

history of redlands california

History of Redlands, California is a fascinating journey that intertwines the tales of Native American tribes, early settlers, agricultural innovation, and urban development. Nestled in the picturesque San Bernardino Valley, Redlands has evolved from a small agricultural town into a thriving city known for its rich cultural heritage, diverse community, and beautiful landscapes. This article will explore the various phases of Redlands' history, from its indigenous roots to its modern-day charm.

Early Inhabitants

Before the arrival of European settlers, the area now known as Redlands was inhabited by the Serrano and Cahuilla tribes. These Native American groups thrived in the region, utilizing the natural resources available to them.

Cultural Practices

The Serrano and Cahuilla people engaged in various cultural practices, including:

- Hunting and gathering local flora and fauna
- Creating intricate basketry and pottery
- Participating in spiritual ceremonies and rituals

Their connection to the land shaped the early identity of the region that would eventually become Redlands.

European Exploration and Settlement

The 18th and 19th centuries marked a significant turning point in the history of Redlands. European explorers began to arrive, seeking new territories and resources.

The Arrival of Spanish Explorers

In the late 1700s, Spanish explorers ventured into California, leading to the establishment of missions and settlements. The area became part of the Spanish land grants, which laid the groundwork for future development.

American Expansion and Land Grants

Following the Mexican-American War (1846-1848), California became a part of the United States. The area around Redlands was opened up for American settlers, and land grants were issued, fostering agricultural development.

Founding of Redlands

The formal founding of Redlands took place in the late 19th century. The discovery of artesian wells in the area was a game-changer, making the previously arid land suitable for agriculture.

Key Figures in Redlands' Development

Several individuals played pivotal roles in the establishment of Redlands:

- **Frank A. Miller:** A key figure in promoting the region as an agricultural hub and later as a residential community.
- **Edwin A. Dutton:** A prominent land developer who contributed to the growth of Redlands through residential projects.
- **George E. Smith:** A successful citrus grower who helped put Redlands on the map as a center for citrus production.

Incorporation and Growth

In 1888, Redlands officially incorporated as a city. The arrival of the Southern Pacific Railroad in 1887 further facilitated growth, enabling the transportation of goods and people.

The Citrus Boom

The late 19th century and early 20th century were defined by a booming citrus industry. Redlands became known as the "City of the Orange," as its fertile soil and favorable climate allowed for the cultivation of various citrus fruits.

Impact on the Local Economy

The citrus industry had several profound impacts on Redlands, including:

1. Economic prosperity through the creation of jobs in agriculture and related industries.
2. Attracting a diverse population of workers and entrepreneurs.
3. Establishing a reputation as a prime location for citrus cultivation, leading to increased land value.

Development of Infrastructure

The economic boom necessitated the development of infrastructure. Between the 1900s and 1920s, Redlands saw:

- The construction of schools, churches, and community centers.
- The establishment of parks and recreational facilities.
- Improvements in transportation, including paved roads and public transit systems.

Modern Era and Urbanization

As the 20th century progressed, Redlands began to transform from an agricultural town to a more urbanized community. The city expanded its boundaries, and residential neighborhoods sprang up to accommodate the growing population.

World War II and Economic Diversification

During World War II, Redlands experienced an economic shift. The demand for goods and services led to a diversification of the local economy, which included:

- Manufacturing
- Retail
- Healthcare services

This diversification helped Redlands weather economic downturns more effectively.

Preservation of History and Culture

Despite urbanization, Redlands has made significant efforts to preserve its historical and cultural heritage. The city boasts:

- Victorian-era architecture, particularly in the historic downtown district.
- Historical sites such as the Redlands Bowl, a renowned outdoor amphitheater.
- Cultural festivals and events celebrating the city's history.

Redlands Today

Today, Redlands is a vibrant city that balances its historical roots with modern urban living. With a population of over 70,000, it offers a high quality of life, rich cultural diversity, and a commitment to education and community involvement.

Key Attractions

Visitors and residents alike can enjoy various attractions in Redlands, including:

- The Redlands Historical Museum, which showcases the city's rich past.
- Smiley Park, a popular recreational area with expansive green spaces.
- Local wineries and breweries that reflect the city's evolving culinary scene.

Future Prospects

Looking ahead, Redlands is poised for continued growth and development. The city is focused on:

1. Enhancing public transportation systems to improve connectivity.
2. Promoting sustainable development and environmental preservation.

3. Fostering a strong sense of community through local events and initiatives.

Conclusion

The **history of Redlands, California** is a testament to resilience, innovation, and community spirit. From its indigenous roots to its status as a modern city, Redlands has continually adapted and evolved while maintaining a deep connection to its past. As it looks toward the future, Redlands remains a unique blend of history, culture, and opportunity, making it a remarkable place to live and visit.

Frequently Asked Questions

What year was Redlands, California founded?

Redlands was founded in 1881.

What was the original purpose of Redlands when it was established?

Redlands was originally established as an agricultural community, particularly known for its citrus orchards.

Which significant event in the history of Redlands occurred in 1885?

The University of Redlands was founded in 1885, becoming a key educational institution in the area.

How did the arrival of the railroad impact Redlands?

The arrival of the railroad in the late 1880s facilitated trade and transportation, significantly boosting Redlands' economy and population growth.

What architectural style is prominent in Redlands?

Redlands is known for its historic Mediterranean Revival and Craftsman-style architecture, particularly in its residential areas.

What major agricultural product was Redlands famous for in the early 20th century?

Redlands was particularly famous for its navel oranges, which were a significant part of its agricultural economy.

What historical landmark in Redlands is recognized for its unique design?

The Redlands Bowl, established in 1924, is a historical landmark known for its unique outdoor amphitheater and summer concert series.

How did the Great Depression affect Redlands?

During the Great Depression, Redlands faced economic challenges, but its citrus industry managed to provide some level of economic stability.

What role did Redlands play during World War II?

During World War II, Redlands served as a training ground for military personnel, with several facilities established to support the war effort.

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