D: Timestamp index, official recording of September 4, 2026

Recording: “Regular City Council - 9/4/26,” LACityClerk YouTube channel, <https://www.youtube.com/live/aEnW1dTlqc>. Times are taken from the recording’s timestamped transcript. Each start time is the speaker’s first words; each end time is the moderator’s closing “thank you” or the speaker’s last words. Durations are accurate to within a few seconds.

Key moments

Time	Event	Link
2:30:45	Instructions: “one minute per item”; items open listed as 7 through 13	t=9045
2:35:02	First Item 5 supporter, past one minute, invited to “finish your thought”	t=9302
2:46:39	Courtland Jindra, opposing, cut off	t=9924
3:03:53	Daniel Guss warns of viewpoint discrimination	t=11033
3:20:22	Virtual public comment closed as out of time	t=12022
3:22:34	Councilmember Jurado: Pershing “never [set] foot into the city of L.A.”	t=12154
3:25:25	Council votes 11-0	t=12325

Item 5 speakers on the one-minute allotment

Speaker	Position	Start	End	Time	Link
Rev. Dr. Timothy E. Tyler, Pastor, First AME Church	Support	2:33:26	2:35:13	1:47	t=9206
Jackie Broxton, President and CEO, Bidy Mason Charitable Foundation	Support	2:35:22	2:37:22	2:00	t=9322
Michael Ellison-Lewis, Bidy Mason Charitable Foundation and First AME Church	Support	2:37:32	2:39:35	2:03	t=9452
Erma Bernard Gibson, First AME Church (identified herself as a City women’s commissioner)	Support	2:39:39	2:41:16	1:37	t=9579
Courtland Jindra, former co-director of the California World War I centennial task force (as stated)	Oppose	2:45:24	2:46:39	1:15 (cut off)	t=9924
Unidentified speaker (Item 5 portion)	Oppose	2:53:59	2:54:51	0:52	t=10439
Tom Grode (Item 5 and general combined)	Process concern	2:59:27	3:00:38	1:11	t=10767

Supporters combined: 7:27 against four one-minute allotments. Opponents and process critics combined: 3:18 against three.

Item 5 remarks within multi-item allotments

Speaker	Position	Start	End	Time	Link
Wayne Spindler (Item 5 portion)	Oppose	2:49:48	2:50:40	0:52	t=10188
Daniel Guss, by telephone (full turn: Items 1 and 5 plus general)	Process objection	3:03:27	3:07:11	3:44	t=11033

Exhibit E: Los Angeles City Council Resolution 2218 (1918), renaming Central Square to Pershing Square, November 12, 1918

Minutes of the Los Angeles City Council, Tuesday, November 12, 1918, pages 582-583. Collections of the Los Angeles City Archives. Transcription of the resolution follows; the original pages are reproduced after it.

Mr. Olsen presented the following resolution and moved its adoption: 2218 (1918)

WHEREAS, the world today is thrilled with the news that Peace has been re-established, and the arms of America and her Allies have been victorious in the world fight for Democracy; and

WHEREAS, The City of Los Angeles is filled with joy and thanksgiving over the successful outcome of the mightiest of all wars, and that justice and right have prevailed in the struggle; and

WHEREAS, the City Council of Los Angeles, filled with heartfelt gratitude to the Almighty God for His delivery of the world from the horrors of autocratic barbarism, and that war has given way to a just and victorious Peace; and

WHEREAS, the City Council of Los Angeles is deeply conscious of the magnificent part played by the Army and Navy of America in bringing about this world-liberating Peace, and desires to pay tribute to the men of America who aided our Allies in establishing Victory and Peace; and

WHEREAS, JOHN J. PERSHING, Commander-in-Chief of the American Expeditionary Force, is a man to whom was entrusted the duty of leading America's Army on the battlefield, and has performed that duty with notable skill and tact; and

WHEREAS, the City Council of Los Angeles believes that some concrete testimonial of the appreciation of the city of the distinguished services of General Pershing should be maintained for all time in a conspicuous place in Los Angeles;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: That in appreciation of the magnificent services of John J. Pershing and the American Expeditionary Force, which he commands, that the name of Central Square be changed to PERSHING SQUARE, and that a committee be appointed by the President of the Council to draft an ordinance and resolutions changing the name of CENTRAL SQUARE to PERSHING SQUARE, and to arrange for the proper dedication of the new name of this Square; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That the rank and file be requested to contribute to a fund for the erection of a suitable memorial for the splendid services rendered by General Pershing and the Army and Navy of the United States of America, which will be a lasting mark of appreciation of the people of Los Angeles; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That the above mentioned committee prepare plans for an adequate program to attend the dedication of the name of PERSHING SQUARE and that General John J. Pershing be invited to visit Los Angeles at the time of said dedication.

Which resolution being duly seconded by Mr. Cleaveland, and after remarks by Messrs. Cleaveland and Olsen, said resolution was adopted by the following vote:- Ayes, Cleaveland, Conaway, Conrad, Criswell, Mallard, Olsen, Reeves, True and President Farmer (9).

President Farmer stated that he would appoint the Committee later.

Tuesday, November 12th, 1918.

583

appreciation of the city of the distinguished services of General Pershing should be maintained for all time in a conspicuous place in Los Angeles;

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President Farmer stated that he would appoint the Committee later.

The City Auditor reported:- 2209 (1918)

I present herewith for your consideration and action the following claims for salary, supplies and other services against the City of Sawtelle:

Jas. C. Ten Eyck.	City Marshal.	salary & exp.	January	\$81.35
C. D. Ballard....	City Atty....	"	"	60.00
Wm. Benton....	Deputy Marshal.	services....	"	55.00
Harmon Cook....	Recorder....	"	"	30.00
A. R. Griffin..	St. Supt. ...	"	"	64.50
H. C. Head....	Treasurer....	salary....	"	45.00
Dr. A. B. Hromadka.	Health Officer	services..	"	5.00
J. L. Klier. ...	City Engineer	"	"	12.50
E. W. Mecum....	City Clerk.	salary	"	50.00
W. E. Clark....	Fire Duty	services	"	5.00
Will Connors	"	"	"	1.75
R. A. Evans	"	"	"	1.75
T. A. Evans	"	"	"	1.75
J. W. Laird	"	"	"	1.75
J. E. Leavers	"	"	"	1.75
J. M. Pruden	"	"	"	1.75
J. N. Smock	Fireman	"	"	10.00
E. T. Walker	Trustee	salary	"	5.00
Wm. Haas	"	"	"	5.00
A. T. Gledhill	"	"	"	5.00
John B. Graham	Custodian	"	"	30.00
Sawtelle Water Co.	Water Co.	water	Dec. &	23.00
Yeager Bros.	"	print'g sup.	"	17.63
Yeager Bros.	"	"	"	1.70
Montgomery & Mullen	Lumber Co.	lumber,cement	"	12.65
L. A. Directory Co.	"	directory	"	5.00
C.E.C. Evans & Sons	"	gasoline	"	1.40
G. L. Edinger	"	lumber	"	1.25
W. S. Brunton	"	coal	"	8.00
Harold Griffith	"	labor	"	37.19
Hollie Gramis	"	"	"	3.75
Wm. Farley	"	"	"	17.50
M. J. Brown	"	"	"	11.56
Sawtelle Livery Feed & Fuel Co.	"	"	"	14.50
J. W. Land	"	repairing	"	1.00
Ed. Rouse	"	File Saw	"	1.00
G. A. Rurd	"	Labor	"	30.00
G. E. Beebe	"	"	"	2.25
H. B. Patrick	"	Team	"	2.50
Ho. Cal. Edison Co.	"	Lighting	"	53.62
Crystal Springs Water Co.	"	Water	"	11.50
Southern Counties Gas Co.	"	Gas	"	2.40
The Pacific Tel. & Tel. Co.	"	Rental	"	1.80

These claims were all examined and approved by the City of Sawtelle Finance Committee, but warrants were never issued in payment of same. I have had my inspector, Mr. J. K. Hawk, investigate these claims and he finds that the services,material or supplies represented were duly received by the City of Sawtelle and the records of both Sawtelle and the City of Los Angeles show that same have not been paid. They accrued prior to annexation Jan. 23, 1918. The City Attorney has ruled with regard to several similar claims, the last being that of Vernon Myers, that it would be legal to pay such claims. I would, therefore, recommend that I be in-

Exhibit G: Council District 14 records produced under the California Public Records Act

Records produced by the Office of Councilmember Ysabel Jurado, Council District 14, in response to a California Public Records Act request concerning the renaming of Pershing Square, including the emails of June 22, 2026 and July 17, 2026 cited in this letter. Excerpt: the first 14 of the 35 pages produced, covering CD14's correspondence with renaming supporters, as received (watermarked). A private individual's personal telephone number left unredacted in the production has been blacked out by the submitters on the last page.

Subject: Re: Moving Forward Together: Renaming Pershing Square to Biddy Mason Square
From: Michael Ellison-Lewis <michael@michaelellisonlewis.com>
Date: 7/26/2026, 10:56 AM
To: Davida Koren <davida.koren@lacity.org>

Hi Davida —

Thank you for sharing this update and the information regarding the Council File. Please accept our apologies for the delayed response, as we wanted to ensure all the details of our upcoming events could be included. Thank you for your understanding.

As you know, First AME Church of Los Angeles and the Biddy Mason Charitable Foundation strongly support Councilmember Jurado's motion. To ensure our stance is properly reflected in the record, we will be collecting and submitting our formal letters of support soon. We will be gathering these letters over the weekend of August 14th through 16th during a series of powerful events honoring our founder's legacy.

Sharing these details to demonstrate that her impact is alive, well, and continuing to grow, we have an exceptional weekend planned:

Friday, August 14: First AME Church of Los Angeles and the Biddy Mason Charitable Foundation are hosting a special ceremony at the Evergreen Cemetery in Boyle Heights to honor her birthday.

Saturday, August 15 (Her actual birthday): In the morning, FAME is hosting a special community reception in advance of the landmark redevelopment of the historic home located on Hobart Boulevard, right around the corner from the church. This property—originally built for prominent entrepreneur Homer Laughlin, the visionary developer behind downtown Los Angeles's iconic Grand Central Market—is being proudly repositioned as the "**FAME Community House.**" That afternoon, the Biddy Mason Charitable Foundation will host our scholarship event, distributing over \$100,000 to former foster youth advancing through college. This event will be held at its home base in the historic West Adams area.

Sunday, August 16: We will hold a celebration service at 9:00 AM at First AME Church of Los Angeles honoring Biddy Mason, our founder.

We look forward to getting all of those compiled letters of support over to your team shortly after the weekend wraps up.

On a personal note, I want to send blessings and peace to the Councilmember and the entire team as you navigate the pressing issues in the district. It was deeply moving to hear the Councilmember so powerfully articulate the direct needs of the community, and it has been incredibly heartening to see how the team immediately sprung into action for the neighborhood following the Lineage warehouse fire in Boyle Heights. Will circle back with more details on the events soon.

MICHAEL ELLISON-LEWIS 

michael@michaelellisonlewis.com | e-mail
www.michaelellisonlewis.com | website

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On Jul 17, 2026, at 3:01 PM, Davida Koren <davida.koren@lacity.org> wrote:

Hi Michael,

I hope this week has been treating you well! I wanted to update you that Councilmember Jurado introduced the renaming Motion on July 1st, which can be found at the following link: <https://cityclerk.lacity.org/lacityclerkconnect/index.cfm?fa=ccfi.viewrecord&cfnumber=24-0751>. I have attached the Motion to this email as well.

On the Council File, you will see that some letters of opposition have been uploaded to the public comment section. To ensure your organization's opinion is also reflected in the record, you all are invited to submit public comment by clicking this button on the Council File:

<Screenshot 2026-07-17 at 2.55.29 PM.png>

Finally, the next steps are to have this item scheduled in Committee and then scheduled in Council. I will be sure to keep you updated once the item has been scheduled. Please let me know if there are any elements I can clarify. Thank you!

Best,

Davida Koren (she/her)

Senior Legislative Deputy

Office of Councilmember Ysabel Jurado | Council District 14



[Instagram](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Website](#)

On Mon, Jun 22, 2026 at 3:15 PM Michael Ellison-Lewis <michael@michaelellisonlewis.com> wrote:

Re: Moving Forward Together: Renaming Pershing Square to Biddy Mason Square

Hi Davida,

Thank you for this update. We are incredibly enthusiastic about Councilmember Jurado's plan to introduce this Motion.

The momentum from the recent Juneteenth Celebration that Councilmember Jurado cosponsored at Biddy Mason Park was palpable. It was wonderful meeting the Councilmember and her Deputy Adam Acosta there. It was an honor to introduce them to Rev. Dr. Timothy Tyler, Pastor of the preeminent First AME Church of Los Angeles, and Jackie Broxton, President and CEO of the Biddy Mason Charitable Foundation.

We are certain that Councilmember Jurado will have the unanimous support of her fellow Council members for this historic initiative. All is well on our end, and having a clear timeline will allow me to communicate directly with several other key leaders to ensure they know the movement is pressing forward strongly.

We are simply interested in learning what the process and timeline look like. A brief step-by-step overview of the timeline, including when it will go before the parks and arts committee? At that same time, please also provide us with a copy of the Motion when it is ready (for our archives at the church and foundation.)

Please kindly continue to keep me updated as these details solidify at every turning point.

My complete contact information is included below.

Thank you and have a great week serving the people of Los Angeles.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL ELLISON-LEWIS 



michael@michaelellisonlewis.com | e-mail

www.michaelellisonlewis.com | website

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On Jun 22, 2026, at 1:14 PM, Davida Koren <davida.koren@lacity.org> wrote:

Hi Michael,

I hope this email finds you well! I am reaching out to follow up on our earlier messages regarding the renaming of Pershing Square to Biddy Mason Square. Councilmember Jurado plans to introduce a Motion to initiate the renaming. I will be sure to follow up with you once that Motion is introduced in Council, as well as update you as the Motion moves forward in the Legislative process. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Best,

Davida Koren (she/her)

Senior Legislative Deputy

Office of Councilmember Ysabel Jurado | Council District 14



[Instagram](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Website](#)

On Tue, May 12, 2026 at 12:54 PM Michael Ellison-Lewis <michael@michaelellisonlewis.com> wrote:

Hi Davida,

Great to be connected. I appreciate you driving the effort to move the Biddy Mason Park naming forward.

I'll be listening out for your update on the next steps. All is well.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL ELLISON-LEWIS 



michael@michaelellisonlewis.com | e-mail

www.michaelellisonlewis.com | website

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On May 12, 2026, at 11:58 AM, Davida Koren <davida.koren@lacity.org> wrote:

Hi Michael,

Wonderful to be connected! We will work internally to move the Biddy Mason Park at Pershing Square naming forward. And I will be sure to follow up with you shortly with more information on next steps. Thank you.

Best,

Davida Koren (she/her)

Senior Legislative Deputy

Office of Councilmember Ysabel Jurado | Council District 14



[Instagram](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Website](#)

On Mon, May 11, 2026 at 2:31 PM Michael Ellison-Lewis
<michael@michaellisonlewis.com> wrote:

Hi Milagros,

Thanks for the introduction.

Hi Davida, it's nice to meet you. Given that the final opportunity to hear this item before its June 21 expiration is the June 9 committee date, I'd appreciate your guidance on the current timeline.

Could you let me know if we are on track for one of the upcoming May or June dates, and if there is any additional information needed from our end to help move this forward?

Sincerely,

MICHAEL ELLISON-LEWIS 



michael@michaelellisonlewis.com | e-mail

www.michaelellisonlewis.com | website

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On May 11, 2026, at 1:42 PM, Milagros Montalvo
<milagros.montalvo@lacity.org> wrote:

Hi Michael,

I am looping in our Senior Legislative Deputy [@Davida Koren](#) who can best advise on your question regarding Council File 24-0751.

Best,
Milagros

On Mon, May 11, 2026 at 1:34 PM Michael Ellison-Lewis
<michael@michaelellisonlewis.com> wrote:

May 11, 2026

Office of the Honorable Ysabel Jurado

Councilmember, Fourteenth District

Dear Milagros,

I left a message for you today with Princeton on the Councilmember's team, but I am following up via email to ensure this remains a priority.

We have not yet received a response regarding **Council File 24-0751** (Biddy Mason Park). With the file's expiration date of **June 21, 2026** fast approaching, we are concerned about the timeline for getting this scheduled.

As a reminder, the remaining committee dates before the deadline are:

- **Tuesday, May 12, 2026**
- **Tuesday, May 26, 2026**
- **Tuesday, June 9, 2026** (Final opportunity before expiration)

Could you please advise on the hearing timeline and confirm the best point of contact—whether yourself, Lauren Hodges, or **Armando Bencomo**—to coordinate the next legislative steps?

We look forward to honoring Biddy Mason's legacy alongside Councilmember Jurado.

With strength and gratitude,

MICHAEL ELLISON-LEWIS 



michael@michaelellisonlewis.com | e-mail

www.michaelellisonlewis.com | website

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communication and all copies thereof without reading or saving them in any manner.

On Feb 4, 2026, at 10:14 AM, Michael Ellison-Lewis
<michael@michaellisonlewis.com> wrote:

Hi Milagros,

Thank you for your thoughtful note. While we will miss the Councilmember's presence this Sunday at First AME Church of Los Angeles for the service, the brunch, and the historic unveiling of the National Park Service Underground Railroad signage, we certainly understand the weight of her current commitments to the city.

Please share with Councilmember Jurado that the Biddy Mason Charitable Foundation, under the leadership of our President and CEO Jackie Broxton, remains a steadfast ally in her district. Our work with foster and transition-aged youth is fueled by a mission of restoration—the same mission we look forward to bringing to life alongside her as we push toward the completion of Biddy Mason Park at Pershing Square.

As she navigates the challenges of leadership, we offer the words of Biddy Mason herself to keep her spirit steady and her vision clear:

"If you hold your hand closed, nothing good can come in. The open hand is blessed, for it gives in abundance, even as it receives."

We encourage her to continue facing the issues of concern in our community with fierce determination and an open hand. In that spirit of unity, we are eager to hear the timeline for bringing the renaming of the park before the necessary council committees. We want to unite our support around the Councilmember as she champions this effort to bring it to full fruition.

We note with urgency that Council File 24-0751 is currently set to expire on June 21, 2026. Furthermore, we note that significant state grant funding appears to be available through the Statewide Park Program (SPP) Round 5 in Summer/Fall 2026. This cycle has \$188.5 million allocated from Proposition 4, which could be vital in the event additional funding is needed to ensure the park's success.

Please keep us in the loop on the next steps and advise if Lauren Hodgins or another member of the team is the best point person to coordinate with regarding these legislative timelines. We look forward to meeting with the Councilmember soon to ensure Biddy Mason's legacy is fully realized in the heart of her district.

All the best to the entire team that powers the mission.
With strength and gratitude,
Sincerely,

MICHAEL ELLISON-LEWIS 
Member of the Board of Directors
The Biddy Mason Charitable Foundation


michael@michaellisonlewis.com | e-mail
www.michaellisonlewis.com | website
X: @ellisonlewis

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On Feb 3, 2026, at 9:55 PM, Milagros Montalvo
<milagros.montalvo@lacity.org> wrote:

Hi Michael,

Hope you are having a great week. Thank you for the invitation! The Councilmember sends her regrets that she won't be able to attend the events this Sunday due to a conflicting engagement.

We wish you a successful service and brunch celebration this upcoming weekend!

Best,

Milagros

On Fri, Jan 30, 2026 at 3:05 PM Michael Ellison-Lewis
<michael@michaellisonlewis.com> wrote:

Dear **Councilmember Ysabel Jurado**:

History is not merely a record of the past; it is the foundation upon which we build our future. In your district, that ground is sanctified by the story of Biddy Mason—the formerly enslaved pioneer who became a healer, a property magnate, and the "Grandmother of Los Angeles."

The **Biddy Mason Charitable Foundation** cordially invites you to join our community for a powerful day of **Worship and Fellowship** on **Sunday, February 8, 2026**. Your presence as our Councilmember would be a profound statement of solidarity as we celebrate a woman whose life work was rooted in the very streets you now represent.

The Morning's Itinerary:

- **9:00 AM | Worship Service**
First AME Church | 2270 S. Harvard Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90018
- **Followed by | Celebratory Brunch & Historic Unveiling**
[Biddy Mason Charitable Foundation](#) | 2193 W. 25th St., Los Angeles, CA 90018

Our Place in the Heart of District 14

As you know, the City of Los Angeles has honored Biddy Mason's impact by designating Pershing Square Park as Biddy Mason Park. This anchors her legacy in the heart of your district, transforming a public space into a permanent reclamation of Black history in Los Angeles.

During the brunch, we will host the **Official Community Unveiling** of the signage designating the Foundation as part of the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom. **As we unveil this national distinction**, we do so knowing that Biddy Mason's journey—from a wagon train in the Santa Monica Mountains to becoming a pillar of District 14—is a story of ultimate triumph.

Local news media will be on-site to document this historic occasion. Having you stand with us as we receive this national recognition would signify the shared commitment between your office and the Foundation to honor our pioneers and the sites where freedom was won.

Please RSVP to info@biddymason.com. Our President and CEO, **Jackie Broxton**, is copied on this message and is available for coordination at [REDACTED]

In Faith and Community,

MICHAEL ELLISON-LEWIS 

Member of the Board of Directors

Biddy Mason Charitable Foundation

[REDACTED]

michael@michaelellisonlewis.com | e-mail

www.michaelellisonlewis.com | website

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Milagros Montalvo (She/They)

Scheduling and Operations Director

LGBTQ+ Liaison

Office of Councilmember Ysabel Jurado | Council District 14



[Instagram](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Website](#)

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Milagros Montalvo (She/They)

Scheduling and Operations Director

LGBTQ+ Liaison

Office of Councilmember Ysabel Jurado | Council District 14



[Instagram](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Website](#)

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The Biddy Mason Charitable Foundation cordially invites you to a day of

WORSHIP *and* FELLOWSHIP



SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2026 • 9 A.M.

First AME Church was founded by Biddy Mason and eight other formerly enslaved people. Together, they established what has become the oldest African American congregation in Los Angeles. In honor of their impact, please join us for the 9 a.m. service at First AME Church, followed by a celebratory brunch at the Biddy Mason Charitable Foundation.

SERVICE • 2270 S. Harvard Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90018

BRUNCH • 2193 W. 25th St., Los Angeles, CA 90018

r.s.v.p.

• BY FEBRUARY 1, 2026 TO
INFO@BIDDYMASON.COM

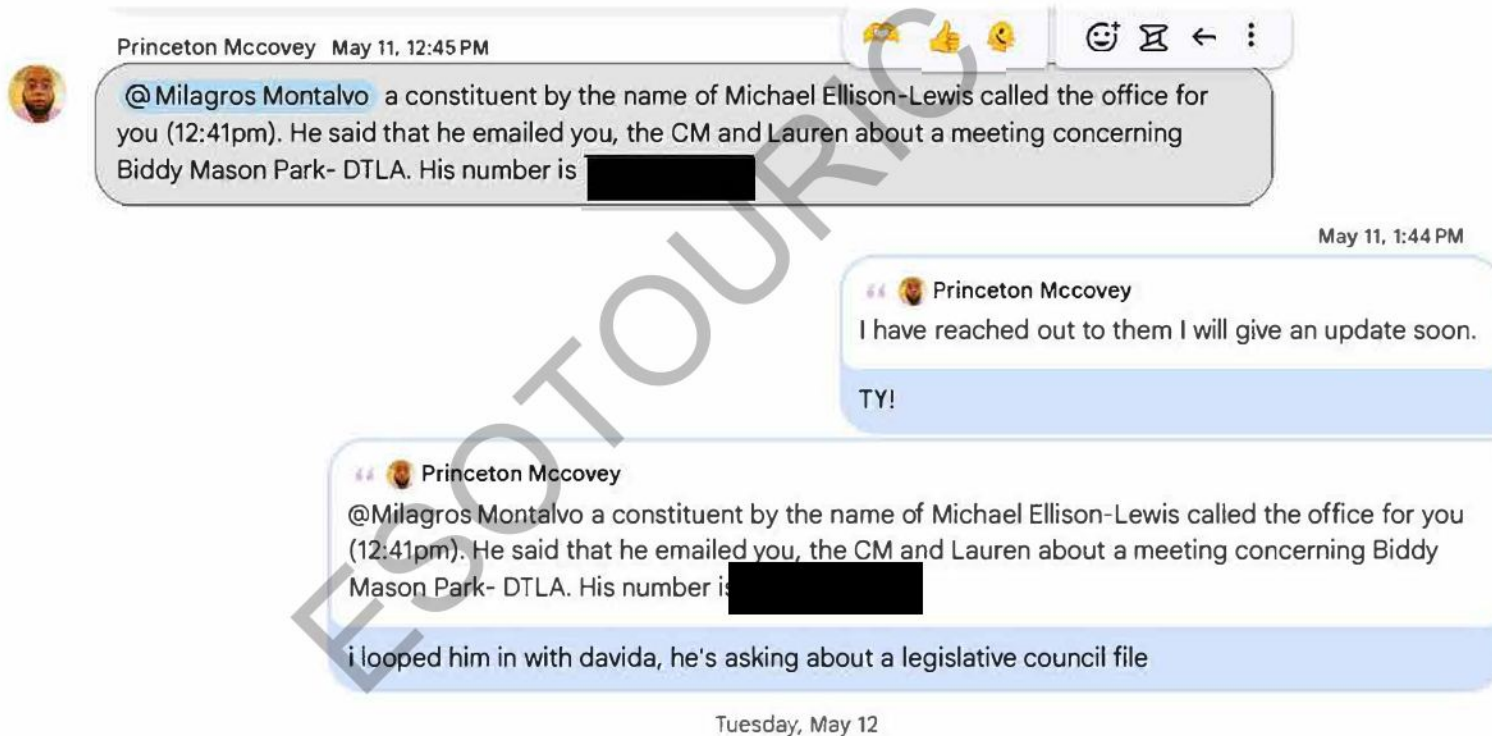


Exhibit K: "Memorial to Biddy Mason, Mayor Snyder in Pulpit," *Los Angeles Times*, March 7, 1904 (1 of 2)

MONDAY, MARCH 7, 1904. Los. An

MEMORIAL TO BIDDY MASON, MAYOR SNYDER IN PULPIT.

HIS HONOR, Mayor Snyder, yesterday afternoon proved his ability as a pulpiteer, and in his efforts at the memorial window dedication at the new First African M. E. Church, he called forth loud acclaims of "Amen!" "Yes, that's so, blass de Lord!" "Yes, indeed, Brother Mayor." The Mayor's address was the feature of the affair. It was a memorial to Mrs. Biddy Mason, an old pioneer of Los Angeles, conceded to have been the richest colored woman west of the Mississippi Valley.

This woman left a record, not alone of remarkable business acumen, considering her opportunities, but also as a great-hearted, charitable Christian, whose good works and lovable character are cherished in the hearts of many pioneers. The memorial window was placed in the new church by her daughter, Mrs. W. H. Washington of Toberman street.

Added to this event was the unveiling of the window to the "Good Shepherd," a contribution of the general congregation which was accomplished with dramatic effect.

The beautiful new church, which would be a credit to any denomination in Los Angeles, was well filled with friends of the Washington family and many who had known Biddy Mason. The choir rendered music, and the invocation led off with a send-off for the Mayor—sort of advance announcement, as it were—in which the petitioner said: "We bless Thee, dear Lord, for a Mayor who don't feel above the citizens of this town and who is willing to come down among us and to speak well of us." [Hearty amens from the brethren.]

Attorney Charles P. Lee, a colored man who was recently admitted to the bar here, presided, and after briefly announcing the purport of this memorial meeting he gracefully introduced Mayor Snyder.

With all the ease of one used to speaking from the pulpit Mr. Snyder at once put his hearers in a pleasant frame of mind by referring to his connection with the Methodist denomination.

WHAT THE MAYOR SAID.

"I am not a stranger in a Methodist

bright as the evening star. When we are called on to go hence and the tomb awaits these mortal bodies, then may our brothers and sisters say of us, as they say of her, 'He was a good man; she was a good woman.'"

Mayor Snyder closed his address with hearty congratulations to the colored people upon acquiring such a church property, and expressing the wish that its influence for good citizenship and for Christian culture would constantly increase.

Rev. C. H. Anderson, pastor of the Second Baptist Church, paid a tender tribute to the life and influence of

which stood on a draped easel on the platform, and then to the memorial window, and although his words were unheard, the actions of the man were eloquence itself.

The memorial window was formally presented to the church by Mr. Lee and was accepted by the pastor, Rev. J. E. Edwards, who also spoke of the main memorial window to the Good Shepherd, and as he referred to it the cloth which had hidden its beauty was dropped, and the picture of the shepherd and the lambs was presented. The congregation with one accord began the recitation of the shepherd





First African Methodist Church—Mayor Snyder in the pulpit—Father Peter Green below.

church," said the Mayor. "I was brought up in the Methodist church and have always attended one. If I have any good in me today the credit is due to the Methodist Church and the instructions I received under its teachings in my youth.

"I am very glad of this opportunity to take part in this service. I am not a minister, but in this beautiful new temple, just being opened, I want to say a word, and that is, that when a church is once dedicated to the worship of Almighty God, it should never be used for any other purpose. [Amens from all parts of the house.]

"I believe it is fitting for me to be here today, as the Mayor of this city, to encourage you in your great work, and to pay my tribute to the good woman whose memory you honor today.

"The work being done by this institution is far-reaching, immeasurable. We have to look to the church for the sustaining power of the best citizenship. It was through the influence of religion that the very liberty we enjoy today was brought about, through the action of the Pilgrim Fathers, and it was through the activity of the church that the sentiment for equal rights was sustained in America.

"I sometimes feel that the church of Christ does not feel its power. If it is directed wholly for the benefit of humanity, and teaches Christ's love for man, it will be invincible, and must succeed; but it must not trifle with its duty.

"Be faithful to this good cause; if a question arises as to right or wrong in your personal conduct, do not act until your conscience is fully satisfied. When you have a clear conscience you may be satisfied that the Lord is not displeased with what you have done.

"Nearly twenty-three years ago it was my privilege to first meet Biddy Mason, or 'Aunt Biddy,' as we all loved to call her. I had come from the home of the colored people, and for some purpose my employer sent me to see Aunt Biddy Mason. The kindly, cheerful greeting of this good soul made me feel almost that I was again at my old home.

"She was a good woman, and you are fully justified in today honoring her memory with this memorial window. There are many lessons to be learned from the life of this good woman. One of these is the important one that we must strive against selfishness, the monster which you must fight at every point.

"Her life was an effort for others. Like Biddy Mason, let us so order our conduct that people in contact with us may not forget us, and that our memories and deeds may shine forth as

Biddy Mason, and stated that she was the first contributor to the building of the first colored Methodist church here years ago, having donated \$500 to that cause.

Attorney John W. Kemp, who was in charge of the legal affairs of the Biddy Mason estate, also spoke in glowing terms of the character of this woman, whose influence seems to have touched so many lives, and dwelt upon the nobility of her character.

Mr. Kemp said that the career of Biddy Mason was in many respects remarkable; and that, born a slave, and hampered with many restrictions, she had succeeded in amassing a property that was valued at more than \$100,000. "Yet it is not for this property," but her sweet, helpful Christian character that Biddy Mason is remembered," declared Mr. Kemp. "Pioneers all praise her life of good deeds, raising the fallen and helping her race by practical aid and sterling example. Her life has been an inspiration to many, and it is meet that it be commemorated by this memorial window."

VENERABLE CHURCH-BUILDER.

Then came one of the picturesque features of the day. Chairman Lee introduced to the congregation a white-haired patriarch, Rev. Peter Green, who stands to the colored Methodists of California in somewhat the same relation that the venerable Moses of old did to the children of Israel. Father Green has been a presiding elder in the church as far back as anyone can remember. His religion is of that practical kind that makes use of both the heart and the hands. In the early days he began to labor with the scattered colored people of California, and had as his parish the whole coast from San Diego to Washington. With his own hands Father Green built churches at Marysville, Stockton, Red Bluff, and Virginia City; and he was the moving spirit in establishing the work in Los Angeles. When the Methodists were ready to dedicate the new church their thoughts reverted to this venerable father in Israel, who had started the work, and the kindly idea was carried out of sending for him to come down from Martinez, Contra Costa county, to participate with them in the enjoyment of the beautiful new structure.

Bent with the weight of years, and with a voice so weakened that those in the rear of the auditorium could only now and then catch a word, the old man detailed the struggles of early days, and the love of Biddy Mason for the church of Christ, not only her own denomination, but the great body of those who served the Lord. With tears streaming down his face, he pointed

first to the picture of the woman, psalm, with beautiful effect, the words rolling out with volume: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want," etc., and the organ played softly during the recitation. It was a fitting climax to a unique service.

THE MASON ESTATE.

Among the properties of the Biddy Mason estate are the business houses at Nos. 331, 333 and 335 South Spring street, two-story brick blocks erected by Mrs. Mason in the early '80s. She left her property to her two daughters, Mrs. Ellen Huddleston and Mrs. Harriet Washington.

Biddy Mason was born a slave and came to California in 1851, with twenty other slaves. Her master feared a sentiment of the Pacific Coast, and endeavored to take his slaves back to Georgia with him.

Through the continued efforts of Robert Owen, Sr., the pitiable cases of these slaves was carried through all the courts, and finally Judge Hayes granted them their freedom.

A Guaranteed Cure for Piles.

Itching, Blind, Bleeding or Protruding Piles. Your druggist will refund money if PIAZO OINTMENT fails to cure you in 6 to 14 days. 50c.

A Summer Route for Winter Travel.

East via Sunset-Piedmont Air Line. Shortest, lowest altitudes, through the old South; Los Angeles to Washington, D. C., without change; parlor, observation, drawing-room and dining cars; meals a la carte. Ask Southern Pacific agents, or Grove Ketchum, T.P.A., 297 W. Third street, Los Angeles.

Reads Like a Fairy Tale.

We make it easy, only charge \$25 down; we pay that ourselves, then give it to you. Cut out coupon today's Times, and hurry. Ten to 40 per cent. discount. Bartlett Music Co., 223-225 South Broadway.

WHICH IS WHAT?

Here's a Point That Brings Calamity to All Thinkers.

When a man steps in his walk and asks himself "which is what?" it is about time he was looking to himself for the cause. When a man loses faith in himself there is one thing on earth that will bring it back, that is Mormon Bishop's BILLS. The little vitalizers and cleansers, Mormon Bishop's BILLS, cure insomnia; they cure constipation; they brush the mud from your failing memory, and they make you strong and restore you to vigorous pathway. They are sold at 50c per box, six boxes for \$2.50. Address OFF A Vaughn Drug Co., 223 S. Spring street.

Bartlett at it Again.

Renewal of our great coupon premium sale. Get each of our ten great leaders at from 5 to 40 per cent. discount. Clip a coupon from paper today, good for first \$25 payment on any piano for next few days. Bartlett Music Co., 223-225 South Broadway.