



# THE CALIFORNIO

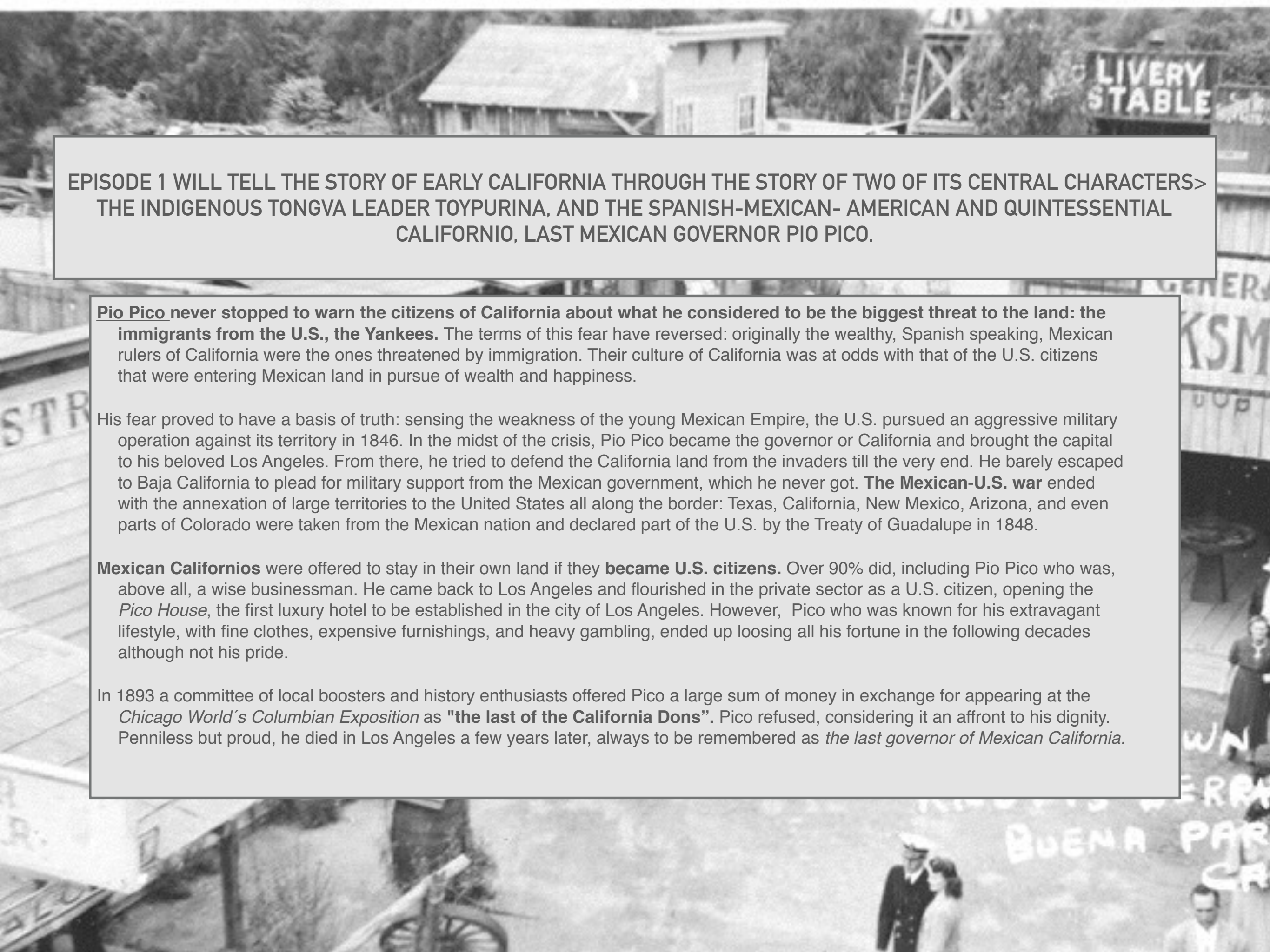


We find ourselves threatened by hordes of Yankee immigrants”.

"What are we to do then? Shall we remain supine, while these daring strangers are overrunning our fertile plains, and gradually *outnumbering and displacing* us? Shall these incursions go on unchecked, until we shall become strangers in our own land?"

## PÍO PICO

LAST MEXICAN GOVERNOR OF ALTA CALIFORNIA 1848,  
TALKING ABOUT IMMIGRANTS FROM THE U.S.



EPISODE 1 WILL TELL THE STORY OF EARLY CALIFORNIA THROUGH THE STORY OF TWO OF ITS CENTRAL CHARACTERS> THE INDIGENOUS TONGVA LEADER TOYPURINA, AND THE SPANISH-MEXICAN- AMERICAN AND QUINTESSENTIAL CALIFORNIO, LAST MEXICAN GOVERNOR PIO PICO.

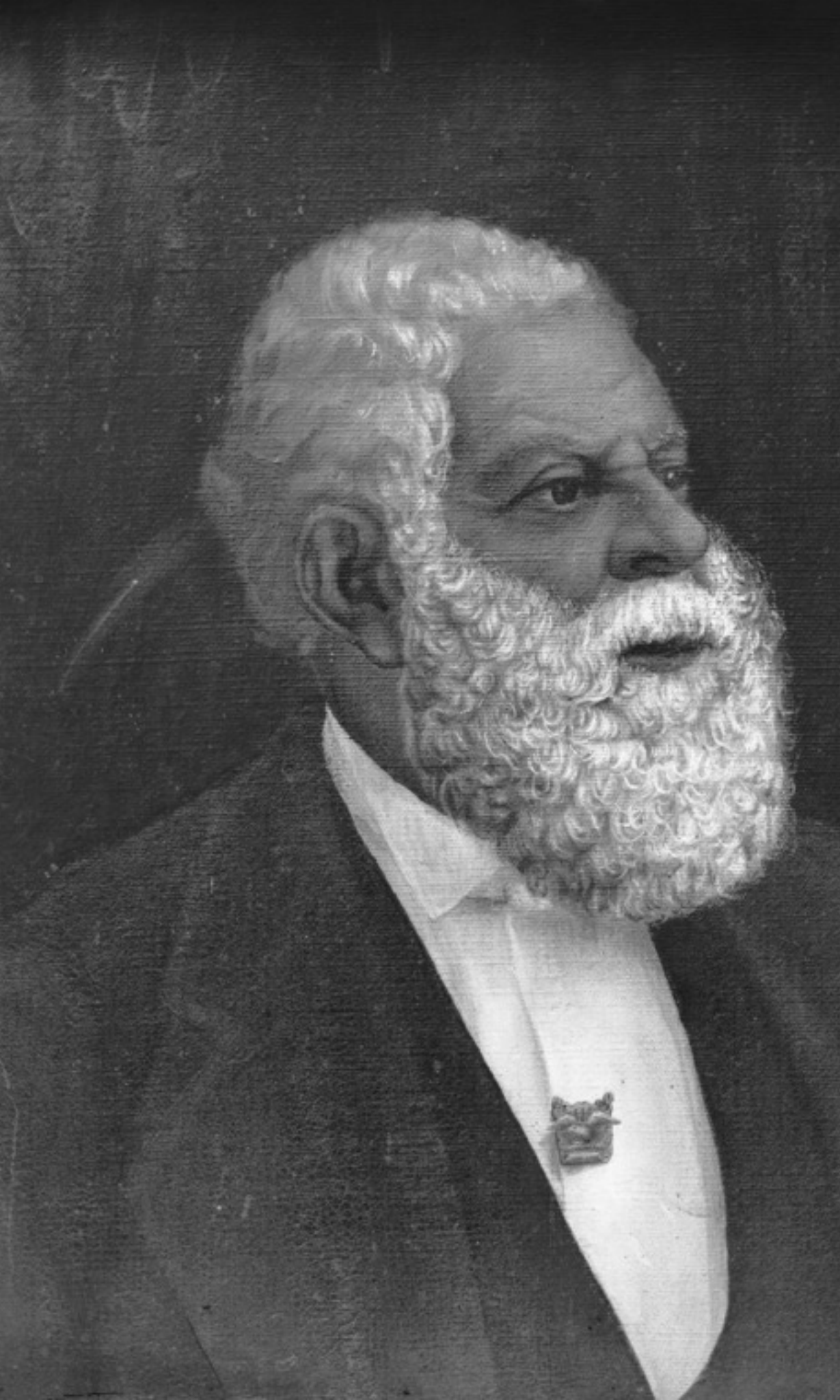
**Pio Pico** never stopped to warn the citizens of California about what he considered to be the biggest threat to the land: the immigrants from the U.S., the Yankees. The terms of this fear have reversed: originally the wealthy, Spanish speaking, Mexican rulers of California were the ones threatened by immigration. Their culture of California was at odds with that of the U.S. citizens that were entering Mexican land in pursue of wealth and happiness.

His fear proved to have a basis of truth: sensing the weakness of the young Mexican Empire, the U.S. pursued an aggressive military operation against its territory in 1846. In the midst of the crisis, Pio Pico became the governor of California and brought the capital to his beloved Los Angeles. From there, he tried to defend the California land from the invaders till the very end. He barely escaped to Baja California to plead for military support from the Mexican government, which he never got. **The Mexican-U.S. war** ended with the annexation of large territories to the United States all along the border: Texas, California, New Mexico, Arizona, and even parts of Colorado were taken from the Mexican nation and declared part of the U.S. by the Treaty of Guadalupe in 1848.

**Mexican Californios** were offered to stay in their own land if they **became U.S. citizens**. Over 90% did, including Pio Pico who was, above all, a wise businessman. He came back to Los Angeles and flourished in the private sector as a U.S. citizen, opening the *Pico House*, the first luxury hotel to be established in the city of Los Angeles. However, Pico who was known for his extravagant lifestyle, with fine clothes, expensive furnishings, and heavy gambling, ended up losing all his fortune in the following decades although not his pride.

In 1893 a committee of local boosters and history enthusiasts offered Pico a large sum of money in exchange for appearing at the *Chicago World's Columbian Exposition* as "**the last of the California Dons**". Pico refused, considering it an affront to his dignity. Penniless but proud, he died in Los Angeles a few years later, always to be remembered as *the last governor of Mexican California*.





“

I do not intend to go to the big show to be one of the animals on exhibit. If those gringos imagine for a moment that they can take me back there and show me in a side tent at two bits a head they are very much mistaken.”

## PIO PICO

LOS ANGELES TIMES INTERVIEW, IN RESPONSE TO THE INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE WORLD FAIR AS “THE LAST DON OF CALIFORNIA”

# HISTORICAL APPROACH

AS THE FIRST EPISODE OF THE SEASON, THIS EPISODE SHOULD SET THE TONE AND THE GENERAL APPROACH TO THE REEXAMINATION OF THE HIDDEN, FORGOTTEN OR MISUNDERSTOOD ASPECTS OF THE HISTORY OF LOS ANGELES.

FOR THIS REASON THIS EPISODE MUST ACCOMPLISH A DOBLE OBJECTIVE: NOT ONLY TO UNDERSTAND BUT ALSO TO SUBVERT MISCONCEPTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH ONE OF THE MOST OBSCURE CHAPTERS OF OUR HISTORY> THE SPANISH OCCUPATION OF THE LAND AND THE MISSION SYSTEM OF COLONIZATION. ON ONE HAND, WE MUST EXPOSE THE HISTORY OF THE LAND PREVIOUS TO ITS INCORPORATION TO THE UNITED STATES; ON THE OTHER, WE MUST ALSO QUESTION THE ROLES AND MOTIVATIONS OF THE KEY CHARACTERS ON THIS STORY.





# TOPONYMS

THE LOST STORY OF L.A. IS OFTEN VISIBLE IN THE MAPS. LOS ANGELES STILL USES A FEW TOPONYMS THAT REMAIN FROM THE TONGVA LANGUAGE: *CAHUENGA*, *TOPANGA* OR *TUJUNGA*, AMONG OTHERS.

A LOT MORE HAS SURVIVED IN THE MAPS FROM THE HISPANIC CULTURES THAT FOUNDED MODERN LOS ANGELES. THE MISSION ORIGINAL NAMES ARE WELL AND ALIVE ALL OVER THE COUNTY: SAN GABRIEL, SAN FERNANDO OR PUEBLO OF LOS ANGELES ITSELF TO NAME A FEW. FROM THE MORE RECENT - BUT OFTEN MORE IGNORED - CALIFORNIO ERA WE CAN STILL TRACE DOZENS OF CLUES THAT REVEAL THE SPANISH MEXICAN FOUNDING OF THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES, AFTER TWO CENTURIES OF ATTEMPTS TO ERASE OR DISTORT THIS INHERITANCE.

FROM LA BREA TO LA CIENEGA, FROM LOS FELIZ TO PICO, FIGUEROA, ALVARADO OR SEPULVEDA, THE MOST FORGOTTEN STORY OF THIS CITY IS HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT, READY TO BE FOUND IN CONTEMPORARY LOS ANGELES BY ANYBODY WHO CARES TO RECOGNIZE IT.







# VISUAL APPROACH



# ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE

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This first episode of the season will rely heavily on the available archival visual footage to illustrate the story.

A creative approach to motion graphics and photo treatment will be explored in order to bring photographs and graphics to life



# INTERVIEWS WITH EXPERTS

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Interviews with experts on the different subjects and periods covered here are key to sustain the structure of the story and will be shot in a visual manner consistent with the rest of the series.

This interviews will give context to the materials and advance the story, sometimes offering contrasting opinions about the subject.

- WILLIAM DEVERELL, AUTHOR OF *WHITEWASHED ADOBE AND RAILROAD CROSSING*
- WILLIAM D. ESTRADA, AUTHOR OF *LOS ANGELES PLAZA*
- LAURA PULIDO, CHICANO/A STUDIES SCHOLAR AND CO-AUTHOR OF *A PEOPLE'S GUIDE TO LOS ANGELES*
- JOHN MACK FARAGHER, AUTHOR OF *ETERNITY STREET* (YALE)
- PHOEBE S. K. YOUNG, AUTHOR OF *CALIFORNIA VIEJA* (COLORADO)
- STEVEN HACKEL, JUNIPERO SERRA BIOGRAPHER
- BENJAMIN MADLEY, AUTHOR OF *AN AMERICAN GENOCIDE*
- CARLOS MANUEL SALOMON, *PICO* BIOGRAPHER



# FILMING ON LOCATION

Los Angeles contemporary sites and scenes will be filmed on location to contest, illustrate or respond to the archival footage and expert interviews.



- TONGVA PEOPLE: scenes with contemporary Tongva community:
  - THE LETTER from the GABRIELENO/TONGVA PEOPLE TO THE POPE against the CANONIZATION OF FRAY JUNIPERO.
  - A CLASS OF THE TONGVA LANGUAGE, TODAY EXTINCT.
  - A REHEARSAL FOR THE PLAY TOYPURINA WITH ONE OF THE WRITERS, ANDREW MORALES, of Tongva descent.

- THE SAN GABRIEL MISSION
- TOYPURINA MURAL, EAST L.A.
- OLVERA STREET
- THE PICO HOUSE
- PICO DESCENDANTS IN BOYLE HEIGHTS





**THANKS**

