

history of redlands california

history of redlands california traces the development of a vibrant city nestled in San Bernardino County, known for its rich cultural heritage, agricultural roots, and architectural beauty. This article explores the origins of Redlands, its transformation through the 19th and 20th centuries, and its evolution into a modern community. From indigenous peoples to Spanish colonization, and from citrus boom to contemporary growth, the history of Redlands California offers a microcosm of Southern California's broader historical narrative. Key moments such as the arrival of settlers, the establishment of the citrus industry, and the city's architectural landmarks will be examined. Readers will gain insight into how Redlands balanced preservation and progress across decades. The article also highlights notable figures and events that shaped the city's identity. Below is a structured overview of the topics covered.

- Early Inhabitants and Spanish Era
- American Settlement and Founding of Redlands
- The Citrus Industry Boom
- Architectural and Cultural Development
- 20th Century Growth and Modernization

Early Inhabitants and Spanish Era

The history of Redlands California begins long before American settlers arrived, with the original inhabitants being the Serrano people. These indigenous groups lived in the area for thousands of years, relying on the natural resources of the San Bernardino Valley. Their presence is evidenced by various archaeological sites around Redlands.

During the late 18th century, Spanish explorers and missionaries entered the region as part of their broader colonization efforts in California. The area that would become Redlands was included within the vast Rancho San Bernardino land grant given under Spanish, and later Mexican, rule. The mission system influenced local development, although Redlands itself remained largely undeveloped during this period.

Indigenous Heritage

The Serrano people were skilled hunter-gatherers and maintained complex social and spiritual traditions. They utilized the local landscape for food, shelter, and ceremonial purposes. Their legacy continues to influence Redlands through place names and preserved cultural sites.

Spanish and Mexican Land Grants

Under Spanish and Mexican governance, the land was divided into ranchos, large landholdings primarily used for cattle grazing. Rancho San Bernardino was one of the most significant grants, covering the Redlands area. These ranchos laid the groundwork for future land ownership patterns after California became part of the United States.

American Settlement and Founding of Redlands

Following the Mexican-American War and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, California became part of the United States. American settlers began moving into the San Bernardino Valley, attracted by the fertile land and favorable climate. The settlement that would become Redlands was officially founded in the early 1870s.

Redlands was incorporated as a city in 1888, marking its official recognition as a growing community. Early settlers established farms, built homes, and created infrastructure that spurred further development. The city's name is believed to reflect the reddish color of the local soil, a distinctive feature of the area.

Founding Families and Early Development

Several pioneer families played crucial roles in Redlands' establishment. These settlers invested in agriculture, education, and community institutions. Schools and churches were among the first public buildings constructed, symbolizing the community's commitment to growth and stability.

Incorporation and City Planning

The incorporation process formalized Redlands' government and allowed for planned expansion. The city's layout was designed with wide streets and public spaces, and the construction of railroads connected Redlands to regional markets, facilitating commerce and population growth.

The Citrus Industry Boom

The citrus industry was a transformative force in the history of Redlands California, propelling the city into economic prominence during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The region's Mediterranean climate proved ideal for growing oranges, lemons, and other citrus fruits.

By the 1880s, Redlands became one of the leading citrus producers in Southern California. The success of the industry attracted investors, workers, and families, fueling rapid population growth and urban development. Citrus packing houses, rail shipping facilities, and related businesses became central to the city's economy.

Development of Citrus Groves

Farmers in Redlands planted extensive groves of navel oranges and other citrus varieties.

Innovations in irrigation and farming techniques enhanced yield and quality. The citrus industry became synonymous with Redlands' identity, often referred to as the "Citrus Capital."

Economic and Social Impact

The prosperity generated by citrus farming supported local schools, cultural institutions, and infrastructure improvements. Annual citrus festivals and events celebrated this heritage. The industry also shaped social dynamics, with seasonal laborers and diverse populations contributing to the community fabric.

Architectural and Cultural Development

Redlands is known for its distinctive architectural heritage, much of which dates back to its early prosperity during the citrus boom. The city features a variety of historic buildings, including Victorian homes, Craftsman bungalows, and Spanish Colonial Revival structures.

Public buildings such as the A.K. Smiley Public Library and the Redlands Bowl amphitheater are notable cultural landmarks. These sites highlight the city's commitment to arts, education, and community engagement throughout its history.

Historic Landmarks

Several buildings and districts in Redlands have been preserved or restored for their historical significance. These include the Kimberly Crest House, a Victorian mansion, and the downtown historic district, which showcases early commercial architecture.

Cultural Institutions and Events

The city hosts numerous cultural events rooted in its history, such as the Redlands Festival of Arts and the summer concerts at the Redlands Bowl. Museums and libraries maintain archives and exhibits that educate residents and visitors about Redlands' past.

20th Century Growth and Modernization

Throughout the 20th century, Redlands experienced significant growth and modernization while maintaining respect for its historical roots. The expansion of transportation networks, including highways and railroads, facilitated suburban development and economic diversification.

Industrial and service sectors complemented the agricultural base, and educational institutions such as the University of Redlands became integral to the city's identity. Efforts to preserve historic neighborhoods have continued alongside new construction and urban planning initiatives.

Population and Urban Expansion

Redlands' population grew steadily during the 1900s, driven by improved infrastructure and employment opportunities. Suburban neighborhoods expanded, and commercial centers developed to meet the needs of residents.

Preservation and Community Planning

The city has implemented preservation ordinances and community plans to protect historic sites while accommodating growth. These efforts ensure that the unique character established through the history of Redlands California endures amid modernization.

Key Developments in the Late 20th and Early 21st Century

- Revitalization of downtown Redlands with shops, restaurants, and cultural venues
- Expansion of educational and healthcare facilities
- Implementation of sustainability and green space initiatives
- Community events celebrating heritage and diversity

Frequently Asked Questions

When was Redlands, California founded?

Redlands, California was founded in 1882.

What is the origin of the name 'Redlands'?

The name 'Redlands' comes from the rich red soil found in the area, which was ideal for growing citrus fruits.

What role did the citrus industry play in Redlands' history?

The citrus industry, particularly orange groves, was central to Redlands' economy and growth during the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

How did the railroad impact the development of Redlands?

The arrival of the Santa Fe Railroad in the 1880s facilitated transportation of goods and people, significantly contributing to Redlands' growth.

What historic buildings are notable in Redlands?

Notable historic buildings in Redlands include the A.K. Smiley Public Library, the Redlands Bowl, and the Lincoln Memorial Shrine.

What is the significance of the A.K. Smiley Public Library in Redlands?

The A.K. Smiley Public Library, built in 1898, is a historic landmark known for its architecture and as a cultural center for the community.

How did Redlands contribute during World War II?

During World War II, Redlands contributed through agricultural production and serving as a home to military personnel and defense-related industries.

What is the Redlands Bowl and why is it historically important?

The Redlands Bowl is an outdoor amphitheater established in 1924, known for its free summer music festival, making it a unique cultural institution.

How has Redlands preserved its historical heritage?

Redlands has preserved its heritage through historic districts, museums, restoration of landmarks, and community events celebrating its history.

What indigenous peoples originally inhabited the Redlands area?

The area around Redlands was originally inhabited by the Serrano Native American people before European settlement.

Additional Resources

1. Redlands: A City on the Rise

This book offers a comprehensive overview of Redlands' development from its early days as a small settlement to becoming a thriving city. It explores the economic, social, and cultural changes that shaped the community. Readers gain insight into the key figures and events that influenced Redlands' growth.

2. Oranges and Heritage: The Citrus Legacy of Redlands

Focusing on the citrus industry that defined Redlands for decades, this book delves into how orange groves transformed the local economy and landscape. It highlights the lives of farmers and the impact of agricultural innovations. The narrative also touches on the environmental and social aspects of citrus cultivation.

3. Historic Landmarks of Redlands

This illustrated guide presents the most significant historical sites in Redlands, from Victorian homes to public buildings. Each landmark's story is told in context with the broader history of the city. The book serves as both an educational resource and a travel companion for history enthusiasts.

4. Redlands During the Railroad Boom

Examining the role of railroads in Redlands' expansion, this book chronicles how transportation advancements spurred population growth and commerce. It explores the arrival of the railroad and its effects on local industries. The narrative also includes personal stories from residents during the boom period.

5. The Founding Families of Redlands

This volume profiles the pioneering families whose vision and efforts established Redlands as a community. It traces their origins, challenges, and contributions to the city's infrastructure and culture. The book provides a genealogical perspective alongside historical analysis.

6. Redlands in the Early 20th Century: Growth and Change

Covering the transformative years of the early 1900s, this book discusses urban development, education, and social movements in Redlands. It highlights how the city adapted to modernization while maintaining its unique character. Photographs and archival documents enrich the narrative.

7. Redlands and the Citrus Strike of 1936

A detailed account of the significant labor strike that impacted the citrus industry and local economy. The book explores the causes, key figures, and outcomes of the strike, shedding light on workers' rights and community tensions. It provides a critical look at labor history within Redlands.

8. The Architecture of Redlands: From Mission to Modern

This book surveys the architectural styles found throughout Redlands, illustrating the city's aesthetic evolution. It includes analysis of mission-style buildings, Craftsman homes, and mid-century modern structures. The work discusses how architecture reflects broader historical trends.

9. Redlands Through the Decades: A Photographic History

Featuring a rich collection of photographs, this book visually narrates Redlands' history from its founding to the present day. Each image is accompanied by informative captions that contextualize the scenes. It is an engaging resource for those interested in visual history and community memory.

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