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*One Vision, One Metropolis, One Village:
The Impact and Legacy of the 1932 Los Angeles Athletic City*

ABSTRACT: *The 1932 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles, California, were the first major international sports competition to feature an Athletic Village – an attempt to bring athletes of multiple nationalities, ethnicities, and ideologies together in one centralized location. Using documents from the International Olympic Committee (I.O.C.), newspaper articles, oral histories, and other 1932 ephemera, this article argues that the 1932 Los Angeles Olympic Village was successful and shaped the future of the modern Olympic experience.*

KEYWORDS: *modern history; U.S.; Los Angeles; 1932 Summer Olympics; Athletic Village; International Olympic Committee (I.O.C.); Pierre de Coubertin; William M. Garland; newspapers; travel guides*

Introduction

In 1928, the international athletic community presented the city of Los Angeles with a challenge: “Can you bring men of multiple nationalities, ethnicities, and ideologies together for a two-week global sporting event and house them peacefully in one centralized location – an ‘Athletic City’?” By 1932, Los Angeles was able to answer this challenge with a resounding “Yes, we can!” The Los Angeles Summer Olympics demonstrated to the world that the implementation of an Olympic Village – the first of its kind – had the potential to encourage young men to set aside long-held animosities. After the Games, the *Los Angeles Times* reminded its readers how critics had assessed the endeavor’s chances for success:

“Never,” was the general opinion. “You can’t pen men of all nations together, men from countries, perhaps, who believe they have age-old hatreds; young men whose races, beliefs, and ideals conflict.” But Los Angeles did it. They were not only penned, these men from all over the world, they were offered a beautiful home that became more than a home to them.¹

This article considers the history of accommodations at the Olympics before the International Olympic Committee (I.O.C.) awarded Los Angeles the 1932 Summer Games; the respective transformation and self-marketing of Los Angeles; and the creation of the Olympic Village. It argues that the 1932 Los Angeles Olympic Village was successful and shaped the future of the modern Olympic experience.

The source material for this article includes the I.O.C.’s own documentation on housing athletes from the first half of the twentieth century to the present;² its core

¹ Terrel Delapp, “End of Olympic Village Near: Athletes’ City to be Completely Erased From Hillside,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 14, 1932.

² Centre d’Études Olympiques, *Olympic Summer Games Villages from Paris 1924 to Rio 2016* (Lausanne: International Olympic Committee, 2017), [online](#), accessed June 15, 2022; Centre d’Études Olympiques, *Olympic Winter Games Villages from Oslo 1952 to Pyeong Chang 2018* (Lausanne: International Olympic Committee, 2018), [online](#), accessed June 15, 2022.

text – the Olympic Charter which states the goals of the Olympic Games;³ and the official report of the Xth Olympiad Committee on the 1932 Games in Los Angeles.⁴ The event received extensive media and publicity coverage; thus, articles from the *Los Angeles Times*, as well as local periodicals, promotions, and historical photographs from the University Archives and Special Collections at California State University, Fullerton,⁵ provide additional evidence.

The history of the Olympic Village has attracted some scholarly attention. Xia Gao's and Te Bu's 2011 article offers an overall assessment of this feature,⁶ arguing that the Olympic Village was much closer to the vision of Baron Pierre de Coubertin (1863-1937), the founding father of the modern Olympics, than has previously been thought. The city of Los Angeles and its use of the Olympics to pull itself out of an economic slump is the topic of Barry Siegel's recent monograph, *Dreamers and Schemers: How an Improbable Bid for the 1932 Olympics Transformed Los Angeles from Dusty Outpost to Global Metropolis* (2019);⁷ Siegel focuses on William May Garland (1866-1948), the "prince of realtors," and his efforts to convince the city of Los Angeles to bid for the 1932 Olympics. The long-range impact of the Olympic Village is the topic of Roger D. Moore's 2015 Master's thesis, "1932 Los Angeles Olympics: A Model for a Broken System;" Moore analyzes the—at the time—innovative plan of a dedicated living area for the athletes and how it shaped the infrastructure and spirit of future events. The Olympic Village, first tested in Los Angeles in 1932, became not just a practical component of the Olympic experience; it helped achieve the I.O.C.'s goal of fostering global unity and fellowship.⁸

I. A Vision for the Success of the Olympic Games in the United States of America

Prior to the introduction of the Olympic Village at the 1932 Olympics in Los Angeles, the athletes' accommodations had been the I.O.C.'s responsibility. In an article for the *Los Angeles Times*, published well over a year before the Games, Ralph Huston informed his readers that Baron Pierre de Coubertin deserved the credit for revitalizing the Olympics as a modern-day experience. According to Huston's research, Coubertin had intended to improve France through physical

³ Centre d'Études Olympiques, *Olympic Charter: In Force as from 17 July 2020* (Lausanne: International Olympic Committee, 2020), [online](#), accessed June 15, 2022.

⁴ *The Games of the Xth Olympiad, Los Angeles 1932: Official Report* (Los Angeles: The Xth Olympiad Committee, 1933).

⁵ For example, *Southern California Tourist Travel Guide: Complete Program of Events, Xth Olympiad 1932*, California State University, Fullerton (CSUF), University Archives & Special Collections (UA&SC), Local History Collection (LHC) 236-20-6 1932 Olympics.

⁶ Xia Gao and Te Bu, "Research on Historical Origin of Olympic Village," *Asian Social Science* 7 no. 3 (Spring 2011): 123-130.

⁷ Barry Siegel, *Dreamers and Schemers: How an Improbable Bid for the 1932 Olympics Transformed Los Angeles from Dusty Outpost to Global Metropolis* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2019).

⁸ Centre d'Études Olympiques, *Olympic Charter*.

education, and he believed that reviving the Olympics would be beneficial – not just for France, but for global peace. In Huston’s word,

[t]he good Baron, raised in both military and public schools, had seen the raving effects France had suffered in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. His first idea was to stimulate athletic activity in France to develop a strong, hardy race. Later, he developed the plan of a worldwide athletic carnival which, he hoped, would promote universal peace.⁹

Thus, Coubertin wanted both a better France and a better world, and he was convinced that communal athletic activity could be a means to this end. According to Xia Gao and Te Bu, Coubertin’s vision was remarkably holistic:

Coubertin believed [that] sports activities organized according to definite rules were beneficial to young people and the whole human being, not only good for physical quality, but especially conducive to improve moral standard. At the same time, profoundly affected by the French Social Reformer Frederic Le Play (1860-1882), Coubertin had a strong social responsibility for the extensive public, especially the proletariat.¹⁰

The Olympics were not conceived as an exclusive event for the elites: they were intended to be inclusive of all social classes, from the loftiest of nobles to the poorest of the poor. In addition, they were supposed to boost moral standards and, ultimately, make war less likely.

Organizing an international athletic competition meant providing suitable accommodations, facilities for exercise and training, proper nutrition, and places for restful recovery. According to historical reports on the early Olympic Summer and Winter Games, accommodations prior to 1932 had been limited in scope, not particularly effective from an athletic standpoint, and decentralized. As Anne K. Hutton has shown in her 2001 dissertation, “The Olympic Games: Lessons for Future Host Cities,”

[i]n the early years, no effort was made to house the athletes collectively. Often, visiting countries would try to find accommodation at local hotels, schools, and in some cases even the ship on which the delegations had travelled. During the conferences held before the 1924 Olympics in Paris, the idea of the Olympic Village was first introduced. The first attempt at a Village occurred in Paris, where sets of barracks were used near the Colombes stadium, and where services such as mail and telegraphs were provided.¹¹

Given the I.O.C.’s relative “youth,” the logistical shortcomings of the early Games are somewhat understandable; however, by the time of the Paris Games of 1924, there had already been six such Games (the 1916 Games had been cancelled due to World War I), and the need to come up with solutions was evident.

As Hutton’s findings indicate, the basic needs of athletes and trainers with regard to food, shelter, and rest had traditionally been managed “ad hoc” with

⁹ Ralph Huston, “Frenchman Started Olympics: Baron de Coubertin Conceived Idea for Modern Revival of Ancient Greek Games: First Renewal Staged in Athens in Honor of Early Originators,” *Los Angeles Times*, February 1, 1931.

¹⁰ Gao and Bu, “Research on Historical Origin,” 124.

¹¹ Anne K. Hutton, “The Olympic Games: Lessons for Future Host Cities” (Ph.D. diss., Dalhousie University, 2001), 11.

whatever was available at the moment and far from meticulously planned. The I.O.C.'s official literature corroborates that everybody who participated in the Games, "generally stayed in hotels, public or military buildings, with local people, or even on the boats which had transported them there."¹² All things considered, the 1924 Paris Games were a substantial improvement.

They had furnished wooden huts and were intended for three people. The Village offered shared services such as a post office, a currency exchange office, a left luggage office, a telegraph and telephone service, a laundry, a newspaper kiosk and a hairdresser. The Village also had running water and dining halls, offering three meals a day.¹³

One could call this a "proto-Village," since it had sufficient, albeit temporary services, charged the athletes rent, and was demolished afterwards.¹⁴ Yet, while it was a place for the main actors of the Olympics to lay their heads at the end of the day, it was far from an adequate shelter. The early Olympics were still rather hastily assembled and not taken too seriously. With the exception of the 1904 Games in St. Louis, they usually took place in older, more established European cities that did not consider building a new athletic living space in or around their city limits necessary or desirable; thus, the planners of these Games simply utilized anything available to them for temporary use.

As Coubertin had envisioned, the Olympics were bringing the world closer together, but this was not without its issues. Athletes needed a place to eat, sleep, train, and rest when they were not competing, and a host city, as well as the I.O.C., could not just hope to be able to rely on whatever might be available to handle the needs of a multi-day international sporting event. After all, this lacked the professionalism associated with world-class events. Thus, while the 1924 Paris Olympics had already been on the right track, it would take considerable foresight to turn the experience in Los Angeles into something sufficiently refined to lay the groundwork for a new Olympic staple.

II. The City of Dreams Wakes Up to Its Potential

While the I.O.C. was looking for future Olympic venues, the city of Los Angeles was looking for opportunities to boost its image. The city needed to promote itself to generate tourism, attract investors, and stimulate the economy. By the time the Great Depression hit the United States in 1929, Los Angeles would still be recovering from the consequences of the post-war recession. The job market was down, so were salaries, and while there was a general hope for economic prosperity, few assumed that it would materialize anytime soon. In 1920, the city's elite had banded together and formed a Community Development Association (C.D.A.) to jump-start their community's hitherto non-existent tourism industry. At this point in time, Maximilian F. Ihmsen (1868-1921), the publisher of a local

¹² Centre d'Études Olympiques, *Olympic Summer Games Villages*, 5.

¹³ Centre d'Études Olympiques, *Olympic Summer Games Villages*, 8.

¹⁴ Centre d'Études Olympiques, *Olympic Summer Games Villages*, 8-9.

newspaper, the *Examiner*, proposed that Los Angeles should bid for the Olympic Games, and William Garland, a prominent member of the community and successful realtor, was deemed up to the challenge of accomplishing this task.¹⁵ Garland figured that the Olympics were a perfect vehicle to revitalize the city's economy through international tourism and investment. He had initially hoped that Los Angeles would be able to host either the 1924 or 1928 Games, but these were then taken by Paris and Amsterdam respectively.¹⁶ Bold action was needed, and steps would have to be taken to facilitate a competitive bid.

The first thing Garland needed to do was to convince the city's elite to buy into his vision and into his respective plan for action. These were not directors and movie stars but, rather, landlords and newspaper moguls.¹⁷ Cuthbert E. Reeves's 1932 study, *The Valuation of Business Lots in Downtown Los Angeles*, paints a picture of the period's properties in downtown Los Angeles and their overall worth; it shows that the city had been borrowing heavily between 1923 and 1930, and that, aside from a few "hot spots" where community trade was established, most of the properties were unprofitable farmland.¹⁸ This demonstrates the monetary stakes for landowners in Los Angeles who carried heavy debts and had no way of paying them back. In her article, "When Los Angeles Was Host to the Olympic Games of 1932," Grace A. Somerby outlines William Garland's 1921 plan to assemble four newspaper publishers for a meeting concerning a business opportunity and the future of Los Angeles, namely, "Harry Chandler, publisher of the *Los Angeles Times*; Edward A. Dickson, publisher of the *Evening Express*; Max Ihmsen, publisher of the *Examiner*; and Guy B. Barham, publisher of the *Evening Herald*."¹⁹ According to Somerby, "Mr. Garland initiated the idea of endeavoring to secure the Olympic Games for Los Angeles. It would be a formidable undertaking, he admitted, because several nations were already competing for the honor."²⁰ Garland had just one proposal for these four, and that was for Los Angeles to bid against the other American cities for the opportunity to host the Games: "If you four publishers would be willing to throw the combined force of your powerful newspapers behind a project of this sort, it can be done."²¹ Following the meeting, all four voiced their support for Garland's plan.²² Existing scholarship

¹⁵ Steven A. Riess, "Power without Authority: Los Angeles' Elites and the Construction of the Coliseum," *Journal of Sport History* 8, no. 1 (1981): 50-65, here 52.

¹⁶ Riess, "Power without Authority," 53.

¹⁷ Riess, "Power without Authority," 51.

¹⁸ Cuthbert E. Reeves, *The Valuation of Business Lots in Downtown Los Angeles* (Los Angeles: Los Angeles Bureau of Municipal Research, 1932), 5-6.

¹⁹ Grace A. Somerby, "When Los Angeles Was Host to the Olympic Games of 1932," *The Historical Society of Southern California Quarterly* 34, no. 2 (1952): 125-132, here 125.

²⁰ Somerby, "When Los Angeles Was Host," 126.

²¹ Somerby, "When Los Angeles Was Host," 126.

²² Somerby, "When Los Angeles Was Host," 126.

acknowledges the backroom deals that were negotiated for the sake of the city. While power brokers like Harry Chandler were members of the C.D.A., the other landowners still needed to be brought on board. For example, the future Olympic Village's location in Baldwin Hills was given to the Los Angeles Organizing Committee (L.A.O.C.) by Anita Baldwin (1876-1939), the heiress of oil tycoon and landowner Elias Jackson "Lucky" Baldwin, in exchange for the promise that it would be returned to her after the Games, meaning that the Athletic Village would have to be demolished after the Olympics.²³ Thus, the city's landowners understood that they needed to use their wealth to invest in the city's future, but they proceeded with caution.

Once Garland had the city's elite on his side, he needed to garner the I.O.C.'s attention. One of his plans was to have the city celebrate a ten-day *fiesta* in September 1931 for the 150th anniversary of the *pueblo* of Los Angeles. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, the event extended "from Washington Street north on Broadway to First Street, then east to Main Street and North to the Plaza [...] *La Fiesta*, they called it, but it might better be known as *La Mas Brilliante Forma de Hacer Historia: The Most Brilliant Manner of Making History.*"²⁴ As Siegel has pointed out, the *fiesta* intended to promote the city's identity to the world, "spread the fame of Los Angeles far and wide, and bring in a harvest of tourists;"²⁵ if its coverage in the *Los Angeles Times* is any indication, Garland's *fiesta* was a resounding success. Garland also mobilized resources like the Los Angeles aviation industry, radio, and movie studios to assist him in promoting the city's unique charm.²⁶ Los Angeles was the city where movies were being made in America, and Hollywood was becoming a household name throughout the world. Why not use this priceless resource? After all, one can get more attention for one's city if there is the possibility of meeting Clark Gable or Barbara Stanwyck there. Garland's campaign did not just garner the attention of the I.O.C.; he was able to find a friend in Baron Pierre de Coubertin. According to Siegel, "Billy" Garland, "three years his [i.e., Coubertin's] junior, [...] somehow left the baron feeling like he was talking to a fellow aristocrat. [...] Billy forged bonds as well with most members of the I.O.C., once the baron let him into their dimly lit meeting rooms."²⁷ His personal connection with the founder of the modern Olympics ultimately allowed Garland to successfully market the city to the I.O.C.

²³ Jeremy Scott White, "Constructing the Invisible Landscape: Organizing the 1932 Olympic Games in Los Angeles" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2005), 99.

²⁴ "City Acclaims La Fiesta Opening in Colorful Pageant: Queen Crowning Cheered By Throng of 87,000: State and National Leaders Attend Official Birthday Ceremony on City Hall Steps: La Fiesta de Los Angeles Program for Saturday," *Los Angeles Times*, September 5, 1931.

²⁵ Siegel, *Dreamers and Schemers*, 115.

²⁶ Jeremy Scott White, "'The Los Angeles Way of Doing Things': The Olympic Village and the Practice of Boosterism in 1932," *Olympika: The International Journal of Olympic Studies* 11 (Spring 2002): 79-116, here 87.

²⁷ Siegel, *Dreamers and Schemers*, 38.

Los Angeles had been at an economic standstill even before the Great Depression. Reviving the city's fortunes took a vision and a bold plan that, given the odds, really should not have worked. The local elite, despite their rivalries, had to get on the same page, and they did. Smooth cooperation with outside entities like the I.O.C. was crucial, and it worked. Garland's vision and bold plan soon paid dividends, as both Los Angeles and the I.O.C. realized on July 30, 1932, the opening day of the Summer Olympics.

III. The City of Angels Finds An Answer to Its Prayers

The 1932 Olympic Village was the culmination of creative ideas that solved the I.O.C.'s housing dilemma, enhanced the Olympic experience, and benefited the city of Los Angeles. The development that came to be known as the Olympic Village had initially been proposed by L.A.O.C. General Secretary Zack J. Farmer, though the idea was at first rejected due to the costs associated with it. When the Athletic Village was eventually constructed, financial discipline remained a top priority.²⁸ According to Jeremy Scott White's dissertation, "Constructing the Invisible Landscape: Organizing the 1932 Olympic Games in Los Angeles," the initial plan included cottages that were architecturally personalized for the nationality of the athletes staying in them, but that was scrapped due to costs:

Ultimately, the cottages were painted beige with a rose-colored band along the base, a color scheme that was supposed to reinforce the Mission Style of the Administration Building. Rather than celebrate the architectural styles of visiting nations, as in a world's fair and as originally intended, the Organizing Committee took the expedient course of celebrating an architectural theme supposedly native to Los Angeles.²⁹

Siegel describes what the Village, designed by H. O. Davis, was to look like:

More than 2000 athletes and support personnel if they all came to Los Angeles could be housed in the 550 cottages, each fourteen by twenty-four feet, spaced ten feet apart, spread over three miles. Every bungalow contained a wash basin, a cold-water shower and two ten-by-ten bathrooms, both with an entrance from the outside. Bathhouses [...] were spaced throughout the grounds, featuring hot showers, steam rooms, and rubbing tables [...]. The Village would have its own fire house, emergency hospital, barbershop, post office, laundry, radiotelegraph station, amphitheater, sauna, recreation room, physiotherapy centers and a lounge furnished in chic Spanish mission style. All this would come with a splendid view and temperatures 10 degrees cooler than on the flatlands of L.A.; the Baldwin Hills track, just 10 minutes from the Colosseum, overlooked not only Los Angeles but also the Pacific Ocean, the Santa Monica Mountains and the distant Sierra Madre range.³⁰

Cyclist Russel Allen, who participated in the 1932 Summer Olympics, mentioned the Village and the cottages briefly in his 1988 interview: "It was a Village that they built out in the Crenshaw area. We had little makeshift lean-to cottages that were

²⁸ John E. Findling and Kimberly D. Pelle, *Historical Dictionary of the Modern Olympic Movement* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1996), 75.

²⁹ White, "Constructing the Invisible Landscape," 101-102.

³⁰ Siegel, *Dreamers and Schemers*, 126-127.

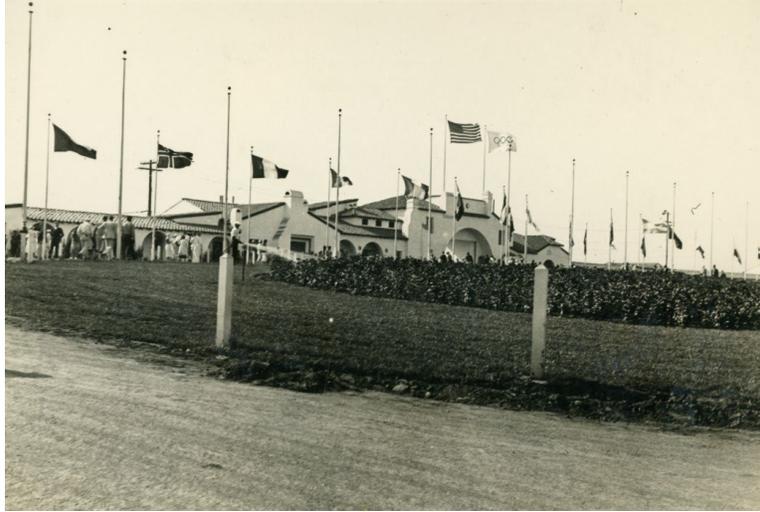


Figure 1: 1932 L.A. Olympic Village, Administration Building (CSUF, UA&SC, LHC 236-20-6, Album).



Figure 2: 1932 L.A. Olympic Village, Main Street (CSUF, UA&SC, LHC 236-20-6, Album).



Figure 3: 1932 L.A. Olympic Village, Athletes' Houses (CSUF, UA&SC, LHC 236-20-6, Album).

quite nice.”³¹ The total cost for the Village came in at nearly \$500,000. The official report of the Xth Olympiad describes the project’s partial funding as follows:

Exceeding the requirements under the Olympic Protocol, the Committee, in a further effort to reduce the costs for participants, decided to offer all of the facilities and advantages of the Olympic Village to the participants on a basis of charges considerably less than actual cost. A rate of two dollars per day was fixed for each Village occupant toward the cost of his housing, dining service, local transportation, entertainment and general care. This charge, together with the reduced transportation rate, made it possible for the Committee to submit in its report to the Congress a suggested budget of five hundred dollars or less for each participant from European shores, covering his journey to Los Angeles, his stay in the city for thirty days, and his return home, as against preliminary estimates by various countries averaging as high as fifteen hundred dollars.³²

According to White’s dissertation, costs were kept at half of what had been estimated, making the Games in southern California economically feasible for the athletes,³³ which would have been a convincing argument for the I.O.C. as well.

Coubertin hoped that the Games would be an example of global brotherhood, but if the political rivalries of the day could not be permanently removed, maybe they could be temporarily suspended during this international sporting event. At least allegedly, this seems to have worked in 1932. The official report of the Xth Olympiad characterizes the French and German participation as follows:

The swimming events of the Games of the Xth Olympiad provided many of the most thrilling performances of the competitions. Contested in a magnificent new pool, approved as ideal by the International Swimming Federation, the events drew capacity audiences and Olympic records were shattered in practically every event.³⁴

Given the state of world affairs in 1932, the respective French and German athletic spirit certainly was a major theme for the Xth Olympiad. However, as Sandra Heck and Thierry Terret have pointed out in their 2011 article, “The 1932 Olympic Games in Los Angeles: A New Beginning in the French and German Press Representation of the Former Enemy?” some caution is in order. While athletes from both countries saw each other throughout the event, they did not have the opportunity to compete against each other most of the time.³⁵ Most of the political jabs came from the German side which either dismissed German failures or simply did not acknowledge French victories. Meanwhile, France remained neutral about the competition, preferring to focus on America and its contributions to hosting

³¹ Russell Allen, “An Olympian’s Oral History: Russell Allen, 1932 Olympic Games, Cycling.” interview by George A. Hodak, February 1988, *LA84 Foundation: Digital Library Collections*, [online](#), accessed June 15, 2022.

³² *The Games of the Xth Olympiad, Los Angeles 1932: Official Report*, 47.

³³ White, “Constructing the Invisible Landscape,” 99.

³⁴ *The Games of the Xth Olympiad, Los Angeles 1932: Official Report*, 597.

³⁵ Sandra Heck and Thierry Terret, “The 1932 Olympic Games in Los Angeles: A New Beginning in the French and German Press Representation of the Former Enemy?” *Olympika: The International Journal of Olympic Studies* 20 (2011): 79-100.

and participating in the Games, especially in the swimming category.³⁶ France even praised Germany, though less for its athletes and more for “the country’s capacity to perform despite the difficulties stemming from the worldwide depression.”³⁷ Overall, the Games seem to have proceeded without any overt political controversies.

Among the athletes, camaraderie and friendship were certainly more prevalent than rivalry and strife. The organizers had initially intended to divide the athletes into groups based on their national backgrounds:

The various teams would “be given neighbors in accordance with their national sympathies.” The Latin Americans would be together, except for the Portuguese-speaking Brazilians who would align with the southern Europeans; France will be next to its Little-Entente allies; Germany and the former Central Powers would line up with the Scandinavian nations; the British would dwell with other countries of the Commonwealth.³⁸

Despite these neat geopolitical efforts by the organizers, there was a sense of community among the athletes regardless of whether their countries were politically aligned. Peter D. Clentzos expressed this notion in his 1987 interview: “In the Olympic Village you could see it everywhere because in those days there weren’t too many nations involved with the Olympic Movement. [...] We respected one another. When we met we said hello without any retreat. We just believed in each other.”³⁹ The organizers’ caution was understandable, though, as this was the first time that so many diverse athletes would be living together in one centralized setting. According to a 1987 interview by track-and-field athlete Evelyne Hall Adams, the athletes witnessed little discrimination:

I wasn’t aware of any discrimination but I know that there was some. Later on I met Frances Holmes who was a 1908 standing high jumper from Brazil. He was on the American team in 1908. He said that the Americans did not fully accept him as a member of their team. But I think the discrimination was very slight.”⁴⁰

Apparently Adams herself was especially beloved by the Japanese athletes:

I was trying to say that I was going to practice but, of course, they couldn’t understand me. We were only communicating by using our hands or smiling. So off to their room I went, and they dressed me in all their beautiful kimonos and robes, the shoes, the fans, the whole works. Then, when I tried to give these things back to them, they protested. I told them I couldn’t accept these very expensive gifts, but while I was protesting, the manager, who spoke English, said to me, “Please Evelyne, keep these. They have elected you Japan’s adopted daughter. They

³⁶ Heck and Terret, “1932 Olympic Games,” 88.

³⁷ Heck and Terret, “1932 Olympic Games,” 89.

³⁸ Siegel, *Dreamers and Schemers*, 126-127.

³⁹ Peter D. Clentzos, “An Olympian’s Oral History: Peter D. Clentzos, 1932 Olympic Games, Track & Field,” interview by George A. Hodak, October 1987, *LA84 Foundation: Digital Library Collections*, [online](#), accessed June 15, 2022.

⁴⁰ Evelyne Hall Adams, “An Olympian’s Oral History: Evelyne Hall Adams, 1932 Olympic Games, Track & Field,” interview by George A. Hodak, October 1987 *LA84 Foundation: Digital Library Collections*, [online](#), accessed June 15, 2022.

want you to accept their humble gifts." So that was a thrill—to be Japan's adopted daughter. I was also really honored when I was selected as the friendliest girl in the Village.⁴¹

Thus, it appears that many of the athletes saw themselves as colleagues and friends, regardless of national borders and the politics of the day.

While the I.O.C. was hoping for successful Olympic Games, the city of Los Angeles made every effort to capitalize on the event by marketing itself as a major metropolitan destination. One example of this was the distribution of tourism booklets that highlighted suitable activities for visitors in the city and southern California during the games, like the *Southern California Tourist Travel Guide: Complete Program of Events Xth Olympiad 1932*.⁴² This travel guide particularly referenced the city's entertainment industry, hoping that visitors to the Olympic Games would also be interested in sightseeing tours that could take them inside a movie studio or enable them to see Charlie Chaplin at his house.⁴³ According to Jeremy Scott White's article, "The Los Angeles Way of Doing Things" (2002), Hollywood—and all the glitz and romance associated with it—was more noteworthy than the city it was based in.⁴⁴ At an I.O.C. meeting in Prague prior to the 1932 Games, a Central European delegate asked Garland, "Where is Los Angeles? Is it anywhere near Hollywood?" and during a 1930 conference in Berlin, Garland and Farmer utilized film reels to demonstrate that they would be able to host the Olympics as well as accentuate the cinematic nature and "exotic modernity" that a city like Los Angeles had to offer.⁴⁵ Thus, the Games' organizers quickly adapted to the reality that people all over the world were aware of Hollywood, movie stars, and "Tinseltown," but not of the city of Los Angeles.

The Xth Olympiad shaped Los Angeles and the Games not just because of its innovative Olympic Village. The 1932 Olympic experience became the gold standard for much of the twentieth century. Germany certainly took inspiration from the 1932 Games and utilized a similar structure, with help from its military, for its 1936 Olympics in Berlin;⁴⁶ however, the marketing aspect of the Berlin Games was much more sinister, as Nazi Germany used the event's global platform to subvert the Olympic ideal and propagate "Aryan" superiority. Back in Los Angeles, the 1932 Games garnered not just immediate praise but also financial rewards and opportunities. The Summer Olympics and surrounding convention events brought Los Angeles a hefty profit of 60 million dollars—the equivalent of 1.1 billion dollars in today's marketplace. In addition, tourists started to take extended vacations in the region which also increasingly attracted international

⁴¹ Adams, "An Olympian's Oral History."

⁴² *Southern California Tourist Travel Guide: Complete Program of Events Xth Olympiad 1932*.

⁴³ *Southern California Tourist Travel Guide: Complete Program of Events Xth Olympiad 1932*, 17, 25.

⁴⁴ White, "The Los Angeles Way of Doing Things," 87.

⁴⁵ White, "The Los Angeles Way of Doing Things," 87.

⁴⁶ Centre d'Études Olympiques, *Olympic Summer Games Villages*, 14-16.

traders and investors, thus realizing the C.D.A.'s vision.⁴⁷ Those buildings of the Olympic Village that were not demolished after the Games were either sold, adding more revenue to the city's coffers, or donated; according to a 1932 article in the *Los Angeles Times*, Japan was to receive one of the cottages as a "lasting shrine of friendship."⁴⁸ Scholars acknowledge that the 1932 Olympics launched a new era in the Games' modern history. Emily Ramey's 2017 dissertation, "Los Angeles and the Summer Olympics: How Los Angeles Commercialized the Olympic Games in 1932 and 1984, Changing the Future of the Olympics," notes that future Olympics sought to emulate the Los Angeles paradigm, and when the Games returned to Los Angeles in 1984, they were handled by an experienced and thriving international metropolis.⁴⁹ To the city of Los Angeles, the 1932 Games brought an economic stimulus; to future host cities, they modeled a successful marketing campaign; and to the I.O.C., they offered a framework for accommodations and training that would dramatically improve the Olympic experience—so much so that the quality of the Olympic Village is now very much part of the competition, and athletes who have participated in multiple Olympic events can be called upon to compare and contrast their respective living and training experiences.

Conclusion

This article has showcased the fruitful collaboration between the city of Los Angeles and the International Olympic Committee that led to the successful Summer Olympics of 1932 and the creation of the first Olympic Village. From these Games, Los Angeles emerged as much more than just the old town next to Hollywood, namely, as a city with international promise and untapped financial potential. The 1932 Olympic Village offered a viable solution to the I.O.C. how athletes' accommodation could and should be handled in the future, thus moving the Games closer to Baron Pierre de Coubertin's vision of achieving peace through international sports competitions. Finally, Olympic venues after 1932 took a page out of the Los Angeles playbook when marketing themselves, their identities, and their cultures as integral parts of the international Olympic experience.

There is considerable room for additional research on this subject matter. For example, how do cities that prepare to host the Olympic Games of the future still reference the Xth Olympiad as a model? How can countries promote themselves by utilizing their most picturesque locations and, thus, stimulate travel and their economies beyond the Games themselves? And what innovations can organizers utilize to enhance the Olympic Village of the future? Another aspect worth examining is the correlation between cause and effect with regard to the planning

⁴⁷ Siegel, *Dreamers and Schemers*, 184.

⁴⁸ "Japan Gets Gift from Olympiad: Cottage Used by Athletes Here to Become Lasting Shrine of Friendship," *Los Angeles Times*, November 28, 1932.

⁴⁹ Emily Ramey, "Los Angeles and the Summer Olympics: How Los Angeles Commercialized the Olympic Games in 1932 and 1984, Changing the Future of the Olympics" (Ph.D. diss., The Claremont Graduate University, 2017).

and execution of the 1932 Games. Max Ihmsen, a newspaper publisher, had conceived the original idea of hosting the Olympic Games in the city of Los Angeles. William Garland, a realtor, would be the one tasked by the Community Development Association to get approval from the city and bid for the opportunity to the I.O.C. Due to Ihmsen's untimely death (1921), he and Garland never really had the chance to collaborate on the Games, but one is left to wonder to what extent Ihmsen's planning and Garland's execution did, in fact, align.

In 1932, the Latin motto of the Olympic Games – *Citius, Altius, Fortius* (“faster, higher, stronger”) – applied to both the I.O.C and the city of Los Angeles. Due to the success of the Olympic Games and the interest in the city shown by tourists and investors, the Olympics attained a better logistical framework, the city's economy and infrastructure moved faster, the Olympics soared higher, and both became stronger for years to come.

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