

For two blocks on either side of Central Avenue from ~~12th~~ Twelfth Street to ~~Jefferson Avenue~~ Jefferson Avenue is jammed one-half of Los Angeles' negro populations, shunned by the whites and other racial minorities and despised by the more prosperous Negroes who lived on the west side of town. This stretch, known as the "black belt" or the "Harlem of ~~Los~~ Ellay" is as squalid as can be found in the City of the Angels except possibly for a section of ~~Little~~ Little Mexico ~~just~~ a mile east of the Civic Center. Los Angeles proudly boasts of having no slums, but all the unhealthy conditions of the slums exist in "Ellay's Harlem".

~~In~~ In ~~a~~ a dingy second story room of one of the more ~~ramshackle~~ ramshackle apartments in the section, ~~Jim~~ Sunny Jim drew his first breath. This was shortly after the armistice of World War I. Jim never knew who his father was. Neither did his ~~mother~~ mother, a drunken washerwoman.

Jim wasn't called Sunny Jim until he started going to school, and one of ~~the~~ the older pupils/labelled him that because of the perpetual scowl Jim wore. Jim couldn't help that ~~scowl~~ scowl; it was the result of a scar that he'd gotten when his mother swatted him across the face in a drunken fit, knocking him ^{down the stairs} to the ground. The blow and fall ^{plus inadequate medical care} must have affected his mind too, because although he grew to be a strapping fellow, his mentality never did exceed that of a twelve year old child. However, his mother was kinder to him after that only occasionally ~~cursing~~ cursing him and cuffing him.

~~Jim's scar and scowl kept him from making any friends~~ Despite ^{he was often} his scowl, Jim was one of the gentlest creatures alive; ~~he~~ although ~~often~~ often called a "sinful Niggah" by his mother, Jim was too dumb

to know the meaning of sin or evil. But at least he'd been conditioned to feel guilty when his mother called him a "sinful Niggah". Once ~~he saw a white man~~ ~~just after he had~~ ~~passed a white~~ ~~man~~ ~~on the street,~~ ~~Jim~~ ~~overheard~~ ~~the man~~ ~~exclaim,~~ ~~"God,~~ ~~that~~ ~~Nigger~~ ~~stinks!"~~ That hurt Jim's feelings, and he felt like crying, but his scarred face only made him look mean instead of pathetic. After that, he tried to shun white folks, and sought anonymity by mixing with members of his own race, but even then he stood out because he was the only scowler in a group that had learned to laugh at its own misfortunes and adversities.

He took to hanging around the pool rooms