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The riveting history of the legendary gateway to the city of Los Angeles

LOS ANGELES— Against a consistently blue sky, the crisp white clock tower of Union Station sits comfortably in the cityscape of Los Angeles. And each day a steady stream of commuters and tourists pour through its doors while its mission revival architecture speaks to a mythic vision of Spanish heritage, but with streamline moderne and art deco details. At first glance this building, conceived as a gateway to a growing metropolis, offers no hint of the civic, financial, and legal battles surrounding its development—battles that were waged across decades and that went as high as the U.S. Supreme Court. But at the beginning of the twentieth century, the construction of the station was mired in so much controversy that it was almost never built.

Los Angeles Union Station explores this compelling example of how transit and corporations disrupted regional balances of power and political economies. Aided by new research and beautiful drawings from the Getty Research Institute's archive, the authors demonstrate how contentious politics informed architectural design—and the many ways in which Union Station was at the heart of the rise of Los Angeles. From images of horse and carriages on Alameda Street to modern photography of the still stylish station, this rich visual history provides a penetrating glimpse into the political machinations and economic pressures that shaped the station. This book accompanies the exhibition *No Further West*, on view at the Los Angeles Public Library from May 2 through August 10, 2014.

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