

# GHOSTS OF USC

## A Historical Immersive Haunt

Thursday, October 26, 2023 –  
 Sunday, October 29, 2023  
 Kerckhoff Hall  
 734 W. Adams Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90089

For production info and artist bios,  
 visit [bit.ly/VVProgram-GhostsofUSC](https://bit.ly/VVProgram-GhostsofUSC)

### KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

- This event is a collaboration between students and faculty at the USC School of Dramatic Arts and the USC School of Cinematic Arts along with the theater group Company of Angels.
- The immersive, walk-through experience will transport you to 1880, the year USC was founded.

### LOS ANGELES IN 1880

USC was founded in 1880, a time when Los Angeles was just beginning to be developed from a small town into the metropolis we know today. In 1880, it had been about a century since the Spanish governor Felipe de Neve founded the pueblo of Los Angeles on unceded Tongva land (1781), and about three decades since the United States took control of California from Mexico after the Mexican-American War (1848) and, shortly thereafter, California became a U.S. state (1850).



It was in the 1880s that the population of what we now know as Los Angeles began to grow significantly, with the completion of railroad lines that linked Southern California to the rest of the United States along with a real estate boom and L.A. boosterism—touting the region’s fertile land and the health benefits of the weather—drawing new residents to L.A. It was a decade before oil would be discovered in L.A. in 1892.

The Los Angeles of the late nineteenth century was a place of farmlands (notable crops included citrus and wine grapes), migration, growth, and development. It was a time of many firsts in the growing city: L.A.’s first bank, first synagogue, first AME church, first labor union, first kindergarten, and first universities—St. Vincent’s (now LMU) in 1865 and USC in 1880—were established in this era. The first L.A. streetlights were lit in the 1860s, and the first trolleys—drawn by horses—started up in the 1870s. Houses were numbered for the first time in 1870 to create a city directory, and in 1881, the first issue of the *Los Angeles Times* was published, as the *Los Angeles Daily Times*.

The era was also a time of demographic change, ethnic conflicts, and racist violence such as the mob massacre in 1871 of 19 Chinese immigrants—more than 10 percent of L.A.’s small Chinese population at the time—amid national anti-immigrant hostilities. In this era, white residents became a majority in L.A. for the first time, and over the course of a generation white Americans and European immigrants replaced Mexicans in L.A.’s government. African Americans migrated to L.A. after the Civil War. As in cities across the United States, immigrants and members of minority communities often faced substandard living conditions, low wages, and discrimination—though they were also often the people building the railroads and other infrastructure that facilitated the growth of the new city.

1880 was a few years before Hollywood was conceptualized as a real estate subdivision in 1887. It would be another few decades before the first film was completed in Hollywood (*The Count of Monte Cristo* in 1908).

Sources: *The Oakland Museum of California*, *Los Angeles Public Library*, *LA Almanac*, *Discover Los Angeles*, *Britannica*



University of Southern California Freshmen Picnic, CA, 1889



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Kerckhoff Hall, University of Southern California  
730-746 W. Adams Blvd., Los Angeles, CA



College of Liberal Arts, University of Southern California, 1880s

## TUDOR REVIVAL ARCHITECTURE

The Tudor period in England and Wales occurred from 1485 to 1603, encompassing the Elizabethan era. What we think of today as Tudor architecture mostly dates to the early part of the era, before the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. Characteristics of Tudor architecture include steeply pitched roofs with many gables, groups of rectangular windows, bay windows, brickwork and half-timbering, and impressive chimneys.

Tudor Revival architecture emerged in England in the late nineteenth century, and became popular in the United States soon after, especially in the first decades of the twentieth century. Steve Carney suggested in the *L.A. Times* in 2015 that Tudor Revival architecture was popular in early-twentieth-century Los Angeles because it evoked a quiet English country life in the midst of a burgeoning new city. The Getty House, the L.A. mayor's official residence, was built in this style in 1921.

USC's Kerckhoff Hall was built in 1909 in the Tudor Revival style and originally the home of William and Louise Kerckhoff, whose family ran the Kerckhoff-Cuzner Mill and Lumber Company. After the 1880s building boom in Los Angeles, William Kerckhoff became an active utilities developer in the growing city, and both he and his wife turned to philanthropy, with charitable donations to both UCLA and USC. Their home was eventually donated to USC in 1946.

## COMPANY OF ANGELS

Company of Angels is the oldest non-profit professional equity waiver theater in Los Angeles, and is dedicated to creating theater that is connected to the community. The company was founded in 1959 by actors including Leonard Nimoy, Richard Chamberlain, Vic Morrow, and Vic Tayback to provide a space for theater artists to work at their craft free of commercial constraints. The company has produced more than 500 plays and also runs programs for playwrights and offers arts education for local youth.

## FOR FURTHER REFLECTION

- ⦿ How do you picture Los Angeles in 1880? What might your life have been like in 1880 L.A.?
- ⦿ What ghosts were you thinking about as you moved through the space?
- ⦿ What do you know about the histories of the buildings you live in or take classes in?
- ⦿ How do you picture Los Angeles in 2080? 2180?



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## IF YOU LIKED THIS EVENT, YOU MIGHT WANT TO CHECK OUT:

- Upcoming Visions and Voices events:
  - 11/30/23:** Experience LA trip to the [LA Opera: \*El Último Sueño de Frida y Diego\*](#) (open to USC Students only)
  - 1/13-1/28/24:** [Sacrifice Zone: Los Angeles—An Immersive Installation and Performance](#)
  - 1/25-1/31/24:** [Blood Baby](#)
  - 3/21/24:** [About Face: Women, War, and Re-envisioning Troy](#)
- Company of Angels website | [companyofangels.org](http://companyofangels.org)
- Lost L.A.* on PBS | [pbs.org/show/lost-la](http://pbs.org/show/lost-la)
- Angel City Press | [angelcitypress.com](http://angelcitypress.com)
- Classes and events at the USC School of Dramatic Arts [dramaticarts.usc.edu](http://dramaticarts.usc.edu)
- Classes and events at the USC School of Cinematic Arts [cinema.usc.edu](http://cinema.usc.edu)

## DISCOVER MORE AT THE USC LIBRARIES

**ADAM SEXTON** of the USC Libraries selected the following resources to help you learn more about this event. Electronic resources are accessible through the search bar on the USC Libraries homepage at [libraries.usc.edu](http://libraries.usc.edu) but may require the user to log in using their USC credentials.

### BOOKS

- Glen Creason, [Los Angeles in Maps](#) (New York: Rizzoli, 2010)
- Charles Epting, [University Park, Los Angeles: A Brief History](#) (Charleston: The History Press, 2013)
- Manuel P Servín, [Southern California and Its University: A History of USC 1880–1964](#) (Los Angeles: W. Ritchie, 1969)
- Sarah Tieck, [Ghosts](#) (Minneapolis: Big Buddy Books, 2016)
- Elizabeth Tucker, [Haunted Halls: Ghostlore of American College Campuses](#) (Jackson: Univ. Press of Mississippi, 2007)

### DATABASES

- [LA as Subject](#)
- [USC Digital Library](#)

### JOURNAL

- [The Skeptical Inquirer](#)

### RESEARCH GUIDE

- [The Monsters Are Real! SEL Fall Exhibit](#)



LA Opera: *El Último Sueño de Frida y Diego*

