

## The Great Wall Of L.A.

Out in North Hollywood, there's an imposing mural, one-half mile long, chronicling the history of California from dinosaurs to television. It's plenty accurate but hardly a pretty picture. From the landing of the Spaniards in the 1500s, to the 1940s where the mural stops, it's one long saga of exploitation and oppression. The Spaniards conquer the Indians,

the Americans conquer the Spaniards. There's the civil war, the land wars, railroads built by Chinese labor, and expansive farms worked by Hispanics. World War I, false prosperity, depression, strikes, World War II, Japanese internment camps, zoot suit riots, segregation. Oh, there are a few moments of progress as well, such as the discovery of electricity, the baby boom and television. The mural is beautifully painted, much in the style of Mexican muralist Jose Orozco, and it's designed to assume the traditional mural function as well. That is, education. This is the people's version of

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history in white California. Here, those citizens ignored by textbooks may take note of their heritage. Best of all, the mural runs along the Tujunga Wash in the San Fernando Valley, a regular ghetto of white Californians. While it can be seen from passing cars, it is best viewed when walking, jogging, or riding a bike along the path that borders the mural. The better to savor the message.

The mural was painted over the course of many summers by 200 young people, between the ages of 14 and 21, from the county. The project was directed by L.A.'s renowned muralist Judith Baca and sponsored by the Social and Public Art Resource Center (SPARC) in Venice.

This summer, they'll begin painting the 1950s, and we can't wait until they get to the '80s. Individual guides or walking tour pamphlets are available through SPARC at 822-9560.

The mural is north of the Hollywood Freeway, 101. Exit Coldwater Canyon, continue north. The mural is on the west side of Coldwater Canyon between Burbank Blvd. and Oxnard Blvd.

-Hunter Drohojowska