

Grand Projects in 1913



Main Street makeover: prismatic glass transoms transformed storefronts in 1913
Photo courtesy of the Museum of Ventura County

Ventura's Big Bang

The origin of today's modern Ventura – its “big bang” – can truly be traced to 1913, which saw an explosion of civic improvements.

The donation of the Cephias L. Bard Historical Collection served as the genesis of today's Museum of Ventura County. The Chamber of Commerce Landmarks Committee pledged to restore the Ortega Adobe. The Rincon Causeway and Ventura River Bridge opened, and planning began for the Ivy Lawn Cemetery. Finally, Ventura's enthusiastic bicentennial celebration of the birth of Mission San Buenaventura founder Junipero Serra capped a banner year.



The E.C.O. women's club led by Alice Bartlett restored the historic Grant Park Cross
Ventura Free Press
Photo courtesy of Foster Library Archives



Sol N. Sheridan, in tie at center, presides over what would become the core collection of the Museum of Ventura County in this circa 1913 photo. The museum, located in the west wing of the Ventura County Courthouse, was then known as the Pioneer Museum, and Sheridan was the first curator of the collection.
Photo courtesy of the Museum of Ventura County

City Boosters-in-Chief

Sol N. Sheridan (pictured above, standing) wrote his purple-prose essay “Ventura-By-The-Sea” bragging of “a resort city of the higher class” illustrated by caricatures of the city's commercial and community boosters for the May 1912 issue of “Out West” magazine by Charles Fletcher Lummis.



Ventura by the Sea 1912
Photo courtesy of the Cynthia Thompson Archives

The City Beautiful Movement

Begun at the World Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893, the movement swept the country and Ventura for decades with its uplifting philosophy of curing social decay through smart urban planning, spirited local boosterism and classically inspired architecture. The aim of its “Beaux-Arts” style of architecture was to create civic buildings of monumental grandeur that promoted a harmonious social order. Ventura's crowning ‘beautiful’ achievement was the construction of the magnificent new Ventura County Courthouse, replacing the previous version. Set in a landscape of rare beauty, the palm-fronted neoclassical building by Albert C. Martin has dominated the community from its hillside location for a century, looking down California Street to the ocean and pier.



First Ventura County Courthouse built in 1873
Photo courtesy of the Museum of Ventura County



Ventura County Courthouse c. 1912
Photo courtesy of the Museum of Ventura County



Ventura County Courthouse 1913
Photo courtesy of Glenda Jackson & Jeff Maulhardt