

HISTORY OF YORBA LINDA

Archaeological discoveries show that the Tongva, Luiseño and Juaneño tribes visited the Yorba Linda area near the Santa Ana River as early as 4,000 years ago. They used the area as a seasonal campsite.

Modern history of Yorba Linda began in 1834 when Bernardo Yorba received a land grant from the Mexican government for 13,328 acres. He called it “Rancho Cañon de Santa Ana.” It was located north of the Santa Ana River and included the present day city of Yorba Linda.

In 1835 Bernardo began building one of the largest adobe houses built during the “Golden Age of the California Ranchos.” He named his hacienda *San Antonio* and it is said to have had fifty rooms.

After Bernardo's death in 1858, his land was divided between his wife and children. By 1907, some of the land was bought by Jacob Stern, a resident of Fullerton. The next year, the Janss Investment Company in Los Angeles bought Stern's land. They named the area Yorba Linda—Yorba being the last name of its original owner, Bernardo Yorba, and Linda, which means “beautiful” in Spanish. “Linda” may also have been selected in honor of the town of Olinda, just to the north. The Janss Company sold agricultural plots for \$150 an acre and “choice” ranches for \$250 per acre and up.

By 1911 about thirty-five people lived in Yorba Linda. Many of them were farmers who owned orange or lemon groves. The Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company installed telephone service, and the first school was built.



Buckmaster Garage on Main Street circa 1912.

In 1912 the Pacific Electric Railway Company extended its service to Yorba Linda, and provided growers with swift transportation of their produce to Los Angeles. In addition, 1912 marked the year that the Southern California Edison Company installed electrical service; the first post office opened; and the first church in town, the Yorba Linda Friends Church, was built.



Yorba Linda's first church - Yorba Linda Friends Church - circa 1918.

Richard M. Nixon, the thirty-seventh President of the United States, was born on January 9, 1913 in Yorba Linda. Additionally in 1913, the Yorba Linda Chamber of Commerce was organized and the Yorba Linda Library opened.



Nixon family in 1916: Parents Frank and Hannah and children (l to r) Harold, Donald, and Richard.

In 1917, Yorba Linda Boulevard became the first paved road in the community and the Yorba Linda Star began publication.



Olinda Street circa 1920

Yorba Linda went through few changes between 1920 and 1960. In those forty years, Yorba Linda's population grew from 350 to 1,198. The town's main business continued to be farming.

It was not until the 1960s that Yorba Linda began experiencing significant population growth. By 1967, the year the town was incorporated, the population had dramatically increased to 11,433.

The 1970s and 80s continued the growth of the previous decade. Many of the city's housing developments, including East Lake Village, were built during this time. In addition, a number of shopping centers were built, including the SAVI Ranch Center that is anchored in 2016 by Best Buy, Bed, Bath & Beyond, Costco, and Kohl's.

The city opened the Black Gold Golf Course on November 16, 2001. This public golf course is spread over 219 acres and features a lighted driving range, putting green and 20,000 square foot clubhouse complete with men's and women's locker rooms, fully stocked pro shop, full service bar and grill restaurant, and excellent wedding and banquet facilities.

Richard M. Nixon Library and Birthplace

On July 19, 1990, the nine acre Richard M. Nixon Library and Birthplace was dedicated. In attendance were Richard M. Nixon and wife, Pat, and former presidents Gerald Ford, Ronald Reagan, and George Bush. It was a privately supported, non-profit institution dedicated to educating the public about the life and times of the thirty-seventh President and encouraging interest in history, government and public affairs.

Richard M. Nixon died on April 22, 1994, in New York City and was buried on the grounds of the Nixon Library in Yorba Linda, at the side of his First Lady, on April 27, 1994. The eulogists at his State Funeral were President Bill Clinton, Senator Robert Dole, California Governor Pete Wilson, and Nixon's second Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger.

On July 11, 2007, the National Archives assumed control of the Nixon Library with Timothy Naftali as Director.

In 2015 the Nixon Library and Birthplace closed for significant renovations to the display areas. With the formal reopening in 2016, the museum incorporated a video-centric, cutting-edge experience for visitors.

Yorba Linda Town Center Project

Located near the intersection of Imperial Highway and Yorba Linda Boulevard, the ten acre Town Center area is at the heart of Yorba Linda's historic downtown. Existing occupants include retail and office space along Main Street, the Yorba Linda Public Library, a local fire station, and a historic church. Several existing buildings date from the early 1900s. Plans for the Project incorporate pedestrian-friendly streetscape improvements on Main Street. These buildings and improvements will preserve the small town atmosphere.

The Yorba Linda Town Center Project will be a pedestrian-friendly, high-end retail, entertainment, and restaurant district. Plans include over 125,000 square feet of theater, grocery, clothing, and restaurant spaces centered around an open space commons.

On Tuesday, November 1, 2016 the Yorba Linda Chamber of Commerce and Zelman Development Company, in cooperation with the City of Yorba Linda City Council, broke ground on the highly anticipated Yorba Linda Town Center project. The Town Center is expected to open in 2018.