



FIGURE 5. A white mob gathers at the home of W. H. Whitson at 1863 East Seventieth Street in 1949. Whitson intended to sell his home, in this still-white section of South Central, to African Americans. Courtesy of the Los Angeles Public Library.

the cities of Inglewood, Hawthorne, Gardena, Compton, Lynwood, Huntington Park, and South Gate.

Within the city, those “transitional” neighborhoods in which blacks were slowly buying property became the focus of white resistance. White residents of Leimert Park, for example, vigorously defended segregation. Located on the western edge of South Central, Leimert Park had been created by architect Walter Leimert in 1927 as an upscale white “bedroom community.” But in the late 1940s, African Americans slowly began purchasing homes in and around the area, provoking growing white hostility. For example, shortly after African American John Caldwell, his wife, and his sixteen-year-old daughter moved into their home at 543 Sixth Avenue in 1951, they awoke to the crackling sound of a four-foot cross burning on their lawn.¹⁹

Similarly, William Bailey, a World War II veteran and the head of the science department at nearby Carver Junior High School, moved with his wife to a modest bungalow in a predominantly white area just north-