

New Directory Focuses on Little-Known Archival and Historic Collections about the History of Los Angeles

Publication Is Culmination of Four-Year Partnership between the Getty Research Institute and 200 Los Angeles Cultural Organizations
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LOS ANGELES, Calif. --The first directory of less visible archives and collections related to the history of Los Angeles is being published and distributed on June 7, 1999.

"Cultural Inheritance/L.A.: A Resource Directory of Less Visible Archives and Collections in the Los Angeles Region" is the result of a four-year project by L.A. as Subject, a research project of the Getty Research Institute, in partnership with more than 200 local community museums, libraries, government offices, universities, neighborhood organizations, places of worship, scholars and artists.

The 350-page resource directory identifies and defines 178 little-known private and public archives and collections about the Los Angeles region, which include documents, photographs, and a wealth of other primary source materials. Most of these resources are unpublished and previously have not been easily accessible to scholars, researchers, and artists. The broad range of collections represented includes the Automobile Club of Southern California's History Archive, the Sephardic Temple Tifereth Israel, the Public Utilities History Center, the International Gay and Lesbian Archive, the Antelope Valley Indian Museum, the Italian Oral History Project, and the archives and collections of the Western States Black Resource and Educational Center.

"We wanted to shed light on interesting resources about the history and culture of the Los Angeles region that until now have either been on the margins of credible source materials, or simply not known," said Karen Stokes, Project Manager for "L.A. as Subject." "We hope the directory will be indispensable as a resource tool in promoting new research, scholarship, and artistic production about the Los Angeles region."

Among the collections documented are the Immanuel Presbyterian Church Registry, which reflects the transition of every ethnic community that has lived in the mid-Wilshire and Koreatown/Pico-Union neighborhoods; the private collection of Hirokazu Kosaka, which traces the history of Japanese immigration in California; and the archives of Dan Kwong, which sheds light on Japanese internment and the political nuance in the relationship between Japanese and Chinese American citizens during WWII. Also included is the Western States Black Resource and Educational Center, which holds more than 12,000 volumes of rare papers, photographs, and poetry, as well as an extensive collection of films produced by African-Americans.

The directory will be released, accompanied by an online version, at a symposium at the Getty Center on June 7-8. Titled "Mapping L.A.: A Global Prototype," the event will bring together scholars, researchers, and community heritage preservationists. Using "mapping" as a metaphor for how Los Angeles is studied, examined, and translated, participants will examine methods and practices of mapping --social, cognitive, political, electronic and cartographic --and the implications of drawing them together. The program will also include a video conference between Los Angeles and the "Stories Exchange Project" in Prague, focusing on comparative international dimensions of mapping cultural heritage. The second day of the symposium is open to the public (see enclosed agenda).

In conjunction with the launch of the directory, exhibitions at two venues showcase local archives and collections. "Illuminating Visual Culture, Artifacts, and Documents: the Harbor and Coastal Cities Corridor" at the Social and Public Art Resource Center (SPARC) in Venice features cultural materials that reflect the transformative histories of communities in the coastal cities between Ventura County and Orange County. This exhibition opened on May 22 and will run through July 22. "Expressions in the Gallery: Less Visible Material Culture in the Central City Corridor" at the Watts Labor Community Action Committee (WLCAC) represents the social, cultural, and economic histories of communities in the area bounded by L.A. Civic Center to the north, East Los Angeles to the east, West Los Angeles to the west, and Watts to the south. It opened May 22 and will close June 30. For more information on the exhibitions, please call (310) 440-6222.

To receive a complimentary copy of the directory, please call (310) 440-6222.