



LITTLE TOKYO Historic District is one of seven National Historic Landmarks in the City of Los Angeles. Little Tokyo is a historic ethnic neighborhood in downtown Los Angeles whose history began in 1885 when a Japanese seaman, Hamanosuke Shigeta, opened a restaurant on First Street. By 1900, several more businesses had been established, and the first-generation Japanese American (issei) community was booming. During this period, Little Tokyo's population expanded as issei came to Los Angeles searching for jobs and housing. Little Tokyo was one of the first and largest Japanese American urban communities to form in the United States. During World War II, Japanese Americans living in Little Tokyo were incarcerated into relocation camps, decimating the community. After the war, many Japanese Americans returned to a geographically smaller Little Tokyo. By the 1960s, the physical environment and the population density in and around Little Tokyo had declined drastically from what it had been in the 1920s and 1930s as a result of the rapid post-war dispersal of Japanese Americans. The later post-war years began urban renewal and opened the door to Japanese corporate capital. Although the area has gone through many changes over the past 120 years, it continues to serve as a center and symbol for the Japanese American community and history.