



*Generations*  
FROM ORIGINS ONWARD



THE CITY OF CAMARILLO PRESENTS  
**60 HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS OF  
CAMARILLO & THE PLEASANT VALLEY**

1964-2024



# FOREWORD BY PLEASANT VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

*It began with a lunch meeting* at Carmen's Snack Shop in 1964 when local citizens planned to resist annexation of this area by the City of Oxnard. Our first traffic light was also installed that year.

With an excellent climate, road and rail connections, good schools, parks and hospitals, Camarillo is unique in being settled by homesteaders on a piece of land not included in one of the nearby land grants. After a small land rush, the first title deed was signed by President Grant in 1874.

Although disturbed by highway expansion in 1954, the classic Old Town area survived and remains a historical gem surrounded by rich farmlands. Now we have a thriving City with many organizations supporting the well-being of the community.

The Pleasant Valley Historical Society and Museum continues to serve the community by collecting, preserving, and presenting historical artifacts, books, journals, oral histories, and photos, and awarding Don and Doña honors each year to outstanding local citizens. Please join us in also celebrating our 60th anniversary in 2024. May the strength and goodness of the community continue to shine on this little piece of California land.

*-Joy Todd*

**PRESIDENT**  
Pleasant Valley  
Historical Society



# *In the beginning* **BEFORE 1960**

- 1** El Camino Real was used by Padre Junipero Serra in **1775**.
- 2** A small land rush occurred when unclaimed land was discovered between the big Spanish land grants. The town of Springville sprang up with a post office in **1875**.
- 3** The Santa Clara Water and Irrigation Ditch Company was organized in **1879**.
- 4** The first lath and plaster house in the area was built on the Totty Ranch in **1880**.
- 5** In **1885**, Adolfo Camarillo became the managing owner of Rancho Calleguas. He built a large house in **1892** and planted eucalyptus trees along the road that became Highway 101.





**6** In **1887**, the Southern Pacific Railroad came to Ventura County. In **1898**, the line was extended to the new Oxnard sugar factory. The Camarillo depot opened in **1906**.

**7** The town of Somis was established by Thomas Bard in **1892**.

**8** In **1914**, St. Mary Magdalen Chapel was built for the Camarillo family. Designed by Albert C. Martin, the “chapel on the hill” was a dominant landmark.



**9** The Camarillo State Hospital was built in **1936**, the largest of its kind in the state.

**10** St. John's Seminary was built in **1939** and had a Gutenberg Bible in its Doheny Library, the first major work printed in Europe with movable metal type.

**11** Oxnard Air Force Base (which later became the Camarillo Airport) opened in **1942**. In **1951**, one thousand airmen were stationed there and the runway was extended.

12

The Ventura Freeway was rebuilt in **1954** with the infamously steep 7% descent known as the Conejo Grade.

13

The Camarillo Sanitary District was founded in **1955**.

14

Adolfo Camarillo High School opened in **1956** and Rio Mesa High School in **1965**.

15

Adolfo Camarillo passed away in **1958**.

16

In **1959**, the Capehart military housing tract opened with 315 units on 51 acres. It was rebuilt in **2010** as Catalina Heights.



## Early **1960s**

17

The Ventura Youth Correctional Facility was established north of town in **1962**.

18

The Pleasant Valley Recreation & Park District was established in **1962**.

19

The annual Camarillo Christmas Parade began in **1962**.

20

In **1963**, the 5,500-acre Camarillo Ranch was sold. The ranch house was donated to the City in **1998** and placed on the National Register of Historic Places in **2003**.

21

The first area supermarket, Vons, opened in the Ponderosa Shopping Center in **1963**.

22

In **1963**, 3M built a magnetic tape factory that employed 900 people, becoming the largest local employer.



# Last 60 YEARS

**23** The City of Camarillo was incorporated in **1964** to provide for orderly growth after the Camarillo Ranch was sold.

**24** In **1964**, local actor Joel McCrea sold 1,500 acres of his ranch in the Santa Rosa Valley. He was active in Camarillo, especially with the Boys & Girls Club.

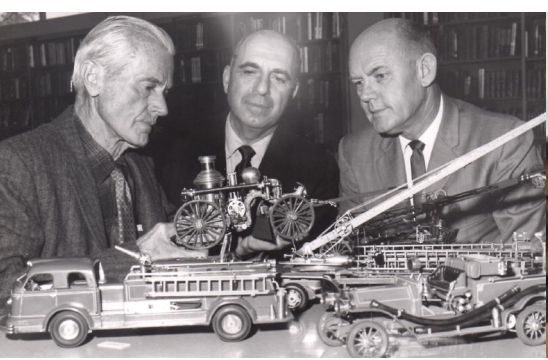
**25** The Pleasant Valley Historical Society was founded in **1964** to collect and maintain the history of Camarillo and the Pleasant Valley.

**26** The first traffic light in the area was at Las Posas and Pleasant Valley Roads. In **1964**, a traffic light was installed at the corner of Arneill and Las Posas Roads.

**27** The City contracted with the Ventura County Sheriff's Office in **1965** for police protection.

**28** Camrosa Water District was established in **1966**. A water supply was secured when the Calleguas Water District joined the Metropolitan Water District. High-quality water arrived from the Feather River in **1973**.

**29** The Camarillo Boys Club was founded in **1967**. It became the Boys & Girls Club of Camarillo in **1981**.



- 30** Las Posas Village Shopping Center was built in **1967**.
- 31** The Pleasant Valley Recreation and Park District Aquatic Center opened in **1969**.
- 32** In **1969**, the Camarillo Health Care District was established. Pleasant Valley Hospital opened in **1973**.
- 33** The Bookworm bookstore opened in **1973**.
- 34** Master plans were approved for construction of 415-acre all-electric Leisure Village, and the first residents arrived in **1973**.
- 35** A General Plan for the City was written by a citizens committee in **1974**.
- 36** Cable TV arrived in **1974**.



*Then & Now*



**37**

Early locations of City Hall were the Pleasant Valley School on Ventura Boulevard and the old Bank of America building on Palm Drive. A new City Hall was built on Carmen Drive in **1977**.

**38**

In **1981**, a citizens initiative passed to moderate residential growth. Agreements were made to protect open space and agriculture with the SOAR (Save Open Space and Agricultural Resources) ordinance.

**39**

In **1982**, new Fire Station 52 was dedicated in Mission Oaks.

**40**

In-N-Out Burger, the first in Ventura County, opened in **1983**.

**41**

Pleasant Valley Senior Center opened in **1984**.

**42**

The Pleasant Valley Historical Society Museum and Garden was established in **1985** with a lease for the former Camino Water District building.

**43**

New zip code 93012 was established in **1990**.

**44**

The Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology "Bird Museum" opened in **1992**.

**45**

Spanish Hills Club opened in **1993** and Sterling Hills Golf Club opened in **1999**.

**46**

The Northridge Earthquake struck in **1994**.

**47**

Casa Pacifica Centers for Children and Families opened in **1994**.

**48**

Camarillo Premium Outlets opened in **1995**. The Outlets expanded in **1997** and again in **2009**.





**49**

The Camarillo State Hospital closed in **1997**. Over the years, more than 160,000 patients were treated there.

**50**

California State University Channel Islands was founded in **2002** on the site of the former state hospital.

**51**

The new Camarillo Library at 4101 Las Poasas Road opened in **2007**.

**52**

The Calleguas Creek Bike Trail opened in **2007**.

**53**

Pleasant Valley Fields, a 55-acre sports park, opened in **2011**.

**54**

The City purchased Dizdar Park from the Pleasant Valley Recreation and Park District in **2011**. The Dizdar Park Renovation and Expansion Project began in **2024**.

**55**

The Springville interchange on Highway 101 opened in **2012**.

**56**

In **2017**, a mural showcasing agriculture, early structures, and a train was painted at the Pleasant Valley Historical Society Museum.

**57**

Rancho Campana High School and Performing Arts Center opened in **2018**.

**58**

In **2018**, the Hill Fire burned to Conejo Creek.

**59**

The North Pleasant Valley Desalter opened in **2023** to increase the City's potable water supply.

**60**

On **October 22, 2024**, the City of Camarillo celebrates its 60th anniversary!



*to current day*

A special thank you to Pleasant Valley Historical Society for providing the historical content for this brochure.

# 60 YEARS

1964-2024



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[CityofCamarillo.org](http://CityofCamarillo.org)

