

# Indigenous History in Ventura County

Prior to European settlers arriving in the area that would eventually become Ventura County, the Ventureño Chumash people had been stewarding the land for over 13,000 years. The Chumash people comprised a large and diverse population living in settlements ranging from coasts and islands to the interior and mountain areas between Malibu and San Luis Obispo. Their large coastal villages engaged in long-distance trade with villages on the Channel Islands.

Before their way of life was disrupted by Spanish settlers, the Chumash exhibited high levels of craftsmanship, including basketry, elaborate rock painting, and the construction of sturdy plank canoes that enabled travel to the Channel Islands. In addition, as part of their stewardship, the Chumash people burned large areas of grassland in order to increase yields of seeds and other foods, an important practice that was later outlawed by the Spanish (County of Ventura Historic Preservation Plan). Generations of Chumash descendants continue to help steward these lands to this day.

To learn more about indigenous history in Ventura County, please visit [vclandmarks.org](http://vclandmarks.org).



Burro Flats Painted Cave | Simi Hills  
Credit: Niceley, CC BY-SA 4.0 [tinyurl.com/wjke7rup](https://tinyurl.com/wjke7rup)

Post Office Tower and Portico | Ojai | Designated 1975



Oxnard Carnegie Library | Oxnard | Designated 1971



The Cultural Heritage Board works to preserve and protect public and private historic, cultural, and natural resources. The CHB is composed of seven members, one member representing each of the five Supervisorial Districts and two at-large members.

For more information, please visit our website [vclandmarks.org](http://vclandmarks.org) or contact the program planner, Dillan Murray, at 805.654.5042 or [Dillan.Murray@venturacounty.gov](mailto:Dillan.Murray@venturacounty.gov)

## Ventura County CULTURAL HERITAGE BOARD

Protecting Ventura County's  
Historic, Cultural, and  
Natural Resources

Serving the unincorporated areas of Ventura County and the cities of Fillmore, Moorpark, Oxnard, Port Hueneme, Simi Valley and Thousand Oaks



## Finding Hidden Gems

Have you ever wondered about the history of your property or one in your community? Each historic property, no matter how significant, has a story to tell. A little hard work and research can help you unearth a hidden gem. We have a few tips on where to begin.

### The Building

The building itself is a great place to start. Examine it carefully, both inside and out. Take precise notes on its current appearance: the building materials, style, and shape, as well as the number and style of windows and chimneys and the appearance and material of the roof. All of these elements can point to the date of construction. Below are a few examples of common roof types.



Gable



Hip



Offset Gable



Truncated Hip



A-Frame



Pyramidal



Flat



Gambrel

Former Methodist Church | Moorpark | Designated 1979



## Tracing the History of a Building

### – Relevant Documents

Documents with historical information about a building can be found in many places.

- The County Recorder's office can provide a chain of title to establish an ownership history for the property. In addition, wills, probate records, building permits, and assessor's records can be reviewed.
- Architectural plans are usually not available unless the building is relatively recent construction. If they do exist, they can be a resource by showing floor plans and window/door placement.
- Maps of your area, recent and historic, can provide information about when and where a building was built. If an older map doesn't have the building and a newer map does, this can indicate a date range for construction. Some maps are available at the Museum of Ventura County.
- Newspapers can be another source to search through that can provide valuable information, especially dates.
- Published town or county histories often provide valuable information on the development of an area.

## Benefits of Designation

There are many benefits to having your property designated as a Ventura County landmark, including eligibility for the following:

- Historical Property Contracts (Mills Act Contracts)
- State and Federal Tax Incentives
- Zoning Code Deviations
- Building Code Alternatives (State Historic Building Code)
- Conservation Subdivisions



Faulkner House | Santa Paula | Designated August 1968

## Mills Act Contracts

Mills Act historical property tax contracts benefit property owners of eligible landmarks and district contributors. Under the Mills Act, in return for investment into a property, property taxes may be reduced by 30 percent (commercial) to 60 percent (residential) depending upon the circumstances of the historic landmark and the date of purchase.