1 *Museum of Ventura County*
100 E. Main St.

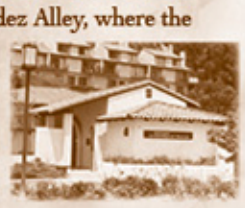
The Museum celebrates the history and culture of Ventura County with special exhibitions, programs and events. The George Stuart Historical Figures bring world history to life, and the Museum Research Library is a treasure trove of photographs, books and documents relating to this region.

2 *Mission Gardens & Moreton Bay Fig Tree**
On Main St. between Figueroa St. & Ventura Ave.

This land was once the Old Mission Gardens, surrounded by tall adobe walls, boasting a lion's head fountain and cultivating some of the first orange trees grown in California. The Moreton Bay Fig tree, located west of Figueroa Plaza, was planted in the 1880s. *(Cross Main Street)*

3 *Mission Plaza Archaeological Site**
(Albinger Archaeological Museum, Valdez Adobe, and El Caballo) – 113 E. Main St.

The Albinger Archaeological Museum (open by appointment) was named for long-time Ventura Mayor Al Albinger and built on the home site of saloonkeeper and early mayor Angel Escondon. To the west of the museum is a walkway called Valdez Alley, where the handsome 1820 Ramon Valdez adobe once stood. The adobe served as the first polling place where all nine eligible voters cast their ballots for Abraham Lincoln in 1860.



Farther up the hill on Valdez Alley is a little Mission-era brick building and fountain called "El Caballo" (the horse), after the shape of its water spout. The building was part of a seven-mile aqueduct system developed by the Spanish Padres and constructed by Chumash labor in the 1790s and early 1800s. *(Proceed east on Main St.)*

*National Register of Historic Places

4 *San Buenaventura Mission*
211 E. Main St. & Figueroa St.

San Buenaventura Mission is the ninth in the chain of 21 Missions and the last one founded personally by Fray Junípero Serra on Easter Sunday, March 31, 1782. The Mission's first church building was destroyed by fire. In 1792 work was in progress on the present church made of tile, stone and adobe. The church's walls are 6 1/2 feet thick. The Mission Museum highlights mission artifacts such as Chumash basketry and mysterious wooden bells. In the Church garden can be found the almost life size statue of Fray Junípero Serra. The Mission's two Norfolk Island Pines, planted in the 1880s, were designated California's Millenium Landmark Trees in 2000. In 1769 Fray Junipero Serra and his companions headed northward from Mexico found Mission San Diego. This undaunted missionary lived wholeheartedly his motto: *Siempre adelante. Nunca atras.* Always go forward. Never turn back. *(Cross to south side of Main Street)*

5 *Peirano's Market* and Mission Lavanderia**
204 & 208 E. Main St.

Converted into Jonathan's Restaurant in 1998, Peirano's Market was Ventura's first commercial brick building, constructed in 1877 for Italian merchant Alex Gandolfo. His nephew, Nick Peirano, took over the general store in 1890 and the store remained in the family until the late 1980s. The murals on the west outside wall are typical of commercial advertising in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In 1992, archaeologists discovered an elaborate Mission era "lavanderia" (laundry) with a 26 by 30 foot washing pool under the building, constructed by Chumash mission converts as part of the aqueduct system during the early 1800s. *(Proceed south on Figueroa)*

6 *Chinatown Site, Figueroa St. Plaza*
(on both sides of Figueroa St. Plaza)

Nothing remains of Ventura's Chinatown (called *Sui Mon Gong* by its residents) that began in 1866 and grew to house over 200 Chinese until 1923. But in 2004, Ventura's Chinese American Historical Society commissioned respected Chinese artist Qi Pang and his wife Guo Song Yun to create the China Alley Memorial Mural to depict the simple wooden buildings that made up a completely self-contained community with its own shops, businesses, rooming houses, and a Taoist Temple that non-Chinese called "The Joss House."

DONNA GRANATA

7 *Knights of Columbus Hall*
Figueroa St. Plaza – 36 S. Figueroa St.

This building, constructed as a motion picture house in 1927, was called the Mission Theater. It was taken over by the Knights of Columbus in the 1950s and slightly altered in 1976.

8 *The Clock Tower Inn*
181 & 185 E. Santa Clara St.

Built in the 1930s as a fire station, the building has been converted into a restaurant and hotel. The tower's purpose was to dry fire hoses.

9 *A.J. Comstock Museum*
Figueroa St. Plaza

On the northeast side of the Clock Tower Inn, facing the plaza rose garden, is the A.J. Comstock Fire Museum. This small exhibit portrays the history and growth of Ventura City's Fire Department, including the Chinese Fire Company which operated in Ventura for nearly 30 years.

10 *Carlo Hahn House**
211 E. Santa Clara St.

This fine two-story house, built in 1912, shows many characteristics of the Victorian period of 1860 to early 1900s.

29 *Fray Junipero Serra Statue**
Below City Hall on California at Poli Streets

In 1936 the Federal Arts Project funded this heroic sculpture of the mission founder. Finnish sculptor John Palo-Kangas originally cast it in cement. The present statue, an exact replica, was cast in bronze in 1989. A wooden duplicate used in the making of the bronze statue can be seen in the City Hall Atrium.

30 *Ventura City Hall & Municipal Art Gallery **
501 Poli St.

City Hall, formerly the Ventura County Courthouse, was built by noted Los Angeles architect Albert C. Martin in 1912 in the "Beaux Arts" style. Its neo-classic columns, arched windows, and terra cotta façade are offset by 24 whimsical faces of Franciscan padres, the order that founded the city in 1782. The terra cotta façade and retractable bronze gateways are decorated with bouquets of lima beans, a reminder that Ventura County once billed itself as the lima bean capital of the world. The Italian marble entry lobby with its dramatic sweeping stairway leads up to the second floor Municipal Art Collection and what was once the Superior Courtroom, now the City Council Chambers. It is graced with three stained glass domes, a gift from the architect. The city purchased the property, hired the firm of Fisher and Wilde to restore and seismically upgrade the structure and opened it as City Hall in 1972. The County Sheriff's Office, constructed in 1931, was restored in 1988 as City Hall West, with Chumash murals in the Atrium and bronze entry doors. The Bridge Gallery featuring community arts and events connects to the five-story City Hall North at 505 Poli Street, a former county building that now houses the Ventura Chamber of Commerce, Ventura Ventures Technology Center (V2TC), a high-tech business incubator, and the Nonprofit Sustainability Center for various social service and arts organizations.

For those who would like to explore further, one block east on Poli Street stand three historic structures.

Judge Ewing Residence
605 Poli St.

This Queen Anne style home, built in 1894 for Judge Felix Ewing, is known for its decorative Balchelder tiles, wrap around porch, and stone walls.

The Hammonds Residence
637-9 Poli St.

This richly decorated Queen Anne style home was built in 1905 for Harry Hammonds, owner of an insurance company.

The Elizabeth Bard Hospital
121 Fir St.

This impressive Moorish Revival building was completed in 1902 as one of the most modern hospitals in Southern California by Dr. Cephas L. Bard. Ironically, he was the first patient admitted and to die in the hospital.

For Tourist Information call the Ventura Visitors & Convention Bureau at 805/648-2075.

This document is available in alternate formats by calling the City of Ventura at 805/658-4726 or 805/654-7788 (TDD).

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MUSEUM OF VENTURA COUNTY
VENTURA
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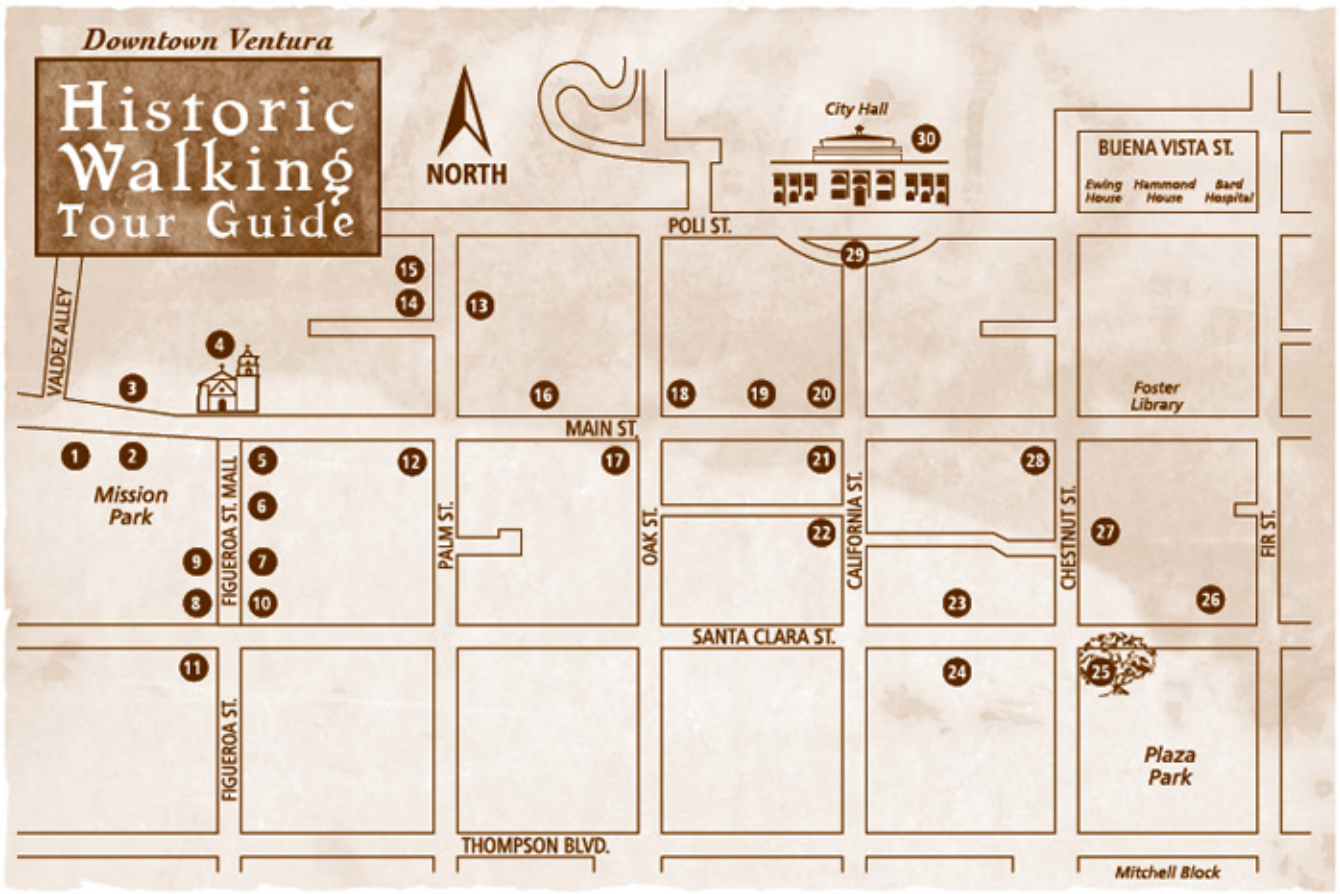
San Buenaventura Mission

Historic Walking Tour Guide

Downtown Ventura

Sponsored by the Ventura Visitors and Convention Bureau, Museum of Ventura County, Downtown Ventura Organization, San Buenaventura Mission and the City of Ventura Community Partnerships Division



11 *Nick Peirano House**
107 S. Figueroa St.

This beautiful Queen Anne style home was built in 1897 by Nicola "Nick" Peirano for his young bride Clara Rafetto. Nick took over his uncle's grocery business in 1890.

Next door are two restored Victorians, *The John Love House*, a Colonial revival home built in 1903 and *The William Elwell House*, a Queen Anne style home begun in the 1880s and completed in 1902. (Return to Main Street)

12 *Site of Spear's Saloon*
298 E. Main St. - Southwest corner of Main St. & Palm St.

Mr. Spear rented out the now removed second floor of his saloon to serve as the first City Hall in Ventura as well as the first County Courthouse. He served his beer to supervisors, councilmen, judges, and jurors during their frequent breaks from the tiresome work of government. The saloon won another place in Ventura's history when, in 1874, it offered the first ice cream served in Ventura as a fundraiser for the Ventura Library Association. *(Proceed north up Palm Street)*

13 *Phoenix Stables*
34 North Palm St.

The brick stables and carriage house were built in 1906 by Newton Sanborn. Purchased in 1921 by the county, it was remodeled and used as the county garage, and again in 1982 as the Old Town Livery. *(Across the Street)*

14 *Norton Ranch House*
71 N. Palm St.

This 1910 Craftsman-style house once stood on a 40-acre walnut farm on Bristol Rd. It was moved to this location, restored in 1990 and designated a historic landmark in 1998. This home was linked to the prominent Chaney, Callens, Vanoni, Ramelli and De Silva families over the years.

15 *Hartman Residence*
73 N. Palm St.

Mr. Fredelin Hartman, a native of Bavaria, Germany, operated a profitable brewery for many years on this site. He built this Craftsman-style home for his family in 1911. Gayle Kieran restored the house, full of woodwork details in 1988. *(Return to Main St. and proceed east)*

16 *First Post Office*
377 E. Main St.

In 1861 Ventura's first postmaster, Volney A. Simpson, was said to have carried letters in his hat for delivery to residents in what is believed to be the first system of letter carrying in the state. In 1903, local businessmen of the Ventura Improvement Company raised the capital to build this structure for use as a post office at a cost of $20,000. Marks on the floors of the store show where the post office counter was once located. *(Proceed east up Main St.)*

17 *Bank of Italy*
394 E. Main St.

Built in the popular Beaux-Arts style (Italian Renaissance Revival), this 1924 two-story bank was built for John Lagamarsino, Sr. and designed by a top Los Angeles architectural firm, Morgan, Wall and Clements. Marble bas-relief was imported from Italy. Inside the building, finely decorated beams and gold leaf cornices can be seen, but unfortunately, much of the original design was lost when the building was converted in the 1930s.

18 *Bank of Ventura Building**
16 N. Oak St.

Built in 1904 by architect J.H. Bradbeer, the two-story brick building was one of the first banks in town. For many years it operated as the Mill's Jewelry Store. One of the offices above the bank contained the first (1915) Ventura law office of Erle Stanley Gardner who wrote many Perry Mason mystery stories. See stop #21 for Erle Stanley Gardner's second law office. *(Proceed east on Main Street)*

19 *El Jardín Patio**
461-461 E. Main St.

The first movement to create a shopping environment began in Southern California in the 1920s – it was a movement that would end with the elaborate shopping malls of today. Built in 1925, El Jardín Patio was designed by the Los Angeles architectural firm of Weber, Staunton, and Spaulding. *Pacific Coast Architect Magazine* (July, 1928) stated:

"Entering the commercial court, the shopper feels that he is in another world. Here is a fountain, trees, flowering shrubs, and pleasant nooks in which it rests . . . where shopping becomes a pleasure." It has retained its Spanish Colonial style with its raised courts and wrought iron railings despite some remodeling in 1952. *(Continue east on Main Street)*

20 *Hotel Ventura*
487 E. Main St.

The Hotel Ventura, now called the Ventura Inn (a residential hotel), was built in 1926 on the site of the 1903-1925 City Hall. Once the largest hotel in Ventura, with the city's second elevator, it was built by Gus Berg who owned the De Riviera Hotel in Santa Barbara. The hotel was designed by the Pasadena firm of Williard, Bell and Clarence Jay. The building has many Spanish elements seen best in the double-arched entry and columns. *(Cross Main Street to the south side, down California Street).*

21 *First National Bank Building**
21 S. California St.

Crowning the center of the downtown commercial district is this four-storied bank building with elements of the Renaissance revival style. The interior is striking with elegant chandeliers, columns and decorative moldings. Built in 1926 by architect H. H. Winner, the building, in its time, was home to six banks. The building had the first elevator in Ventura County. Erle Stanley Gardner produced the drafts for his first Perry Mason novels in his second law office above the bank. *(Continue south on California Street.)*

22 *El Nido Hotel**
67 S. California St.

Built in 1927 by the County Courthouse architect Albert C. Martin, this Spanish colonial revival hotel was named "El Nido" (The Nest). Its most outstanding feature is the cast stone frieze in the Spanish "Churrigueresque" style. *(Proceed east on Santa Clara Street)*

23 *Traveller*
555 E. Santa Clara St. south side of Downtown Parking Structure

Public artwork created by Blue McRight and Warren Wagner in 1998 depicts a Chumash tomol (board canoe) and paddles that link Native American and modern modes of transportation. On the sidewalk is a quote from Chumash elder Fernando Librado: "The canoe is the house of the sea". *(Cross the street.)*

24 *Hotel Fosnaugh*
540 E. Santa Clara St.

Built in 1926, this fanciful Norman revival building does its best to create the impression of a French chateau with steep-pitched roofs, towers, and decorative brickwork. *(Proceed east down Santa Clara Street to Plaza Park.)*

25 *Moreton Bay Fig Tree*
Plaza Park corner of Santa Clara & Chestnut Streets

Planted in 1874, this giant tree provided shade for band concerts, political rallies, and war bond drives during WWII. The park was laid out in 1866 and re-landscaped several times over the years. Directly south of the park, on Thompson Blvd., stands the Historic Mitchell Block of eight homes representing a number of architectural styles from Victorian to Craftsman. *(Proceed across Santa Clara Street and enter the U.S. Post Office.)*

26 *Gordon Grant Murals**
675 E. Santa Clara St. (across from Plaza Park)

Santa Barbara artist Gordon Grant painted the mural in the lobby of the US Post Office in 1936 in the WPA Federal Arts Project style known as "American Scene" or "Regionalism." *(Proceed back to Chestnut Street and turn north)*

27 *The Ventura Theater**
26 S. Chestnut St.

Built in 1928 in the Spanish Colonial Revival style, the Ventura Theater is the county's only Great Movie Palace. Vaudeville shows necessitated dressing rooms and a lofty scene dock to make it a fully functional theater. The lobby is decorated with ornate fixtures. Under the 40 foot auditorium dome hangs a magnificent chandelier surrounded by a stylized silver sunburst design. *(Proceed north on Chestnut Street)*

28 *Ventura Guaranty Building & Loan*
598 E. Main St.

Built in1928, this elegant brick building combines designs of Spanish Colonial Revival with influences of zig-zag modern, most visible in the glazed tile and decorative brickwork. The hand-stenciled ceilings and wood paneling are reminiscent of Hearst Castle. The murals, painted by artist Norman Kennedy, depict early life at Ventura's Mission. *(Proceed to City Hall)*