

# Biddy Mason Interred Evergreen Cemetery



**Biddy Mason** 🌟

**BIRTH** 15 Aug 1818  
Hancock County, Georgia, USA

**DEATH** 16 Jan 1891 (aged 72)  
Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, California, USA

**BURIAL** [Evergreen Cemetery](#)  
Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, California, USA 📍 [Show Map](#)

**PLOT** Section G, Lot 320

**MEMORIAL ID** 20989 · [View Source](#)

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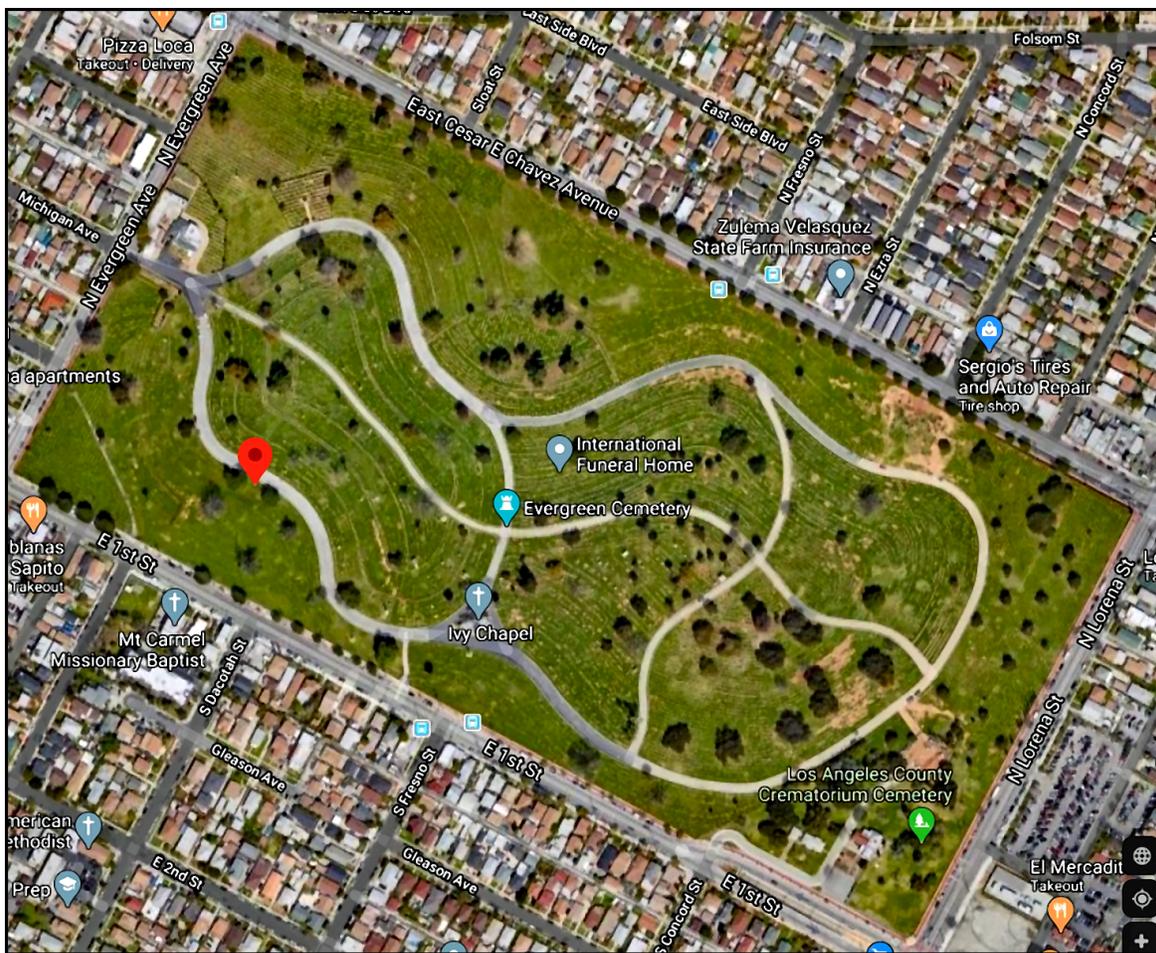
Biddy Mason Grave Location, Evergreen Cemetery, East Los Angeles

## Obituary Biography by Curtis Jackson

Former slave, nurse/ mid wife, successful entrepreneur, humanitarian and founder of Los Angeles's first African-American congregation. Bridget "Biddy" Mason was born a slave in Aug. of 1818 on a Georgia plantation owned by Robert Marion Smith and his wife Rebecca (Crosby) Smith. Mason had three daughters, Ellen, Ann and Harriet, whose father was reputedly Smith himself. In 1847, Smith became a Mormon convert and decided to move to the Utah Territory with his household and slaves. In the strenuous two-thousand miles cross-country, Mason was responsible for herding the cattle, preparing the meals and acting as mid-wife along with taking care of her own children. It is said that Mason walked behind her master's 300-wagon caravan from Mississippi to Southern California. In 1851, Smith moved his household again, this time to San Bernardino, Ca. Smith sensed that Mason and her three daughters might seek their freedom in California, therefore he planned to take them back South. Luck came for Mason and her daughters after arriving in California, discovering that slaves were free in that state. She petitioned a court in 1856 for her and her daughters freedom. A Sheriff asked Smith to appear in court to prove ownership of the family. He failed to appear in court and Mason won freedom for herself and her daughters. She and her daughters moved to Los Angeles where she found employment as a nurse and midwife. Hard work and her nursing skills allowed Mason to become economically independent. She later bought a site in what is now downtown Los Angeles on Spring St. for \$250, becoming the first African-American woman to own land in Los Angeles. In 1884, Mason sold a parcel of her land for \$1500 and built a commercial

building with spaces for rental on the remaining land. She continued making wise decisions in her business and real estate transactions and her financial fortunes continued to increase until Mason had accumulated a fortune of almost \$300,000. Mason gave generously to various charities and provided food and shelter for the poor of all races. She also remembered those in prison whom she visited often. In 1872, she and her son-in-law, Charles Owens, founded and formed the Los Angeles branch of the First A.M.E. Church, Los Angeles's first African-American congregation which began having services in Mason's living room. Bridget "Biddy" Mason died in Los Angeles on Jan. 15, 1891 and was buried in an unmarked grave in Evergreen Cemetery. By the time Mason had died, the property, she owned had become the heart of Los Angeles's financial district and was worth \$250,000. On March 27, 1988, nearly a century after Mason's death, a tombstone was unveiled at a ceremony which marked her grave for the first time. The ceremony was attended by Mayor Tom Bradley and about three thousand members of the First A.M.E. Church. On November 16, 1989, the citizens of Los Angeles declared a Biddy Mason Day and a memorial of her achievement was unveiled at the Broadway Spring Center located between Spring St. and Broadway at Third St. in Los Angeles.

Bio by: [Curtis Jackson](#)



Biddy Mason Gravesite, Evergreen Cemetery, East Los Angeles, Section G - Lot 320

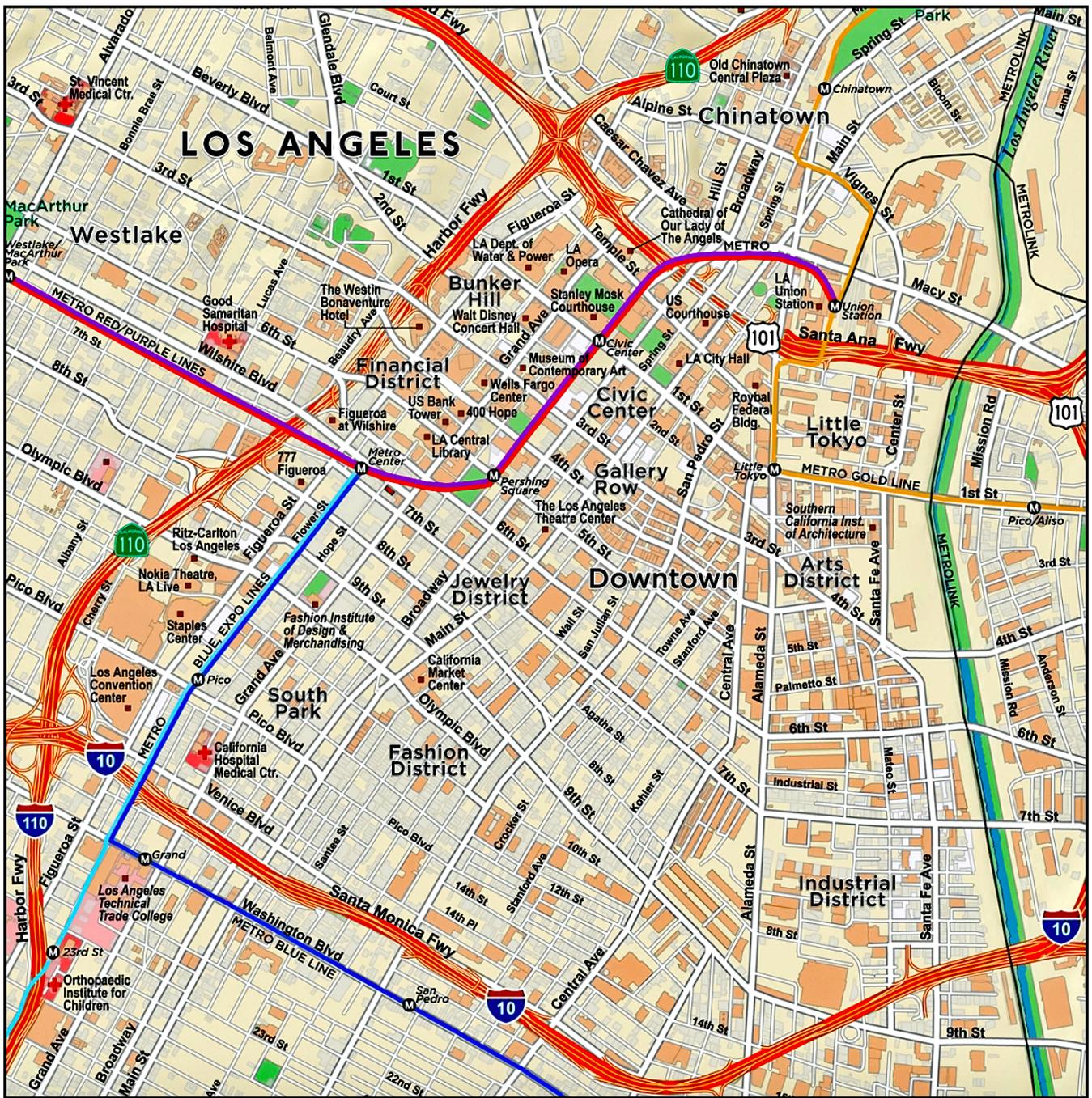


Added by [Larry Luna](#)

Tombstone Marker, Biddy Mason, Evergreen Cemetery, East Los Angeles



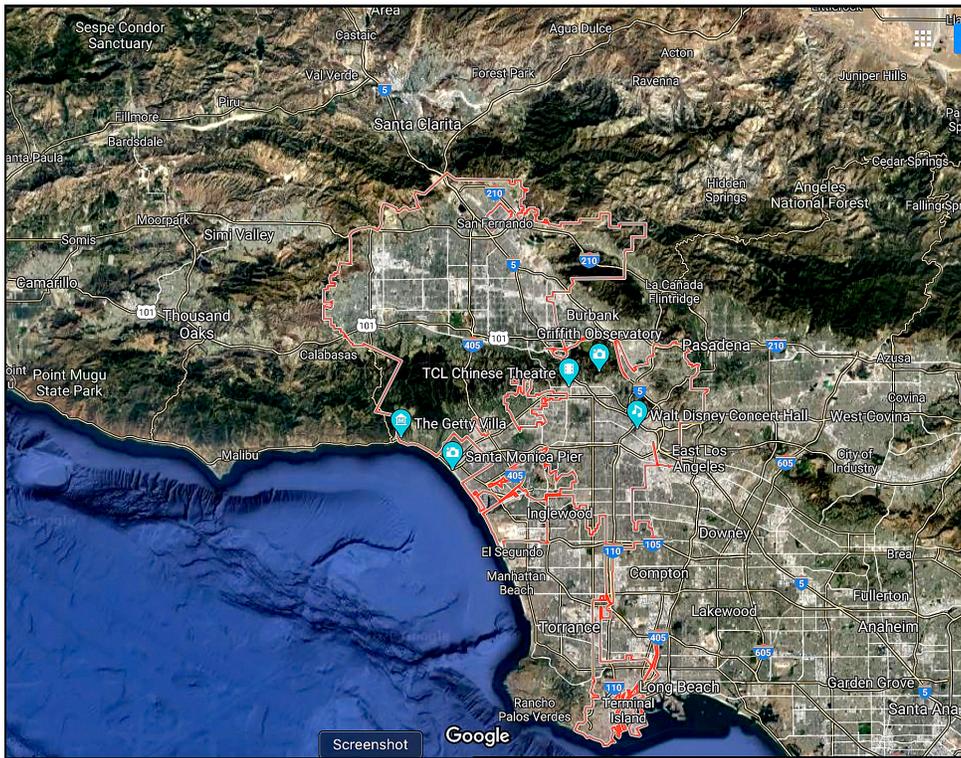
Inscription Biddy Mason Tombstone



Graphic Map Downtown Los Angeles

Properties of Bidly Smith Area Adjacent Spring Street, West of the City Hall





Map Regional Vicinity Los Angeles

