



ELA ANCHOR STANDARD LESSON PLAN

Northrop Presents

Limon Dance Company Matinee Performance

November 17, 2022

Intended Audience: Grades 3–12

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LEARNING TARGET

The students will know who José Limón was, how he developed his art, and why his work is notable.

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COMMON CORE ELA ANCHOR STANDARDS ADDRESSED

LISTENING, SPEAKING, VIEWING, AND EXCHANGING IDEAS 2:

Communicate with others, applying knowledge of vocabulary, language, structure, and features of spoken language, considering audience and context.

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WHAT IS THE LIMÓN DANCE COMPANY?

Founded in 1946 by José Limón and Doris Humphrey, the Limón Dance Company has been at the vanguard of American Modern dance since its inception and is considered one of the world's greatest dance companies.

Acclaimed for its dramatic expression, technical mastery, and expansive, yet nuanced movement, the Limón Dance Company illustrates the timelessness of José Limón's work and vision.

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WHO IS JOSÉ LIMÓN?

Choreographer and dancer José Limón is credited with creating one of the world's most important and enduring dance legacies— an art form responsible for the creation, growth, and support of modern dance in this country.

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WHAT WAS JOSÉ LIMÓN'S EARLY LIFE LIKE?

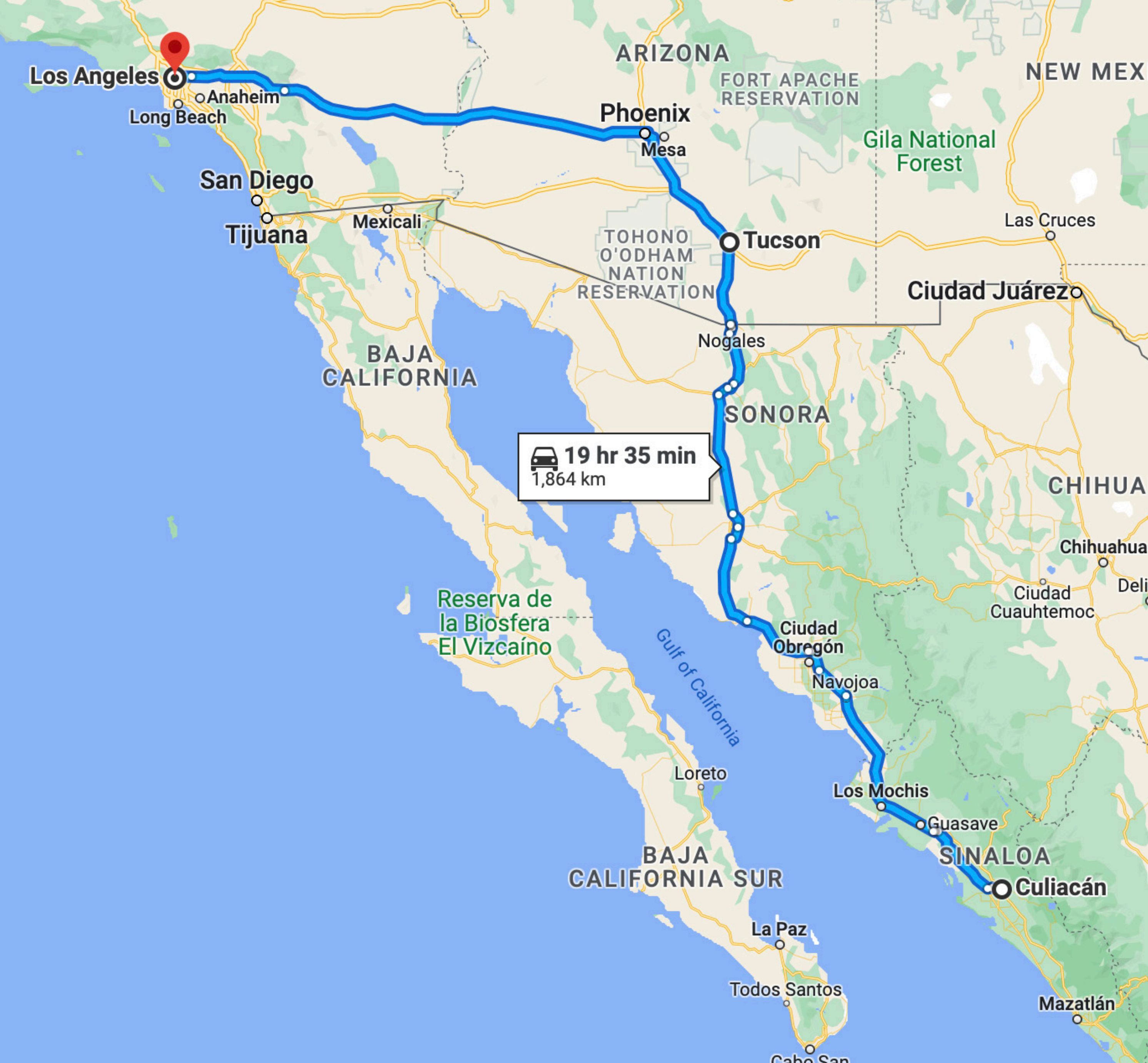
- José Arcadia Limón was born on Jan 12, 1908, in Culiacán, Mexico. His father was a musician and conductor. His mother was the daughter of a school teacher. Limón was the oldest of eleven children, four of whom died in infancy.
- When the Mexican Revolution of 1910 threatened their safety, the Limón family left Culiacán and took up residence in other cities, including Hermosillo and Nogales.

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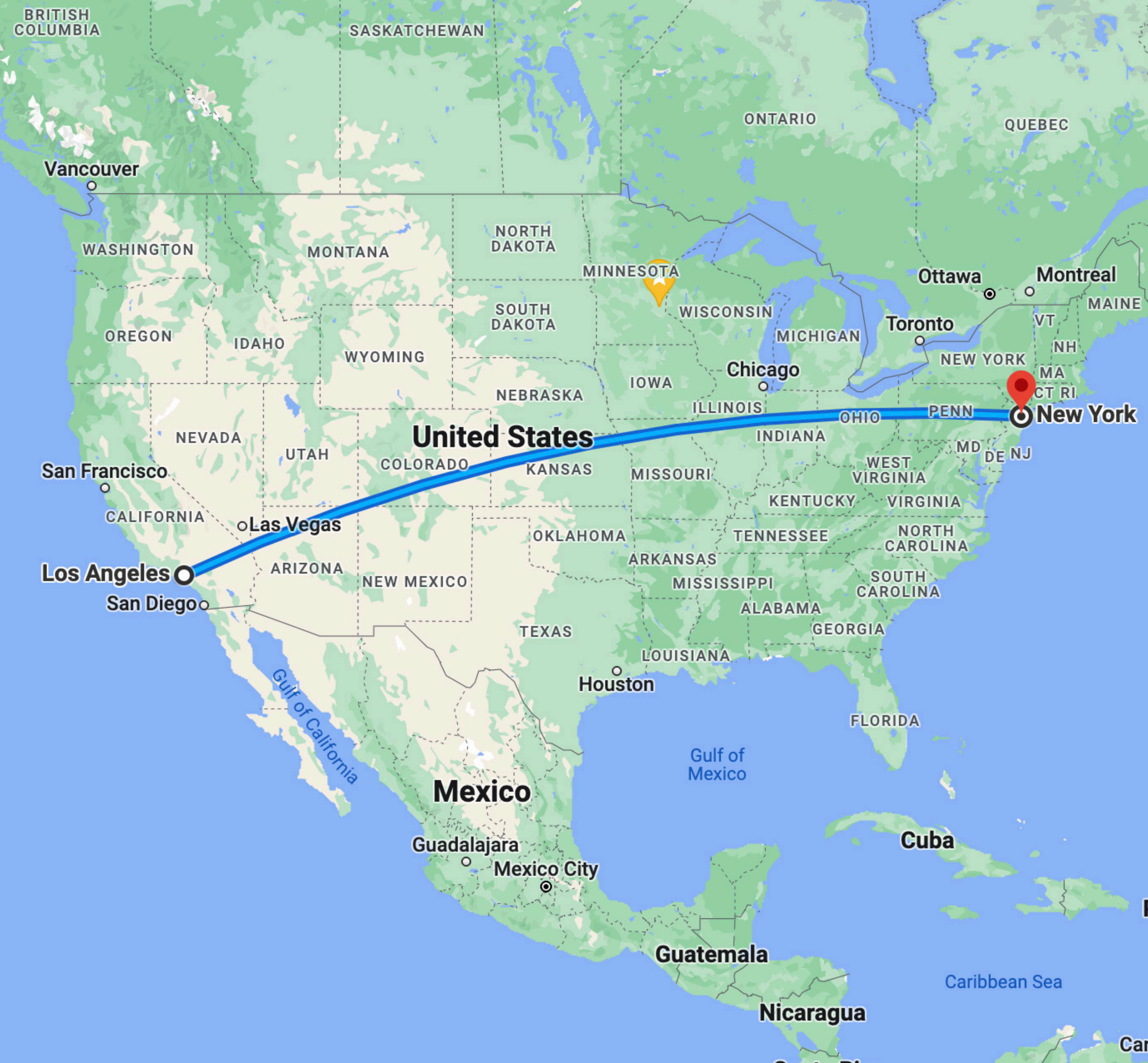
- In 1915, the Limóns emigrated from Mexico to Tucson, Arizona. They later moved to Los Angeles, California.

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HOW WAS JOSÉ LIMÓN EDUCATED?

- José Limón graduated from Los Angeles' Lincoln High School in 1926 and enrolled at the University of California, Los Angeles, to study art. In 1928, however, he left his program and moved to New York.
- In New York, Limón attended a dance performance by Harald Kreutzberg and Yvonne Georgi and was inspired to begin training as a dancer. He studied with Doris Humphrey and Charles Weidman at the Humphrey-Weidman Studio and then danced professionally with their company.

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WHAT WAS JOSÉ LIMÓN'S EARLY DANCE CAREER LIKE?

- In addition to performing with the Humphrey-Weidman Company through 1940, Limón also danced in a number of Broadway productions, including the musical revues *Americana* and *As Thousands Cheer* in 1932 and 1933, respectively.
- In the '30s, Limón also developed his skills as a choreographer. In 1937, he created his first important work, *Danzas Mexicanas*.
- He also taught dance at a half-dozen colleges around the country.

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WHAT DID JOSÉ LIMÓN DO DURING WW2?

- In 1943, Limón was drafted into the United States Army. He initially served as a truck driver in the quartermaster corps, then was transferred to the Special Services Division, where he directed dance performances.
- Limón was discharged at the end of 1945 and became a United States citizen in 1946.

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WHAT HAPPENED TO JOSÉ LIMÓN'S CAREER AFTER WW2?

- He established his own dance company in New York in 1947, hiring Doris Humphrey as his artistic director. He continued to choreograph for himself and his company; his best-known work is *The Moor's Pavane* of 1949, a dance inspired by Shakespeare's *Othello*. Other important works were *The Traitor* (1954) and *The Emperor Jones* (1956).
- In 1951, Limón began to work with Juilliard School in New York, where he would teach for the rest of his career.

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WHAT WERE SOME OF JOSÉ LIMÓN'S AWARDS AND HONORS?

- José Limón and Company was the first dance company to travel abroad on a cultural mission under the United States State Department when they were sent to South America to perform in 1954.
- There were other firsts for Limón and his troupe: They opened the first dance performance at the New York Shakespeare Festival Theatre in Central Park in 1962, and they gave the first dance performance at New York's Lincoln Center in 1963.
- Limón received such honors as the Dance Magazine Award, the Capezio Dance Award and four honorary doctorates.

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WHAT WAS THE END OF JOSÉ LIMÓN'S LIFE LIKE?

- Limón choreographed until the end of his life, creating at least one new piece every year. His final composition, Carlota, premiered in 1972.
- Limón died in 1972.

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WHAT IS JOSÉ LIMÓN'S LEGACY?

- His dance company continues to thrive as the Limón Dance Company; it is part of the José Limón Dance Foundation, a larger entity that oversees Limón's legacy and perpetuates his teaching methods.
- Limón is a role model for Latinx communities throughout the United States.
- Limón was one of the most prominent American choreographers in modern dance.

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WHAT IS JOSÉ LIMÓN'S LEGACY?

- Limón's powerful choreography often focused on human drama, incorporating themes from literature, history or religion.
- Throughout his career, Limón worked to change the image of the male in dance and bring it to a new stature and recognition.

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José Limón electrizó al mundo con

VIDEO: OVERVIEW OF JOSÉ LIMÓN

Watch this introductory video about the José Limón. Click on the image to access the video.

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DIALOGUE

Based on what you have learned thus far, what themes and imagery you experience at the performance?

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YOUR PERFORMANCE AT NORTHROP

What might you experience at the dance performance?

- American modern dance
- Universal challenges of assimilation
- Deep emotions, perhaps of loss and exclusion
- Statements of hope for all humankind
- Expressions of common humanity and compassion

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SEE YOU SOON!

All students are welcome at the University of Minnesota!

The U of M looks forward to seeing YOU at the University of Minnesota soon—and maybe one day as a college student!

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