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What Rodeo Drive Looked Like in 1925 & More Hidden Treasures of SoCal's Archives

By Nathan Masters
March 31, 2011

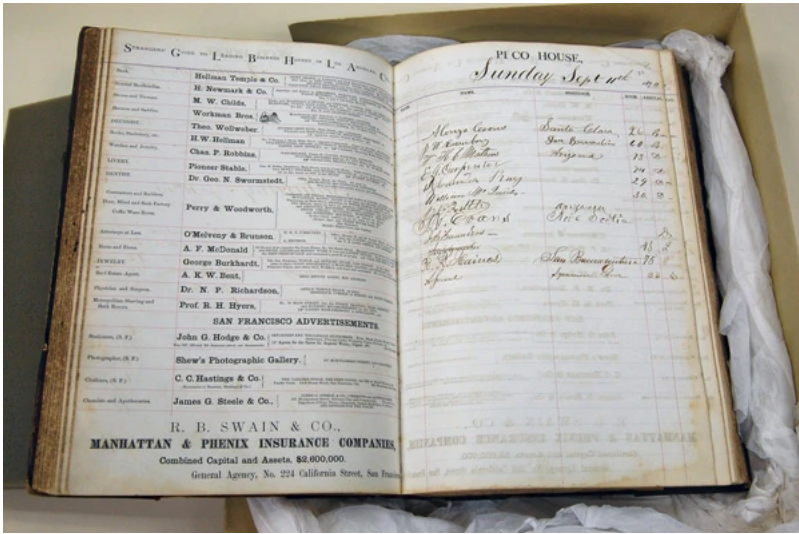


History & Society History

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An important plank of the L.A. as Subject mission is to preserve and help illuminate the sometimes-hidden stories that make up the broader narrative of Los Angeles history-- from the **African-American newspaper editor and activist who ran for Vice President** to **transportation officials who dreamed of flying buses**. This week, we asked the members of L.A. as Subject to dig through their collections and select one item

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Center for the American West, headquartered in Griffith Park.

Autry Library Director Marva R. Felchin shared the photographs below and at the top of this post. They depict a document from the library's collections that uniquely casts light on early Los Angeles history. Felchin explains:

00000176-76d0-da8e-a97f-7fd816180000 Pio de Jesus Pico, governor of California in 1845, built the Pico House in 1870, a luxury hotel intended to help revitalize the old plaza area of Los Angeles. Designed by architect Ezra F. Kysor, Pico House was the first three-story building in Los Angeles and featured gas lighting and indoor plumbing. Pico lost the hotel to foreclosure in 1880. It fell to ruins by the early 1900s and was later deeded to the State of California. The Pico House is California Historical Landmark no. 159, and is sometimes used for art exhibitions and film and television production. The Pico House hotel register is a unique artifact of Los Angeles history. It documents guests travelling to downtown Los Angeles by date, name and place of residence, during the first two years of the hotel's operation, 1870-1872. Printed on each facing page is a "strangers guide to leading businesses," that reads like a directory of significant names in the development of the city. Many of the people and businesses listed still exist in some form. Researchers, curators and others will find a bounty of information about Los Angeles in the directory whether they are studying the activities of specific individuals or tracing the history of hotel management, for example. In the future, the Autry libraries hope to create a searchable database of the contents, a boon to users as well as the preservation of the artifact.

Studio for Southern California History

Throughout the year, the Studio for Southern California History sponsors tours, exhibitions, and other events that, in the words of its mission statement, work to "recover overlooked histories of community and strife in the larger Los Angeles area and to foster a sense of place and political entitlement among Southern Californians."



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In 1903 the poppy became the official flower of California. This is a 1906 image of a woman in a field of poppies "near Los Angeles." This postcard shows this luscious image being sent to an undoubtedly snowy Maine in November. All of the Studio for Southern California History's historic ephemera is available through the L.A. History Archive. In addition to primary sources like postcards, photographs and oral history excerpts, the L.A. History Archive provides lesson plans that integrate local history and other resources to go further in your exploration of Southern California history.

Honnold/Mudd Library of The Claremont Colleges

Serving some of Los Angeles County's oldest colleges and universities, the **Honnold/Mudd Library's Special Collections** contain a wealth of rare and valuable holdings related to Southern California history. Carrie Marsh, head of Special Collections, selected an extraordinary collection of scrapbooks that richly document nearly sixty years of L.A. history:

00000176-76d0-da8e-a97f-7fd8161b0000 The Lindley Scrapbooks were assembled by Dr. Walter Lindley (1852-1922), early resident of Los Angeles and prominent physician, during the late nineteenth century and first years of the twentieth century. They are a part of the Francis Haynes Lindley Memorial Collection housed in Special Collections, Honnold/Mudd Library for The Claremont Colleges. The Lindley Scrapbook Collection consists of 33 scrapbooks covering the period from 1861 to 1921. The Lindley Scrapbook Collection documents through clippings, correspondence, and ephemeral materials, Dr. Lindley's professional and civic achievements, including the formation and management of the California Hospital and nursing program, his candidacy for mayor of Los Angeles, the development of the Whittier State School for Boys, time served on the Los Angeles Public Library board and the founding of a tuberculosis sanitarium in Idyllwild. Other scrapbooks document personal topics and interests, such as events at which Dr. Lindley was a speaker or guest of honor, his travels abroad, correspondence with or in regard to family members, and his interest in the life and works of William Shakespeare. The scrapbooks are a testament to the impact Dr. Lindley had on the development of the city of Los Angeles. Included are letters from prominent members of Los Angeles society, including business owners, physicians, attorneys, realtors, and other civic leaders; clippings from regional newspapers, such as The Los Angeles Examiner, The Monrovia News, The Los Angeles Express, The Los Angeles Evening News, and The Los Angeles Times; photographs of Dr. Lindley and other prominent citizens; and archival material relating to Dr. Lindley's great interest in English literature, especially William Shakespeare and his works.

Metro Transportation Library & Archive

As the official archive for the L.A. County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, the **Metro Library's** collections comprehensively document the county's transportation history. Librarian Kenneth Bicknell shared a detail photo of a 63 by 53-inch map (pictured below) that currently hangs on the wall of the library. According to Bicknell, the map, produced circa 1928, is unique in that it shows street names as well as routes for the **Pacific Electric red cars** and the **Los Angeles Railway yellow cars**, at a time when both rail systems were at their peak.

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artifacts document the fruit's 500-year long relationship with Southern California agriculture, commerce, and identity.

Boulé shared the above photograph, which depicts Asian-American laborers at work in an L.A.-area citrus field. He explains:

Los Angeles, from its earliest days, has always been a place of ethnic and cultural diversity. The area's world famous citrus industry would not have been possible without the skilled labor and knowledge of many groups. Chinese and later Japanese workers were critical to the success of the labor-intensive California citrus industry of the nineteenth century.

Beverly Hills Public Library

Beverly Hills was founded in 1906 as a suburban housing development that quickly grew into an exclusive colony for the show business elite. Archivist Gail Stein of the **Beverly Hills Public Library** has shared selections from the library's historical photographs collection, which documents the changing landscape and character of the city.

This stunning pair of photographs reveals the city's explosive growth over a ten-year period:

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An undated photograph shows traffic on Wilshire Boulevard at Santa Monica Boulevard — "almost as congested as it is now," Stein commented:

The bridle path pictured in this 1925 photograph is today Rodeo Drive:

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*collections, and other institutions. Hosted by the **USC Libraries**, L.A. as Subject is dedicated to preserving and telling the sometimes-hidden stories and histories of the Los Angeles region. Our posts here will provide a view into the archives of individuals and cultural institutions whose collections inform the great narrative—in all its complex facets—of Southern California.*

Read More

Warships, Canneries and Floating Cranes: Melancholy Memories of the Terminal Island We've Lost

The socially and historically complex Terminal Island has become a mono-culture of standardized, containerized commerce. Writer D.J. Waldie recounts a personal history of a once scruffy seaside that is now the nation's top cargo port.

Highlights at the Archives Bazaar: 10 Fascinating Southern California Collections and Historical Organizations

Every year, Southern California museums, libraries and archives come together at the annual Archives Bazaar to exhibit historic items and artifacts. Here are 8 collections and historical organizations whose archives tell a fascinating story of L.A.

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The history of commercial avocados in California comes from a collection of chance discoveries, Indigenous heritages exploited and improbable survivals that were ultimately hitched to the power of California's industrialized agriculture.

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