

MEDIA ALERT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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The Los Angeles Explorers Club teams with the Picturing Mexican America project to create a Self-Guided Bike Tour through Mexican Los Angeles

Ride through Downtown LA and learn about its tumultuous past

Los Angeles, CA – Have you ever driven through Downtown Los Angeles and wondered how Arcadia Street got its name? Did you know that DTLA’s Chinatown was once Sonoratown, a bustling Mexican enclave? Have you heard the story behind the Fort Moore Memorial? Take a self-guided bike ride through Downtown LA with The Los Angeles Explorers Club and Picturing Mexican American to learn about a Los Angeles you may not know once existed.

The 15-mile route will take riders from current Los Angeles back to the 19th Century to experience a history of LA not taught in schools. UCLA Professor Marissa Lopez created the Picturing Mexican America project to look at the history of Mexican Los Angeles to help us understand our present and undo the systematic erasure of LA's Mexican past - in a fun way!

“We’re not gonna lie: 19th century Mexican LA was neither idyllic, egalitarian, or anti-racist, but it’s important to understand that it WAS here and that the version of California history that you might have learned in grade school - the version that my kids are STILL learning in Los Angeles public schools - is part of a deliberate and concentrated attempt to erase that history and replace it with what scholars have described as either a “Fantasy Spanish Heritage” or a “Fantasy Anglo Past.” Whatever you call it, it devalues people of color, depicts them as marginal outsiders, and justifies discrimination and racial violence. We hope this ride untangles some of those threads,” Lopez said.

The Los Angeles Explorers Club is committed to sharing real, authentic stories of Los Angeles through inclusive bike tours, said founder Aimee Gilchrist.

“This type of active storytelling isn't complete without including the rich collection of Mexican-American history that is the foundation for the Los Angeles we know today. For decades, historians have made names like Mulholland, Doheny, Griffith and Chandler commonplace while important Californio figures like Pico, Micheltorena, Vallejo and Pacheco are hardly mentioned at all. When I ran across PMA on Instagram, I began brainstorming ways to collaborate with them on an educational project and a self-guided bicycle tour series seemed like the perfect match for both of us. The hope is that one day in the future, we can ride as a group and reveal these important stories for generations to come.”

The bike tour begins and ends at Union Station with stops at Fletcher Bowron Square, the LA Times Building, Chinatown and Abel Stearns House. For more information, visit LAExplorersclub.com or see our attached brochure.

