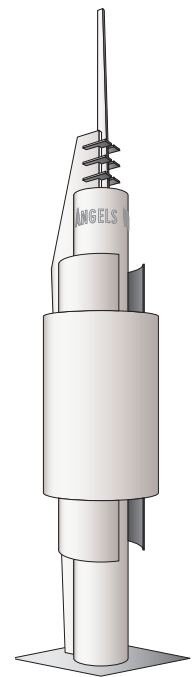


Angels Walk Highland Park Select Stanchions

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ANGELS WALK HIGHLAND PARK



HIGHLAND THEATRE

A GRAND OPENING NIGHT

Highland Park's palatial Highland Theatre opened on March 2, 1925 and quickly became the place of choice for entertainment in the neighborhood. Inside the elegant auditorium was a balcony, full orchestra pit, and a working stage for vaudeville acts. With 1,432 seats, it had a larger capacity than the Sunbeam Theatre, located just one block over. The opening was emceed by popular film actor Gerard Montgomery Bluefeather, better known by his stage name, Monte Blue. Also in attendance was Canadian-American actress Norma Shearer, who christened the cinema with a sacrificial bottle of champagne. The first film shown at the theater was one in which Norma Shearer starred, *A Lady of the Night*.

THE AGE OF THE MOVIE PALACE

In the silent film era, theater architecture was an important aspect of the spectacle and experience. In 1924, Lewis Arthur Smith designed the Highland Theatre, and gave the exterior its fashionable Moorish-inspired look. The interior was extensively decorated with elaborate moldings, large ceiling frescoes, metalwork, and murals. However, the theater's most eye-catching feature has always been its large rooftop sign advertising its presence with hundreds of glowing incandescent bulbs.

THEATER ARCHITECT, LEWIS ARTHUR SMITH

L.A. Smith, as he was professionally known, was a noted and prolific theater architect. He was born in Ohio to German immigrant parents, but by 1910 was living in Los Angeles, where he designed nearly forty movie theaters. Although many have since been demolished, and most of the rest repurposed, his work was eventually recognized. Some surviving examples are Los Feliz's Vista, North Hollywood's El Portal, Pasadena's Bard's Egyptian, and South Pasadena's Rialto theaters, all of which featured either films or live entertainment.

CHANGING TIMES

The Highland Theatre was also a live performance space and in its early days featured vaudeville acts. During World War II, the theater hosted benefits to raise money for war bonds and to pay tribute to fallen soldiers. The Sunbeam was purchased from Dorner & Dice by the Highland's owners and closed, but in 1936, new competition arose with the arrival of two smaller theaters: the Franklin Theatre at Figueroa and Avenue 55, and the Park Theatre at Figueroa and Avenue 59. For fifteen years, these four blocks of Figueroa formed a small but thriving theater district.

The growth of television in the 1950s killed off many first-run theaters in Los Angeles. The Franklin went dark in 1952. The Park lasted until 1963. The Highland weathered declining fortunes into the 1970s, when the owners resorted to screening content not offered on television—namely, pornographic films. Highland Park residents mobilized and picketed the theater, which shut down in 1974. In 1975, it was purchased by Arman Akarakian, who returned mainstream programming and added Spanish-language films and children's matinees on weekends.

Akarakian also, like many theater owners in the 1980s, subdivided the formerly single-screen theater into a triplex. Wall curtains were hung and drop ceilings were installed. The balcony was boarded up and turned into storage space. In 1991, it was designated Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument No. 549. Remarkably, none of Figueroa's old cinemas have been demolished, but only the Highland Theatre outlasted the others in business as a movie house. Even more spectacular, its brilliant rooftop sign remains alight, serving as an icon of the neighborhood.

HIGHLAND THEATRE



The Franklin High School band poses for a group photo outside the Highland Theatre, c. 1936.



HIGHLAND THEATRE

ANGELS WALK HIGHLAND PARK

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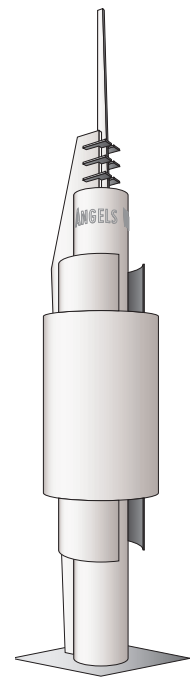
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For more information about Angels Walk LA and to download a guidebook to accompany this, and other historical walks, please visit www.angelswalkla.org.

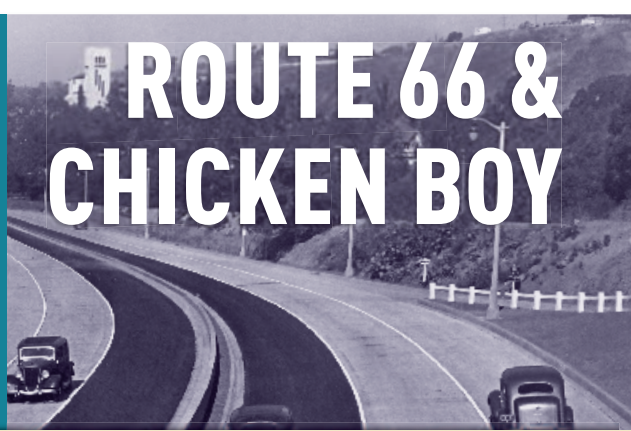


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ANGELS WALK HIGHLAND PARK



ROUTE 66 & CHICKEN BOY

AMERICA'S MOTHER ROAD

U.S. Route 66, established in 1926, was one of the original highways of the United States Highway System. It originally ran from Chicago, Illinois in the east to its western terminus in Downtown Los Angeles, on Broadway. To drum up publicity for the road, the U.S. Highway 66 Association organized the First International Transcontinental Foot Race, utilizing Route 66 for the section between Los Angeles and Chicago, but it was always clear that Route 66 was designed primarily for the automobile. During the Great Depression of the 1930s, many families used it to migrate from the Dust Bowl of the plains to California in search of agricultural work. It was also promoted as an easy way for tourists to visit the 1932 Olympics in Los Angeles. In 1936, Route 66 was extended from downtown to the Pacific Coast Highway in Santa Monica.



On the 83rd anniversary in 2009, of the famous highway's inception, the end of the Santa Monica Pier was declared the official stopping point of Route 66.

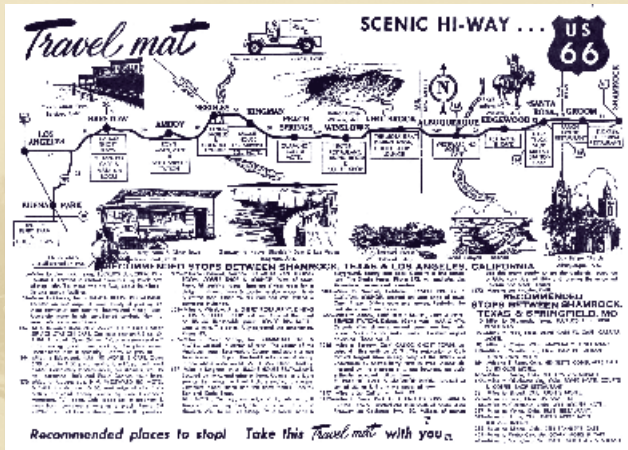
HIGHLAND PARK'S MAIN STREET

The path of Route 66 changed several times during its existence. In Los Angeles County, most alignments incorporated parts of Foothill Boulevard, Huntington Drive, and Colorado Boulevard. In Highland Park, from its inception until 1934, the route ran along Pasadena Avenue (later changed to North Figueroa Street). It was briefly rerouted from 1936-1940



Looking south on North Figueroa Street from Avenue 57, c. 1955.

Chicken Boy holds a bucket of the "best chicken in town."



This Route 66 Travel Mat map guides travelers from Shamrock, Texas to Los Angeles, providing recommended hotels and eateries along the way.

before returning again to Figueroa. That year, the newly completed Arroyo Seco Parkway was incorporated into Route 66's course. By then, the highway itself was increasingly becoming its own attraction, and in 1946, it inspired songwriter Bobby Troup's classic



Postcard featuring an image of Route 66 along the newly incorporated Arroyo Seco Parkway.

composition, "(Get Your Kicks on) Route 66." In 1964, Route 66 was truncated to Pasadena. The famous road was decommissioned altogether in 1985, but remained an iconic symbol of the freedom and adventure offered by the open road. In Southern California its route remains navigable via a network of interstate highways, freeways, and surface streets, including Highland Park's North Figueroa Street.



Bobby Troup's "Route 66" was first recorded by Nat King Cole in 1946.



ROUTE 66 & CHICKEN BOY

ROADSIDE CHICKEN BOY

Any road that Route 66 ever utilized retains something of its recognizable retro charm. Route 66 encouraged the proliferation of automobile-oriented businesses like motor courts, drive-thru restaurants, and motels. The Monterey Auto Camp was established in Hermon by Elmer Drummond around 1923. Further down the road, the first McDonald's was established in 1948 along Route 66 in San Bernardino. Various means



The first McDonald's in San Bernardino, California, c. 1948.

were employed to catch the eye of the many motorists driving by. Neon or incandescent signs, such as one atop the Highland Theatre, visible from a distance, functioned like beacons.

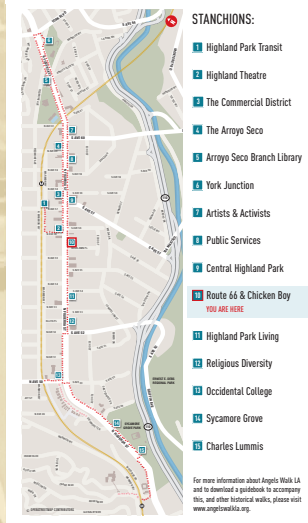
Although the iconic Chicken Boy sculpture arrived on its roost atop Future Studio Design and Gallery long after the demise of Route 66, the larger-than-life fiberglass figure very much embodies the tradition of bold kitsch designed to draw the attention of Route 66 drivers. The sculpture's figure was designed



The original Downtown Los Angeles Chicken Boy restaurant and statue.

and manufactured by International Fiberglass, a Venice-based company that created tall figures colloquially known as "muffler men," as they often held mufflers. They were also customized to hold axes, hot dogs, and in the case of Chicken Boy, a bucket of fried chicken. From 1969-1984, he towered over a restaurant of the same name, located on Broadway in Downtown Los Angeles. After the restaurant closed, he was acquired by artist Amy Inouye. In 2007, she moved him to his current Highland Park location to stand as one of the most loved and recognizable landmarks in the community.

ANGELS WALK HIGHLAND PARK



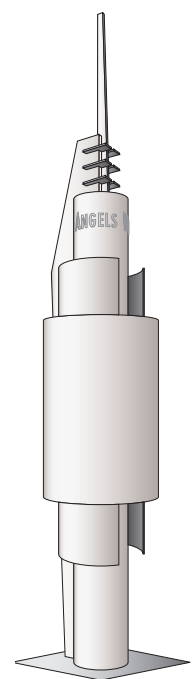
Top & bottom photo: First motorists traveling the new Arroyo Seco Parkway at the Avenue 57 bridge. The Southwest Museum can be seen in the distance.



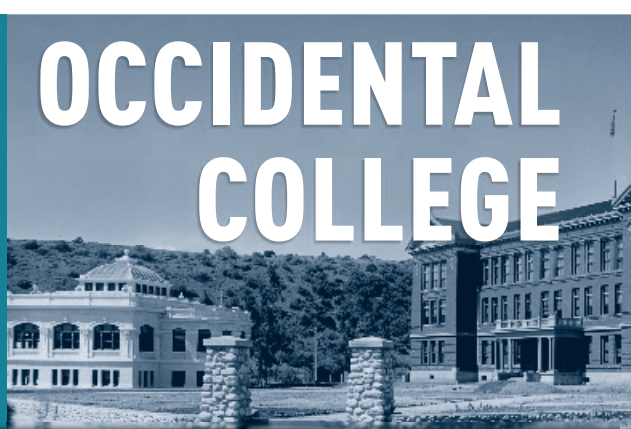
Top & bottom photo: Chicken Boy statue for the leg of the Chicken Boy statue in Highland Park, Los Angeles.

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ANGELS WALK HIGHLAND PARK



Occidental College students having a picnic, c. 1912.

LOS ANGELES' OLDEST LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGE

Venerable Occidental College is the oldest liberal arts college in Los Angeles. Although a fixture of the Eagle Rock neighborhood for over a century, it was located in Highland Park for a short time. The college was founded in Boyle Heights in 1887, by members of the Presbyterian Church. Its first year tuition was only \$50 and the founding class consisted of forty enrolled students. A fire destroyed the original

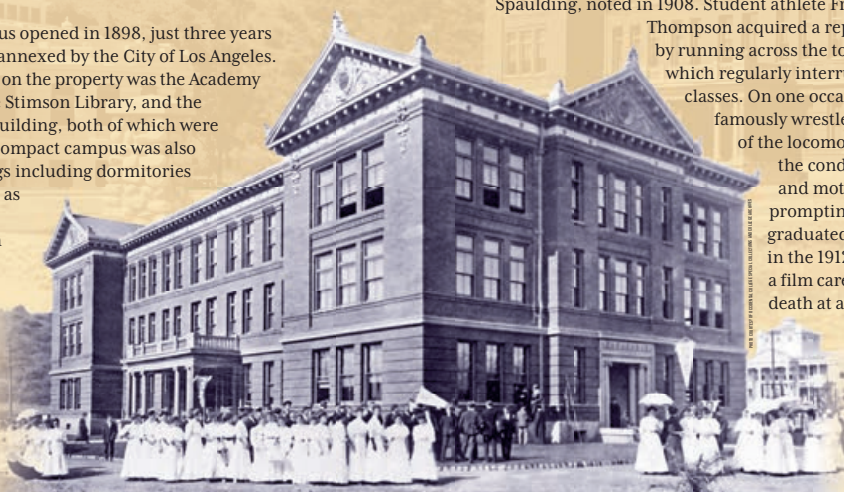
school, leading to a temporary relocation to Downtown Los Angeles in 1896. In 1897, under school president Reverend Guy W. Wadsworth, Occidental relocated to ten acres of land in Highland Park conveniently bisected by the Los Angeles and San Gabriel Valley Railroad, and donated by Sarah Judson, wife of Highland Park developer Albert H. Judson.



A sweeping view of Highland Park in the 1920s. Near the center of the photo, Occidental's Stimson Library and Hall of Arts and Letters can be seen.

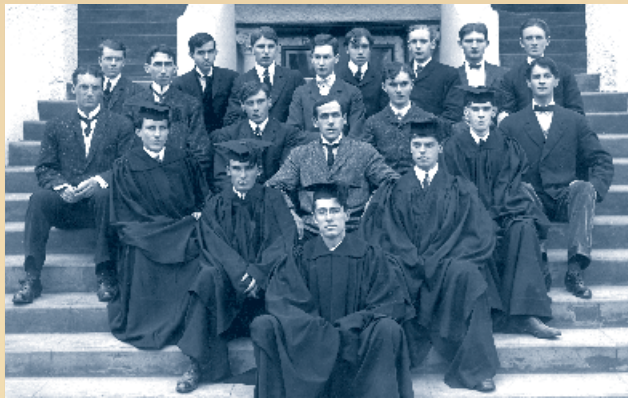
OCCIDENTAL COMES TO HIGHLAND PARK

The Highland Park campus opened in 1898, just three years after Highland Park was annexed by the City of Los Angeles. The first building erected on the property was the Academy Building, followed by the Stimson Library, and the Hall of Arts and Letters building, both of which were completed in 1904. The compact campus was also home to smaller buildings including dormitories and a science lab, as well as an athletic field. Nearby Sycamore Terrace, which was a short walk from campus, was known as "Professors Row," and was home to many of the school's faculty.



Cooks gather outside of the Hall of Arts and Letters, possibly for a graduation ceremony, c. 1904.

OCCIDENTAL COLLEGE



Poet and alumni, Robinson Jeffers (third row, far left), can be seen in this Occidental College Literary Club photo, c. 1904.

NOTABLE ALUMNI AND GUESTS

During Occidental's Highland Park period, it graduated several famous alumni including poet and environmentalist Robinson Jeffers, who wrote for the school's literary journal and graduated in 1905. Occidental College maintains a large collection of his work. Occidental's first Rhodes Scholar was Clarence Spaulding, noted in 1908. Student athlete Fred

Thompson acquired a reputation by running across the tops of trains, which regularly interrupted classes. On one occasion, he famously wrestled control of the locomotive from the conductor and motorman, prompting threats of a lawsuit. Thompson graduated in 1910 and went on to participate in the 1912 Olympics. He then embarked on a film career that was cut short by an early death at age 38 from pneumonia. Furthermore, two U.S. presidents visited the Highland Park campus: Theodore Roosevelt in 1909, and William Howard Taft in 1911.



Occidental College Professor John Alexander Gordon waits for the trolley to go downtown. Behind him is the large Mission Revival residence known as Glenmary. It was built in 1899 but destroyed by fire six decades later.

OCCIDENTAL LEAVES HIGHLAND PARK

In 1909, it was decided that the campus, barely a decade in Highland Park, would look for a new location. Under new president John Willis Baer, the school chose to relocate to Eagle Rock on 75 acres of land donated by developers James G. Garth, W.A. Roberts, and Ralph Rogers, representatives of a land syndicate that aimed to sell residential lots with Occidental as an enticement. Construction of the new campus began in 1912, and classes commenced in the autumn of 1914.

After moving to its new campus, the Highland Park buildings were repurposed. The Academy Building operated as the Occidental Academy, a college-preparatory school. However, with the building of Franklin High School nearby, principal Charles B. Moore and the student body decided to move, vacating the Academy Building. It was then briefly used as a gymnasium, but was soon demolished. The beautiful Beaux Arts-style Stimson Library was dismantled to make way for a car dealership. Of the three major buildings, only the Oliver P. Dennis and Lyman Farwell-designed Hall of Arts and Letters remains, although



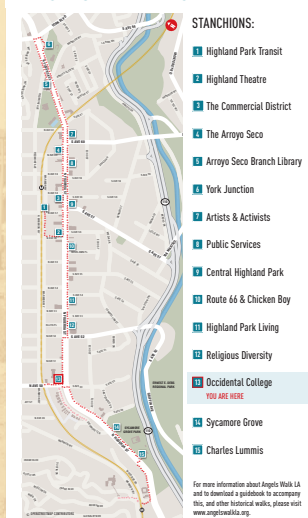
A car dealership was later built on the site of Occidental's Stimson Library; however, what remains (peaked roofs removed) of the Hall of Arts and Letters can be seen directly behind.

not unscathed (its top story was removed). This building later found a second life as an apartment building. In 1993, it was designated Los Angeles Historic Cultural Monument No. 585.



President Taft visits Occidental College, October 16, 1911.

ANGELS WALK HIGHLAND PARK



Top photo: Early Occidental College buildings on Pasadena Avenue near Avenue 50. Bottom photo: View looking up Pasadena Avenue (now North Figueroa Street) showing Occidental's Stimson Library and the Hall of Arts and Letters, c. 1920.



Top photo: Early Occidental College buildings on Pasadena Avenue near Avenue 50. Bottom photo: An Auto Club sign marks Occidental College, c. 1939.