



A Historical Hub of California



Oxnard, one of California's best-kept secrets, boasts a rich history that includes stunning 19th century architecture, relics of agricultural innovation, cultural landmarks and sites of civic importance.

Located 60 miles north of Los Angeles, Oxnard offers an authentic slice of the prized California lifestyle. Here, visitors can have both a relaxing day at the beach and access to an endless list of unique attractions, including live music, comedy, art, museums, cuisine and more. Affordable, accommodating, and full of adventure, this city is a must-see destination, perfect for a road trip, weekend getaway or family vacation.

OXNARD'S ECLECTIC HISTORY, PREHISTORIC TO PRESENT

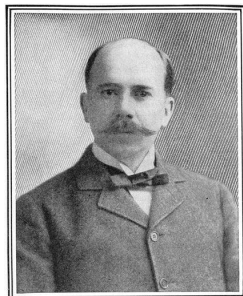
What do woolly mammoths, Spanish missionaries and Cesar Chavez all have in common? It might sound like a trick question, but all three have history in Oxnard. Here's a more detailed list of the city's rich past.

- Oxnard and the nearby Channel Islands were once home to two kinds of mammoths, the prehistoric ancestors of modern-day elephants. In the early 1930s, road workers unearthed an almost-complete specimen of the Columbian mammoth, which is the kind most commonly known to the public. Then, in 1994, a group of paleontologists discovered the fossilized remains of a pygmy mammoth on Santa Rosa Island. According to the Museum of Ventura County, somewhere between 20,000 and 40,000 years ago, a small group of Columbian mammoths swam from the mainland to the islands. Those water-savvy pachyderms ultimately evolved into the smaller species because they required less food to survive.



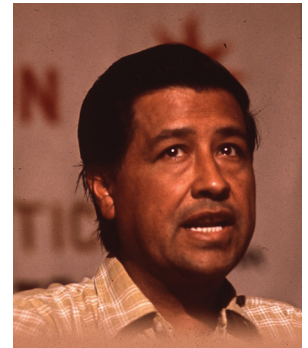
- The earliest evidence of human life in the Americas was also discovered on Santa Rosa Island. The Arlington Springs Man lived more than 13,000 years ago when the four northern Channel Islands were still knitted together as one mega-island, according to curators at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History.
- The native inhabitants of the Channel Islands, Oxnard and other coastal mainlands were primarily Chumash. Called “The First People,” the Chumash lived in round, thatched houses and were known for their well-constructed canoes (called tomol), fine basket work and stone cookware. Their territory once spanned from the beaches of Malibu to Paso Robles.
- In the 1500s colonizers claimed parts of the Americas for the Spanish crown, calling it New Spain. That territory expanded to “Alta California” in the 1700s when Visitador general José de Galvez tasked Franciscan Father Junipero Serra with creating a mission system between Baja and Northern California. Mission San Buenaventura, established in 1782 in nearby Ventura, was the halfway point between the San Diego and Monterey missions. Although a notable historical figure, Father Serra’s statue at Ventura City Hall was removed in July 2020 in the wake of the Black Lives Matter protests, with native groups citing him as an agent of Spanish colonialism who forced them to convert to Catholicism and destroyed their tribes and culture.
- Much of the land was used for cattle ranching, which eventually gave rise to the pueblo life and sprawling ranchos of early Californio families. These families exerted their influence until the State of California was added to the Union in 1850. Around that time, farmers from the East Coast and Europe began moving to the area in search of land and prosperity.

- Henry T. Oxnard, founder and namesake of the city, owned and operated the successful sugar beet factory that generated a population boom and was responsible for the establishment of the City of Oxnard. After several failed attempts to get the state bureaucracy on board with the idea of naming the city “Zachari” after the Greek word for sugar, he settled on his family name instead.
- Oxnard is deeply rooted in the agriculture industry. In the early 1900s, the major crops consisted of barley, beans and beets, which introduced diversity to the industry as many Mexican, Japanese and Chinese workers ventured to Oxnard to find steady employment. The city continued to grow and expand into other industries, namely aerospace,



electronics and manufacturing during World War II, all of which have contributed to the population increase. Oxnard is the largest city in Ventura County.

- During the golden age of Hollywood, Oxnard became a renowned film destination, attracting major studios and stars with its beachfront charm. In 1921, Paramount Studios filmed *The Sheik*, a major motion picture, along the city’s coastline after discovering that it served as the perfect representation of the Egyptian desert.
- In the late 1950s, labor and civil rights leader Cesar Chavez moved to Oxnard, where he started working for the Community Service Organization. This important Latino civil rights group helped train him for future community activism among California’s farmworkers.



HOME TO ESTABLISHMENTS BOTH FAMOUS AND FAMILY-RUN

Oxnard is known as a vibrant and diverse community with people from all walks of life. That multicultural heritage can be found at locations throughout the city, from Channel Islands Harbor to the Golden Chicken Inn on Oxnard Boulevard.

- Head to Henry T. Oxnard Historic District and Heritage Square to see Oxnard’s oldest homes, businesses and cultural sites: The Woolworth Building, location of one of the original popular five-and-dime stores; the Vogue Theater, one of the iconic retro movie theaters designed and built by Edmund Lehman; and the Pagoda at Plaza Park, built in 1910.
- Oxnard’s Carnegie Art Museum was one of nearly 1,700 free public libraries funded by Andrew Carnegie in the United States. His foundation donated \$12,000 in 1906 for the building after Richard Haydock, Oxnard’s first mayor, applied for the funds. The building has served many different functions over the years, including a public library, City Hall, the Chamber of Commerce, the Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Art Club of Oxnard.

- The Navy's growing presence at Port Hueneme during World War II created the need for additional public docking space in Ventura County. In 1945, the U.S. Congress, led by California Rep. Richard Nixon, authorized the Army Corps of Engineers to survey locations for a new harbor. According to the Channel Islands Maritime Museum, numerous cities vied for the opportunity, but the government ultimately selected Oxnard. Development of the harbor split Tinseltown's famed "Hollywood-by-the-Sea" into two separate neighborhoods – Silver Strand Beach to the south and Hollywood Beach to the north. Boat owners from Los Angeles and the San Fernando Valley clamoured for docking space, sparking both a population and economic boom in the city.



- Five generations of the Otani family have owned businesses in Oxnard, starting in 1908 with T. Otani Grocery on Oxnard Boulevard. In 1935, three sons founded Otani Bros. Produce, which later had to be leased out when the Otanis and other countless Japanese Americans were sent to internment camps. The family returned to Oxnard in 1946 and pooled all of their money to transform the grocery store into a malt shop. The family went on to establish several other local businesses including a tackle shop and Otani's Seafood, which still exists today.
- Golden Chicken Inn, located in what used to be called Oxnard's Chinatown, is the oldest remaining restaurant in Ventura County. According to a historic survey prepared for the City of Oxnard, Chinese immigrant Hall Soo Hoo came to Oxnard in 1917 at the age of 14 and opened the Golden Chicken Inn in 1929. The restaurant celebrated its 90th anniversary in 2019.

AN ARTS AND CULTURE HUB

A laid back beach town vibe is not all that Oxnard offers its visitors. Discover an unparalleled arts and culture scene, where music, film and art are deeply rooted in the heart of the city.

Oxnard keeps tradition alive with its numerous museums and plethora of annual events. With its lively cultural spirit found around every corner, it's no surprise that Oxnard was voted by National Geographic as one of the Top 25 Happiest Cities in the United States.

- Shipwreck relics and model ships made from bones can be viewed at the Channel Islands Maritime Museum. As nautical superstition says, renaming a boat begets bad luck. After five name changes, luxury ocean liner La Jénelle (formerly known as the SS Borinquen and Arosa Star, among other names) wrecked off the coast of Silver Strand Beach, where pieces of metal remain. A permanent exhibit is held in the museum, along with model ships from 1790 to 1815, which were built by French sailors out of leftover bones from their meals. These delicate models have survived over centuries and are preserved in a brand new exhibit.

- Oxnard is a car enthusiast's paradise, proudly hosting several car shows and cruise nights every year. Visitors travel to Oxnard for a glimpse at famous, vintage automobiles and custom hot rods at The Murphy Auto Museum and the world-class collection of French automotive design at Mullin Automotive Museum. Some notable mentions include: winners of the Le Mans, the world's oldest active sports car race in Le Mans, France; the "Lady of the Lake," a 1925 Bugatti Type 22 Brescia Roadster pulled from the depths of Italy's Lake Maggiore; and "The Mona Lisa of Cars," a 1936 Bugatti Type 57SC purchased for \$30 million USD.



- Few cities of its size can claim such wide-ranging musical industry triumphs as those of Oxnard. Bursting at the seams with talent, Oxnard has produced some big names in the industry, including critically acclaimed music producer and rapper MadLib and his hip hop group Lootpack and singer/rapper Dudley Perkins, who goes by the stage name Declaime. Both stars were born and raised in Oxnard, released records at Stones Throw Records, and went on to establish their own creative businesses.

- Oxnard is also the birthplace of the iconic "Nardcore," a hardcore punk movement that started in the Oxnard suburbs of Silver Strand Beach and Port Hueneme. Bands of the nardcore scene, such as Agression, Dr. Know, and Ill Repute, have put their own distinctive California spin on English punk rock

- Artists have ventured to Oxnard's Teatro, a cinema turned recording studio available for studio rental, for the chance to record tracks in the iconic building where Willie Nelson, Bob Dylan, Iggy Bob, Kenny Rogers and Neil Young have left their mark. The building, constructed in 1929 and originally called The Boulevard Theater, is the oldest standing theater in Oxnard. In 1995, producer Mark Howard discovered the spot and converted it into a recording studio to be used by big names in the music industry.
- Hollywood stars flocked to Oxnard, including Clark Gable, who purchased a home here, as well as Charlie Chaplin and John Wayne, both of whom spent leisure time fishing and exploring the seaside city, including the specially designed neighborhood "Hollywood-by-the-Sea." Aptly named Hollywood Beach has been frequented by several cinematic stars, including Charlie Chaplin and Rudolph Valentino. Considered another one of Oxnard's most popular beaches, this relaxing stretch of warm sand and gentle waves serves as the perfect backdrop for a dolphin sighting.

- This eclectic city is also known as a boxing hub for professionals and Olympic-level athletes. Earning the nickname "Boxnard," this city has produced top-tier boxers such as Hugo Centeno Jr., Fernando Vargas, Robert Garcia and Victor Ortiz. Others have trained at the various gyms in Oxnard, including Ukraine's Vasyl Lomachenko, lightweight world champion and two-time Olympic gold medalist.



Visitor Information

Contact Visit Oxnard for information and a free visitors magazine.

VisitOxnard.com



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