

## Ojai Valley Historical Timeline

prepared by Elise DePuydt for the Ojai Valley Museum

Native Americans occupy the Ojai Valley as early as 13,500 years ago. Chumash villages and seasonal camps were located throughout the valley.

1782 – Mission San Buenaventura is founded by Father Junipero Serra

1821 – Mexico wins its independence from Spain

1833 – The Mexican Congress ratifies a law for the secularization of the California missions

1837 – Gov. Juan Alvarado grants the 17,716.83-acre Rancho Ojai to Fernando Tico and the 21,522.04-acre Rancho Santa Ana to Crisogono Ayala and Cosme Vanegas

1839 – Raphael Lopez builds an adobe home at the mouth of Matilija Canyon

1846 – The U.S. military takes possession of California from Mexico

1848 – The Mexican-American War is formally concluded with the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo and the United States acquires the New Mexico and Texas territories, and California  
– Gold is discovered by James Marshall at Sutter's Mill near Coloma, California

1850 – California enters the union as the 31<sup>st</sup> state (as a free state)

1853 – Fernando Tico sells Rancho Ojai

1861 – George Gilbert extracts and refines oil near Rancho Arnaz

1864 – Thomas A. Scott, a Pennsylvania oil and railroad tycoon, buys Rancho Ojai (and other California lands) and forms the California Petroleum Company

1865 – Thomas Bard takes charge of Thomas Scott's land interests in California and begins drilling for oil on Rancho Ojai

1866 – Olive Mann Isbell, known as America's first teacher in California, and her husband Dr. Isaac Isbell move into Fernando Tico's abandoned adobe in the lower Ojai Valley

1867 – Thomas Bard strikes oil at the California Petroleum Company's Well No. 6 in Upper Ojai – California's first oil gusher

1868 – Thomas Scott directs Bard to begin selling the surface rights to Rancho Ojai land. This was the first subdivided land within Rancho Ojai

1869 – A small school opens at the foot of the Upper Ojai grade called the Sagebrush Academy and the Ojai School District is formed

1871 – J.W. Wilcox discovers hot springs in Matilija Canyon that later would become the first Matilija Hot Springs resort

1873 – Charles Nordhoff's *California for Health, Pleasure and Residence* was first published in book form – William McKee opens Oak Glen Cottages in the East End – The first hot springs resort opens in Matilija Canyon called San Buenaventura Springs (*later called Matilija Hot Springs*) – F.S.S. Buckman plants the first orange grove in the valley – Ventura County is formed (*previously was part of Santa Barbara County*)

1874 – Royce Surdam founds the town of Nordhoff (now the City of Ojai) – Abram Blumberg opens Nordhoff's first hotel (located where Libbey Park is today) – Lafayette Herbert opens Nordhoff's first general store – John Montgomery buys 1,300 acres of Surdam's land

1875 – The first Ojai Valley Grange is organized –The Sagebrush Academy closes and a new school is built in the Upper Valley on land donated by Henry Dennison – The Nordhoff School District is formed to build a school in the town center

1876 – The Nordhoff Grammar School opens on East Matilija Street – John Meiners of Wisconsin acquires a large ranch northwest of the village of Nordhoff in exchange for an unpaid debt

1877 – Presbyterians organize the first church in the valley with services taking place in the grammar school – C.P. Wiggins purchases the Nordhoff town site, including the Nordhoff Hotel – Dr. W.H. French is Nordhoff's first doctor

1878 – The Casitas Pass stagecoach road opens – John Montgomery deeds the land to the people of Ojai for the cemetery that had been unofficially established several years earlier (the Nordhoff Cemetery at Del Norte and Cuyama Roads)

1881 – Charles Nordhoff makes his first visit to the valley, escorted by William Hollister

1882 – Charles Nordhoff publishes the second edition of *California for Health, Pleasure and Residence*, in which he mentions the Ojai Valley

1883 – Benjamin and Mary Gally begin purchasing the Oak Glen Cottages – A new Upper Valley School is built on land donated by Captain Robinson and Joseph Hobart

1884 – Presbyterians build the first church in Nordhoff at Ojai Avenue and Fairway Lane

1887 – Railroad services between Ventura, Santa Barbara and Los Angeles begins – Abram Blumberg opens the Ojai Hot Springs in Matilija Canyon (*later called Matilija Hot Springs-the first Matilija Hot Springs was flooded out in 1884*) – The San Antonio School District is formed

1888 – Lyons Springs resort (Cliff Glen) opens in Matilija Canyon – The first Congregational Church meetings are held (their church was located on the southeast corner of Ojai Avenue and Ventura Street)

1889 – Sherman Thacher begins tutoring students for college preparation

1891 – Leverett Mesick starts *The Ojai* newspaper (now the *Ojai Valley News*) – Wheeler Blumberg opens Wheeler Hot Springs – 300 people are living in the town of Nordhoff – Dr. Saeger opens the first drug store in Nordhoff

1892 – The Ojai Club was formed to improve the valley – Ernest and Josephine Pierpont open the Pierpont Cottages

1893 – The George Thacher Memorial Library opens on South Montgomery Street – Mary Gally takes over management of Oak Glen Cottages (Gally Cottages) after her husband dies – The Fortnightly Club literary group was formed

1894 – Charles Nordhoff makes his third visit to the valley with his wife and three daughters – Sherman Thacher promotes the founding of the Ojai Athletic Club – a telephone line is established between Nordhoff and Ventura – The first Ojai Band is formed

1895 – The Casa de Piedra School (Thacher School) is destroyed by fire – The Nordhoff Grammar school moves to a new two-story schoolhouse on Ojai Avenue and North Montgomery – William Thacher organizes the Ojai Valley Tennis Club (*the tennis club absorbs the Ojai Athletic Club the following year*)

1896 – The Ojai Valley Tennis Club initiates a valley-wide tournament, and then challenges the Ventura Tennis Club (*considered by the Ojai Valley Tennis Club to be the first “Ojai”*)

1897 – Ojai succumbs to its own gold rush – Nordhoff citizens present a petition to the Ventura County Board of Supervisors against allowing a saloon permit in Nordhoff

1898 – The Ventura and Ojai Valley Railroad’s Nordhoff spur is completed – a train depot is erected just east of Fox Street – President William McKinley establishes the Pine Mountain and Zaca Lake Forest Reserve (*later to become the Santa Barbara Forest Reserve*)

1899 – The Southern Pacific Railroad takes over the Nordhoff spur – The foundation for the Ojai Tennis Tournament is laid (*some consider this the first “Ojai”; the Ojai Valley Tennis Club dates the first “Ojai” as 1896*) – Golf is first played in the valley at Mary Gally’s cottages – The King’s Daughters group is organized

1900 – The Ojai Improvement Company is formed to construct a luxury hotel – The Congregational and Presbyterian Churches merge and both church buildings are moved to the south side of East Ojai Avenue just east of Montgomery Street

1901 – The Ojai Olive Oil Association forms and builds an olive mill at the end of Bald St.

1903 – The Ojai Improvement Company’s Foothills Hotel opens (designed by Samuel M. Ilsley) – The Committee of Fifteen is formed to enforce law and order – The Boyd Club opens – President Theodore Roosevelt’s Proclamation 512 establishes the Santa Barbara Forest Reserve – George Bald becomes the head forest ranger of the Ojai Ranger District of the newly formed Santa Barbara Forest Reserve and serves for 19 years

1904 – The Evelyn Nordhoff Memorial Fountain is constructed on Ojai Avenue – The first fire department in Nordhoff is organized (located just west of the Nordhoff Hotel) – Ventura County acquires the Camp Comfort land on Creek Road for a park

1905 – The system of Federal Forest Reserves under the Department of the Interior is transferred to the Department of Agriculture, creating the United States Forest Service

1906 – There were four automobiles in the valley – Joe and Inez Berry open the Berry Villa on South Signal (where post office parking lot is today)

1907 – The Ojai State Bank opens in J.J. Burke's real estate office – Abram and Helen Hobson buy a bungalow on Santa Ana Street and begin renovating it – The Santa Barbara Forest Reserve becomes the Santa Barbara National Forest

1908 – Edward Thacher is a leader in establishing the Ojai Orange Association – Edward Drummond Libbey and his wife Florence begin wintering at the Foothills Hotel - The entrance towers at Foster Park are dedicated

1909 – Nordhoff High School opens in the grammar school – The Charles Pratt house is constructed on Foothill Road (designed by Greene & Greene) – Edna Baker and Clara Smith start the Shakespeare Club – The Ojai Orange Association packing house opens on Bryant Street in February

1910 – A craftsman-style high school is built on Paseo Road – A stately Bank of Ojai building opens east of the Ojai Inn (*formerly Blumberg's Nordhoff Hotel*), designed by Silas R. Burns

1911 – Construction of the Libbey house on Foothill Road is completed (designed by Myron Hunt & Elmer Grey) – Mrs. Pierpont Ginn builds the Ojai Valley Woman's Club (*first used by the King's Daughters*) – The Summit School District is formed

1912 – The Bristol School is founded

1913 – Ojai has electric lighting for the first time

1914 – Heavy winter rains cause flooding, knock telephone and telegraph poles down, and wash out the railroad tracks – J.J. Burke builds the Isis movie theater – The Ojai Valley Men's League is formed – Mr. Libbey introduces his town improvement ideas at a special town meeting in April - Candelaria Valenzuela collaborates with anthropologists to share her knowledge of the Chumash language and culture

1915 – Donald Crisp directs the filming of *Ramona* at Bob Clark's ranch in Casitas Springs

1916 – Construction is begun on the Arcade, Post Office Tower and Pergola (designed by San Diego architects Frank Mead and Richard Requa)

1917 – The first Ojai Day is celebrated April 7 (*a day after the United States enters WWI*) – The village name is changed from Nordhoff to Ojai – Fire rages out of Matilija Canyon on

June 16, devastating much of the residential portion of town – A stove explodes November 28 burning the west half the Arcade stores – A Parent Teacher Association (P.T.A.) is formed

1919 – The second Foothills Hotel is built (designed by Mead & Requa) – The second St. Thomas Aquinas Church is completed (designed by Mead & Requa)

1920 – The El Roblar Hotel is constructed, designed by Mead & Requa (now the Oaks at Ojai)

1921 – City of Ojai is incorporated – The first Ojai Board of Trustees is formed – There are 500 people living in the City of Ojai – Work on the new Dennison Grade road begins – Libbey hires architect George Washington Smith to design three spec houses in the Arbolada – Bill Baker buys the Gerstenmeyer bakery on East Ojai Avenue

1922 – Jiddu Krishnamurti visits the valley for the first time – Bob Clark is elected sheriff – Libbey constructs the Arbolada Development (Maravilla) Co. office at 121 West Ojai Avenue

1923 – The first building of the Ojai Valley School is constructed (designed by Wallace Neff) – The clubhouse at the Ojai Valley Country Club designed by Wallace Neff is constructed (now the Ojai Valley Inn & Spa) – A new firehouse is built just east of the Boyd Club

1924 – The Krotona Institute of Theosophy in Hollywood moves to Ojai - Villanova Preparatory School for Boys opens – John Meiners' heirs begin selling land parcels in Meiners Oaks – The Ojai Tennis Tournament is canceled due to a hoof and mouth outbreak

1925 – Mr. Libbey dies of pneumonia – Pop Soper opens a training camp for boxers at the mouth of Matilija Canyon - A new Summit School is built – The Ojai Valley Community Chorus is formed - The Hobsons begin the Spanish-style conversion of their home

1926 – Annie Besant, International President of the Theosophical Society, purchases land in Upper Ojai she calls Happy Valley – Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge and Frank Frost sponsor a music festival at the Foothills Hotel – The Ojai Valley Garden Club is founded

1927 – The Arcade is extended 100 feet to the east with 7 new stores added – The Ojai Valley Men's League becomes the Ojai Valley Chamber of Commerce – The Ojai State Bank becomes the Bank of Italy – Annie Besant buys *The Ojai* newspaper and hires Frank Kilbourne to manage it – a new Spanish style Nordhoff Grammar School is built on Ojai Avenue and North Matilija Street – a new San Antonio school is built (designed by Roy Wilson) – The Masonic Lodge is built (on what is now Mallory Way) – The Lions Club is formed – Bill Baker builds a new Spanish-style bakery (designed by Roy Wilson)

1928 – the new Ojai Library opens on East Ojai Avenue (designed by Carleton Monroe Winslow) – Grace Hobson Smith and her husband Fred Smith build a home next to their parents they call the "little house" (*possibly completed in 1929*) – 1500 people attend the first Star Camp in Meiners Oaks to hear Krishnamurti speak – Ojai responds to the St. Francis Dam disaster – The Foster Bowl at Foster Park is constructed (designed by Roy Wilson)

1929 – Madeleine Baird builds Acacia Lodge in Meiners Oaks (the Baird Mansion) – Krishnamurti severs his ties to the Theosophical Society – The Liberal Catholic Church is built in Meiners Oaks (designed by John Roine) – The Ojai jail, built in Libbey Park, begins operation – John Burnham builds the Cottages Among the Flowers (designed by Harold Burket) – Pacific Bell Telephone builds a facility at Ojai Avenue and North Blanche Street (now AT&T)

1930 – Presbyterians build a new church on Aliso Street and Foothill Road (designed by Carleton Monroe Winslow) – Fred and Lida Hart begin showing “talkies” at the Ojai Theater – Edward and Rhoda Martin build a home in the Siete Robles tract called The Pleiades (known as the Taj Mahal) – The Bank of Italy becomes the Bank of America

1931 – Local horseback riders form the Ojai Trails Association to build and maintain trails – Forest Ranger Jacinto Reyes retires after serving 31 years in the Cuyama Ranger District

1933 – Construction of the Maricopa Highway is completed – Seven Civil Conservation Corps camps are located in the Ojai backcountry – Bill Swanson becomes manager of the Ojai Theater – Anthony Sarzotti deeds 10 acres to the city for a park (on Park Road)

1936 – The new fire station is built on South Montgomery (a WPA project) – The Santa Barbara National Forest becomes the Los Padres National Forest

1937 – Nazarenes move the former Presbyterian Church building to the corner of Aliso and Montgomery Streets – Harold Clausen, owner of the Clausen Funeral Home, purchases the first ambulance in the valley

1938 – The meeting hall at Camp Comfort is built – members of the American Legion begin meeting in the high school

1939 – The Ojai Community Art Center opens – Louis Boyle opens the Orchid Town Western village on Fairview Road – The Ventura County Sheriff’s department opens the Honor Farm on Baldwin Road

1942 – The 134<sup>th</sup> Infantry from Nebraska takes over the country club as a combat training camp – The Monica Ros School opens – The California Preparatory School for Boys opens in the former Foothills Hotel

1943 – The 17<sup>th</sup> Infantry from New Jersey replaces the 134<sup>th</sup> Infantry – The Ojai Tennis Tournament is canceled for four years – The Upper Ojai School closes and becomes part of the Summit School District

1944 – The Seabees Acorn Assembly & Training Detachment replaces the 17<sup>th</sup> Infantry

1945 – Bob Hope and Bing Crosby raise funds for the Navy Relief Welfare Fund here – Don Henderson’s private airstrip at Highways 33 and Baldwin Road goes public

1946 – The Happy Valley School opens in Meiners Oaks – The Chekhov Players opened the High Valley Theater in Upper Ojai (at the former Upper Ojai School) – Ojai Avenue is roped off for the statewide Folk Dance Festival

1947 – Don Burger reopens the country club as the Ojai Valley Inn and Country Club – John Bauer organizes the first Ojai Music Festival using the high school auditorium as the main venue – The Ojai Tennis Tournament, cancelled during World War II, resumes – Ethel Percy Andrus founds the National Retired Teachers Association (NRTA) – John Rains (of Ventura) begins building the Valley Outpost Lodge (Mallory Way Cottages)

1948 – The Matilija Dam is completed – Beatrice Wood establishes her pottery studio in the east valley – A Rotary Club group is formed in the valley

1949 – 3-4 inches of snow falls on the valley floor in January – Bob Andrews and Kenneth Prairie start the *Ojai Valley News* in competition with *The Ojai* – The Liberal Catholic church is moved to a site on the former Gally Cottages property – The Flesher family extends the Ojai Theater by 16 feet on South Signal Street – The Meiners Oaks Elementary School opens on Lomita Avenue

1950 – There are 2,519 people living in the city – The Ojai Valley Grange moves into a Quonset hut brought into Meiners Oaks

1951 – A new Summit School is built

1952 – The first “spill over” occurs at the Matilija Dam – *Pat and Mike*, starring Katharine Hepburn & Spencer Tracey, is filmed at the Ojai Valley Inn – The Fleshers put in a crying room at the Ojai Theater

1954 – Ojai Festivals (Ojai Music Festival) builds a stage in Civic Center Park (Libbey Park) – Oaks Hotel owner, Frank Keenan, commissions the first of two Jesse Arms Botke murals – Ethel Percy Andrus opens the Grey Gables home for retired teachers – Fire Station #22 is built in Meiners Oaks – The American Legion builds a new hall at 960 East Ojai Avenue (*where the Firebird Plaza is now*)

1955 – Igor Stravinsky conducts at the Ojai Music Festival – Camp Ramah opens at the former California Preparatory School – The Southern California Railway Club makes its last train excursion into Ojai on the Southern Pacific’s final steam engine run – St. Thomas Aquinas Church builds a parochial school and convent on Canada Street – First Baptist Church holds its first nativity pageant using three live camels and a white donkey

1956 – Alan and Helen Hooker open the Ranch House Restaurant in Meiners Oaks – Avatar Meher Baba visits Meher Mount atop Sulphur Mountain – Mira Monte Elementary School opens

1957 – Ojai Festivals builds the Libbey Bowl shell (designed by Austen Pierpont and Roy Wilson) – Aaron Copeland conducts at the Ojai Music Festival – Oaks Hotel owner, Frank Keenan, is convicted of federal income tax evasion – Zaidee Soule donates her family land to the county for a park – The Boyd Club is moved to Sarzotti Park – The Bank of America

builds a new bank on the former Boyd Club property – Topa Topa Elementary School opens on Mountain View Drive

1958 – Ethel Percy Andrus founds the American Association of Retired Person (AARP) – *The Ojai* and *Ojai Valley News* newspapers merge – Ojai Search and Rescue is formed – Telephone service reaches 1,391 people in Ojai – The new post office building is completed (*the post office tower was not altered*)

1959 – The Casitas Dam and reservoir are completed – Matilija Junior High School is built on Maricopa Highway– St. Joseph’s Convalescent Hospital opens in the East End

1960 – The stately old bank building east of Libbey Park is demolished – The Ojai Terrace Shopping Center opens at the “Y” on Maricopa Highway – Topa Lanes bowling alley opens on East Ojai Avenue – Lynn Rains and his son Alan buy Hickey Brothers Hardware and change the name of the store to Rains – A group of over 100 people, calling themselves the Voice of the Valley, pitch in to buy and run *The Ojai Press*, (a competitor to the *Ojai Valley News*), which becomes the *Press Sentinel* in 1961 – The Ojai Valley Community Hospital opens on Maricopa Highway

1961 – The city establishes the Ojai Parks and Recreation Commission

1962 – Ruth Melhorn organizes the first Ojai Independence Day Parade – the 18-hole, county-owned Soule Park Golf Course is completed – Fred Volz purchases *The Ojai Valley News*, and the Voice of the Valley, happy with this transition, close down the *Press Sentinel*

1963 – The Steward Canyon debris basin and channelization project is completed – St. Thomas Aquinas parish builds a new church on Maricopa Highway – The city takes over ownership of the Nordhoff Cemetery – The Los Robles movie theater opens on Maricopa Highway near the “Y” (now Rabobank) – There are 18,000 people living in the valley.

1964 – An Optimist Club is formed – Richard Bartindale opens Bart’s Books on West Matilija and Canada Streets

1965 – Spearheaded by Rodney Walker, Jerald Peterson and Keith Lloyd, a group of 250 local investors purchase the Oaks Hotel

1966 – The city population closes in on 6000 – The Ojai Valley Historical Museum & Historical Society is founded – The Ojai Unified School District is formed – Nordhoff High and Matilija Junior High trade schools – City Hall moves to the former Baptist Church site on Ventura and Matilija Streets – Wayne Glasgow buys the Ojai Theater and renovates it with a Scottish motif.

1967 – Pierre Boulez is the music director for the Ojai Music Festival – Three hippie love-ins take place in Libbey Park – Tensions break out into violence between hippies and non-hippies during the summer; county sheriffs and CHP are called in to help quell the crowds – There is an explosion at the west pergola arch on December 30 – Land is purchased adjacent to the Krotona Institute to build the Taormina housing community – The city enters into a franchise agreement with Golden State Water Company to supply Ojai’s water – The



first Mexican Fiesta takes place in Libbey Park – The East Ojai Valley Associates and a new group called the Committee to Preserve the Ojai (*later called the Citizens to Preserve the Ojai*) oppose a scenic highway (freeway) through Ojai

1968 – Florence Garrigue arrives in the valley to establish Meditation Mount – HELP of Ojai is founded – The Altrusa Club donates the chimes for the post office bell tower – A second explosion takes place on the west pergola arch in October – The Orange Empire Trolley Museum sponsors a special, final passenger train trip into Ojai

1969 – Happy Valley School (now Besant Hill) moves from Meiners Oaks to Happy Valley in Upper Ojai – The police station moves next to city hall on North Ventura Street – 40 inches of rain falls in a two-week period causing severe flooding and washing out the railroad tracks — Southern Pacific Railroad abandons the tracks from near Canada Larga to Ojai – The U.S. Forest Service Ojai Ranger District office moves from 731 East Ojai Avenue to 1190 East Ojai Avenue

1970 – The Ojai Valley Museum moves to the former city hall at 338 East Ojai Avenue

1971 – The Ojai Civic Association deeds over Civic Center Park (Libbey Park) to the City of Ojai – The city demolishes the historic pergola and memorial fountain – The buildings at Meditation Mountain are completed (designed by Zelma Wilson)

1973 – The Citizens to Preserve the Ojai begin a campaign to prevent U.S. Gypsum from operating a phosphate strip mine near Pine Mountain

1974 - Beatrice Wood moves her studio to Happy Valley – A Montessori School opens on Baldwin Road – The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation starts buying land in the Ventura River watershed surrounding Lake Casitas to create the 3,500-acre Teague Memorial Watershed, banning development around the lake.

1975 – Krishnamurti founds the Oak Grove School in Meiners Oaks

1976 – City hall moves to the Hobson-Smith homes on Santa Ana Street, donated to the city by Fred Smith and his daughters Barbara and Margaret (remodeled by Zelma Wilson) – Drs. Benito and Dominga Reyes move the World University they founded in 1974 to the former City Hall site on North Ventura Street – The historic Foothills Hotel is demolished

1977 – Sheila Cluff purchases the Oaks Hotel and opens the Oaks at Ojai health spa

1978 – The first “spill over” occurs at the Casitas Dam (Lake Casitas) – Construction of a new police station begins on Santa Ana Street east of city hall – Friends of the Ojai Library group is founded and they help raise funds for the new library wing and for book acquisition

1979 – Ravi Shankar performs at the Ojai Music Festival – The Ojai Foundation is established in Upper Ojai – Ojai Fire Station #21 is built at East Ojai Avenue and Oak Glen – the Ojai Valley Museum moves to the old fire station on South Montgomery – St. Thomas Aquinas College builds a school on Ojai-Santa Paula Road

1980 – Ojai Police Department becomes a unit of the Ventura County Sheriff's Department – the county acquires the upper part of the old railroad grade to construct the Ojai Valley Trail (*now a segment of the Ventura River Parkway Trail*) – The population in the city tops 7,000

1981 – The new wing of the Ojai Library is dedicated (*the north-south running wing*) – The first play of the Ojai Shakespeare Festival takes place in Libbey Bowl

1982 – The Ventura County Humane Society opens an animal shelter on Bryant Street – HELP of Ojai opens the 2<sup>nd</sup> Helping Thrift Store on Fox Street

1983 – An International Regatta is staged at Lake Casitas – Khaled Al-Awar buys the Glasgow Playhouse movie theater and renames it the Ojai Playhouse

1984 – Lake Casitas is the venue for the Los Angeles Summer Olympics' canoe, kayak and scull events – Ojai Studio Artists is formed – The Rotary Club of Ojai, West is chartered – Phil Harvey starts the Ojai Camera Club (now the Ojai Photography Club) and reinstates the Ojai Community Chorus

1986 – Jiddu Krishnamurti dies in his Pine Cottage home in Ojai at age 90

1987 – The Ojai Valley Land Conservancy is founded – TV and movie star Larry Hagman, and his wife Maj, begin building their home "Heaven" atop Sulphur Mountain

1988 – Zelma Wilson designs a plaza behind the arcade stores – The Keep the Sespe Wild group is founded – The Ojai Film Society is formed – The county-owned Matilija Hot Springs is closed to the public

1990 – The city establishes the Ojai Historical Preservation Commission

1991 – The seismic renovation of the arcade is completed – Craig Walker initiates the return of Ojai Day that had ended in 1928 – The Los Angeles Archdiocese orders the closing of the St. Thomas Aquinas Parochial School – Julie DelPozzo launches the Nordhoff Cemetery Adopt-A-Grave program – The C.R.E.W. youth leadership and employment organization is founded

1992 – The Ojai Historic Preservation Commission saves the Ojai jail from demolition

1993 – Sanford Drucker launches the Living Treasures program – The Bank of America moves into the old Security Bank building on Ojai Avenue and South Blanche Street – The city buys the former St. Thomas Aquinas church – The Coalition to Stop Weldon Canyon Dump is formed – The Ojai Education Foundation is founded to support public school programs outside of the OUSD budget – The Ojai Institute opens (now the Ojai Retreat)

1995 – The Ojai Valley Library Foundation is founded – Southern Pacific Railroad abandons the tracks from Ventura to near Canada Larga, which had served the Petrochem plant – The Maricopa Highway (SR 33) is designated the Jacinto Reyes National Scenic Byway

1996 – The Ojai Valley Museum moves into the former St. Thomas Aquinas church – The former Bank of America building east of Libbey Park is renovated into shops and galleries (designed by Marc Whitman) – The National Disaster Search Dog Foundation was founded by Wilma Melville – The first concert in the new Libbey Park bandstand takes place – The Ojai Valley Library Foundation and the Ojai Library set up a SchoolLinks Homework Center – The Taconic Resources county-wide March ballot, Measure T, which put construction of the Weldon Canyon dump before voters, was defeated – Theater 150, a professional theater company, begins productions in the former Clausen funeral home on East Matilija Street.

1997 – The Ojai Valley Inn and Spa completes the first phase of its expansion and renovation project, which includes the luxury spa (designed by Bill Mahan and David Bury) – Weil Tennis Academy opens – A city Youth Master Plan is completed and the Ojai Valley Youth Foundation is formed – Oprah Winfrey films the TV movie, *Before Women Had Wings*, in Ojai – Wheeler Hot Springs closes to the public

1998 – Beatrice Wood dies a week after celebrating her 105<sup>th</sup> birthday – The Ojai Playwrights Conference is founded

1999 – David Mason and Joan Kemper spearhead the reconstruction of the pergola and memorial fountain (designed by David Bury from the 1916 Mead & Requa plans) – The Friends of the Ojai Library and the Ojai Valley Library Foundation merge into the Ojai Valley Library Friends & Foundation – The Ojai Valley Land Conservancy purchases the meadow adjacent to Nordhoff High School on Maricopa Highway for a preserve

2000 – The 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Ojai Tennis Tournament is celebrated – The Ojai Valley Community Hospital Foundation is formed to purchase the Ojai hospital and establish it as a nonprofit – The first Ojai Film Festival takes place in the fall – The Ojai Raptor Center is founded by Kimberly Stroud – Brian Bemel, of Performances to Grow On, founds the Ojai Storytelling Festival

2001 – Ojai holds a memorial at Libbey Park for victims of the “9/11” New York City disaster – Ojai Valley ranchers Tony Thacher, Jim Churchill, Mike Shore and Bob Davis found the Ojai Pixie Growers’ Association – Alexis Ells opens the Equine Sanctuary for rescued performance horses

2002 – Cluff Vista Park is dedicated – The Arcade Plaza redevelopment is completed – Food for Thought is founded to work with the school district on food issues in the schools – The Ojai Valley Toastmasters Club is chartered – The Ojai Valley Land Conservancy acquires funds to purchase a nearly 1600-acre parcel on the Ventura River in Meiners Oaks, part of which was once slated for a golf course – The Valley Oak Charter School is founded to serve the educational needs of the valley’s home schooled students – Michael McFerrin renovates the first Presbyterian church building on Aliso and Montgomery Streets.

2003 – The city establishes the Ojai Arts Commission – The City of Ojai adopts a public art ordinance – The Honor Farm on Baldwin Road closes – Ojai Valley Bank merges into Mid-State Bank & Trust – The Ojai Valley Library Friends & Foundation purchases the 1922 Libbey Land Office building just east of the library and open the Twice-Sold Tales bookstore

2004 – The first Lemire Grand Prix introduces professional bicycling races to Ojai – The Los Arboles Condominium project on South Montgomery is completed (designed by Marc Whitman) – The Los Padres Forest Watch organization is founded – Susan McRae and Sandy Messori organize the first Ojai Lavender Festival in Libbey Park

2005 – Rotary Community Park is dedicated – The Camp Comfort renovation project is completed – The Ojai Valley Community Hospital merges with the Community Memorial Hospital in Ventura – Ojai Community Bank opens in the former Bank of A. Levy building at Ojai Avenue and Rincon Street – Julie Grove opens Reins of Hope, a horse therapy center with programs for veterans, women and children

2006 – The Oaks at Ojai (originally the El Roblar Hotel) undergoes a major renovation – The Ojai Valley Inn and Spa completes the second phase of its renovation project – HELP of Ojai leases the former Honor Farm property on Baldwin Road to run some of their programs

2007 – The City of Ojai adopts an ordinance regulating chain stores – The E-Bello Plaza opens, replacing the popular Ojai Frostie hamburger stand – The Ojai Valley Business Park on Bryant Circle is built (designed by David Bury) – The Stop the Trucks Coalition launches a campaign to reduce gravel trucks on Highway 33 – The Ojai Trees organization is formed to foster the growth of Ojai's community forest – The Living Peace in Ojai group is formed to celebrate the annual International Day of Peace each year in September – The Ojai FLOW group is formed to gain local control of the city's water supply

2008 – The Ojai Valley Woman's Club is renovated – The Ojai Valley Green Coalition is formed

2009 – Nordhoff High School celebrates its 100th year – Ojai is named the second best Tennis Town in America in a contest sponsored by the U.S. Tennis Association – World-renowned potter Otto Heino dies at age 94 – The Ojai Valley Defense Fund is founded – California Fish & Game wardens tranquilize, and later euthanize, a bear sitting in an East Aliso Street tree, sparking citizen outrage and the formation of the Ojai Wildlife League – Francisca Beach opens the Senga Classic Stage Company at the Ojai Valley Grange

2010 – The population in the city is 7,461 – The Ojai Skate Park is constructed

2011 – The new Libbey Bowl is completed (designed by David Bury) – the first Ojai WordFest is organized – Ojai becomes a Tree City USA – Brian Bemel and John Zeretzke organize the first World Music Festival at Libbey Bowl

2012 – TV and movie star Larry Hagman dies at age 81 – The Ojai Youth Entertainers Studio (OYES) opens at the former Theater 150 venue on East Matilija Street

2013 – The City of Ojai adopts an exterior lighting ordinance

2014 – Ojai Valley Community Hospital renovation is completed – A Golden State Water Company water main breaks on Ojai Avenue destroying the inside of the Ojai Playhouse movie theater – Ojai residents vote to adopt a mayor and city council form of government to begin in late 2016 (*previously the council members chose the mayor*) – An Affordable

Housing Committee is formed to work towards the development of more low-income housing in Ojai

**New from Elise:**

2015 – City population is 7602 – Valley population nearly 30,000 – Volunteers construct new playground in Libbey park – Ojai local Bob Daddi buys the *Ojai Valley News* – Ojai is proclaimed an International City of Peace – The Ojai Valley Grange is reinvigorated with a revival week of old-school homesteading workshops

**On our website now:**

2015 – The population in the city is 8,202 – The valley-wide population is nearly 30,000 – A new playground is constructed by volunteers in Libbey Park – Ojai local Bob Daddi buys *the Ojai Valley News* – Ojai is proclaimed an International City of Peace – A group of concerned citizens, including Chumash tribal elders, Julie Tumamait-Stenslie and Patrick Tumamait, are instrumental in getting the city to adopt a cultural resources resolution – The city grapples with the issue of short-term vacation rentals – The Ojai Valley Grange is reinvigorated with a revival week of old-school homesteading workshops

2016 – The city bans short-term (less than 30 days) rentals in Ojai – In April the Casitas Municipal Water District adopts Stage 3 water conservation restrictions due to ongoing drought – Ordinance allows beekeeping everywhere within city of Ojai –The OUSD School Board declares Chaparral school property (former Nordhoff Grammar School) surplus with intent to lease property – Bowlful of Blues, absent since 2005, returns to Libbey Bowl –On Ojai Day the Ojai Valley Museum begins a Jubilee Year celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the centennial of the Edward Libbey-led Spanish-style conversion of the town and it's renaming from Nordhoff to Ojai in 1917

2017 – Citizen group Ojai Flow wins its years-long struggle for local control when Golden State Water Co agrees to sell the water franchise to Casitas Municipal Water District – “Mr. Ojai,” local historian David Mason, dies July 22 – The Ojai Tourism Improvement District (OTID) ends after Chamber of Commerce rescinds their request for continued funding by the city in wake of fierce opposition – The Al-Awars, owners of the Ojai Playhouse, win a \$3.85 million settlement against Golden State Water Company for its July 2014 water damage to the movie theater – Ojai Community Bank is purchased by the Bank of the Sierra – The US Forest Service halts all new oil and gas leasing throughout the Los Padres National Forest – The Thomas Fire, the largest recorded fire in California history, breaks out north of Santa Paula on December 4 and burns 281,893 acres in Ventura and Santa Barbara counties