# Historic Context Statement Update

# County of Santa Cruz

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[1] California Office of Historic Preservation, "OHP Preferred Format for Historic Context Statements," Sacramento: California, Department of Parks and Recreation, accessed September 29, 2025, https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/pages/1054/files/Format-for-Historic-Context-Statements.pdf. This quoted statement is included in accordance with guidance from OHP Preferred Format for Historic Context Statements from the California Office of Historic Preservation, which requires federally funded projects, like this historic context statement, to acknowledge funding sources and clarify that the views expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the U.S. Department of the Interior or the Office of Historic Preservation.

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# Acronyms and Abbreviations

| Acronym/Abbreviation | Definition |
|---|---|
| 1994 Context Statement | 1994 County of Santa Cruz Survey of Historic Resources Update and Context Statement |
| APPB | Associação Portuguesa Protectora e Beneficiente |
| CCR | California Code of Regulations |
| CLG program | Certified Local Government program |
| County | Santa Cruz County |
| CPDES | Colónia Portuguesa do Divino Espírito Santo |
| CRHR | California Register of Historical Resources |
| FEMA | Federal Emergency Management Administration |
| IDES | Irmandade do Divino Espírito Santo de Mission San José |
| JACL | Japanese American Citizens League |
| NAACP | National Association for the Advancement of Colored People |
| NHPA | National Historic Preservation Act |
| NRHP | National Register of Historic Places |
| OHP | California Office of Historic Preservation |
| planning area | General Plan planning area |
| PRC | California Public Resources Code |
| SES | Sociedade do Espírito Santo |
| SPRSI | Sociedade Portuguesa Rainha Santa Isabel |
| UCSC | University of California, Santa Cruz |
| UFW | United Farm Workers |
| UPEC | União Portuguesa do Estado da Califórnia |
| UPPEC | União Portuguesa Protectora do Estado da Califórnia |
| Update | Historic Context Statement Update for the County of Santa Cruz |
| USO | United Service Organizations |

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background and Objective

The following section will present the background and the intent of this Historic Context Statement Update for the County of Santa Cruz (Historic Context Statement Update; Update), covering a review of the existing historical resources inventory efforts in Santa Cruz County (County), a statement of objective for the project, project funding, and a section describing how to use this document.

### 1.1.1 Background

#### Existing Context

In 1986, the County commenced to survey historical resources in the County to serve as the baseline for the County's Historic Preservation Program, which was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on February 14, 1989. The Historic Preservation Ordinance (Chapter 16.42, Volume 2, of the County Code, revised May 1991) governs the treatment of the historical resources listed in the inventory.

In 1993, the County Historical Resources Commission recognized the need to update the inventory due to damage from the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake and other events, as well as the lack of a historic context statement for consistent evaluation criteria. Historic context statements help to establish recognized, consistent thresholds for the interpretation of resources in a particular area within the broader, recognized historical context of the state and the nation. This allows for the creation and application of consistent evaluation criteria, ensuring that potential resources are not overlooked. After receiving a Certified Local Government program (CLG program) grant from the California Office of Historic Preservation (OHP), the Historical Resources Commission consultant Susan Lehmann, along with County Planning Department staff, initiated a project to compile the County's first historic context statement. The project also sought to expand the existing inventory to include previously unsurveyed properties and revise it to exclude those historic properties that had been destroyed after the earthquake.

The result of the project was the 1994 County of Santa Cruz Survey of Historic Resources Update and Context Statement (1994 Context Statement), prepared by Susan Lehmann, Historical Resources Consultant.[2] In addition to a brief discussion about the Precontact[3]-, Spanish-, and Mexican-period development of the area, the 1994 Context Statement offered an account of the historical development of the County from 1840 to 1940. This period was divided into three contexts, called themes, with associated focused subcategories. The three themes with associated subcategories were presented as follows:

- Context 1: Economic Development in Santa Cruz County (1850–1940)
  - Agriculture
  - Industry other than Agriculture
  - Transportation

[2] Susan Lehmann, "County of Santa Cruz Survey of Historic Resources Update and Context Statement," submitted to Santa Cruz County Historic Resources Commission, September 15, 1994. Prepared by Susan Lehmann, Historical Resources Consultant for the Santa Cruz County Historic Resources Commission.

[3] The term "Precontact" is used here in place of "Prehistoric" to acknowledge the rich and continuous histories of Native American communities prior to contact with outside cultures, including but not limited to Europeans.

- Context 2: Residential, Commercial and Institutional Architecture in Santa Cruz County (1840–1940)
  - Spanish Mission and Spanish Colonial Style
  - Romantic Styles
  - Victorian Styles
  - Eclectic Styles
- Context 3: Institutions in Santa Cruz County (1840–1940)
  - Schools
  - Churches
  - Fraternal and Community Organizations

The 1994 Context Statement identified 228 resources as part of the survey update, as follows:

- Context 1: 65 total historical resources representing the industries of agriculture, wine, powder, lime, lumber, tourism, and transportation
- Context 2: 126 total historical resources, all in the area of architecture
- Context 3: 37 total historical resources with representative property types including schools, churches, community institutions, and fraternal organizations

### Limitations of the Current Document

OHP recommends updating historic context statements approximately every 5 years to ensure that local and preservation planning decisions are based on the most up to date information. The current historic context statement has not been updated in 31 years. At the time that the 1994 Context Statement was prepared, the author addressed resources that were built before 1940, or 54 years old and older at the time. The document overlooks critical periods of historical development within the County that have since become relevant, as they now include several decades of potential historical resources over 50 years old.

The 1994 Context Statement took a narrow approach in its discussion of the many ethnic and cultural groups who have contributed greatly to the cultural landscape of the County. The context statement declares that due to limited available secondary source material on these groups, "Rather than treat ethnic contributions as a separate Context or even as sub-topics, any information available about a particular ethnic group [*was*] woven into the over-all topics such as industry, agriculture, education and religion where applicable … Although a very good history of the Chinese in the Monterey Bay region by Sandy Lydon has been published, the histories of the Mexican, Filipino, Japanese, Italian, Portuguese and Slavic people have yet to be written."[4] The document therefore does not provide a holistic picture of the experience of these groups in the County, which makes the identification of meaningful historical resources associated with them difficult.

## 1.1.2 Objective

Historic context statements are intended to be living documents that require updates in perpetuity to ensure they remain aligned with current professional standards and accurately reflect ongoing changes in historical understanding. The guidance for the preparation of historic contexts has been updated by OHP to emphasize a

4 Lehman, *County of Santa Cruz Survey of Historic Resources Update and Context Statement*, 2.

more comprehensive and analytical approach to understanding and evaluating historical resources, which entails placing an emphasis on property types rather than individual buildings or architectural styles. By establishing a framework for identifying property types, history can more readily be linked with the built environment.

This Historic Context Statement Update aims to enhance the 1994 Context Statement by addressing the lack of information related to the cultural and ethnic populations living and working in the County between 1850 and 1990. The structure of this addendum-style update aims to provide an account of the diverse histories of the populations who have contributed greatly to the development of the County that is both more thorough and more precise. The purpose of this focus is to identify potential historical resources associated with these groups and their histories that were previously not addressed. The broad nature of this discussion is organized using the brief developed histories of each of the General Plan planning areas of the County.

This Historic Context Statement Update therefore focuses on the period from 1850 through roughly 1990 in Santa Cruz County, a timeframe selected to capture the full arc of Santa Cruz County's development from early statehood through the late twentieth century. This timeframe encompasses significant shifts in population, industry, and community life in the County, and includes eras and events that have become eligible for consideration as historic resources that were not covered in the 1994 Context statement. By extending the timeframe for this Historic Context Update through 1990, this ensures that properties and narratives reflecting more recent and diverse histories—including those of cultural and ethnic groups that were systematically excluded and historically overlooked —are recognized and evaluated according to current preservation standards.

This document introduces new relevant themes with associated property types, eligibility requirements, and integrity thresholds. The report also includes the evaluative criteria of the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR), and County Historic Resources Inventory.

### 1.1.3 Funding

Amendments to the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) in 1980 created the CLG program to involve local governments in historic preservation and integrate these efforts into local planning. The CLG program, the federal government, and the County jointly funded this 2025 addendum-style Update of the existing 1994 Context Statement. The total cost for this Update is $66,650. OHP awarded the County a $40,000 CLG grant for the 2025-2026 CLG funding year, and the County contributed an additional $26,650 in County staff work-hours toward the project. The grant period for this project is December 1, 2024, through May 30, 2026.

### 1.1.4 How to Use This Document

In accordance with best practice and National Park Service guidance, properties must be evaluated within their historic context to ensure a thorough application of the eligibility criteria. Theme, place, and time are the basic elements that define a historic context. The context statement typically includes and describes eras of physical development, including the evolution of building forms and architectural styles, as well as highlighting facets of patterns of development or events.

Historic context is also linked to the built environment through the concept of property type. A property type is a grouping of properties with shared physical or associative qualities and characteristics. Characteristics may relate to structural forms, architectural styles, building materials, or site type. Associative characteristics may relate to the nature of associated events or activities or to associations with a specific individual or group of individuals. In this

way, the historic context provides a key tool for considering the significance and integrity of potential historical resources. In order to provide a contextual framework for assessments, this context provides an overview of the historical themes and architectural styles that were identified in this context statement.

## 1.1.5 Designation Criteria and Integrity Requirements

The following presents an overview of the national, state, and local guidelines for evaluating properties in the County for historical significance and integrity.

### National Historic Preservation Act and the National Register of Historic Places

The NHPA established the NRHP and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. Under the NHPA, significant cultural resources are referred to as historic properties, which include any prehistoric or historic district, site, building, structure, or object included in, or determined eligible for inclusion in, the NRHP. This term includes artifacts, records, and remains that are related to and located within such properties. The term includes properties of traditional religious and cultural importance to an Indian tribe or Native Hawaiian organization. Historic properties designated by the Secretary of the Interior to be National Historic Landmarks are nationally significant historic places that possess exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the heritage of the United States. A property is considered historically significant if it meets one of the NRHP criteria and also retains sufficient historic integrity to convey its significance.

The NRHP is the United States' official list of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects worthy of preservation. Overseen by the National Park Service under the U.S. Department of the Interior, the NRHP was authorized under the NHPA, as amended. Its listings encompass all National Historic Landmarks, as well as historic areas administered by the National Park Service.

The NRHP criteria for evaluation (36 CFR Section 60.4) consider the quality of significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, and structures. For a property to be listed or determined eligible for listing on the NRHP, it must first be evaluated for its ability to meet one or more of the following criteria:

A. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
B. That are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
C. That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
D. That have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

To be listed on the NRHP, a property must not only be shown to be significant under at least one of the NRHP criteria, but it also must have integrity. The evaluation of integrity is sometimes a subjective judgment but must always be grounded in an understanding of a property's physical features and how they relate to its significance.

Historic properties either retain integrity (that is, convey their significance) or they do not. Within the concept of integrity, the NRHP criteria recognize seven aspects or qualities that, in various combinations, define integrity. These are location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

To retain historic integrity, a property will always possess several, and usually most, of these aspects. The retention of specific aspects of integrity is paramount for a property to convey its significance. Determining which of these aspects are most important to a particular property requires knowing why, where, and when the property is significant.[5]

There are certain types of properties that are not considered eligible for the NRHP. However, such properties will qualify if they are integral parts of districts that do meet the criteria or if they fall within the following categories:

A. A religious property deriving primary significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance; or
B. A building or structure removed from its original location but which is primarily significant for architectural value, or which is the surviving structure most importantly associated with a historic person or event; or
C. A birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance if there is no appropriate site or building directly associated with his or her productive life; or
D. A cemetery which derives its primary importance from graves of persons of transcendent importance, from age, from distinctive design features, or from association with historic events; or
E. A reconstructed building when accurately executed in a suitable environment and presented in a dignified manner as part of a restoration master plan, and when no other building or structure with the same association has survived; or
F. A property primarily commemorative in intent if design, age, tradition, or symbolic value has invested it with its own exceptional significance; or
G. A property achieving significance within the past 50 years if it is of exceptional importance.

## California Register of Historical Resources:

California Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 5024.1 establishes the CRHR, which lists all significant resources in California considered to be historical resources. In California, the term historical resource includes, but is not limited to, "any object, building, structure, site, area, place, record, or manuscript which is historically or archaeologically significant, or is significant in the architectural, engineering, scientific, economic, agricultural, educational, social, political, military, or cultural annals of California" (PRC Section 5020.1[j]). The CRHR is "to be used by state and local agencies, private groups, and citizens to identify the state's historical resources and to indicate what properties are to be protected, to the extent prudent and feasible, from substantial adverse change" (PRC Section 5024.1[a]). The criteria for listing resources in the CRHR were expressly developed to be in accordance with previously established criteria developed for listing in the NRHP. As such, a resource is considered historically significant if it meets at least one of the following criteria outlined under PRC Section 5024.1(c):

1. Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California's history and cultural heritage.
2. Is associated with the lives of persons important in our past.
3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values.

[5] California Office of Historic Preservation, *California Register and National Register Criteria: A Comparison (for the Purposes of Determining Eligibility for the California Register)*, OHP Technical Assistance Series No. 6, Sacramento, CA: Office of Historic Preservation, Department of Parks and Recreation, 2011.

4. Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

In addition to meeting one of the significance criteria described in PRC Section 5024.1(c), a resource must also possess sufficient integrity to qualify for listing in the CRHR. Integrity is defined in 14 California Code of Regulations (CCR) Section 4852(c) as "the authenticity of an historical resource's physical identity evidenced by the survival of characteristics that existed during the resource's period of significance" as evaluated with regard to the resource's retention of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Historical resources that lack sufficient integrity to meet the criteria for listing in the NRHP may still be eligible for listing in the CRHR if they have the potential to yield significant scientific or historical information, or specific data.

The CRHR includes not only listed prehistoric and historic-era cultural resources but also California Historical Landmarks (numbered 770 and above), California Points of Historical Interest designated by the State Historical Resources Commission, and resources identified through local historical resource surveys or designated under local ordinances, provided the survey and ordinance meet the criteria in 14 CCR Section 4852(e) and (f).

## Santa Cruz County Historic Resources Inventory

A list of historical resources is maintained in the County's Historic Resources Inventory, which identifies historic resources located in the unincorporated areas of the County. "Historic resource" is defined in Chapter 16.42, Historic Preservation, of the County Code as follows (County Code 16.42.030 [I] [Ord. 5061 Section 28, 2009; Ord. 4922 Section 1, 2008]):

> Any structure, object, site, property, or district which has a special historical, archaeological, cultural or aesthetic interest or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the County, State, or nation, and which either has been referenced in the County General Plan, or has been listed in the historic resources inventory adopted pursuant to SCCC 16.42.050 and has a rating of significance of NR-1, NR-2, NR-3, NR-4, or NR-5.

To be placed on the County's Historic Resources Inventory, a property must first be evaluated for its ability to meet one or more of the following criteria and on its retention of architectural integrity and historic value (County Code 16.42.050, Historic Resource Designation [Ord. 4922 Section 1, 2008]):

1. The resource is associated with a person of local, State or national historical significance.
2. The resource is associated with an historic event or thematic activity of local, State or national importance.
3. The resource is representative of a distinct architectural style and/or construction method of a particular historic period or way of life, or the resource represents the work of a master builder or architect or possesses high artistic values.
4. The resource has yielded, or may likely yield, information important to history.

**Santa Cruz County Historic Districts:** The County defines a historic district as a group of resources that (County Code 16.42.030 [E] [Ord. 5061 Section 28, 2009; Ord. 4922 Section 1, 2008]):

1. Have character of special historic or aesthetic interest or value; and
2. Represent one or more periods or styles of architecture typical of one or more eras in the history of the County; and

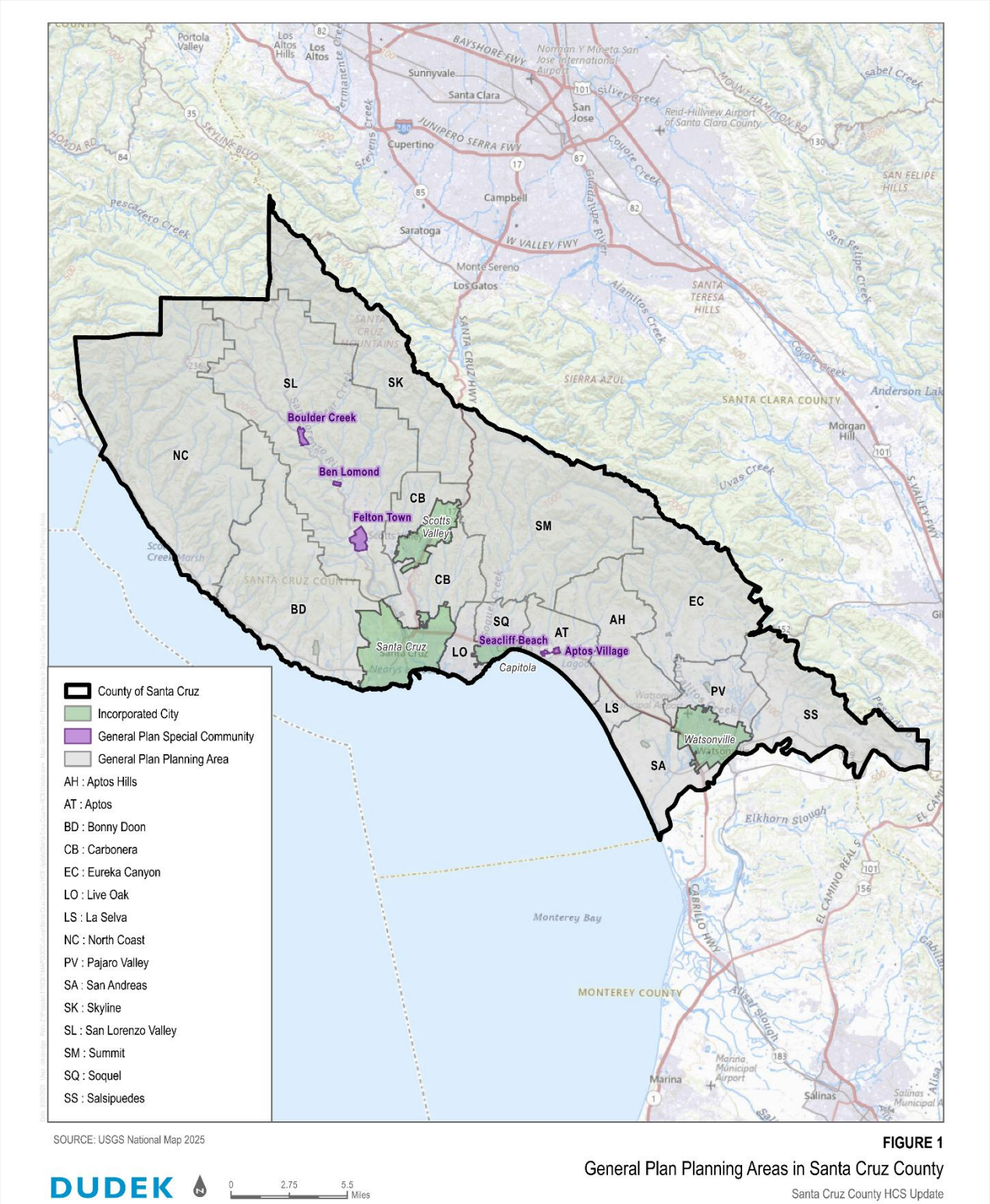
3. Cause such area, by reason of these factors, to constitute a geographically definable area possessing a significant concentration or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects that are unified by past events, or aesthetically by plan or physical development.

# 1.2 Methodology

## 1.2.1 Geographic Scope of the General Plan Planning Areas

The scope of this study is limited to the County and examines the individual histories of its 15 General Plan planning areas (planning areas) (Figure 1, General Plan Planning Areas). The following section briefly describes the planning areas within the County, which define the geographic boundaries of this study, along with the related General Plan Town Areas (towns) and General Plan Village Areas (villages).

**Figure 1.** General Plan Planning Areas in Santa Cruz County



## Aptos (AT)

The Aptos Planning Area is located in the southwestern area of the County between the Soquel Planning Area to the east and Aptos Hills Planning Area to the east and northeast. The Aptos Planning Area is bordered by Monterey Bay to the southwest and the Santa Cruz Mountains to the northeast and comprises several unincorporated communities, including Aptos, Seacliff, and Rio Del Mar, and two villages, Aptos Village and Seacliff Village.[6]

### Aptos Village

Aptos Village is located approximately 6 miles east of the City of Santa Cruz and 8 miles northwest of the City of Watsonville. The village serves as the gateway to the Forest of the Nisene Marks State Park. Aptos Village is divided into three major areas: the Hihn subdivision, which is separated from the rest of the village by Trout Gulch Road and the railroad tracks; South of Soquel; and the Village Core, which is located north of Soquel Drive and west of Trout Gulch Road.[7]

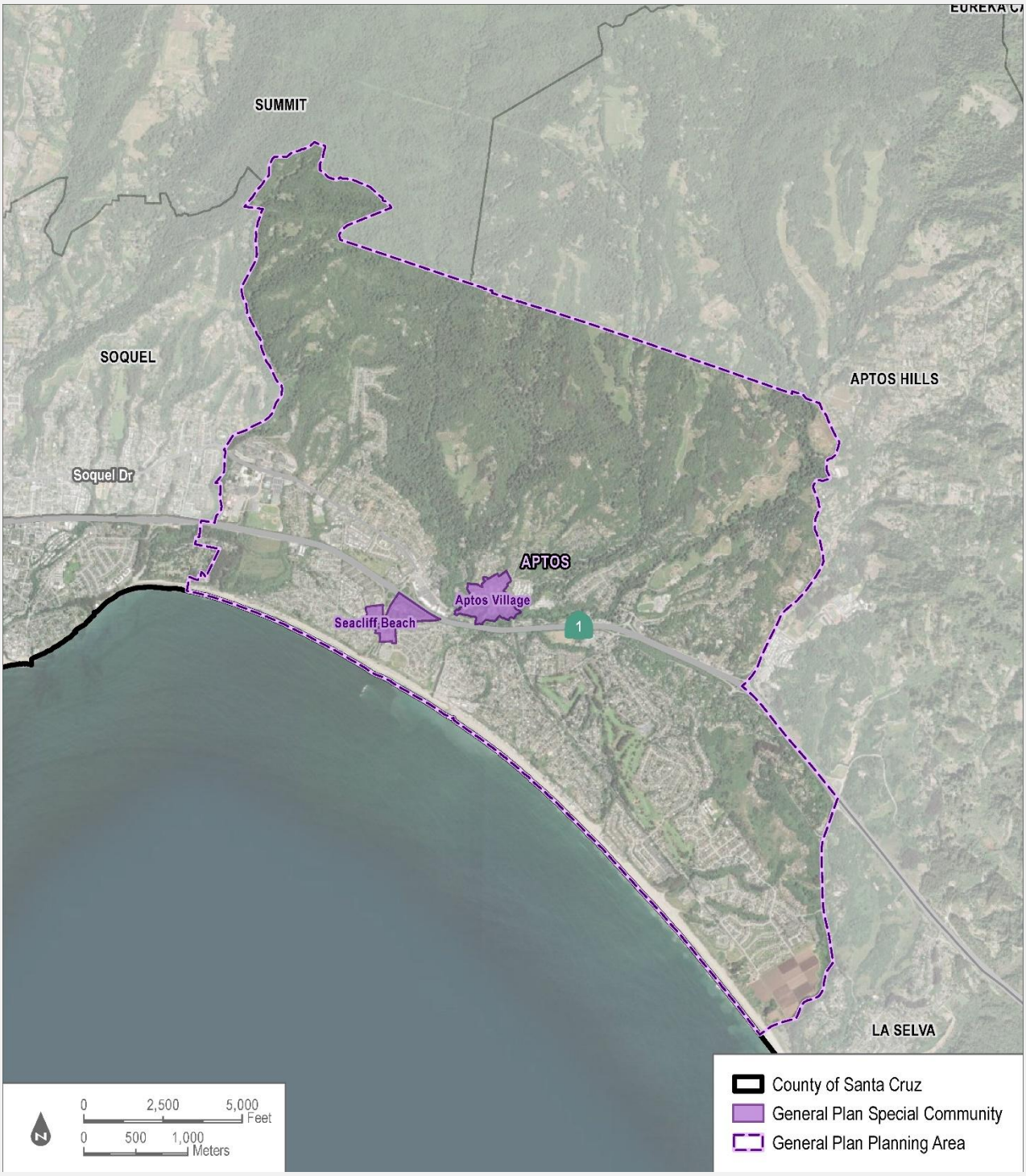
### Seacliff Village

Seacliff Village is located between the town of Capitola and the community Rio Del Mar, approximately 7 miles southeast of the City of Santa Cruz and 10 miles northwest of the City of Watsonville. The community extends from Borregas Gulch to Aptos Creek on the seaward side of Highway 1, comprising about 21.3 acres of land.

6 John Hibble, "A Brief Overview of the History of Aptos," Aptos Chamber of Commerce, accessed May 22, 2025, https://aptoschamber.com/history-aptos/; Data Commons, "Aptos," accessed May 22, 2025, https://datacommons.org/place/geoId/0602378.

7 David Thomas Clark, *Santa Cruz County Place Names* (Kestrel Press, 2008), 9; County of Santa Cruz Planning Department, "Aptos Village Plan," February 23, 2010, accessed May 22, 2025, TABLE OF CONTENTS, 1, 19.

**Exhibit 1.** Aptos (AT) Planning Area.

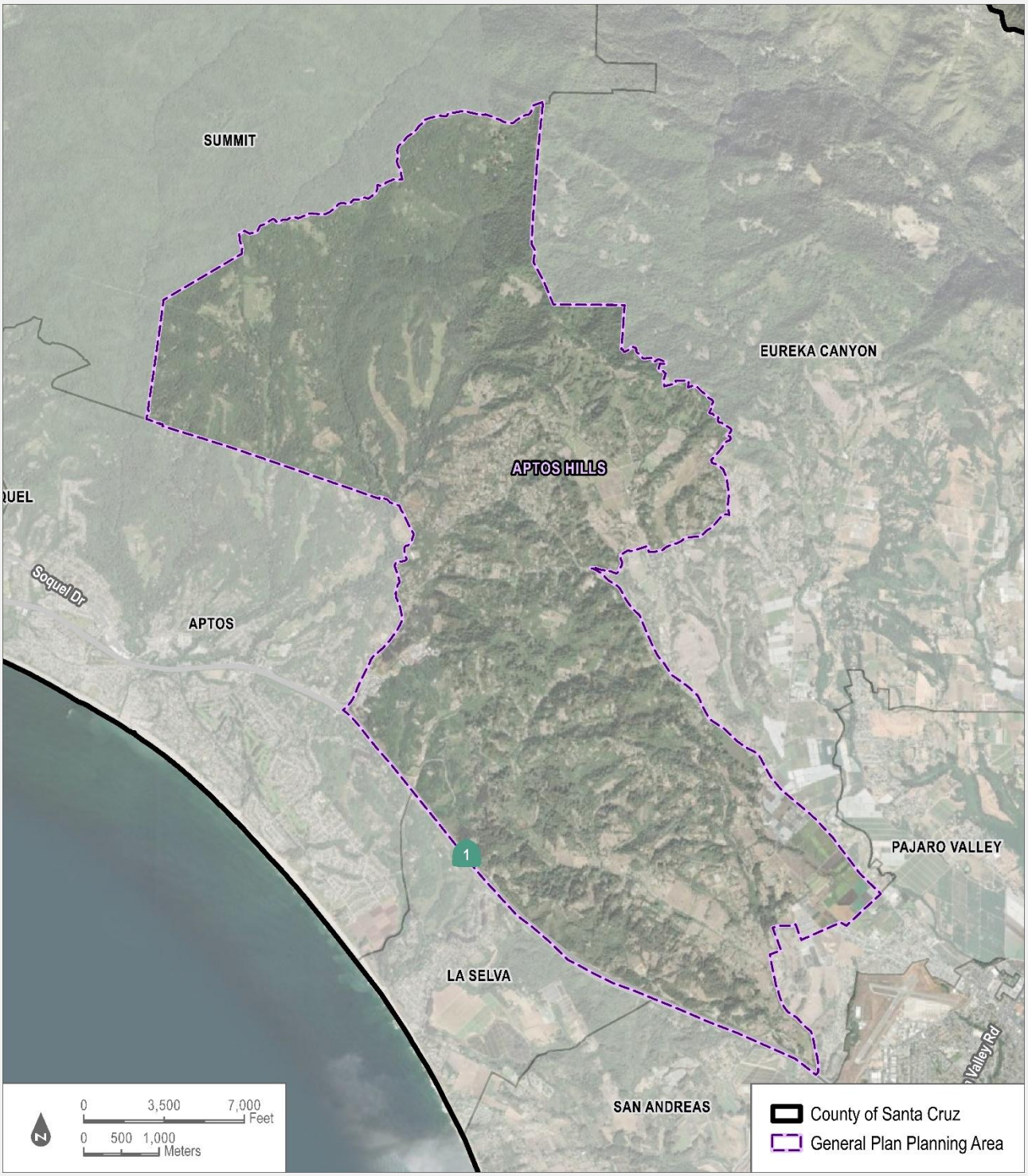



**Source:** Dudek 2025.

## Aptos Hills (AH)

The Aptos Hills Planning Area is located in the southeastern area of the County between the Summit Planning Area to the southwest and the Eureka Planning Area to the east and southeast. The Aptos Hills Planning Area is directly east of the census designated place of Aptos and northeast of the community of Rio del Mar. It overlaps several unincorporated communities, including Aptos, Aptos Hills-Larkin Valley, and Day Valley.

**Exhibit 2.** Aptos Hills (AH) Planning Area.



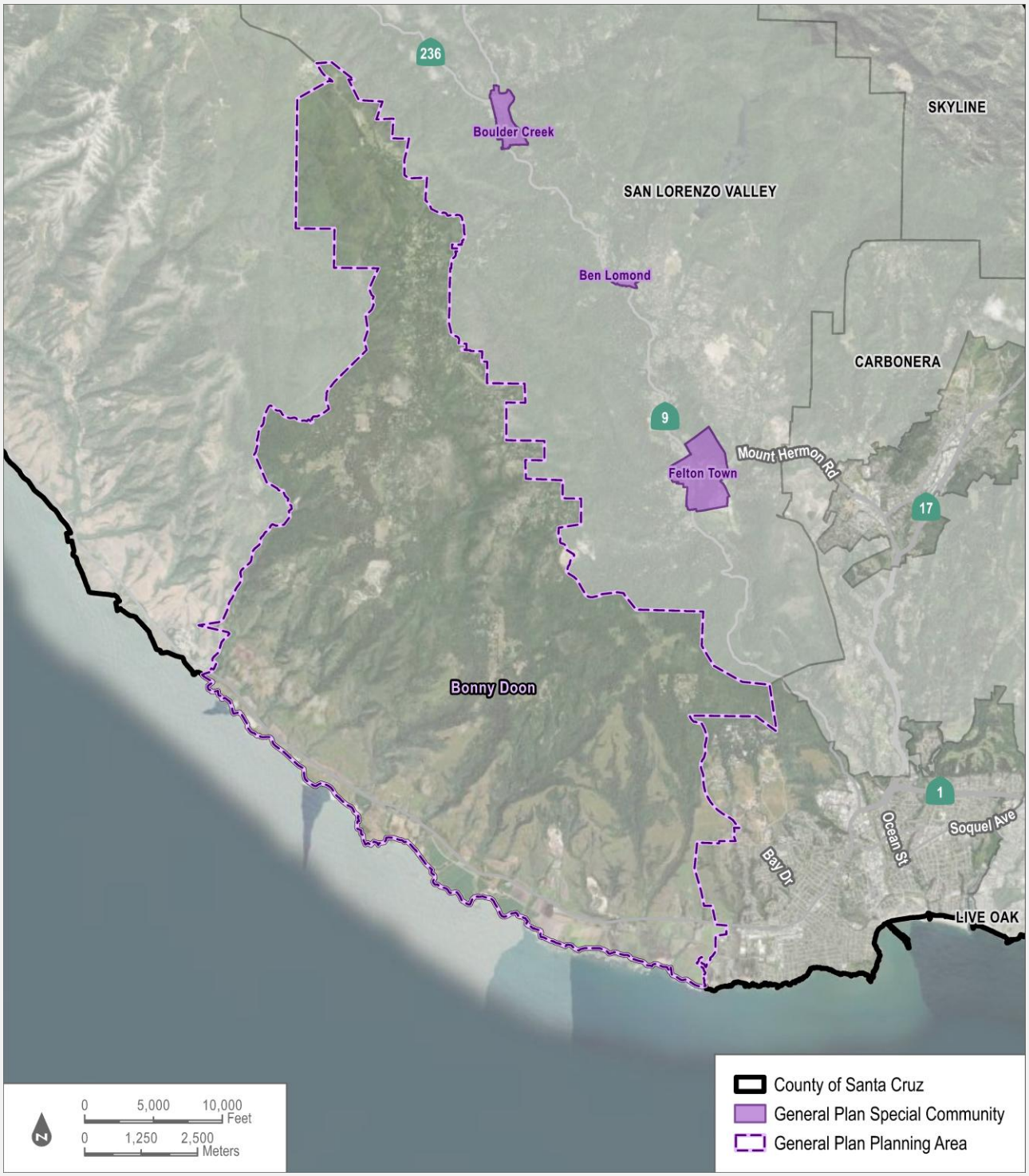

**Source:** Dudek 2025.

## Bonny Doon (BD)

The Bonny Doon Planning Area is situated in the northwestern area of the County between the North Coast Planning Area to the northwest and the San Lorenzo Valley Planning Area to the north and northeast. The Bonny Doon Planning Area partially overlaps the community of Davenport and includes the unincorporated community of Bonny Doon, which encompasses an area of 16.7 square miles.[8]

[8] Clark, *Santa Cruz County Place Names,* 33; United States Census Bureau, Bonny Doon CDP, California, accessed May 23, 2025, https://data.census.gov/profile/Bonny_Doon_CDP,_California?g=160XX00US0607470.

**Exhibit 3.** Bonny Doon (BD) Planning Area.



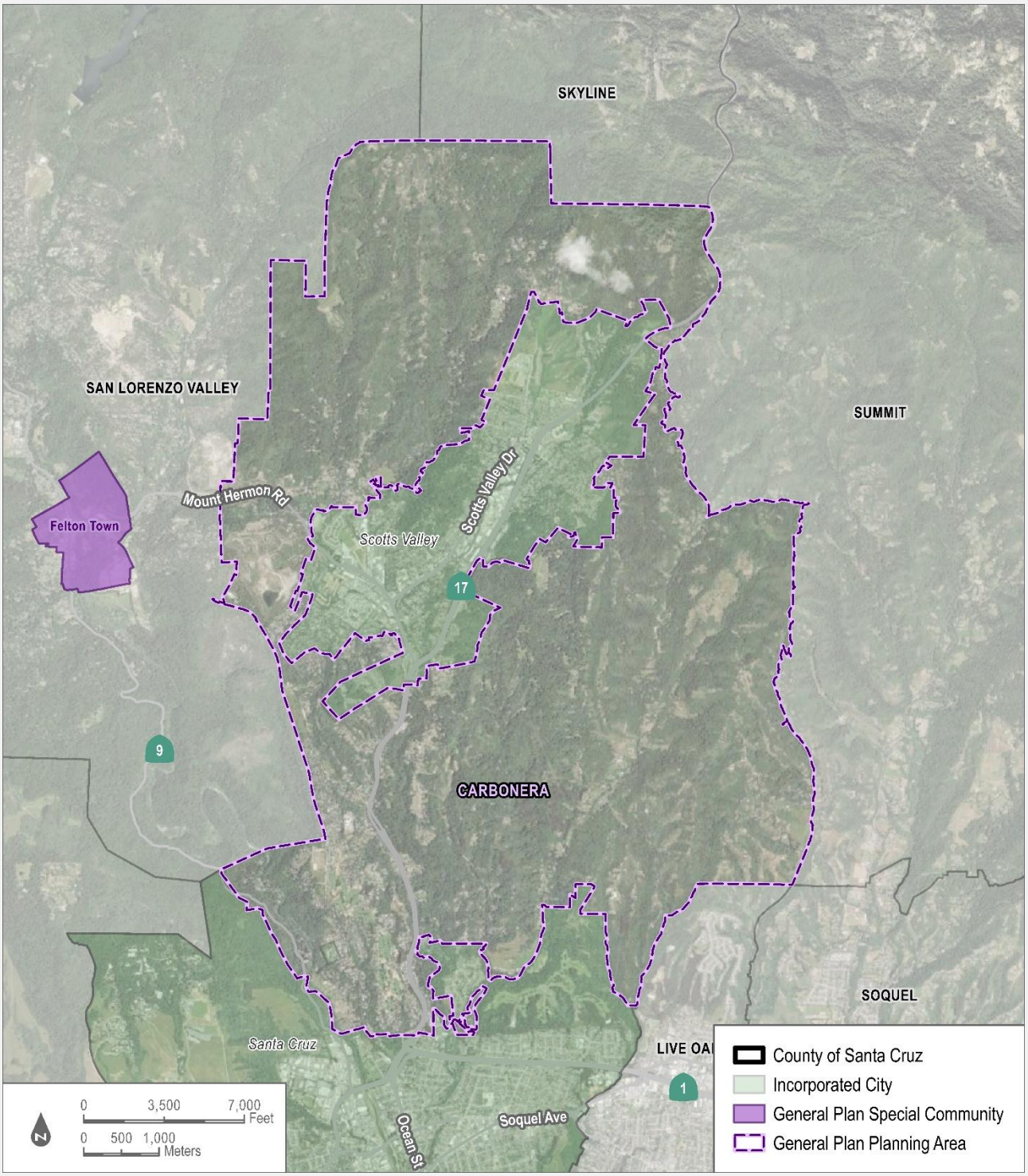

**Source:** Dudek 2025.

## Carbonera (CB)

The Carbonera Planning Area is located in the central area of the County, to the northeast of the Live Oak Planning Area and west of the Lorenzo Valley Planning Area. Carbonera Creek, an 8-mile-long stream, flows southward through the area.[9] In addition to the City of Scotts Valley, the Carbonera Planning Area also contains the unincorporated communities of Paradise Park and Pasatiempo.

[9] Clark, *Santa Cruz County Place Names*, 59; "Carbonero Estates Subdivision Seeks Annexation to SC City," *Santa Cruz Sentinel,* March 11, 1962, 8.

**Exhibit 4.** Carbonera (CB) Planning Area.



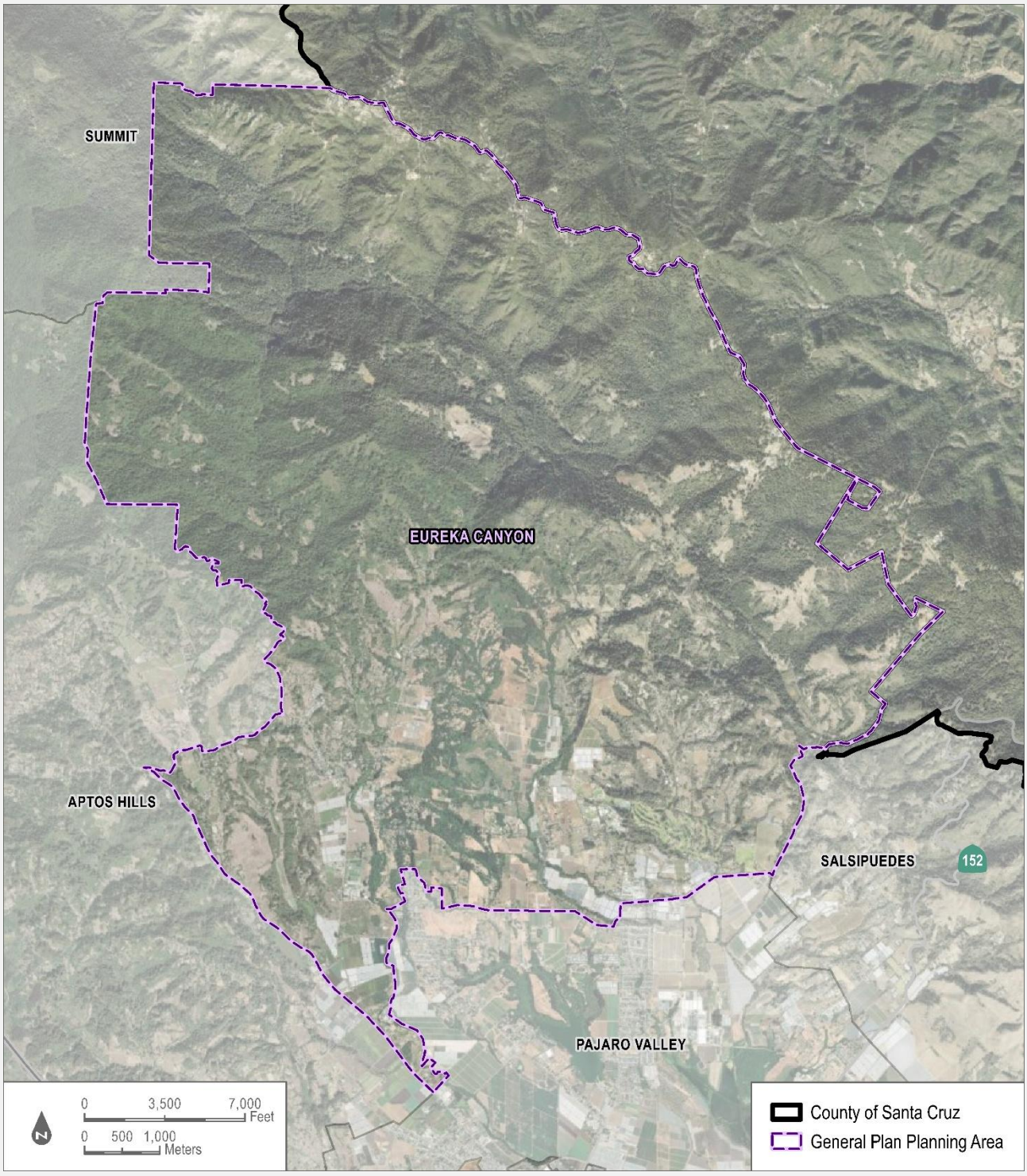

**Source:** Dudek 2025.

## Eureka Canyon (EC)

Eureka Canyon is a planning area located in the southeastern area of the County, west of the Summit Planning Area, northwest of the Aptos Hills Planning Area, and northeast of the Pajaro Valley Planning Area. Eureka Canyon is near the Eureka Canyon, which extends from the summit of the Santa Cruz Mountains southward toward the flatlands of Corralitos. The Corralitos Creek flows through the canyon to the west of the planning area. The Eureka Canyon Planning Area contains Corralitos and a portion of Day Valley, both of which are unincorporated communities.[10]

[10] Clark, *Santa Cruz County Place Names*, 104.

**Exhibit 5.** Eureka Canyon (EC) Planning Area.




**Source:** Dudek 2025.

## La Selva (LS)

The La Selva Planning Area is located in the southwestern area of the County, southwest of the community of Rio Del Mar and southeast of the Aptos Hills Planning Area. A population of approximately 2,531 resides in the community of La Selva Beach, half of which overlaps with the La Selva Planning Area.[11]

[11] United States Census Bureau, "La Selva Beach, CDP, California," accessed May 23, 2025, https://data.census.gov/profile/La_Selva_Beach_CDP,_California?g=160XX00US0640508.

**Exhibit 6.** La Selva (LS) Planning Area.

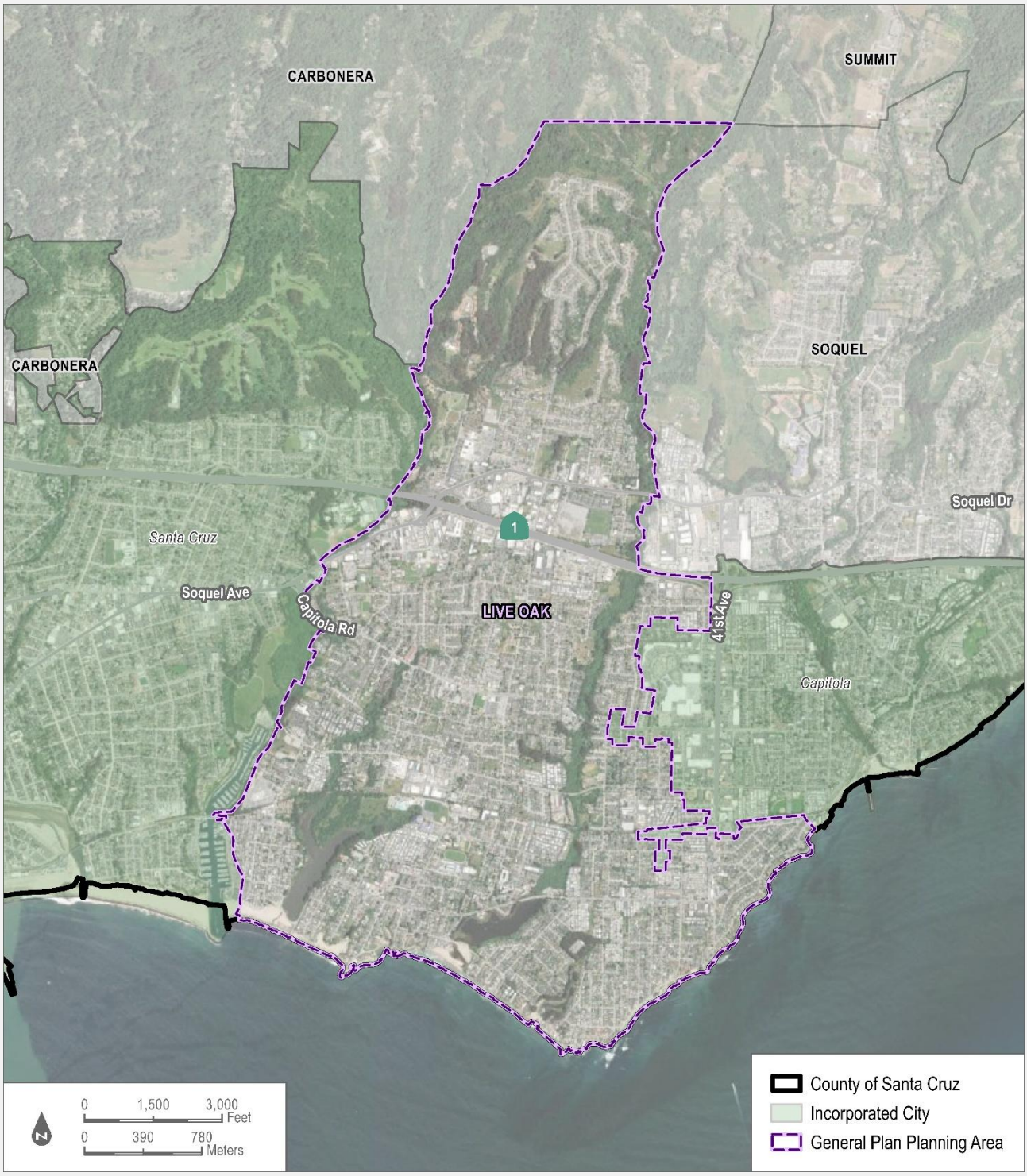

**Source:** Dudek 2025.

## Live Oak (LO)

The Live Oak Planning Area is situated in the southwestern area of the County, west of the Soquel Planning Area and southeast of the Carbonera Planning Area. The Live Oak Planning Area is located east of the City of Santa Cruz and northeast of the City of Capitola and contains the unincorporated communities of Live Oak, Twin Lakes, and Pleasure Point.[12]

[12] Data USA, "Live Oak, California," accessed May 26, 2025, https://datausa.io/profile/geo/live-oak-ca; United States Census Bureau, "Live Oak, CDP, California," accessed May 26, 2025, https://data.census.gov/profile/Live_Oak_CDP,_California?g=160XX00US0641922.

**Exhibit 7.** Live Oak (LO) Planning Area.



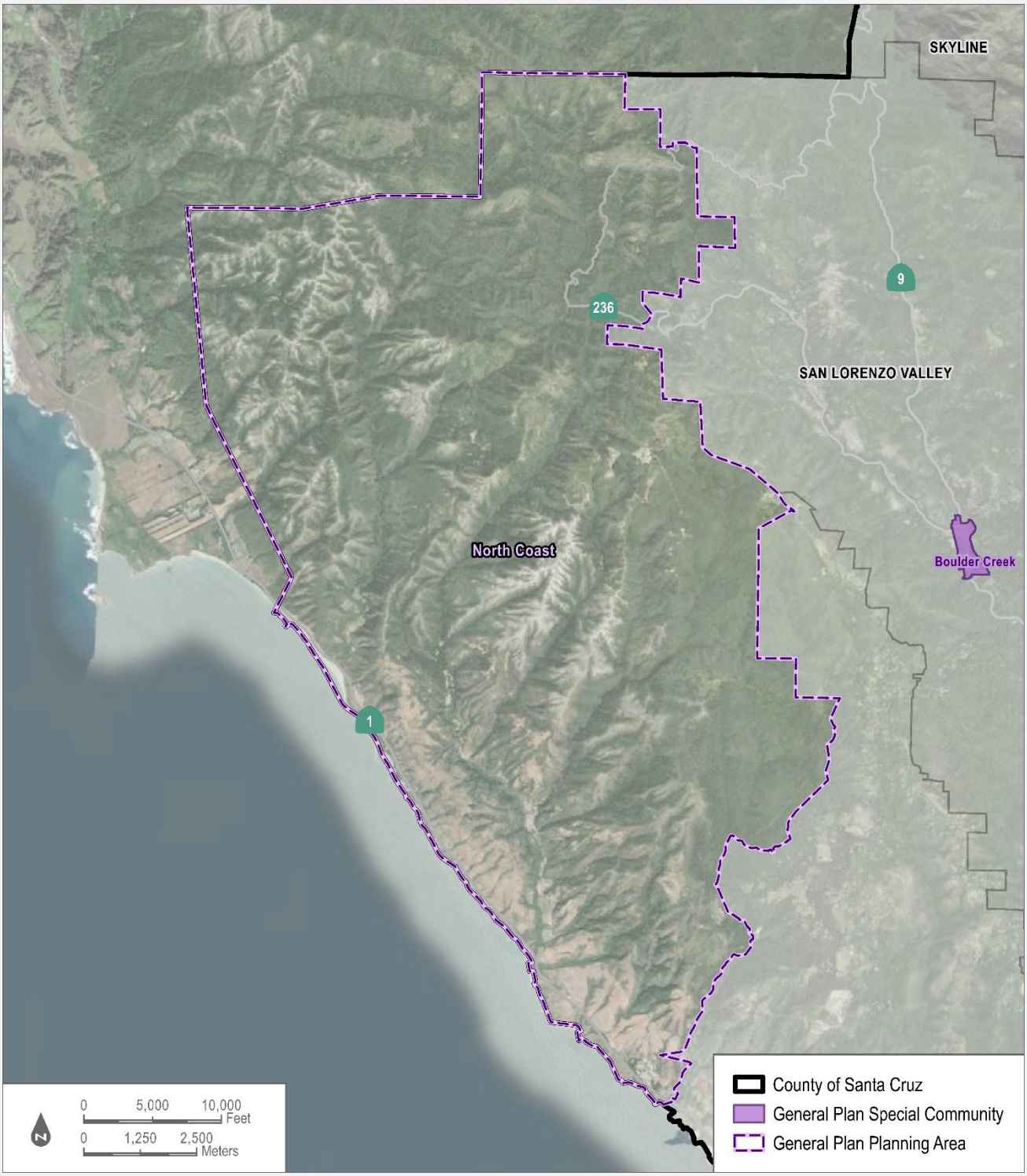

**Source:** Dudek 2025.

## North Coast (NC)

The North Coast Planning Area is in the northwestern area of the County, northwest of the Bonny Doon Planning Area and west of the San Lorenzo Valley Planning Area. The North Coast Planning Area extends from the border of San Mateo County to the north, west to the edge of Santa Cruz County along the Pacific Ocean, 1 mile inland to the east, and south to the City of Santa Cruz city limits. The planning area spans approximately 20 miles and partially overlaps the census designated community of Davenport. Davenport is located approximately 9 miles north of the City of Santa Cruz and southwest of Bonny Doon. As of 2020, Davenport's population was 388 residents, who occupy an area spanning 2.8 miles.[13]

[13] United States Census Bureau, "Davenport, CDP, California," accessed May 27, 2025, https://data.census.gov/profile/Davenport_CDP,_California?g=160XX00US0618086; Coastal Conservancy, "North Coast Santa Cruz Access Facilities and Management Plan," September 23, 2021, 3.

**Exhibit 8.** North Coast (NC) Planning Area.



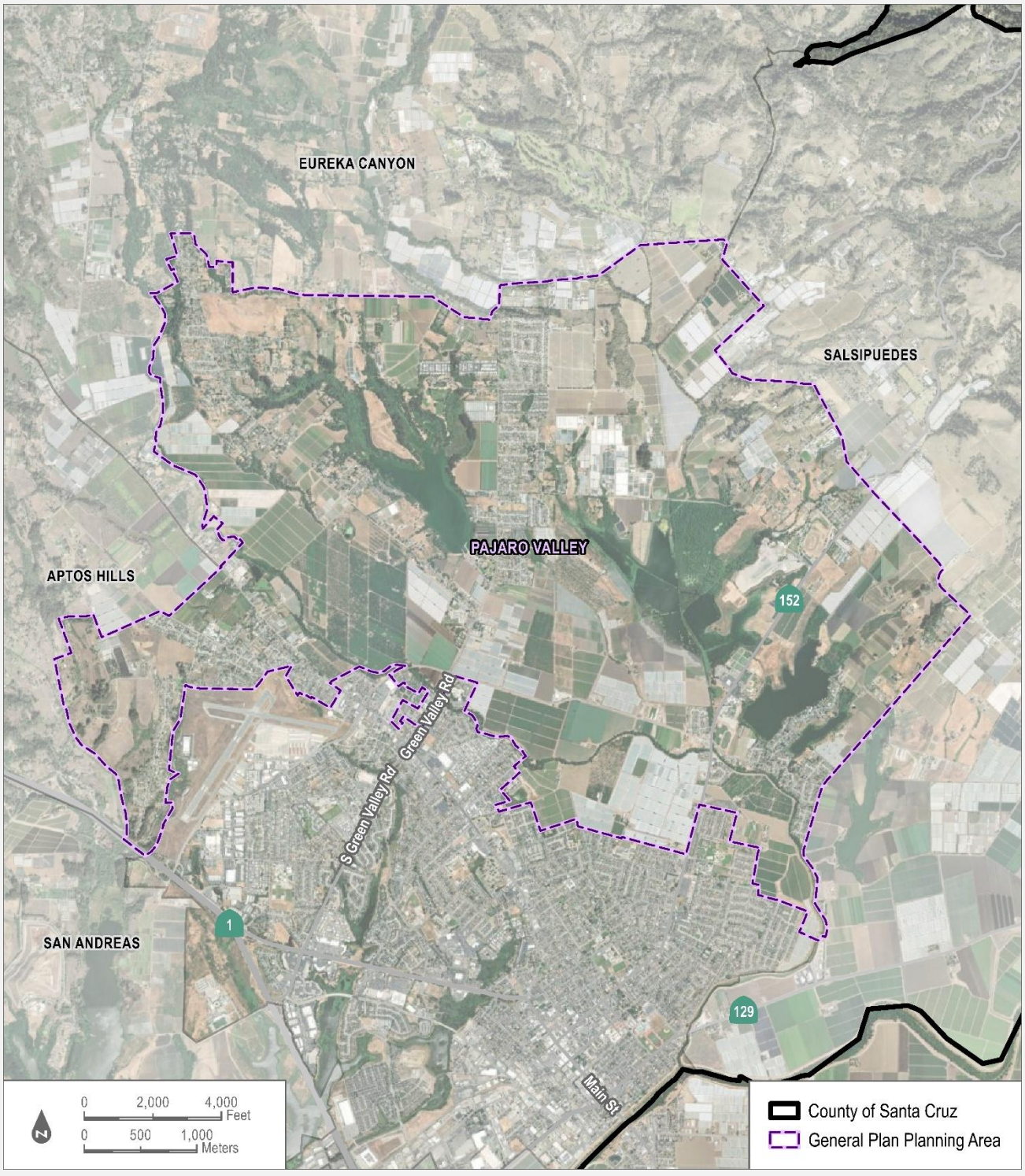

**Source:** Dudek 2025.

## Pajaro Valley (PV)

The Pajaro Valley Planning Area is located in the southeastern area of the County, between the Salsipuedes Planning Area to the east and the Aptos Hills Planning Area to the west. It is named for the Pajaro River, and the valley is bordered by the Pacific Ocean on the west and the Santa Cruz Mountains to the east. The area begins in the Chittenden Pass, where the Pajaro River enters through a pass in the Santa Cruz Mountains, and extends to the Pacific coast. The City of Watsonville is located to the southwest. The planning area contains the unincorporated communities of Freedom, Amesti, and Interlaken.[14]

[14] Clark, *Santa Cruz County Place Names,* 232; K. Muir, "Geology and Ground Water of the Pajaro Valley Area, Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties, California, January 1, 1972," accessed May 27, 2025, https://www.usgs.gov/publications/geology-and-ground-water-pajaro-valley-area-santa-cruz-and-monterey-counties.

**Exhibit 9.** Pajaro Valley (PV) Planning Area.



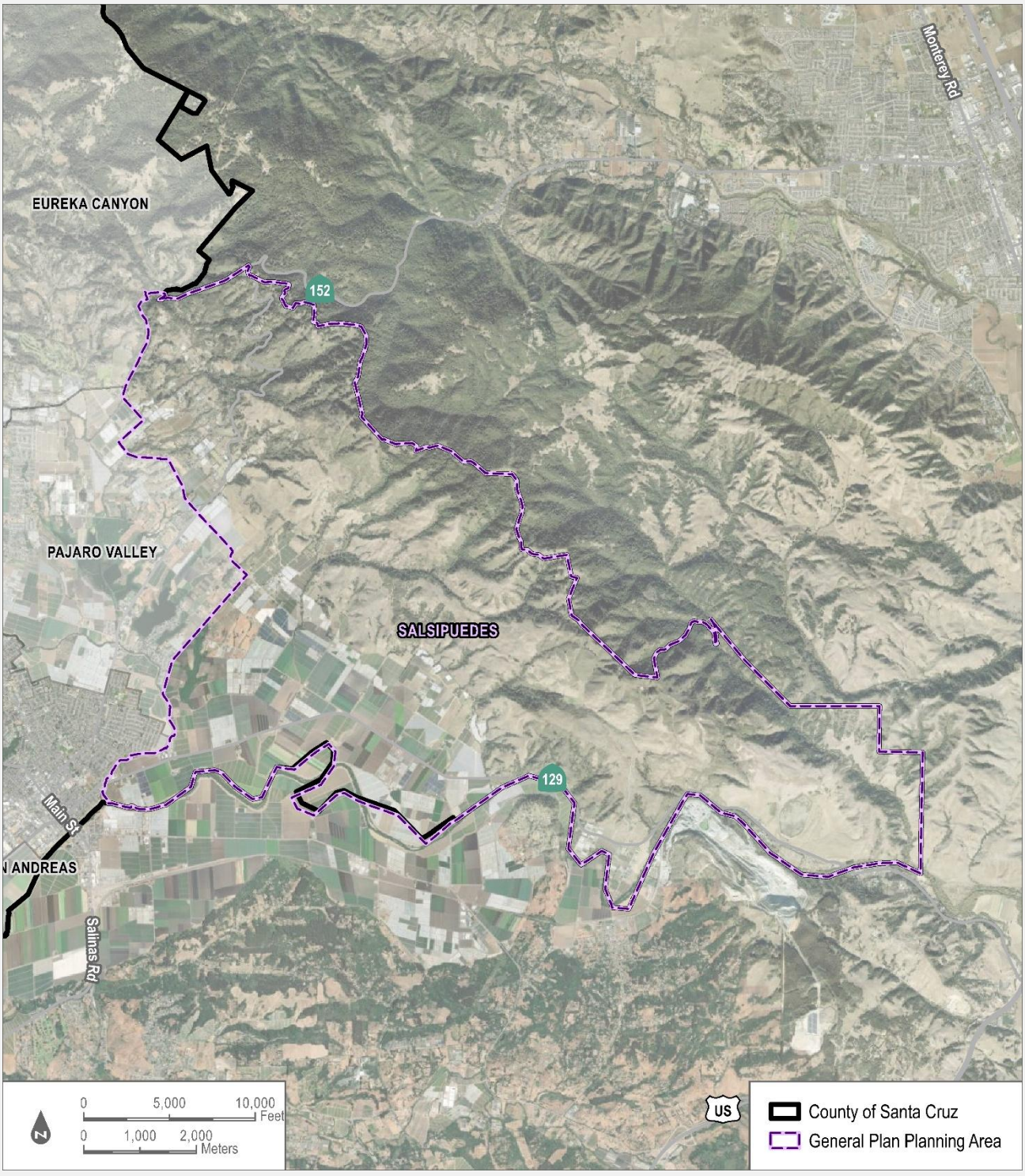

**Source:** Dudek 2025.

## Salsipuedes (SS)

Salsipuedes is a planning area located in the southeastern area of the County, west of the Pajaro Valley Planning Area and the Santa Clara County border. Salsipuedes encompasses the mountainous area where Corralitos Creek becomes Salsipuedes Creek and extends to the Pajaro River near Highway 129 in Watsonville.[15] The planning area partially overlaps the unincorporated community of Interlaken.

[15] Clark, *Santa Cruz County Place Names,* 268.

**Exhibit 10.** Salsipuedes (SS) Planning Area.




**Source:** Dudek 2025.

## San Andreas (SA)

The San Andreas Planning Area lies in the southwestern area of the County, southwest of the Pajaro Valley Planning Area and southeast of the La Selva Planning Area. It is also the name of a railroad stop later known as "Ellicott," located west of Watsonville, near present-day Buena Vista Drive and San Andreas Road.[16] The planning area contains the unincorporated community of Pajaro Dunes and the southern half of the La Selva Beach neighborhood.

[16] Ibid., 269, 291.

**Exhibit 11.** San Andreas (SA) Planning Area.


**Source:** Dudek 2025.

## San Lorenzo Valley (SL)

The San Lorenzo Valley Planning Area is located in the Santa Cruz Mountains in the northern area of the County, between the Skyline Planning Area to the northeast and the North Coast Planning Area to the west. The community of Felton is considered the southern entrance to the valley, and Boulder Creek is considered the northern entrance. The San Lorenzo River flows through the valley. There are seven communities within the San Lorenzo Valley: the four unincorporated communities of Brookdale, Lompico, Mount Hermon, and Zayante, and three towns, Ben Lomond, Boulder Creek, and Felton.[17]

### Ben Lomond

Ben Lomond is a town within the San Lorenzo Valley Planning Area that encompasses 8.4 square miles, with a population of 6,337 and a total of 2,622 households. The town is located at the base of the Ben Lomond mountain range, which extends southeast of Big Basin Redwoods State Park to the University of California, Santa Cruz (UCSC) campus.[18]

### Boulder Creek

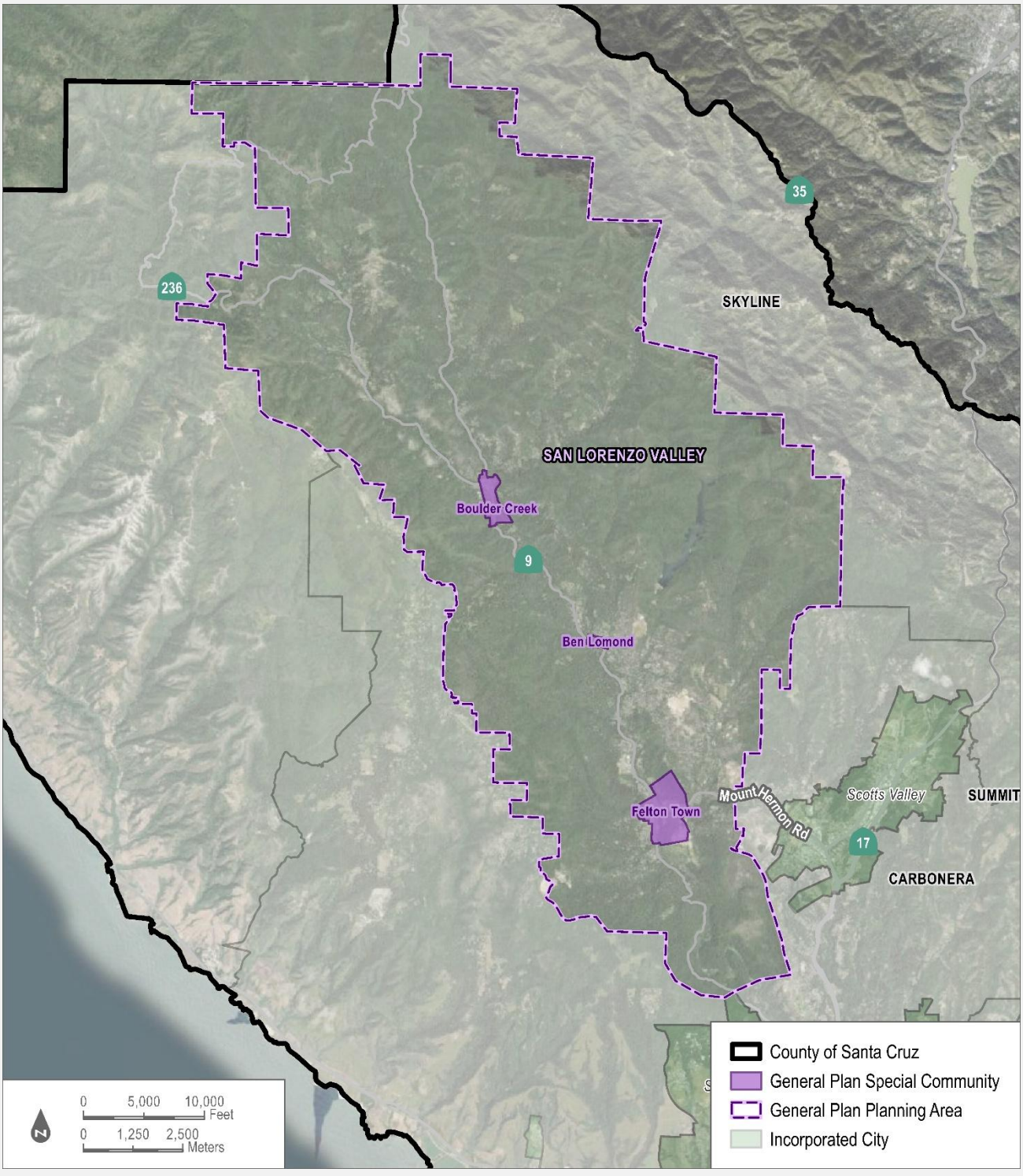
Boulder Creek is a town in the northern end of the San Lorenzo Valley, located within the San Lorenzo Valley Planning Area at the junction of Bear Creek, Boulder Creek, and the San Lorenzo River. The unincorporated community has a land area of 7.5 square miles and 5,429 residents.[19]

### Felton

Felton is a town located at the southern end of the San Lorenzo Valley Planning Area, bordered by Bonny Doon to the east, Ben Lomond to the north, and Mount Hermon to the west. Felton encompasses 4.6 square miles and has a population of 4,489 with 1,606 households.[20]

17 Ibid., 296.
18 United States Census Bureau, "Ben Lomond, CDP, California," accessed June 2, 2025, https://data.census.gov/profile/Ben_Lomond_CDP,_California?g=160XX00US0605332; Clark, *Santa Cruz County Place Names,* 22.
19 United States Census Bureau, "Boulder Creek, CDP, California," accessed June 2, 2025, https://data.census.gov/profile/Boulder_Creek_CDP,_California?g=160XX00US0607652; Clark, *Santa Cruz County Place Names,* 35.
20 United States Census Bureau, "Felton, CDP, California," accessed June 2, 2025, https://data.census.gov/profile/Felton_CDP,_California?g=160XX00US0623826; Clark, *Santa Cruz County Place Names,* 110.

**Exhibit 12.** San Lorenzo Valley (SL) Planning Area.



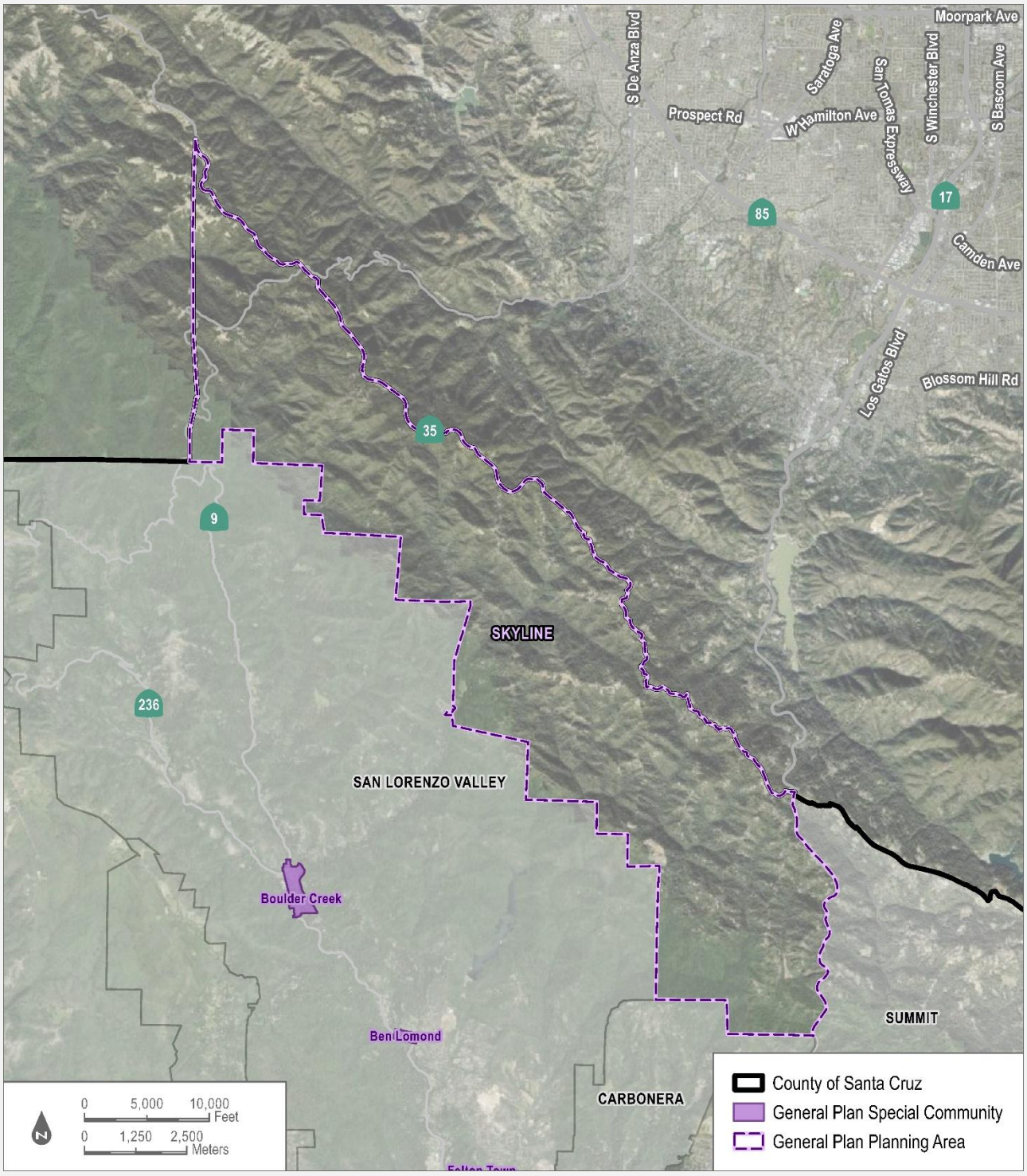

**Source:** Dudek 2025.

## Skyline (SK)

The Skyline Planning Area is located in the Santa Cruz Mountains, northwest of the San Lorenzo Valley Planning Area and northeast of the Summit Planning Area. Skyline Boulevard is a mountain road that begins at Sloat Boulevard in San Francisco and extends to Bear Creek Road in the County, at which point its name becomes Summit Road. Skyline also refers to Skyline Boulevard and the Skyline to Sea Trail. The trail, which is 30 miles in length, starts at an elevation of 3,2414 feet at Castle Rock and ends at sea level at Waddell Beach in Big Basin Redwoods State Park. There are no census designated communities in the Skyline Planning Area.[21]

[21] Clark, *Santa Cruz County Place Names,* 324–326.

**Exhibit 13.** Skyline (SK) Planning Area.



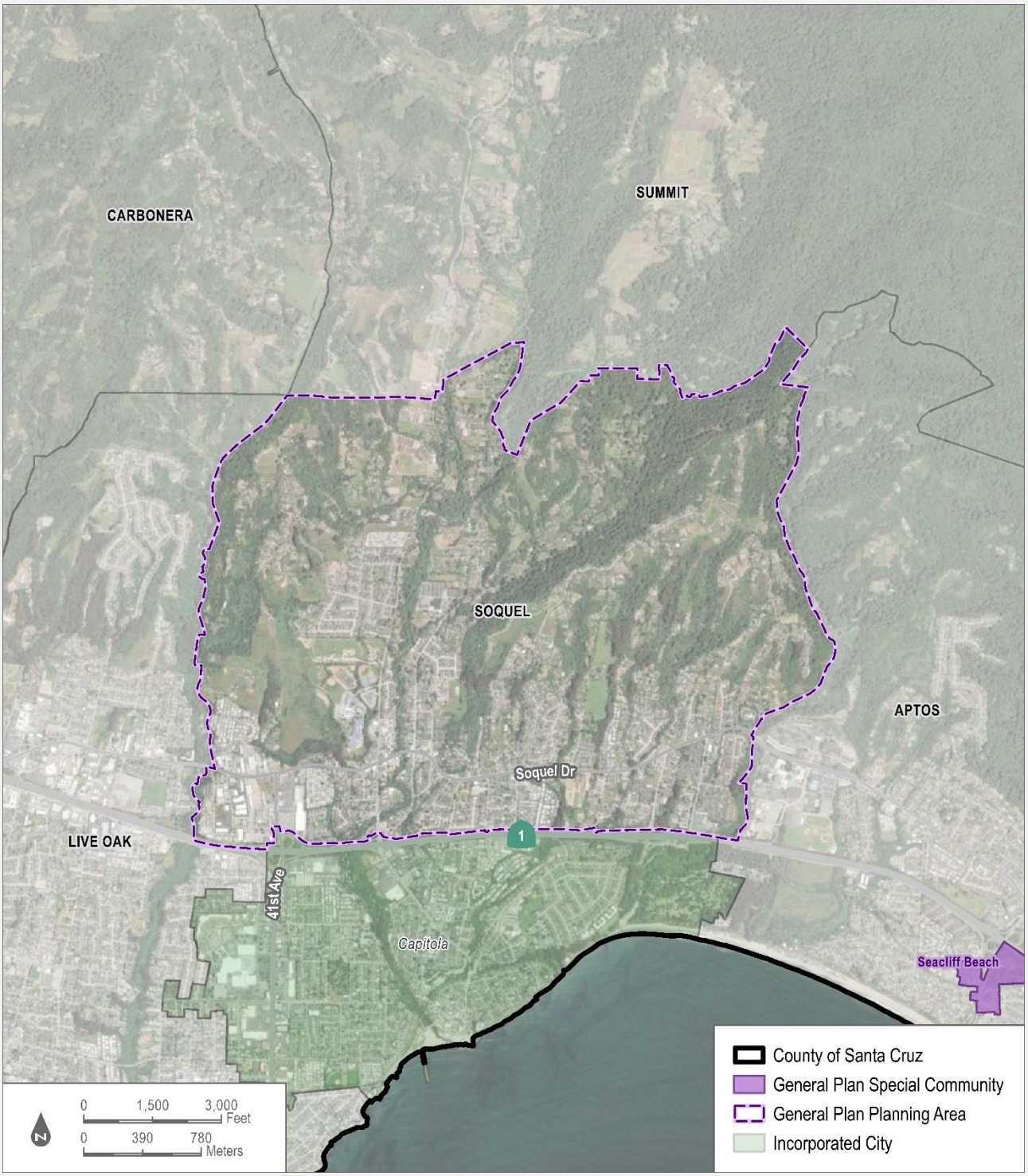

**Source:** Dudek 2025.

## Soquel (SQ)

The Soquel Planning Area is located in the south central area of the County, situated between the Aptos Planning Area to the west and the Carbonera Planning Area to the northeast. Developed around Soquel Creek, the village was historically located on Rancho Soquel. Presently, Soquel encompasses 4.6 square miles and the unincorporated community of Soquel. [22]

[22] Data USA, "Soquel, CA," accessed June 2, 2025, https://datausa.io/profile/geo/soquel-ca#:~:text=In%202023%2C%20Soquel%2C%20CA%20had,%24114%2C991%2C%20a%200.942%25%20increase; Clark, *Santa Cruz County Place Names,* 330.

**Exhibit 14.** Soquel (SQ) Planning Area.



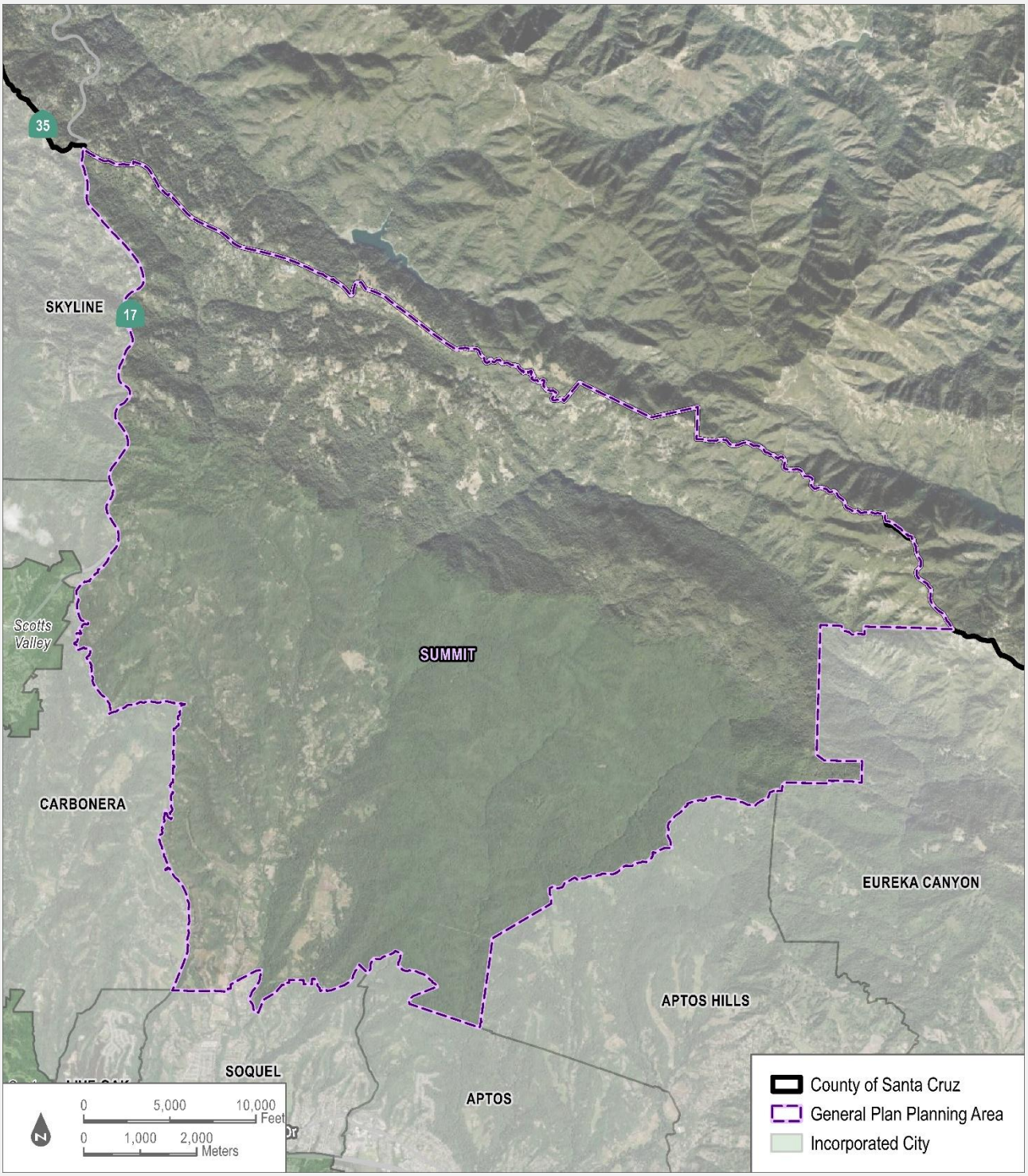

**Source:** Dudek 2025.

## Summit (SM)

The Summit Planning Area is located in the Santa Cruz Mountains, north of the Soquel Planning Area and east of the Eureka Canyon Planning Area. Part of the planning area is located in Santa Clara County, but a majority of the area is in Santa Cruz County and lies along the summit of the Santa Cruz Mountains. Within Santa Cruz County, the planning area is bounded by Highway 17 to the east and southeast and the Santa Clara–Santa Cruz County border to the northeast. The planning area overlaps with the census designated community Day Valley.[23]

[23] Loma Prieta Community Foundation, "LPCF History," accessed August 19, 2025, https://www.lpcf.org/history; Clark, *Santa Cruz County Place Names,* 338.

**Exhibit 15.** Summit (SM) Planning Area.




**Source:** Dudek 2025.

## 1.2.2 Research

The following section provides a brief overview of the archival research and community outreach efforts completed for this study.

### Repositories, Archives, and Organizations

This project was made possible through the extensive use of primary and secondary sources housed within the following repositories, archives, and organizations. Their collections provided the essential historical records, documentation, and contextual materials that informed the research, interpretation, and narrative development in this study:

- California State Archives
- California State Library
- Calisphere
- Historical newspapers
- Online Archive of California
- Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History
- Santa Cruz Public Library
- Special Collections & Archives, UCSC
- The Pajaro Valley Historical Association
- Watsonville Public Library
- The Portuguese History Museum

### Oral Histories

Dudek drafted broad questions specifically designed to help the Dudek project team identify valuable source material and gain familiarity with overall historical trends within each of the ethnic and cultural communities. These questions were circulated to community representatives identified by the County in coordination with the Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History, and responses were received from representatives of five of the eight communities that were contacted:

- Donna Mekis and Kathryn Mekis Miller (Croatian)
- Kathleen Gutierrez, Meleia Simon-Reynolds, Steve McKay, and Roy Recio (Filipino)
- Kenny Kusumoto (Japanese)
- Janey Malatesta Leonardich (Italian)
- Bob Camacho (Portuguese)

Oral history interviews were conducted with four key representatives of three ethnic and cultural communities to enrich the narrative with firsthand perspectives. Matthew Sundt, Senior Policy Planner for Historic Resources with the County's Community Development and Infrastructure Department, played a central role in coordinating, supporting, and transcribing these interviews with Donna Mekis and Kathryn Mekis Miller, Bob Camacho, and Kenny Kusumoto.

The interviews were designed to follow up on earlier questionnaires and aimed to capture lived experiences and community insights related to underrepresented histories in the unincorporated areas of the County. The interviews were structured around a prepared set of questions, which were shared with participants in advance. These conversations helped surface examples of cultural resources, community memory, and historical narratives that may not be well documented in existing records. Interview logistics were coordinated by Fallin Steffen, Architectural Historian at Dudek, in late July 2025 at various locations in the City of Santa Cruz, California. The oral interviews and corresponding transcriptions are on file with the County.

## 1.2.3 Project Team

### Authors

This Historic Context Statement Update was primarily prepared by Dudek Architectural Historians Fallin Steffen, MPS; Claire Flanegin, MA; and Danielle Baza, BA. The report was also prepared with contributions from Dudek Archeologists Sarah Brewer, MS, RPA, Julie Royer, MS, RPA, Angela Moniz, MS, RPA, Jacob Stone, Ph.D, and Ryan Brady, MS, RPA, who completed the Precontact History section in Section 2; and Senior Architectural Historian Patricia Ambacher, MA, who provided a senior-level review of the study. Steffen, Baza, Flanegin, and Ambacher meet the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards in Architectural History and History. Dudek GIS Analyst Rachel Strobridge managed the geographic information system data and created the figures in the report. Dudek's Jennifer Garman, Editor, and Felisa Pugay, Formatter, provided editorial and formatting support to ensure clarity, consistency, and visual alignment throughout the document.

### Additional Contributions and Acknowledgements

Matthew Sundt, Senior Policy Planner/Historic Resources
County of Santa Cruz
Community Development and Infrastructure

Shannon Lauchner Pries, Supervisor, Cultural Resources Programs, Certified Local Government Coordinator
California Office of Historic Preservation
Surveys & Contexts/CLG Coordinator

# 2 Historic Context

This section addresses key themes and changes in Santa Cruz County's historical development. Following an introduction to the identified themes of significance (2.1), Section 2 begins with an overview of pre-contact and ethnographic history in the county (2.2), followed by an analysis of demographic and infrastructure changes in the county from 1940 to 1990, building on where the 1994 context statement concluded (2.3). The section then presents brief historical accounts of the development of each planning area within the county (2.4), explores the contributions of eight ethnic and cultural communities in shaping the county's history (2.5), and concludes with a discussion of the identified themes of significance, associated property types and integrity requirements (2.6).

## 2.1 Overview of Themes

This Historic Context Statement Update is organized to reflect the distinct histories, contributions, and lived experiences of eight of the diverse populations that shaped the County. While each community's narrative is unique, many share common patterns of migration, labor, cultural expression, and civic engagement. To support a consistent and comparative framework for evaluating historical resources, the context identifies a set of overarching themes across all community groups that are discussed and woven in throughout this study.

These themes—Making a Nation, Making a Living, Making a Life, and Pursuing Social Justice—serve as interpretive lenses through which the experiences of each community can be understood. They allow for the identification of both tangible and intangible heritage resources, including buildings, districts, and landscapes, as well as sites of civic action, protest, and community gathering that are significant for their symbolic and cultural associations. The structure enables the themes to be extracted and applied to individual community narratives, supporting future research, survey efforts, and preservation planning. Associated property types for each theme are presented following the Ethnic and Community Narratives in Section 2.5.

- The Making a Nation theme explores the roles these diverse communities played in shaping the development of the County and how it is reflected in their migration patterns, contributions to residential and commercial development, and the formation of cultural and ethnic enclaves. It examines how broader historical forces, including employment patterns, discrimination, prohibitive federal and state laws, restrictive covenants, and racial zoning, initially influenced these communities, and how that shifted over time.
- The Making a Living theme explores the historical contributions of various communities to the County's workforce. It encompasses key economic sectors, including labor, business and commerce, and skilled occupations. The theme addresses the restricted opportunities faced by immigrant groups, primarily due to discriminatory practices from the local White population and labor unions, and also highlights the development of minority-owned and -operated enterprises and other areas where the community members achieved success.
- The Making a Life theme highlights how these diverse communities in the County have built strong connections through fraternal and social organizations and religious and spiritual venues that served as spaces that fostered civic, social, and political engagement. It also examines their participation in sports, leisure, and entertainment.
- Finally, the Pursuing Social Justice theme explores the ways in which diverse communities in the County have advocated for equity, inclusion, and civil rights. It highlights the efforts of individuals and groups to

challenge discriminatory practices; secure access to equal education, housing, and fair wages; and build coalitions for labor rights and political representation. This theme recognizes that social justice movements have taken many forms—from grassroots organizing and legal challenges to cultural expression and civic engagement—and that these efforts have shaped both the built environment and the social fabric of the County.

## 2.2 Precontact History

California has a long history of human occupation. Despite scattered claims of earlier presence, the most conservative estimate is that people began traveling from northeastern Asia to North America and inhabiting its vast and varied geography near the end of the Pleistocene. Previously, scholars believed that this slow migration occurred solely through terrestrial journeys inland via the Bering Strait between modern-day Russia and the U.S. state of Alaska. However, evidence of maritime exploration during a similar timeframe has come to light through dated coastal sites along the Pacific coast of the Americas, even without the discovery of any maritime vessels in the archaeological record.[24]

Lifeways of indigenous groups living within the County followed general patterns identified in the archaeological record of the greater Central Coast region of California.[25] These patterns represent adaptive shifts in settlement, subsistence strategies, and technological innovation over time. Evidence of human habitation during the Paleo-Indian Period (10,000 years ago and older) is not common and is generally expressed through isolated flaked stone artifacts or sparse lithic scatters. Fluted projectile points, which characterize this period in other parts of western North America, have not been identified within the County, with the closest found in San Luis Obispo County to the south.[26] Another distinctive flaked stone tool associated with this period, however, the eccentric crescent, was discovered at a site in Scotts Valley, which is situated on the shoreline of a former Pleistocene lake, providing compelling evidence of Paleo-Indian habitation there.[27] Although there are no known coastal sites dating to this time period, they may have been inundated by rising ocean levels throughout the Holocene.[28]

24 J.M. Erlandson et al., "The Kelp Highway Hypothesis: Marine Ecology, the Coastal Migration Theory, and the Peopling of the Americas," *The Journal of Island and Coastal Archaeology* 2, no. 2 (2007): 161–174.

25 T.L. Jones et al., "The Central Coast: A Midlatitude Milieu," in *California Prehistory: Colonization, Culture, and Complexity*, ed. Terry L. Jones and Kathryn A. Klar (Lanham, MD: Altamira Press, 2007), 125–146.; R. Milliken, *A Time of Little Choice: The Disintegration of Tribal Culture in the San Francisco Bay Area, 1769–1810*, no. 43 (Menlo Park, CA: Ballena Press, 1995).

26 E. Bertrando, "Evidence and Models for Late Pleistocene Chronology and Settlement Along California's Central Coast," in *Emerging from the Ice Age: Early Holocene Occupations on the California Central Coast*, ed. Ethan Bertrando and V.A. Levulett, *Occasional Papers* no. 17 (San Luis Obispo, CA: San Luis Obispo County Archaeological Society, 2004), 93–105; R.O. Gibson, *Results of Archaeological Monitoring for Unocal Soil Testing Program along Pipelines near Santa Margarita, San Luis Obispo County, California* (Paso Robles, CA: Gibson's Archaeological Consulting, 1996), report submitted to UNOCAL CERT, San Luis Obispo; copies available from the Central Coast Information Center, Department of Anthropology, University of California, Santa Barbara; W.W. Mills, M.F. Rondeau, and T.L. Jones, "A Fluted Point from Nipomo, San Luis Obispo County, California," *Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology* 25 (2005): 214–220.

27 R. Cartier, *The Scotts Valley Site: CA-SCR-177* (Santa Cruz, CA: Santa Cruz Archaeological Society, 1993); J.M. Erlandson, "In Search of a White Bear: An Eccentric Crescent from Sudden Ranch (CA-SBA-208), Northern Santa Barbara County, California," *Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology* 31, no. 2 (2011): 194–201.

28 T.L. Jones and D. Jones, "Elkhorn Slough Revisited: Reassessing the Chronology of CA-MNT-229," *Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology* 14 (1992): 159–179.

Human settlement in the County appears more frequently during the Milling Stone Period (5,500–10,000 years ago). Sites dating to this period are found along creeks, estuaries, and coastlines and contain both flaked and ground stone artifacts as well as rectangular shell beads.[29] The emergence of ground stone tools, such as milling stones and hand stones, suggests a greater reliance on plant resources, with flaked stone tools less common. The projectile points found on sites of this age are generally leaf-shaped or large side-notched varieties, although other flaked stone tools, such as core-cobble tools, were also used.[30] Subsistence was heavily reliant on marine resources and small mammals, although terrestrial game, such as deer, were also on the menu.[31] The presence of thick rectangular Olivella beads indicate the emergence of exchange networks with neighboring populations.

During the Early Period (2,600–5,500 years ago) sites are found in more varied geographical landforms than previously, suggesting a more intensive use of the landscape.[32] The shift in site locations and artifact assemblages during this time may represent adaptive shifts or an intrusion of neighboring populations as a result of mid-Holocene climate warming trends.[33] The initial use of mortars and pestles during this time reflects a more labor-intensive economy associated with the adoption of acorn processing.[34] Similarly, a greater percentage and variety of formalized flaked stone tools, including side-notched, square-stemmed, and contracting-stemmed projectile points, indicates a greater reliance on terrestrial hunting. A diversity of Olivella bead types also emerges, as well as bone tools such as gorges.

During the Middle Period (950–2,600 years ago), there was a shift toward more long-term occupation at sites, as well as a greater quantity of smaller "use-specific" localities, such as resource processing or tool manufacturing areas. There is also evidence of a shift toward prey species that are more labor intensive to capture, including small schooling fishes, sea otters, and rabbits. Artifacts common to this period include contracting-stemmed projectile points, a greater variety of Olivella shell beads and Haliotis ornaments, and bone tools and ornaments.[35] Circular shell fishhooks and grooved-stone net weight sinkers are present for the first time, signaling a continued reliance

29 R.T. Fitzgerald and T.L. Jones, "The Milling Stone Horizon Revisited: New Perspectives from Northern and Central California," *Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology* 21 (1999): 65–93; M.G. Hylkema, *Prehistoric Native American Adaptations Along the Central California Coast of San Mateo and Santa Cruz Counties* (Master's thesis, San Jose State University, 1991; University Microfilms, Ann Arbor); D. Jones and W.R. Hildebrandt, *Archaeological Investigation at Sand Hill Bluff: Portions of Prehistoric Site CA-SCr-7, Santa Cruz County, California* (Davis, CA: Far Western Anthropological Research Group, Inc., 1990), copies available from Northwest Information Center, Department of Anthropology, Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park; D. Jones and W.R. Hildebrandt, *Archaeological Investigations at Sites CA-SCR-10, CA-SCR-17, CA-SCR-304, and CA-SCR-38/123 for the North Coast Treated Water Main Project, Santa Cruz County, California* (Davis, CA: Far Western Anthropological Research Group, Inc., 1994), copies available from Northwest Information Center, Department of Anthropology, Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park; S.D. Newsome et al., "Dietary Reconstruction of an Early to Middle Holocene Human Population from the Central California Coast: Insights from Advanced Stable Isotope Mixing Models," *Journal of Archaeological Science* 31 (2004): 1101-1115.

30 Jones et al., *The Central Coast*, 125–146.

31 Newsome et al., "Dietary Reconstruction of an Early to Middle Holocene Human Population from the Central California Coast."

32 T.L. Jones and G. Waugh, "Climatic Consequences or Population Pragmatism? A Middle Holocene Prehistory of the Central California Coast," in *Archaeology of the California Coast During the Middle Holocene*, ed. J.M. Erlandson and M.A. Glassow (Los Angeles: Institute of Archaeology, University of California, 1997), 111–128.

33 cf. P. Mikkelsen, W.R. Hildebrandt, and D.A. Jones, "Prehistoric Adaptations on the Shores of Morro Bay Estuary: Excavations at Site CA-SLO-165, Morro Bay, California," *Occasional Paper* no. 14 (San Luis Obispo, CA: San Luis Obispo County Archaeological Society, 2000).

34 cf. M.E. Basgall, "Resource Intensification among Hunter-Gatherers: Acorn Economies in Prehistoric California," *Research in Economic Anthropology* 9 (1987): 21–52.

35 T.L. Jones, *Prehistoric Human Ecology of the Big Sur Coast, California*, *Contributions of the University of California Archaeological Research Facility* (Berkeley: University of California Archaeological Research Facility, 2003.

on marine resources.[36] Similarly, mortars and pestles are more prevalent than milling stones and hand stones, showing the continued importance of plant resources, such as acorns.[37]

The Middle–Late Transition (700–950 years ago) corresponds with a period of rapid climatic change and social reorganization across the region. The Medieval Climatic Anomaly,[38] characterized by fluctuations between cool-wet and warm-dry conditions, was likely an impetus for the cultural change.[39] Archaeological sites dating from this period are rarer, which may reflect a decline in regional population.[40] Artifacts associated with the Middle–Late Transition include contracting-stemmed, double-side-notched, and small leaf-shaped projectile points. The latter are thought to represent the introduction of bow and arrow technology to the region. A greater variety of Olivella shell bead types are found on sites from this period, as are notched line sinkers, hopper mortars, and circular shell fishhooks.[41]

Sites dating to the Late Period (700–181 years ago) are found in a variety of contexts, both coastal and interior. Specialized sites devoted to resource acquisition or processing (such as shellfish gathering areas or bedrock milling stations) are common on the coast, while residential occupation is more common inland[42] (Fitzgerald and Ruby 1997; Jones et al. 2007). Artifacts associated with this period include arrow points, flaked stone drills, steatite and clamshell disc beads, Haliotis disc beads, and Olivella beads. Other artifacts such as milling stones, hand stones, mortars, pestles, and circular shell fishhooks continued to be used.[43]

## Ethnography

The people living within the territory between what is now Richmond in the north and Big Sur in the south were named “Costanoan” by Spanish explorers at the time of European contact. Many modern descendants have rejected the Spanish term, which means “coastal people.” Some prefer to be called “Ohlone” or by their specific tribal band. At the time of contact, the Ohlone people spoke eight distinct Penutian-stock language dialects and lived in approximately 50 autonomous polities or tribelets. The Awaswas dialect of the Costanoan language group was spoken from Aptos north, and the Mutsun dialect was spoken in the southern portion of the County.[44]

At the time of contact, Ohlone people lived in permanent villages but also spent time in smaller camps to collect or process seasonal resources such as acorn or shellfish.[45] Early European explorers between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries provided the first written descriptions about the Indigenous people they encountered, although

36 T.L. Jones and J.A. Ferneau, *Prehistory at San Simeon Reef: Archaeological Data Recovery at CA-SLO-179 and -267, San Luis Obispo, California*, Occasional Paper no. 16 (San Luis Obispo, CA: San Luis Obispo County Archaeological Society, 2002); T.L. Jones and G. Waugh, *Central California Coastal Prehistory: A View from Little Pico Creek*, *Perspectives in California Archaeology* no. 3 (Los Angeles: Institute of Archaeology, University of California, 1995).

37 Jones et al., “The Central Coast: A Midlatitude Milieu.”

38 cf. S. Stine, “Extreme and Persistent Drought in California and Patagonia during Medieval Time,” *Nature* 369 (1994): 546–549.

39 T.L. Jones et al., “Environmental Imperatives Reconsidered: Demographic Crises in Western North America During the Medieval Climatic Anomaly,” *Current Anthropology* 40 (1999): 137–170.

40 T.L. Jones and J.A. Ferneau, “Deintensification along the Central Coast,” in *Catalysts to Complexity: Late Holocene Societies of the California Coast*, ed. J.M. Erlandson and T.L. Jones, vol. 6 of *Perspectives in California Archaeology* (Los Angeles: Cotsen Institute of Archaeology, University of California, 2002), 205–232.

41 T.L. Jones, *Transitions in Prehistoric Diet, Mobility, Exchange, and Social Organization Along California’s Big Sur Coast* (PhD diss., University of California, Davis, 1995).

42 R.T. Fitzgerald and A. Ruby. Archaeological Test Excavations at CA-SCR-117, the Davenport Landing Site. Garcia and Associates, San Anselmo. Report on file Northwest Information Center, Department of Anthropology, Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, 1997; Jones et al., “The Central Coast: A Midlatitude Milieu.”

43 Jones et al., “The Central Coast: A Midlatitude Milieu.”

44 R. Levy, “Costanoan,” in *Handbook of North American Indians*, vol. 8, ed. Robert F. Heizer (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1978).

45 Ibid.

details are sparse. Attempts at systematic ethnographies did not occur until the early twentieth century, generations after the effects of missionization and integration had altered Ohlone lifestyles drastically. Many of the studies, such as those conducted by John P. Harrington (1942) and C. Hart Merriam (1967), focused on recording Native languages before they fell into disuse. Modern Ohlone descendants continue to steward their ancestral land and educate others about traditional lifeways.

An analysis of mission records, historical maps, and other historical documents suggests that there were five main tribal groups within the County at the time of European contact: the Aptos, the Cajastaca, the Cotoni, the Sayanta, and the Uypi.[46] The Aptos people lived along the coast in the vicinity of the current town of Aptos and appear in the records for Mission Santa Cruz. The Aptos intermarried with the Cotoni, the Sayanta, and the Uypi, but were more commonly married with the Cajastaca people to the south (in the vicinity of the modern-day towns of Watsonville and Corralitos), so much so that it is unclear whether they were distinct groups. The Cotoni people lived in the northern area of the County, in the vicinities of Davenport and Bonny Doon. The Sayanta people lived in the Santa Cruz Mountains, in the vicinity of modern-day Felton and Scotts Valley. The Sayanta people more commonly married with the Chaloctac people to the east in Santa Clara County. The Uypi occupied the mouth of the San Lorenzo River in modern-day Santa Cruz. The Uypi people were also referred to as "Soquel" in post-1810 mission records. The present-day town of Soquel takes its name from a tribal leader named Suquel, who was one of the first to be baptized at Mission Santa Cruz.[47]

## 2.3 Santa Cruz County History Overview, 1940–1990

As with most of California, World War II was an inflection point for change in the County. The number of County residents increased from 45,057 in 1940 to 66,534 in 1950 and increased again to 84,219 by 1960. This growth was bolstered by highway construction, beginning with the construction of the Santa Cruz Highway (now Highway 17) through the Santa Cruz Mountains in 1940. The last of the railroad tracks that traversed the mountains washed out in a series of storms in 1940, which necessitated construction of a highway connecting the ever-growing San Francisco Bay Area with coastal communities to the south.[48]

In addition to new construction, the County began to repurpose military resources that had been deemed surplus after World War II. Watsonville Airport, which was previously used as a naval base during the war, opened for public use in 1946. The Coast Artillery Training Center, also located in Watsonville, was purchased by the Seventh-Day Adventist Church and became the Monterey Bay Academy, a boarding school, in 1948.[49]

The other main road, Cabrillo Highway (Highway 1), was extended in 1948 and increased access to the agricultural areas near the border of Monterey County and the booming tourist town of Capitola. Until World War II, the County consisted of only two incorporated cities: Santa Cruz (1866) and Watsonville (1868). Following the end of World War II and the explosive population growth in the greater Bay Area overall, the need for decisive leadership to implement much-needed repairs and infrastructure advancements eventually prompted the City of Capitola to officially incorporate in January 1949. At the time, Capitola was the third city in the County to incorporate, and the original proposed boundaries included the area bounded by the eastern side of 41st Avenue up to Highway 1, west

46 Milliken, *A Time of Little Choice.*
47 Ibid.
48 United States Census Bureau, "Santa Cruz County, California," accessed July 2025, https://data.census.gov/profile/Santa_Cruz_County,_California?g=050XX00US06087.
49 Carmen Morones, "National Guard Training Site – Camp McQuaide," *Local History,* Santa Cruz Public Libraries, accessed July 16, 2025, 1.

to Monterey Avenue past the airport (now decommissioned), south along Monterey Avenue to Escalona Gulch, and down to Monterey Bay. By the early 1950s, the downtown core of Capitola had developed around Soquel Creek, with residences constructed on either side. The largest concentrations of residential development were south of Center Street and west of Bay Avenue. Residences constructed during this period included multifamily apartments, single-family homes, vacation cottages, and bungalows. The area was mostly developed with single-family residences by the 1950s.[50]

In the early 1960s, erosion of the Capitola Beach caused by the completion of the Santa Cruz Small Craft Harbor threatened the foundation of the Capitola economy. Plans for large-scale tourist resorts prompted swift community response to preserve the historic core of "Old Capitola" that many believed was a fundamental commercial feature of Capitola's economy. When the City of Capitola adopted its first General Plan in 1964, it notably allocated commercial uses for Capitola residents outside of the historic core and instead to the westernmost area of the city near the intersection of 41st Avenue and Capitola Road, as well as in the area around Bay Avenue near Highway 1. The development and viability of this area corresponded with the completion of Highway 1, which allowed large commercial developments such as King's Market, completed in 1963 on the southwest corner of the 41st Avenue and Capitola Road, to be more accessible than ever before. Residential development spread east of Bay Avenue with the construction of single-family housing.[51]

Scotts Valley, incorporated in 1966, was the fourth and last city incorporated in the County. While Capitola benefitted from the construction of the Santa Cruz Highway, Scotts Valley's commercial district suffered as the construction impacted the town's financial wellbeing. In the early 1960s, Scotts Valley residents were further infuriated when the County's planning department approved plans for a mortuary and cemetery across from Santa's Village. In 1962, to prevent the cemetery's development, Scotts Valley community associations organized a campaign to undercut the County by incorporating as a city. In 1966, residents overwhelmingly approved of the plan. Despite their attempts to save Santa's Village and similar roadside attractions, the businesses could not survive after Santa Cruz Highway's construction. In addition to the amusement park, the Tree Circus (which had been renamed Lost World), Reed and Graham Concrete Plant, and Johnnie's Produce Stand (a grocery) also closed. Although Scotts Valley's main thoroughfare was largely shuttered, real estate developers were attracted by the community's picturesque location between the City of Santa Cruz and the Santa Clara Valley. In the late 1970s and 1980s, developers constructed residential subdivisions and transformed Scotts Valley into a bedroom community located between the City of Santa Cruz and Santa Clara County's urban centers. Technology companies, including Seagate Technology, Victor Technologies, and Netflix, found an early home in Scotts Valley. Between 1970 and 1990, Scotts Valley grew from having a population of just over 3,500 residents to over 8,600 people.[52]

Prior to World War II, the economy of the County was dependent on agriculture. Large-scale crop cultivation began in the early 1850s, with potatoes and orchards dedicated to apples, pears, almonds, olives, oats, corn, hay, grapes,

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50 M. Hoover, et al., *Historic Spots in California,* 5th ed. (California: Stanford University Press); C. Swift, "Draft Historic Context Statement for the City of Capitola," prepared for the City of Capitola Community Development Department, Capitola, CA; NETR (National Environmental Title Research, LLC), Historical aerial photographs: 1952, 1956, 1968, 1981, 1982, 1993, 2005, 2009, 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, and 2020, accessed October 16, 2023, https://www.historicaerials.com/viewer#; United States Census Bureau 2023, "Quick Facts: Capitola, California," accessed October 16, 2023, https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/capitolacitycalifornia/PST045222.

51 City of Capitola, "Historical Snapshots 1940–1960s," Capitola Museum, accessed July 16, 2025, 3; City of Capitola, *Capitola General Plan*, updated March 13, 2019, LU-5.

52 Randall Brown, "The San Lorenzo Water District: A History," Santa Cruz County, California: San Lorenzo Valley Water District; M. Oppenheimer, "Scotts Valley: Then and Now," Times Publishing Group Inc., accessed June 30, 2023, https://tpgonlinedaily.com/scotts-valley-now/; Biggest U.S. Cities, "Scotts Valley, California Population History," accessed July 5, 2023, https://www.biggestuscities.com/city/scotts-valley-california; SLVWD (San Lorenzo Valley Water District), "History," San Lorenzo Valley Water District, accessed June 15, 2023, https://www.slvwd.com/about-us/pages/history.

and sugar beets. During the Mission era and into the 1860s, farm labor was provided by Native Americans. Chinese laborers replaced the dwindling Native American population from 1866 until the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882. The farming industry in the County continued to rely on migrant labor and on hired Italian, Portuguese, Japanese, and Filipino laborers after Chinese immigration decreased. Apples became the prominent crop, but other crops like apricots, plums, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, flower bulbs, and cut flowers were introduced in the early twentieth century. Dairies and wineries developed in the late 1870s, and by 1936, there were nine wineries in the County. Other industries that thrived in the county included lumber, lime and cement, and early tourism focused on hotels and resorts offering sports, riding, hunting and fishing, and driving.[53]

The economic makeup of the County began to shift rapidly after World War II, with a focus on more industrial jobs to support the ever-growing population. Along the North Coast, Texaco negotiated with Coast Dairies to drill on the land near Davenport. Throughout the County, communities were being subdivided, and new homes were being built; construction of both dwellings and roads began to boom. Some construction was by happenstance, as with the December 1955 San Lorenzo River flooding. The devastation of neighborhoods along the river spurred the creation of the Redevelopment Agency of the City of Santa Cruz to help rebuild. The San Lorenzo Park Project was adopted in 1957 with the aim of solidifying a downtown urban core full of apartment complexes, county and city government buildings, and a new shopping center. The same year, the County increased industrial zoning to allow manufacturing and other operations to continue in areas removed from new housing developments. Santa Cruz Harbor opened in 1963 with 360 boat slips, reinvigorating the tourism industry and creating a new recreational destination. In 1973, 455 more slips were added to the harbor. Today, the harbor is host to an RV park, boat charters, stand-up paddleboards, launch ramps, and five restaurants.[54]

Tourism in the County was another facet of the economy that experienced growth following World War II. With improved roads and greater accessibility to the coast from inland areas, Northern California residents flocked to places like the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk, Santa Cruz Wharf, the so-called Mystery Spot, Santa Cruz and Capitola's downtown areas, and surf spots like Steamers Lane and Pleasure Point. Surfing was introduced to the area in 1885 by three Hawaiian princes—David Kawananakoa, Jonah Kuhio Kalaniana'ole, and Edward Keli'iahonui—but its modest popularity took off in the post World Wwar II years. While the princes had used bulky redwood boards, fiberglass became the preferred material for surfboards due to its lightweight durability, the same reason it had been favored by military pilots. Wetsuits were another advantage for surfers braving the frigid Pacific Ocean. Their inventor, Jack O'Neill, who opened O'Neill Surf Shop in 1952, moved his business from San Francisco to Santa Cruz, thus cementing the area as the northern hub of the sport.[55]

On land, state parks and shopping centers began to draw crowds. Big Basin Redwoods State Park, established in 1902 by a group of early conservationists, attracted over 500,000 visitors a year by 1975. Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park, formed in 1954 by the joining of an existing state park with land donated by the prominent Cowell family

53 Susan Lehmann, "County of Santa Cruz Survey of Historic Resources Update and Context Statement," submitted to Santa Cruz County Historic Resources Commission, September 15, 1994, 7–9, 11, 14–16.

54 Environmental Science Associates, "Coast Dairies Property: A Land Use History," Section 1.0 in *Coast Dairies Long-Term Resource Protection and Use Plan: Draft Existing Conditions Report for the Coast Dairies Property*, San Francisco, California , 2021, Local History Collection, Santa Cruz Public Libraries. https://history.santacruzpl.org/omeka/items/show/134498#?c=0&m=0&s=0&cv=0; City of Santa Cruz Redevelopment Agency. "History of the Redevelopment Agency," excerpted from Redevelopment Agency website, no date, Local History Collection, Santa Cruz Public Libraries, https://history.santacruzpl.org/omeka/items/show/134414#?c=0&m=0&s=0&cv=0.; Santa Cruz Port District, "Port District History," Santa Cruz Harbor, accessed August 25, 2025, https://www.santacruzharbor.org/port-district-history.

55 Dan White, "Humanities Students Dive into Santa Cruz Surfing History," August 14, 2025, University of California, Santa Cruz, https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/news/humanities-students-dive-santa-cruz-surfing-history; Sherrie Murphy, "Harry Mayo: Santa Cruz Surf Pioneer," *Ocean Life Magazine,* Winter 1996; "About Jack O'Neill," O'Neill, 2025, accessed August 25, 2025, https://us.oneill.com/pages/about-jack-oneill?srsltid=AfmBOoqq6p_BudYCnSvQf9zXU_mt8p78S7__UBDBdIvKeEbYH6nJIVIk;

of Santa Cruz, had an attendance rate of approximately 300,000 annually by the 1970s.[56] Both Santa Cruz and Capitola were centers of commercial growth during this time, as well. Once downtown Santa Cruz implemented the San Lorenzo Park Project, interest shifted eastward to 41st Avenue in Capitola. The Capitola Mall opened in 1977 following the 1969 success of the Pacific Avenue Garden Mall in Santa Cruz, which emphasized pedestrian-centered retail and urban beautification.[57]

Educational expansion in the mid-twentieth century played a large role in the economic development of the County. Cabrillo Junior College (1959) was planned as early as 1953 and was finally approved in 1958 by County voters. Several names for the college were considered, including Santa Cruz College, Cabrillo College, Mid-County College, and Begonia College. The name Cabrillo College was approved by the school's first board of trustees in March 1959. The school was paid for by a $6.6 million county bond, creating jobs in the public and private sector and stimulating the local economy. UCSC was constructed in 1965, generating an expenditure of $16.9 million, of which $8.79 million was spent within the City of Santa Cruz and $3.69 million was spent in the rest of the County. By 1987, the economic impact of the college had increased to $379.7 million. In addition to creating jobs, the construction of UCSC generated a small housing boom in the Westside neighborhood, and an influx of college students increased population and progressive sentiment in the County. The County population increased to 123,790 in 1970; to 188,141 in 1980; and by 1990, the population reached 229,734.[58]

The progressive sentiment that coincided with the opening of UCSC signaled a change in politics and culture within the entire County. When the college opened, the curriculum was focused on liberal arts, with no applied or technical programs, sports teams, or fraternities and sororities. The start of the Vietnam War and the deployment of over 350,000 combat troops by mid-1966 caused the campus to radicalize in opposition of the war. Like many schools across the country, UCSC student-body concerns turned to civil rights, the environment, feminism, and labor rights. In 1970, a survey of the political attitudes of first-year students was conducted at 536 universities; 41% of students in the country considered themselves to be liberal, but on the UCSC campus, the figure was 82.7%. Progressive values gained popularity throughout the County in the 1970s, as voters elected more liberal and socialist-feminist candidates to the city council and County board of supervisors. Grassroots politics with an emphasis on social services, the environment, civil rights, LGBTQ+ rights, and the women's movement reflected the County's shifting values toward liberalism.[59]

The 6.9 magnitude Loma Prieta Earthquake on the San Andreas Fault struck at 5:04 p.m. on October 17, 1989. Its epicenter was in the Santa Cruz Mountains near Loma Prieta, but the effects were felt throughout the San Francisco Bay Area, causing approximately $6 billion in property damage. The earthquake killed 63 people and injured 3,757 others. In the County, the earthquake destroyed most of the central business district in downtown Santa Cruz and

56 Bill Neubauer, "Henry Cowell Redwoods State Parks Stands as an Inspiration," *Santa Cruz Sentinel,* June 29, 1970, 11.

57 City of Santa Cruz Redevelopment Agency, "History of the Redevelopment Agency."

58 Wally Trabing, "Majority is Better than 2 to 1," *Santa Cruz Sentinel,* October 22, 1958, 1; "Cabrillo College Bonds," *Santa Cruz Sentinel,* January 21, 1960, 15; "Economic Impact of UCSC," *Santa Cruz Sentinel,* May 11, 1967, 23; Tripp Umbach, "UC Santa Cruz: The Annual Impacts of University of California Santa Cruz in 2017 and Over the Last 50 Years," Final Report 2019, 9–11, accessed August 26, 2025, https://www.ucop.edu/innovation-transfer-operations/_files/Econ%20Impact%20Rpts/ucsc_economic_impact_2017.pdf; USA Facts, "Our Changing Population: Santa Cruz County, California," accessed August 26, 2025, https://usafacts.org/data/topics/people-society/population-and-demographics/our-changing-population/state/california/county/santa-cruz-county/?endDate=2022-01-01&startDate=1990-01-01.

59 William Domhoff, "The Leftmost City: Power and Progressive Politics in Santa Cruz," *Who Rules America?*, January 2009, updated April 2013, accessed August 26, 2025, https://whorulesamerica.ucsc.edu/santacruz/progressive_politics.html; Chris Krohn, "Is the End of the Santa Cruz Progressive Era upon Us?" *Lookout Santa Cruz,* March 23, 2025, accessed August 26, 2025, https://lookout.co/is-the-end-of-the-santa-cruz-progressive-era-upon-us/story.

caused landslides in the mountain communities. Highway 17 was reduced to one lane for 32 days as crews worked to repair the road, and commuters were escorted by California Highway Patrol in the mornings and evenings.[60]

Damages in the City of Santa Cruz were estimated to be $1 billion. The earthquake demolished 20 downtown buildings and 4 of the 5 residential hotels, displacing businesses and leaving hundreds of people homeless. City of Santa Cruz officials estimated that the earthquake caused over $70 million in damage to private homes. Within the County, there was an 85% increase in unemployment. Parks were used as emergency shelters for displaced families; tent-city encampments emerged at Callagan and Ramsey Parks in Watsonville within 24 hours of the earthquake.[61]

After the earthquake, local, state, and federal agencies worked to provide assistance, to varying degrees of success. Many people and businesses who utilized Small Business Administration programs or received assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) expressed dissatisfaction with the procedures, especially members of the Latino community, who were placed at a disadvantage because FEMA had responded to the earthquake with reduced supplies and a limited number of Spanish-speaking personnel. The earthquake revealed the need for better disaster preparedness and stronger coordination among municipal and federal agencies during emergencies. The disaster underscored the challenges encountered by small businesses, which were disproportionately affected due to limited preparedness. Additionally, the disaster illuminated a significant need for affordable housing to better support low-income and minority populations within the County who were impacted by the earthquake.

## 2.4 Brief Historical Development of Planning Areas

The following sections provide a brief account of the historical development in each of the individual planning areas. The histories aim to inform readers that the County has a variety of environmental settings, and these environmental differences have influenced development and settlement patterns and land use practices over time.

### 2.4.1 Aptos

The Aptos and Aptos Hills Planning Areas occupy separate and distinct areas in the southwestern area of the County but share a common history and will be discussed together. The planning areas are named for the communities that developed first in the area and were later subdivided into separate areas.

#### Aptos Village

The area in which present-day Aptos Village is located was traditionally inhabited by the Costanoan (also referred to as Ohlone) tribe who occupied the land long before the Spanish expeditions in the late eighteenth century. The exact derivation of “Aptos” is uncertain, but it is thought that the name is derived from Costanoan, meaning “the meeting of two streams,” pointing to the location where the Aptos Creek and Valencia Creek meet. In 1769, the

[60] California Governor’s Office of Emergency Services, “Loma Prieta Earthquake: A Tale of Resilience,” *Cal OES News*, October 17, 2023, accessed August 26, 2025, https://news.caloes.ca.gov/loma-prieta-earthquake-a-tale-of-resilience/; Irene Reti, “The Loma Prieta Earthquake of October 17, 1989: A UCSC Student Oral History Documentary Project,” 2006, UC Santa Cruz University Library, accessed August 26, 2025, https://library.ucsc.edu/reg-hist/quake; Richard A. Gendron, “Faultlines of Power: The Political Economy of Redevelopment in a Progressive City After a Natural Disaster,” (PhD diss., University of Michigan, June 1998), 5; “5:04pm The Great Quake of 1989,” Santa Cruz Sentinel, 1989, 6.

[61] “5:04pm The Great Quake of 1989,” *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, 18, 20; Joanne M. Nigg, ed., “The Loma Prieta, California, Earthquake of October 17, 1989 –Recovery, Mitigation, and Reconstruction,” U.S. Geological Survey Professional Paper 1553-D., D-4, D-22.

Spanish explorers Gaspar De Portola and Father Crespi led the first expedition through what would become the County of Santa Cruz. In 1833, the Mexican government granted Rafael Castro approximately 5,500 acres of land, and the area became known as Rancho Aptos, extending from the location of present-day Cabrillo College to the community of Seascape. Castro gifted parcels of the rancho to family members or sold acreage to businessmen like Claus Spreckels, owner of the Aptos Hotel and a financier of the Santa Cruz Railroad, and Joseph Arano, owner of a general store and the Anchor House (later the Bay View Hotel). The home of Arano and his wife, Augustia Maria Arano (née Castro), was constructed around 1867 and served as the general store, Aptos's first post office, and the Arano's living quarters.[62]

Major industries in the developing Aptos community included tanneries, timber, and apples. Rafael Castro and his descendants were instrumental in the tanning industry. The Santa Cruz Railroad opened in 1876, connecting Aptos to Watsonville, and timber harvesting became the major industry within the area for the next 40 years. The Loma Prieta Lumber Company and the Valencia Mill logged the redwood groves until the timber industry slowed down in the early twentieth century. Unemployed lumberjacks then turned to growing apple orchards, many of which were initially planted by former lumber mill owner Frederick Hihn. Apples became Aptos's leading industry until 1959.[63]

At the time of his death in 1908, Claus Spreckels owned approximately 2,390 acres in Aptos. Upon his wife's death in 1910, management of the land passed to their family trust, the San Christina Investment Company. The trust sold the land holdings to real estate developer Fred Somers in 1922. In 1924, Somers formed the Aptos Company, an investment company that worked with San Francisco developers to lay out subdivisions in Aptos. In 1927, the Peninsula Properties Company purchased the assets of the Aptos Company and continued to develop subdivisions. The communities of Rio Del Mar and Seascape were created from the subdivisions of land. The developments reflected the shift in industries in Aptos, and from this time, the economy transitioned from logging and agriculture to the tourism, real estate, and service and retail industries.[64]

### Seacliff Village

Prior to Seacliff Village's development in the latter half of the twentieth century, sugar beet fields and pastures occupied the land. In 1925, the Seacliff Company of Santa Cruz proposed a development plan for Seacliff Beach and the surrounding land, envisioning an area with a clubhouse, auditorium, breakwater, hotel, and residential subdivision, but the plan never came to fruition. The Cal-Neva Stock Company purchased 500 feet of beachfront property in 1929 and then towed the cement ship the SS *Palo Alto* to Seacliff and converted the ship to an amusement center with a nightclub, hotel, and restaurant. The company also constructed a pier that extended to the ship. In 1931, the State of California purchased a 29.97-acre parcel of land that included the beachfront property north of the pier and subdivision lots east of the beach, establishing one of California's earliest state parks. California State Parks eventually acquired the SS *Palo Alto* in 1936, after the Cal-Neva Stock Company's bankruptcy in 1932. The remainder of the Seacliff Village area was undeveloped until the 1950s, when the present-day commercial buildings now located in the area were constructed. Commercial construction continued through the 1980s. Seacliff Village's core is accessed primarily by Center Street, with residential areas spread out to the east, west, and northwest. Today, the Seacliff Village Planning Area comprises 38 parcels and approximately 21.3 acres and includes the Seacliff Village County Park, which was constructed in the early 2000s.[65]

62 Kevin Newhouse and the Aptos History Museum, *Images of America: Aptos* (Arcadia Publishing, 2013), 7, 13, 17.
63 Newhouse, *Images of America: Aptos,* 7, 18, 19, 22*;* John Hibble, "A Brief Overview of the History of Aptos."
64 Newhouse, *Images of America: Aptos,* 63, 64.
65 Ibid., 66, 67; Kenneth Adelman, *Seacliff Village Plan*, 2016, 2, 3, 72, accessed June 3, 2025, https://cdi.santacruzcountyca.gov/Portals/35/CDI/Planning/Policy/GeneralPLanTownPlans/SeacliffVillagePlan.pdf.

### 2.4.2 Aptos Hills

The Aptos Hills Planning Area (also known as Aptos Hills/Larkin Valley) is located in the southwestern area of the County, between the Aptos Planning Area to the southwest and the Eureka Canyon Planning Area to the northwest. In 1901, the County Board of Supervisors approved a petition to form a new school district, the Larkin Valley School District. Aptos Hills remained part of the Aptos Planning Area until the 1980s. Between 1980 and 1990, the U.S. Census Bureau designated four new places within the County, including Aptos Hills/Larkin Valley.[66]

### 2.4.3 Bonny Doon

The Bonny Doon Planning Area is named for the community of Bonny Doon, which is located on Ben Lomond Mountain, historically located on Mexican land grant Rancho de la Laguna, which was purchased by James Williams in 1847 from Gil Sanchez. Williams built a landing area at the mouth of the San Vincente Creek (later known as Bonny Doon Beach) and constructed a sawmill As mill sites were consistently moved up the mountain as areas were cleared of timber, men and their families moved to live at the sites and created small villages. Many of these families settled permanently on the mountain, developing small ranches on the cleared land. Bonny Doon gets its name from Scotsman John Burns, who settled in the area in the 1850s. Burns named the area "Bonny Doon" because the land reminded him of his native Scotland. The first road through Bonny Doon, Pine Flat Road, was built in 1861. Mining sandstone and limestone were also a profitable industry for Bonny Doon, with approximately half of the land area used for lime quarries. Andrew Glassell began operating the first lime kiln in Bonny Doon in 1858 and ultimately expanded to 10 quarry sites by 1867. The first school, San Vincente, opened in 1872, and by 1900, Bonny Doon had four schools. The Bonny Doon Post Office was established in 1887 but closed in 1930. Families of Italian descent settled in Bonny Doon in the late nineteenth century, working in the lumber mills, grape vineyards, and apple and prune orchards. However, by the 1930s, Watsonville took over as the prime apple growing area in the County, and apple production in Bonny Doon diminished. In 1957, aerospace company Lockheed Corporation purchased land in Boony Doon to construct a new facility, eventually amassing 4,000 acres. Because Lockheed employed over 900 people, the County paved roads within Bonny Doon and encouraged more people to move to the area, although by 2000 the corporation employed less than 100 workers. The location of Bonny Doon on the mountain made the area susceptible to fire and snowstorms. The first community fire suppression team was established in 1957, and the volunteer fire company constructed a firehouse in 1970. Bonny Doon is home to some specialty businesses such as lavender growing and floriculture for the wedding and cut-flower industries, as well as cottage industries like woodworking, metalsmithing, and pottery. As Silicon Valley developed, the appeal of country living increased, causing real estate sales in Bonny Doon to grow. The Bonny Doon area began transforming from one with a shared identity to a bedroom community for the emerging industries in Silicon Valley and San Jose.[67]

### 2.4.4 Carbonera

The name for the Carbonera Planning Area derives from the Mexican land grant Rancho la Carbonera, first made in 1838 and patented in 1873 as 2,225 acres. The name Carbonera is Spanish for "charcoal pit" or "men who gathered hardwood and burned them to create charcoal," referring to the madrone and oak trees in the area. By the 1890s, plots of land from the rancho were being sold to settlers. Today, Carbonera refers to an exclusive

[66] "Official Proceedings of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Cruz, State of California," *Santa Cruz Evening Sentinel,* March 9, 1901, 4; "Four New Census Areas," *Santa Cruz Sentinel,* December 20, 1992, 2.

[67] Ladies of Bonny Doon Club, *Memories of the Mountain: Family Life in Bonny Doon 1800–2000* (AuthorHouse, 2004), 8–10, 16, 21.

neighborhood, Carbonera Estates, which was developed in the 1960s and spans approximately 120 acres between Highway 17 and Branciforte Drive. In 1962, a petition to annex the subdivision was filed with the City of Santa Cruz. The proposal included about 210 parcels, and the intent was to maintain a rural atmosphere but obtain city services such as police and fire protection, water, sewage, and garbage collection. The City of Santa Cruz approved the annexation in March 1963, and the neighborhood continues to be one that features premium real estate.[68]

### 2.4.5 Eureka Canyon

The Eureka Canyon Planning Area contains the unincorporated community of Corralitos, situated along the western boundary of the area. The Eureka Canyon Planning Area is named after a canyon through which Corralitos Creek once flowed. In the late eighteenth century, redwoods from the canyon were milled for shingles. In 1893, W.S. Rogers was awarded the contract to build a bridge across the creek. It forms part of the former Mexican land grant Rancho los Corralitos, which originally encompassed 15,440 acres. "Corralitos" is Spanish for "little pens," but the origin of the rancho's place name is disputed; some authorities believe that it derives from a name of one of the campsites of the Portola Expedition, and others state that the rancho was named for the lake now called Corralitos Lagoon. In addition to Corralitos, within the borders of the former rancho are present-day Pleasant Valley and the unincorporated community of Freedom.[69]

### 2.4.6 La Selva

Of the three land grants awarded to the Castro family in 1833, one encompassed Rancho San Andres, which is the site of the present-day La Selva Planning Area, named after the coastal community of La Selva Beach. In 1859 and 1868, a man named Thomas Leonard purchased land from the Castros and occupied the area that now comprises Seascape, Los Barroncos, and La Selva Beach. In April 1894, the president and board of trustees of the College of Santa Clara purchased La Selva Beach from Leonard. Upon the 160-acre site, the college constructed a retreat for their members of the Society of Jesus, naming it Villa Manresa. Realtor and land developer D.W. Batchelor acquired the land from the college in 1925 for $50,000. Batchelor, a Scotsman, decided to name the town Rob Roy after a famed Scottish highland chief. He invested over $253,000 during the next year and a half to develop the tract through creating subdivisions, building roads, bringing in electricity, and installing a water system and the first sewage system in the area. These original sewer lines were abandoned in 1958, and the health department instructed property owners to install a septic tank system. Batchelor also developed a resort with a bath house, deer park, cottages, bridle paths, and hiking trails. Land was allocated for a church, school, playground, parks, and a beach. The Southern Pacific Railroad made passenger and freight stops in Rob Roy until the mid-1930s, stopping due to a decline in business. In 1935, Batchelor sold what was left of the original 265 acresto Edward G. Burghard. However, Burghard did not have rights to the beach below the mean tide line, as Batchelor had set aside this land for the use of LA Selvans. Under Burghard, the town's name was changed to La Selva Beach ("the forest beach" in Spanish), and the road names were changed from those of Scottish origin to their present-day Spanish names. The community of La Selva Beach changed ownership one more time, to real estate firm J.R. Jacoby Inc., and the state acquired the 21-acre beach in 1948, renaming it Manresa State Beach. Around the same time, the Jacoby Corporation sold the remaining lots of land, ending single ownership of the community.[70]

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68 Clark, *Santa Cruz Place Names,* 262; *Santa Cruz Sentinel,* September 26, 1897, 3; "Carbonero Estates Subdivision Seeks Annexation to SC City," *Santa Cruz Sentinel,* March 11, 1962, 8; "Carbonera Annexation On The Way," *Santa Cruz Sentinel,* February 27, 1963, 1.

69 Clark, *Santa Cruz Place Names,* 266*; The Pajaronian*, April 20, 1882, 3; *The Pajaronian,* April 27, 1893, 3.

70 Robin Batchelor, *La Selva Beach* (Batchelor, 1984), 2–3; Clark, *Santa Cruz County Place Names,* 170, 188.

To address and oversee the needs of the community, property owners formed the La Selva Beach Improvement Association, and articles of incorporation were filed with the state in December 1947. A volunteer fire department, the La Selva Fire Protection District, was established by the County in 1948; the first unit had 19 volunteers. In 1977, the fire protection district added a surf rescue unit. The district oversees the areas from the border of Seascape south to Zils Road, east on Buena Vista to Larkin Valley Road, and along Wildwood Road and White Road from Larkin Valley to Calabasas Road. Other community engagement within La Selva includes the addition of the La Selva Woman's Club in 1948, the establishment of a branch of the County Library in 1950, formation of a Boy Scout troop and Cub Scout pack in 1953, and the construction of a nondenominational church in 1961. From 1950 to the mid-1960s, deputies were appointed to La Selva Beach, and the community was under the protection of the County deputy sheriffs. In 1952, a branch of the Watsonville Post Office opened in La Selva Beach at a hardware store but has since ceased operations.[71]

### 2.4.7 Live Oak

The Live Oak Planning Area is located in the south central area of the County between the Bonny Doon Planning Area to the west, the Carbonara Planning Area to the north, and the Soquel Planning Area to the northeast. Live Oak is a developed unincorporated area, approximately 2.9 miles east of downtown Santa Cruz. The name Live Oak is derived from Rancho Encinalito del Rodeo, the name Alejandro Rodriguez gave to his newly settled 1,500-acre territory between present-day Santa Cruz and Soquel. In Spanish, the word "encino" indicates the Holm oak, a variety of evergreen white oak common to the southern Mediterranean regions of Europe. Upon settling the area, Rodriguez encountered a vast quantity of North American evergreen oak trees, known commonly as the live oak, which bore similarities in appearance to the European variety. He named the rancho after this defining landscape feature; subsequent settlers roughly translated the term into English, and the name endures today. Rodriguez failed to file a formal petition of ownership for Rancho Encinalito del Rodeo before his death in 1848. In the following year, settlers arrived on the rancho and filed claims of ownership, which the Rodriguez family would attempt to challenge in the U.S. court system. Following a series of unfortunate court rulings in favor of the settlers, approximately 1,300 acres of the original rancho land was divided among the new claimants, leaving the widow Rodriguez with a meager 20-acre plot and the remainder of the property to be distributed among the five Rodriguez children. The Rodriguez children gradually sold off portions of their land holdings to early prospectors in the area.[72]

Early American settlers in the area included farmers Jacob Schwan, Henry Johans, Martin Kinsley, and the Corcoran family. The settlers farmed wheat, oats, barley, corn, fruit trees, and grapes. The Live Oak School District was formed in August 1872, and a school was built in 1873 on the present-day school grounds. A rail line between Santa Cruz and Watsonville was completed by 1876, and it featured a stop in Live Oak called Cliffside Station. Additional transportation infrastructure was in place between Santa Cruz and the Live Oak area as early as the 1880s in the form of horsecars, followed by an electric trolley system in 1892. In addition to the vast quantities of grain produced by farmers in the Live Oak area, poultry farming became a popular venture during World War I. The Santa Cruz Milling Company began operation of a grain mill at a new plant constructed beside the Cliffside Station in 1922. The plant offered a convenient location at which local farmers could mill their grain and then ship it off to market on the adjacent train, which ran just north of the property. Additionally, the plant offered poultry farming supplies and a means for farmers to mix their own custom feeds. Live Oak developed quickly during and following World War II. The Live Oak Fire District was established in 1942, and a fire house was erected along 17th Avenue in 1948.

71 Batchelor, *La Selva Beach,* 5–7.

72 Phil Reader, *Rancho Encinalito Del Rodeo: The Invisible Rancho* (Cliffside Publishing: 1989); Collins Spanish to English Dictionary, "Encina," https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/spanish-english/encina; Phil Reader, *The First 100 Years: a History of Live Oak School, 1872-1972* (California: Cliffside Publishing).

The Live Oak School District expanded with new school buildings between 1950 and 1951 and boasted an enrollment of over 500 pupils. By the 1960s, residential development and small-scale vegetable and flower farms gradually overtook the areas of Live Oak formerly dominated by poultry and cereals production. Today, the Live Oak area is primarily characterized by residential neighborhoods.[73]

## 2.4.8 North Coast

A majority of the land within the North Coast Planning Area is held in public trust for resources conservation and public access or is preserved through agricultural easements. There are a small number of residential properties within the North Coast Planning Area, including the town of Davenport. The land within the North Coast Planning Area occupies three former Mexican land grants: Rancho Agua Puerca y Las Trancas, Rancho San Vincente, and Rancho Arroyo de la Laguna. The community of Davenport is named after Captain John Pope Davenport, a whaling captain who arrived in the area around 1851. He moved his family to an inlet 12 miles north of the City of Santa Cruz in 1869, where he built a wharf and home that came to be known as Davenport Landing. Swiss settlers began arriving to the North Coast in the 1860s, purchasing land from Spanish grantees, and began dairy production. Land acquisition by both Swiss and Italian dairy farmers continued into the early twentieth century. Swiss immigrants established the Coast Dairies and Land Company in 1902. The land was also cultivated for agriculture, with farmers growing Brussels sprouts, artichokes, and broccoli. Italian and Filipino immigrants worked in the fields planting and picking the crops, later replaced by Mexican nationals in the late 1940s and 1950s.[74]

The early 1900s additionally witnessed the growth of the lumber and cement industries in Davenport and the North Coast. Lumber companies like the San Vincente Lumber Company logged the trees surrounding the Davenport area and used the Ocean Shore Railway and San Vicente Lumber Company Railroad to transport the lumber to the west side of Santa Cruz. Limestone was briefly quarried in the North Coast area by the Santa Cruz Lime Company, first from 1875 to 1876, and later from 1901 to 1906. However, the preference for Portland cement over traditional lime mortars ultimately led to the discontinuation of lime kiln operations. In 1905, entrepreneur William Dingee purchased the Santa Cruz Lime Company property and 95 acres from the Coast Dairies and Land Company to construct the Davenport Cement Plant, first known as the S.C. Standard Cement Company. The plant was instrumental in the rebuilding of San Francisco and Oakland after the 1906 earthquake, producing upward of 10,000 barrels of cement a day to transport to the Bay Area. In 1908, William Crocker of Crocker Bank purchased the plant. The town of Davenport developed as a result of the cement plant; the Coast Dairies and Land Company built hotels and residences to house the plant employees, and later the plant provided materials for the Davenport jail and church and the Crocker Memorial Hospital. Italian immigrant Dorello Morelli opened the Davenport Cash Store in 1908 and operated the store for 49 years. A school opened in 1906, and by 1908, there were 83 children enrolled whose families hailed from 22 states and the countries of Switzerland, Spain, Italy, France, Germany, Greece, Norway, and Sweden. In 1913, a fire destroyed the original two hotels and the Cash Store, all of which were rebuilt. As the demand for cement increased, a pier was constructed along the coast in 1935, and a cement tanker transported cement up and down the coast and to Hawaii until 1954. Construction of Cabrillo Highway (present-day Highway 1) through the County began in 1933, and the route along the North Coast was completed in 1939.

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73 Margaret Koch, *Santa Cruz County Parade of the Past* (Valley Publishers: 1973), 151–152; SCCRTC (Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission); "Rail Projects," Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission, accessed September 14, 2018, https://sccrtc.org/projects/rail/; *Santa Cruz Evening News,* "New Milling Plant Begins Operations, November 24, 1922, 5; *Santa Cruz Evening News,* "Santa Cruz Milling Company Plant," December 6, 1911, 4.

74 Coastal Conservancy, "North Coast Santa Cruz Access Facilities and Management Plan," 3; Alverda Orlando, Sally Iverson, and Ed Dickie, *Images of America: Davenport* (Arcadia Publishing, 2020), 7; Ivan Franco Comelli, *La Nostra Costa (Our Coast),* (AuthorHouse, 2006), 49, 53; Bureau of Land Management, "Cotoni-Coast Dairies," accessed August 13, 2025, https://www.blm.gov/cotoni-coast-dairies.

Throughout the latter half of the twentieth century, the cement plant changed ownership three times, becoming the Pacific Cement and Aggregates in 1956, Lonestar Cement Corporation in 1965, and RMC Pacific Materials in 1988. In 2005, CEMEX purchased the plant but closed the facility in 2010.[75]

The Coast Dairies and Land Company originally owned 7,000 acres of the North Coast Planning Area; this land was purchased in 1988 by the Save the Redwoods League and the Trust for Public Land. Of this, 400 acres of land were donated to the State of California for a state park, and 5,600 acres were transferred to the Bureau of Land Management in 2014. The Trust for Public Land has retained ownership of the remaining 1,000 acres that are used as agricultural parcels and leases them to local farmers. In 2014, the Bureau of Land Management designated the land as the Cotoni-Coast Dairies National Monument.[76]

### 2.4.9 Pajaro Valley

The Pajaro Valley Planning Area is located in the southern area of the County, between the San Andreas Planning Area to the southwest and the Salsipuedes Planning Area to the southeast. The planning area is within the greater region of the Pajaro Valley, of which one-third is in Monterey County and two-thirds are in Santa Cruz County, comprising approximately 50,000 acres. Within the planning area, the land is primarily used for agriculture, with a portion designated as urban very low-density residential land, and small segments designated as public facility/institutional, suburban residential, and resource conservation. Historically, the area of the County referred to as the Pajaro Valley included the communities of Corralitos, Freedom, La Selva Beach, Pajaro Dunes, Amesti, Interlaken, and the City of Watsonville. The Pajaro Valley Planning Area, however, only encompasses the unincorporated communities of Amesti, Interlaken, and Freedom. For clarity, in this context, "Pajaro Valley" refers to the broader historical region traditionally recognized by local usage, rather than the boundaries of the Pajaro Valley Planning Area.[77]

The region of Pajaro Valley is named for the Pajaro River Valley, which extends 30 miles from its origin near San Felipe Creek through parts of the Counties of San Benito, Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, and Monterey before emptying into Monterey Bay. Wheat was historically grown in the Pajaro Valley until the 1850s and 1860s, followed by diversification into potatoes, hops, sugar beets, berries, and orchard fruit. Apple farming first began in the Pajaro Valley in the 1850s, with the first orchard belonging to Jesse D. Carr. Commercial orchards were first planted by Isaac Williams and R.F. Peckham in 1858. The first school in the Pajaro Valley was established in 1852 and the entire valley was included within the school district. Today, agriculture remains the Pajaro Valley's primary industry, with commercial farms producing strawberries, apples, cauliflower, broccoli, lettuce, artichokes, and fresh flowers. The success of large-scale agriculture in the Pajaro Valley was and continues to be dependent on immigrant labor, especially that of Japanese, Filipino, and Mexican immigrants. Filipino immigrants began arriving in the Pajaro Valley after the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, and their population continued to increase after the restriction of Japanese immigration in 1924. Filipino immigrants were exempt from "Asian quotas" because the Philippines was recognized as a U.S. territory during this period, and Filipinos were therefore U.S. citizens. Japanese immigrants came to the

[75] Orlando, Iverson, and Dickie, *Images of America: Davenport,* 32–33, 40, 50, 81, 114; Santa Cruz Public Libraries, "Davenport Cement Plant," Local History Collection, accessed August 14, 2025, https://history.santacruzpl.org/omeka/items/show/10259#?c=0&m=0&s=0&cv=0&xywh=-87%2C35%2C655%2C351; *Santa Cruz Sentinel,* "Davenport," February 4, 2001; *Santa Cruz Evening News, "Ocean Shore Work to Start in S.C. County,"* April 14, 1933; County of Santa Cruz, "Draft Santa Cruz Coastal Restoration and Reuse Plan," September 2018, accessed August 14, 2025, https://www.santacruzcountyca.gov/Portals/0/cemex/SC%20Coastal%20Restoral%20and%20Reuse%20Plan/Part%20I%20-%20Introductions%20and%20Background.pdf, 1–7.

[76] Bureau of Land Management, "Cotoni-Coast Dairies"; Orlando, Iverson, and Dickie, *Images of America: Davenport,* 124–125.

[77] Clark, *Santa Cruz County Place Names,* 232; Edward Sanford Harrison, *Santa Cruz County, Illustrated*, published for the Board of Supervisors, 1890, 19.

Pajaro Valley as early as 1892, filling the labor void left by the Chinese Exclusion Act. Under the Bracero Program (1942–1964), Mexican citizens arrived to fill the labor shortages created by World War II and Japanese incarceration.[78]

Watsonville's founder, Judge John H. Watson, arrived in the Pajaro Valley in 1851. Watson and D.S. Gregory had purchased land that was part of the Rancho Bolsa del Pajaro. The two men rented out tracts of land to newcomers who hoped to profit from the fertile soil, initially through potato cultivation. As the town of Watsonville continued to grow, hotels, stores, two churches, and a post office were established. Watsonville incorporated in 1868. By 1876, the completion of the Santa Cruz Railroad and the extension of the Southern Pacific Railroad line from Gilroy to the community of Pajaro across the Pajaro River connected Santa Cruz with Watsonville and Pajaro Junction. With the addition of the railroad, farmers in the Pajaro Valley were able to transport produce to shipping facilities in San Francisco and Monterey Bay. The Western Beet Sugar Factory, established by Claus Spreckels, opened in 1888. Spreckels also founded the Pajaro Valley Railroad to transport beets and raw sugar to be refined in San Francisco. Watsonville is home to the headquarters of national companies such as Driscoll's Strawberries, Martinelli's, and California Giant. Like many other areas in the County, the Pajaro Valley sustained damage from several natural disasters. In 1906, Watsonville and the Pajaro Valley were impacted by the San Francisco earthquake, which caused buildings to collapse, created landslides, and disrupted railway transportation. In 1911, 1922, 1931, 1937, 1939, and 1955, heavy rainfall caused the Pajaro River to overflow and destroyed houses, stores, bridges, and acres of farmland. In 1989, Watsonville suffered $35 million in damage from the Loma Prieta earthquake, which caused the destruction of 850 dwellings and 100 commercial and industrial buildings.[79]

## 2.4.10 Salsipuedes

The Salsipuedes Planning Area takes its name from the former Mexican land grant Rancho Salsipuedes, of which 25,800 acres were in the County. The rancho was named for the Salsipuedes Creek, and the creek was named for the Spanish phrase "sal si puedes," meaning "get out (or depart) if you can." Rancho Salsipuedes was originally granted to Francisco de Haro, the first mayor of Yerba Buena in 1834, and regranted to Manual Jimeno Casarin in 1840. The U.S. Deputy Surveyor filed the land grant with the Public Land Commission in 1853, and in 1860, the land was divided and conveyed to Joseph B. Crockett, Edward D. Baker, S.M. Tibbits, James Blair, William F. White, and J.P. Davidson. The land was subsequently divided and sold to other settlers throughout the rest of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century. Salsipuedes had an abundance of fertile land, and farmers successfully cultivated fruit orchards or harvested timber.[80]

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78 Fred William Atkinson, *100 Years in the Pajaro Valley* (Register and Pajaronian Print: 1935), 63, 67, 72; City of Watsonville, "Economic Profile," accessed August 16, 2025, https://www.watsonville.gov/932/Economic-Profile; Hugh McCormick, "The Legacy of Japanese Immigrants in the Pajaro Valley," *Good Times,* November 10, 2020, accessed August 15, 2025, https://www.goodtimes.sc/japanese-immigrants-pajaro-valley/; Pajaro Valley Arts, "Pajaro Valley Agricultural Timeline," accessed August 15, 2025, https://pvarts.org/dev/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Pajaro-Valley-Agricultural-Timeline.pdf.

79 Pajaro Valley Historical Association, "Judge Watson," accessed August 15, 2025, https://www.pajarovalleyhistory.org/judge-watson/; Harrison, *Santa Cruz County, Illustrated,* 21; Pajaro Valley Historical Association, "Watsonville Has Seen Its Fair Share of Floods," *PVHA Newsletter,* Spring 2023, accessed August 15, 2025, https://www.pajarovalleyhistory.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/PVHA_Newsletter_Spring2023.pdf.

80 Clark, *Santa Cruz County Place Names,* 269; *Santa Cruz Semi-Weekly Sentinel,* "Legal Advertisements," July 13, 1860, 4; Santa Cruz Trains, "Company: White and DeHart Company," July 24, 2025, accessed August 16, 2025, https://www.santacruztrains.com/2025/07/company-white-and-dehart-company.html.

Today, Salsipuedes remains an unincorporated area located northeast of Watsonville and has a population of 2,135. It is included in the Pajaro Valley Fire Projection District, and its wastewater collection services are overseen by the Salsipuedes Sanitary District. The sanitary district formed in 1965 and services 510 residential connections.[81]

## 2.4.11 San Andreas

The San Andreas (or Andres) Planning Area is an unincorporated area southwest of Highway 1 and southeast of La Selva Beach . It takes its name from one of eight separate Santa Cruz land grants given to the Castro family, known as Rancho San Andres. The rancho extended along Monterey Bay from present-day Manresa Beach to Sunset Beach and Beach Road. The San Andreas School was established in 1861 and operated until 1946, when it was consolidated within the Freedom School District. The area was called "San Andreas Ranch" for a number of years after the territory became the State of California, with 20 individuals using it as their business address in 1875. The land was suitable for grain cultivation and pastureland and had large sections of forest and swampland. One of the oldest roads in the County, San Andreas Road, extends through the area, from a present-day Highway 1 interchange 2 miles north of La Selva Beach to Beach Road, one-third of a mile northwest of Pajaro River. San Andreas was also host to a Southern Pacific Railroad station, first known as San Andres upon its establishment by the Santa Cruz Railroad in 1876. The Southern Pacific Railroad purchased the line in 1881 and renamed the station to "Ellicott" in 1891. Southern Pacific ended passenger service in 1938 due to declining freight and passenger patronage. During World War II, the station was used as a base for the National Guard's Camp McQuaide. The base was decommissioned in 1948. Today, the San Andreas area encompasses agricultural land, a wildlife refuge, and a state park, Rancho San Andres Castro Adobe Park. The park includes a two-story hacienda built for Jose Joaquin Castro in the mid-1850s.[82]

## 2.4.12 San Lorenzo Valley

The San Lorenzo Valley Planning Area derives its name from the San Lorenzo River Valley, which winds through the heart of this region and has shaped both its landscape and community history. The area was historically split between three Mexican land grants: Rancho Zayante, granted to Joaquin Buelna in 1834; Rancho Canada del Rincon en le Rio San Lorenzo, granted to Pierre Sainsevain in 1843; and Rancho La Cabonera, granted to William Thompson in 1838. Present-day San Lorenzo Valley has a population of 35,000 people and consists of seven communities: Ben Lomond, Boulder Creek, Brookdale, Felton, Lompico, Mount Hermon, and Zayante.[83]

With its location among the redwoods in the Santa Cruz Mountains, the San Lorenzo Valley had a prominent logging industry in the mid-to-late nineteenth century and into the early twentieth century. In 1860, Henry van Valkenburgh established the San Lorenzo Paper Mill, which operated until 1872. The location of the San Lorenzo Valley provided the materials for the success of California Powder Works. The company operated from 1863 to 1914, acquiring the paper mill property in 1872. Scattered settlements and villages developed in the

81 Local Agency Formation Commission of Santa Cruz County, "Salsipuedes Sanitary District Service and Sphere Review," January 6, 2016, accessed August 16, 2025, https://santacruzlafco.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Salsipuedes-MSR-Sphere-2015-Final.pdf.

82 Clark, *Santa Cruz County Place Names,* 272, 292; Leonard A. Greenburg and Stanley D. Stevens, *Santa Cruz County Illustrations with Historical Sketch of the County* (The Museum of Art and History at the McPherson Center indexed edition 1997 [original 1897]), 55; Santa Cruz Trains, "Stations: Ellicott," December 7, 2023, accessed August 7, 2025, https://www.santacruztrains.com/2023/12/stations-ellicott.html; California State Parks, "Rancho San Andres Castro Adobe Park Property," accessed August 7, 2025, https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=22271#:~:text=About%20Rancho%20San%20Andr%C3%A9s%20Castro,new%20exhibits%20and%20interpretive%20displays.

83 Clark, *Santa Cruz County Place Names,* 291.

valley in the 1870s, along with stores, hotels, and sawmills. To transport the felled timber, a flume from Boulder Creek to Felton was constructed in 1875. In 1879, construction began on a rail line that ran from the Santa Clara Valley through Felton and into Santa Cruz, called the Santa Cruz and Felton Railroad. The South Pacific Coast Railroad took over operation of the line in 1880, and it was acquired by the Southern Pacific Railroad in 1887. By 1908, the railway extended to Boulder Creek.[84]

Although the San Lorenzo Valley had a prosperous logging industry, a portion of the forest was set aside for conservation. In 1902, the State of California established Big Basin Redwoods State Park. It is the oldest state park in California and preserves more than 18,000 acres. The tourism industry began to emerge in the valley in the early twentieth century, as camps with cabins and auto camps developed. The damming of the San Lorenzo River and subsequent creation of a beach and swimming pools added to the popularity of the area. In the early twentieth century, towns in the San Lorenzo Valley created booklets advertising the valley and encouraging people to move to the area. The booklets advertised local businesses, schools, and churches, and touted the proximity to the redwoods.[85]

### Ben Lomond

Ben Lomond is an unincorporated town in the San Lorenzo Valley Planning Area and was originally called Pacific Mills. In 1887, the town's name was changed to Ben Lomond, after the Ben Lomond mountain range located above. The mountain range was named by Scotsman John Burns after the Scottish mountain Ben Lomond. Burns settled in the area in 1851 and planted the County's first vineyard. Pennsylvania native James Pierce migrated to California in 1854, and in 1877 he built two mills at the location of present-day Ben Lomond. As the town expanded, people from Scotland, Italy, and China immigrated to the area, as well as migrants from the East Coast and Midwest. Chinese immigrants found employment in road and rail construction, agriculture, domestic service, and as camp cooks and laundrymen. After the Chinese Exclusion Act passed in 1882, anti-Chinese sentiment caused the immigrants to leave, and by 1885, no Chinese remained in the San Lorenzo Valley. The Chinese population in the valley rebounded by 1900, but the only jobs available to them were as domestic workers and laundrymen; by 1910, no Chinese lived in Ben Lomond. The first school in Ben Lomond, the Newell Creek School, opened in 1876 and was renamed Ben Lomond School in 1894. A second school to support the growing population was constructed in 1895.[86]

Beginning in the early 1900s, Ben Lomond became an attractive tourist location; Hotel Ben Lomond opened in 1889 but was rebuilt and refurbished in 1905, offering 40 suites that could accommodate 150 guests, as well as outdoor activities including fishing, hunting, boating, swimming, riding, tennis, and bowling. Several other hotels followed in the early twentieth century. Wealthy California residents took advantage of Ben Lomond's scenery and amenities by building summer homes in the town. Ben Lomond was also home to several churches of various denominations, a post office, a livery stable, and various stores. In 1911, the Ben Lomond Improvement Society, a community organization focused on enhancing the area, raised funds to construct a library and park. The Ben Lomond Fire District took over operations of the park in 1942 and maintained it until 1950, when the Ben Lomond Park and Recreation District formed. The district dissolved in 1976, and maintenance transferred to the County. In 1990, the County Board of Supervisors adopted the Ben Lomond Town Plan with the intent to improve the park's

84 Ibid, 13; Lisa Robinson, *Images of America: The San Lorenzo Valley* (Arcadia Publishing, 2012), 13, 19, 46.

85 Robinson, *Images of America: The San Lorenzo Valley,* 63, 78; California State Parks, "About Big Basin Redwoods State Park," accessed August 18, 2025, https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=540.

86 Clark, *Santa Cruz County Place Names,* 22; San Lorenzo Valley Museum, "San Lorenzo Valley Chinese 1850–1920," 2022, accessed August 18, 2025, https://www.slvmuseum.org/chinese.html.

appearance, increase pedestrian and traffic safety, preserve the rural character of Ben Lomond, and upgrade the park facilities. The plan also established development standards to be applied to new developments in the town.[87]

## Boulder Creek

The town of Boulder Creek, named for the stream, is located at the junction of Bear Creek, Boulder Creek, and the San Lorenzo River. It began as a logging community in the 1860s, when Joseph W. Peery constructed a water-powered sawmill on the river. Peery built another sawmill 2 miles south of the first one and founded the town of Lorenzo, which was later absorbed into Boulder Creek. The post office opened in 1872. The town was incorporated in 1902, and disincorporated in 1905 because residents opposed the taxation necessary to maintain the town as an incorporated entity. Settlers in the area planted fruit trees and vineyards, and some, like William Horstman, established wineries. In 1891, a fire destroyed nearly all the buildings in downtown Boulder Creek, spurring residents to form a volunteer fire department, the Boulder Creek Hose Company. The first school in Boulder Creek proved to be too small for the growing town, so in 1891, a new four-room grammar school was erected on land donated by the Felton Flume and Transportation Company. A high school later opened in July 1905. In May 1885, the South Pacific Coast Railroad built a station at Boulder Creek for freight shipping, and in 1910, gasoline-powered railmotor cars—small self-propelled vehicles designed to run on railroad tracks, distinct from road-going automobiles—were in use along the line between Boulder Creek and Santa Cruz. After the Southern Pacific Railroad acquired the South Pacific line, a standard gauged line from Felton to Boulder Creek was added in 1907. By 1930, all passenger lines from Boulder Creek to Felton ceased operation, with the route replaced by buses. Boulder Creek was considered a premier mountain resort, one accessible by roads. A library, real estate office, and several hotels opened in the first decade of the twentieth century, including Camp Joy, a resort established exclusively as a summer camp for boys. Recreational activities in Boulder Creek included the Boulder Creek Band, a baseball club named the Sawfliers, and a fraternal organization, the Washingtonian Society. The population in Boulder Creek steadily increased each decade, peaking at 6,725 in 1990. By 2000, the population had declined to 4,081, but by 2010 it had increased slightly to 4,923 and had increased again to 5,429 at the time of the 2020 census. In 1992, the County approved the Boulder Creek Specific Plan, with aims to retain the unique character of the town, create a community gathering space, and improve recreational facilities.[88]

## Felton

Like other towns in the San Lorenzo Valley, Felton developed from a logging community. The town is laid out on the Zayante Rancho, located on the western side of Zayante Creek near its confluence with the San Lorenzo River. The rancho land grant was first given to Joaquin Buelna in 1833 and passed to Francisco Moss in 1839 and then in 1841 to Joseph Majors, who claimed he acquired the land for Isaac Graham and others. In 1843, Graham relocated his Zayante sawmill to the junction of Fall Creek and the San Lorenzo River, but credit for laying out the town is given to Edward Stanly, Graham's lawyer, who acquired the land after Graham's death in 1863. Stanly and his

87 Robinson, *Images of America: San Lorenzo Valley,* 52, 79, 108, 117; Ronnie Trubek, "The Exciting Story of How Park Hall Came to Be," May 10, 2023, accessed August 18, 2025, https://parkhall.benlomond.org/2023/05/the-exciting-story-of-how-park-hall-came-to-be/; County of Santa Cruz, "Ben Lomond Town Plan," accessed August 18, 2025, https://cdi.santacruzcountyca.gov/Portals/35/CDI/Planning/Policy/GeneralPLanTownPlans/BenLomondTownPlan.pdf.

88 Clark, *Santa Cruz County Place Names,* 35, 37; Hazel Horstman Lundgren, "Memories and Milestones of the Horstman Family of Boulder Creek, 1874–1974," in *Santa Cruz County History Journal,* no. 2, 1995: 6; Robinson, *Images of America: San Lorenzo Valley*, 42, 47, 48, 69, 89, 95; *Santa Cruz Surf and Superior California Farmer,* "Supervisors and Saloons," July 7, 1915, 4; United States Census Bureau, "Boulder Creek CDP, California Decennial Census"; County of Santa Cruz, "Boulder Creek Specific Plan," May 12, 1992, 3, https://cdi.santacruzcountyca.gov/Portals/35/CDI/Planning/Policy/GeneralPLanTownPlans/BoulderCreekPlan.pdf.

nephew John A. Stanly laid out the town in 1868, naming it after Edward Stanly's nephew-in-law John Brooks Felton.[89]

Prior to the town's official planning and settlement design, the first school in Felton, the San Lorenzo School, opened in 1863. The name was changed to Felton School in 1875, and the school was relocated to a new location and new building in 1894 before joining Ben Lomond and Zayante Schools in 1946 to form San Lorenzo Union Elementary. In 1870, the town post office was established. The South Pacific Coast Railroad arrived in the area in 1879 and built its Felton station on the east side of the San Lorenzo River. Construction on the railroad was primarily supplied by Chinese laborers, who comprised 21% of Felton's 271 residents in 1880. Aside from the flourishing logging industry, Felton was home to two successful lime companies. The first was the Davis and Jordan Lime Company, opened in 1852 and later acquired by Henry Cowell, becoming part of the Cowell Lime and Cement Company. The H.T. Holmes Company followed in 1880. The Town of Felton was incorporated on April 14, 1884, but was disincorporated in 1917 after Governor William Stephens signed the bill AB 749 repealing the act for incorporation of Felton after the community lost a large portion of its tax base.[90]

Felton is presently known as a popular spot for tourism, which has its origins in the 1870s, and vacation homes. The first hotel, the Cremer Hotel, opened in Felton in 1876, followed by the Grand Central Hotel in 1889. Tourism increased in the San Lorenzo Valley after the Big Basin Redwoods State Park opened, and Felton witnessed an upsurge in tourism in the 1920s because of auto camps that offered tents, cottages, and tennis courts. Fires plagued the town in 1888, 1896, 1917, and 1946, destroying many buildings and structures. However, some of the resources from Felton's early period survived and serve as focal points for tourists. Today, visitors are drawn to the Felton Covered Bridge County Park, which features the historic covered bridge built in 1892, serving for 45 years as the only entry to Felton. As with Ben Lomond and Boulder Creek, the County approved a Felton Town Plan to preserve the unique characteristics of the town, implement a planning framework to guide both public and private improvements, and encourage economic viability. The plan was adopted in 1987. Population in Felton peaked in 1990 at 5,350 but decreased to 4,489 by 2020.[91]

### 2.4.13 Skyline

The Skyline Planning Area is located on the border of Santa Clara County, west of State Route 35 (also known as Skyline Boulevard) in Santa Cruz County. The unincorporated area primarily is comprised of the following official land use designations: Mountain Residential plots between 10 and 40 acres; a small portion of Parks, Recreation, and Open Space in the northwestern portion of the planning area; Resource Conservation in the southwestern corner; and a very small percentage of land is used as Suburban Residential or Agriculture. In 1994, the County

89 Clark, *Santa Cruz County Place Names,* 110–11, 274; *Santa Cruz Weekly Sentinel,* "Probate Notice," October 13, 1866, 2.
90 *Santa Cruz Sentinel,* "Felton Disincorporates," April 21, 1917.
91 *Santa Cruz Sentinel,* "Newspaper Noted for Longevity," April 11, 1943, 4; *Santa Cruz Weekly Sentinel,* "No title," July 31, 1880, 3. Robinson, *Images of America: San Lorenzo Valley,* 16, 51, 70; Santa Cruz County Parks, "Felton Covered Bridge County Park," accessed August 18, 2025, https://parks.santacruzcountyca.gov/Home/ExploreOurParksBeaches/AllCountyParks/FeltonCoveredBridgeCountyPark.aspx; Santa Cruz Public Libraries, Population Statistics for Santa Cruz County and Cities, 1850–2000," accessed August 18, 2025, https://web.archive.org/web/20091226234107/http://www.santacruzpl.org/history/articles/426/; Jeff Oberdorfer and Associates, *Felton Town Plan: A Specific Plan for the Unincorporated Village of Felton*, July 28, 1987, accessed August 2025, https://cdi.santacruzcountyca.gov/Portals/35/CDI/Planning/Policy/GeneralPLanTownPlans/FeltonPlan.pdf.

adopted an updated General Plan that included general land use designations for the 15 planning areas in the County. The General Plan identified Skyline as part of the Rural Land Use designations.[92]

## 2.4.14 Soquel

The Soquel Planning Area takes its name from the unincorporated Village of Soquel and larger community of Soquel. The planning area was initially part of Mexican land grants Rancho Shoquel and the Rancho Shoquel Augmentation. Rancho Soquel was granted to Martina Castro in 1833 and encompassed 1,668 acres, extending from present-day Soquel Creek to Borregas Gulch. The augmentation was added in 1844 and consisted of 32,702 acres, extending the original grant northwest to the present-day site of Mountain Charley's Cabin and northeast to the summit of Loma Prieta in Santa Clara County. The origin of the place name has various interpretations. One is that "Soquel" refers to the location of a group of local Native Americans or to a tribal leader and is a Costonoan word meaning "place of the willows" or "laurel" as in the abundance of laurel trees in the area. Another is that "soak, hell" was a response from a miner when he asked his companions how to remedy his stiff boots.[93]

### Soquel Village

The town of Soquel was established in 1852 after the Gold Rush as miners left the gold fields and settled elsewhere to profit from the region's natural resources, and it became the third-largest settlement in the County by 1860. The town developed around Soquel Creek, and the creek's water supplied power for at least five sawmills upstream of the town as well as a beach flat where the creek connected with the ocean, which became an important shipping point and wharf called Soquel's Landing in the late 1850s. From the wharf, the town exported lumber, leather, manufactured goods, and produce such as potatoes, wheat, sugar beets, corn, apples, and cherries. Early industries like flour mills, tanneries, chair factories, a shoe manufacturing plant, a paper mill, and a beet sugar plant supported the local economy. The Santa Cruz Railroad arrived in the area in 1876, running along the coastline, and a depot was constructed near the wharf and shipbuilder Samuel Alonzo Hall's resort, Camp Capitola (later the incorporated municipality Capitola). When the Southern Pacific Railroad purchased the rail line in 1881, it relocated the depot to the eastern end of the trestle in Capitola. Fishing was also a profitable industry in the area, dominated first by Chinese immigrants who occupied the China Beach settlement into the 1890s, and by Italian immigrants from 1890 to 1920. With Soquel Creek running through the village, bridges were constructed to connect farmland with the businesses that developed along the main roads, Soquel Drive and Main Street. Stores, restaurants, hotels, and the Soquel Grammar School were located on these streets and along Porter Street. However, proximity to the Soquel Creek subjected the town to several devastating floods, with the earliest recorded in 1862. Floods were a regular occurrence in the 1930s and 1940s, but Soquel sustained the most damage during the floods of 1955 and 1982, which destroyed millions of dollars' worth of homes, businesses, and power lines. The land within Soquel and the surrounding areas was not conducive to large-scale agriculture, but settlers successfully planted apples, cherries, pears, plums, prunes, and strawberries in the areas cleared by logging. Farms employed a large labor force of immigrants from China and Mexico, as well as migrants from the Midwest during the 1930s. In addition to the Italian, Chinese, and Mexican immigrants, Soquel also became home to settlers from Germany, Italy, Ireland, Portugal, Russia, and Japan. One of the lasting imprints that immigrants left on the area comes in the form of the Bargetto Winery. Italian immigrants Philip and John Bargetto first settled in San Francisco in 1891 and 1909,

92 County of Santa Cruz, "Appendix B: Land Use Designation Maps," in *Santa Cruz County General Plan*, B-14, accessed August 18, 2025, https://cdi.santacruzcountyca.gov/Portals/35/CDI/Planning/Policy/GeneralPlanTownPlans/General%20Plan%20Appendices/GP_AppB_GP-DesignationsMaps_FINAL.pdf?ver=g5vw_ovRbrCVRVRaCF0Gww%3D%3D&timestamp=1712076913524; County of Santa Cruz, "Chapter 2: Land Use," Santa Cruz 1994 General Plan, 2-11, 2-12, 2-56.

93 Clark, *Santa Cruz County Place Names,* 273, 328.

respectively, and relocated their winemaking business to Soquel in 1917. During Prohibition, Bargetto Winery produced wine for friends and neighbors and the Catholic Church, as "altar wine" was still permissible under the Volstead Act. After Prohibition, the winery resumed widespread wine production, and today it is operated by the fourth generation of Bargettos. Agriculture was the primary industry in Soquel until the end of World War II, after which the farmland was subdivided and developed for residences during the 1950s.[94]

## 2.4.15 Summit

The Summit Planning Area is also known as the Loma Prieta community. Within the planning area is the abandoned town of Loma Prieta. The area was named for the Loma Prieta Mountain, the highest peak in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Development in the area began as a prosperous logging village established in 1883. The Loma Prieta Mill and Lumber Company transported timber from the Summit area to the shipping point in Aptos. The company owned an independent standard-gauge railroad, the Loma Prita Railway, and used the line to move both timber and passengers to Aptos. The Southern Pacific Railroad acquired the line in 1887. The mill workers and their families built homes on the hillsides surrounding the mill and constructed a hotel, general store, Wells Fargo express station, and post office in the town. In 1889 a storm destroyed the mill, and the Loma Prieta Mill and Lumber Company abandoned the facility; the town was abandoned after the mill closed. Although the company returned to the site and operated a new mill from 1908 to 1912 and then again from 1918 to 1920, the town was never revived. The site of the town is now located in the Forest of Nisene Marks State Park, established in 1963. Therefore, the current Loma Prieta area comprises a population that is spread across a large, rural area.[95]

Today, the Summit Planning Area consists of mostly Mountain Residential plots, followed by Parks, Recreation, and Open Space, some Resource Conservation land, and Rural Residential plots spread throughout the west side of the area. In 1952, a school opened to serve the children of the Summit area. The new school, Loma Prieta School, replaced the four small school districts previously existing in the area. To foster a sense of kinship among the rural neighbors, residents formed the Loma Prieta Community Foundation in 1983. The foundation hosts fundraisers for the Loma Prieta community for such purposes as disaster relief and renovation of the community center and various public spaces, and also hosts events such as pancake breakfasts, a performing arts program called Theatre in the Mountains, and recreation classes.[96]

Living in the forested mountains places Summit residents under the constant risk of natural disasters. In 1989, the Loma Prieta Earthquake ruptured the ground along Summit Road and Skyland Ridge in the Summit Planning Area, subsequently causing landslides. The earthquake destroyed Loma Prieta Elementary School and damaged approximately 600 homes in Summit, and some families chose to leave the area completely. The Summit area needed to be studied for seismic safety before residents were allowed to rebuild. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers led a $600,000 federal study of the area in March 1990. Residents did not receive the results of the study until September 1991 but were granted permission to apply for building permits. Wildfires have also caused significant

94 The Soquel Pioneer and Historical Association, *Images of America: Soquel* (Arcadia Publishing, 2011), 8, 23, 35, 45, 54, 55, 62, 99; John E. Bargetto and Geoffrey Dunn, *Vintage Bargetto: Celebrating a Century of California Winemaking* (John E. Bargetto: 2013), 34, 37; Carolyn Swift, "A Soquel History Tale," *City of Capitola,* accessed August 16, 2025, https://www.cityofcapitola.org/capitola-museum/page/soquel-history-tale.

95 Clark, *Santa Cruz County Place Names,* 179; Santa Cruz Trains, "Loma Prieta," December 19, 2014, accessed August 19, 2025, https://www.santacruztrains.com/2014/12/loma-prieta.html.

96 County of Santa Cruz, "Appendix B: Land Use Designation Maps," B-17; *Santa Cruz Sentinel,* "Loma Prieta's New School to be Dedicated," February 28, 1952, 15; Loma Prieta Community Foundation, "LPCF History."

damage to the Summit area. Most notably, the Summit Fire in 2008 burned more than 4,000 acres in the Santa Cruz Mountains and destroyed 34 homes and 82 outbuildings.[97]

# 2.5 Ethnic and Cultural Community Narratives

The following section provides the ethnic and cultural community narratives for each community discussed in this study. Where appropriate, this study includes limited direct quotations from historical sources that contain terminology now recognized as insensitive or offensive. These terms are presented in the format of direct, italicized quotations ("*historical term*") to preserve the historical context and to accurately reflect the attitudes and language of the time.

## 2.5.1 African American/Black

African Americans historically settled in the County following the Gold Rush, where they made lives and contributed broadly to the social fabric of the County in the areas of education, agriculture, and civil rights. In alignment with contemporary scholarly standards and to respectfully acknowledge racial identity and agency, this study uses the terms "Afro-descendant/African descent" "Black" and "African American" in place of outdated or dehumanizing terminology. Afro-descended is used to describe individuals of African descent in California where the historical context, including Spanish and Mexican governance over California, suggests broader connections beyond only Africa and the United States. African American is used when discussing U.S. citizenship and cultural identity, and Black is used in broader racial and social contexts or when historical records do not specify national origin.

### Background

People of African descent established a presence in California alongside Europeans beginning with Spain's explorations of the New World. The first people of African descent to arrive in California likely came as enslaved persons or crew members on European ships exploring California's coastline during the 1500s and 1600s, as well as during two overland expeditions by Don Gaspar de Portolá, the Governor of Baja, to establish Spanish military and religious control over Alta California during the 1700s.[98] In 1845, Don Pío de Jesús Pico IV, also known as Pío Pico, was a Mexican political leader of African-Latino descent who became the last governor of Mexican-controlled Alta California. Pico's prominent role reflects the high-ranking positions that Afro-Latinos achieved during the period that California was under Mexican governance.[99]

When gold was discovered at Sutter's Mill in California just prior to California becoming a part of the United States in 1850, free, formerly enslaved, and enslaved African American individuals traveled from the eastern and southern United States westward to settle in rural California counties, including areas of the County.

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97 *Santa Cruz Sentinel,* "Aftershocks Trigger Landslides in Summit Area," October 20, 1989, 5; *Santa Cruz Sentinel,* "School/Earthquake Compounds Problems," October 31, 1989, 12; *Santa Cruz Sentinel,* "Summit/Post-Temblor Risk Still a Big Mystery," March 8, 1990, 12; Greg Beebe, "Summit Area Rebuilding Rules May Be Eased," *Santa Cruz Sentinel,* September 10, 1991, 1; Cathy Kelly and Stephen Baxter, "Summit Fire: A Look at Rebuilding Three Years Later," *Santa Cruz Sentinel,* updated September 11, 2018, accessed August 20, 2025, https://www.santacruzsentinel.com/2011/05/22/summit-fire-a-look-at-rebuilding-three-years-later/.

98 Delilah L. Beasley, *The Negro Trail-Blazers of California* (New York: G.K. Hall, 1997, originally published 1919).

99 National Park Service, "Pío Pico," U.S. National Park Service, last updated October 30, 2019, https://www.nps.gov/people/pio-pico.htm.

## Settlement in Santa Cruz County

In To Know My Name: A Chronological History of African Americans in Santa Cruz County, historian and author Phil Reader notes that, "Throughout the two hundred year history of Santa Cruz County … African Americans are without question, the invisible minority."[100] Although present since the earliest recorded history of the County, African Americans have formed a historically small minority, beginning with the Gold Rush in 1848, that grew gradually at first and later accelerated during the period following World War II.

The earliest persons of African descent to make their way to the County do not appear to have settled. Sailors and crewmen of African descent arrived as part of Spanish exploration of Alta California, including during the overland Portolá expeditions in 1769 and 1770. These expeditions located Monterey Bay and set the stage for the establishment of Mission Santa Cruz in 1791 and the self-governing but ultimately unsuccessful Villa Branciforte in 1795. A series of censuses conducted in 1790 suggests that approximately 19% of the combined populations of the presidios in Alta California (San Francisco, Monterey, Santa Barbara, and San Diego) and the two self-governing pueblos (San José and Los Angeles) was of African descent.[101] Given the complexity and mutability of racial identity in colonial Spain, however, some scholars believe that the number of people of African descent in Alta California was much higher. The AfricanCalifornios.org, a digital history project from California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo's Institute for Advanced Technology and Public Policy, provides a succinct description noting the inherent difficulties of this changeable system, stating that,

> By the late eighteenth century, Spanish intellectuals had drawn up complicated lists of how certain racial categories were created, such as specifying that the union of a Mestizo and a Spaniard begat a castizo (someone who is one quarter indigenous and three-fourths Spaniard). While such terms were used in colonial documents, such a care to determine the exact racial makeup were rarely taken. Race, as a social construct, was determined by appearance both physical and social. Race, therefore, could change depending on the perception of one's social standing.[102]

Given the prevalence of Afro-descendants in other similar settlements in Alta California during this period, it is plausible to consider that they may have similarly settled in areas of the County as part of the establishment of Villa Branciforte or Mission Santa Cruz. Afro-descendants also experienced upward mobility following the tumultuous transition from Spanish to Mexican control of Alta California. They rose in military ranks, held high government offices, and were the recipients of the extensive land grants issued during the Mexican Period.[103] Land grants to citizens during this period covered over 150,000 acres of present-day Santa Cruz County, so the possibility exists that some of these early recipients may have been of Afro-descents as well.

The 1830s saw the arrival of the first African American to make their way to the County. Allen Light, a formerly enslaved man from Virginia, arrived in the area of the County in 1835 and spent time trapping along the banks of the San Lorenzo, the Soquel, and the Pajaro Rivers.[104] In 1848, Jim Beckwourth, a free-born African American man from Virginia, led a party out west along the Santa Fe Trail and subsequently spent time exploring the County during

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100 Phil Reader, *To Know My Name: A Chronological History of African Americans in Santa Cruz County* (Santa Cruz Public Libraries, originally published 1995; revised 2021), 2, https://history.santacruzpl.org/omeka/items/show/134496#?c=0&m=0&s=0&cv=0.

101 Cameron Jones and Foaad Khosmood, "African Californios," AfricanCalifornios.org, Cal Poly Institute for Advanced Technology and Public Policy, accessed August 15, 2025, https://www.africancalifornios.org/.

102 Cameron Jones and Foaad Khosmood, "Race in Early California," AfricanCalifornios.org, Cal Poly Institute for Advanced Technology and Public Policy, accessed August 15, 2025, https://www.africancalifornios.org/race-in-early-california.

103 Jones and Khosmood, *African Californios*.

104 Reader, *To Know my Name*, 5.

his time carrying the express mail from the City of Monterey to Nipomo, in modern San Luis Obispo County, California.[105]

Despite early visitors and the start of the Gold Rush, the County recorded no African Americans in the 1850 federal or 1852 state census efforts.[106] While the 1850 census attempted enumeration of races in the United States, including Black and mixed-race peoples, because California was admitted as a free state to the United States under the Compromise of 1850, the state's new census counted only free Black people. Given this absence of data, coupled with the fear and uncertainty encouraged by the Fugitive Slave Act, the possibility that this census data omits African Americans and/or African-descended people settled in California is entirely plausible.

A few short years later, the draw of the gold discovered in California brought African Americans to the County. Unlike other groups that arrived in California during the Gold Rush that were predominately represented by single young men, many African Americans came in family groups on their journey out west.[107] Early on they settled in the young towns of Santa Cruz (established 1848, incorporated 1866) and Watsonville (established 1852, incorporated 1868) but later settled and worked agricultural properties in the Santa Cruz Mountains and the Pajaro Valley in the County. Due to the realities of family separation for enslaved people in the United States, there were also often unattached black women who traveled with these groups.[108]

The first wave of African American pioneers who arrived in the County during the 1850s laid the groundwork for a vibrant and thriving Black community, predominately in the Pajaro Valley. These first notable arrivals included Daniel Rodgers, Jim Brodis, Dave Boffman, Robert Johnson, and London Nelson.

- Daniel "Dan" Rodgers arrived enslaved in the County with his American enslaver in 1849 before returning to Arkansas in 1852 and buying his freedom. He later returned to the Pajaro Valley with a wagon train of neighbors in 1860. Dan Rodgers became a fierce advocate of desegregated education for the black population of Watsonville and the Pajaro Valley.[109]
- Jim Brodis escaped from his enslaver while mining for gold on the Yuba River. He fled and arrived in the Pajaro Valley in 1851, later purchasing a farm in the vicinity of Watsonville.[110]
- Dave Boffman bought his freedom from his enslaver while in the California gold fields before relocating to the Santa Cruz Mountains in 1852 to lease a sawmill. He is believed to be the first African American to own property in the County, with ranch holdings located near Rodeo Gulch (between Live Oak and Soquel) and on Vine Hill in the Santa Cruz Mountains.[111]
- Robert Johnson was one of the first neighbors of Daniel Rodgers to settle with his family in the County, arriving in 1853.[112] With the assistance of White American and immigrant neighbors, Johnson purchased property in the East Lake district of the County east of Watsonville, where he lived until his death in 1899.[113]

105 Ibid., 5.
106 United States Census Bureau, *The Seventh Census of the United States: 1850 – California* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1853), https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1850/1850a/1850-census-report-california.pdf.; Reader, *To Know My Name*, 5.
107 Ibid., 3
108 Ibid., 3.
109 Ibid.,9
110 Ibid., 6.
111 Ibid.,7
112 Ibid., 7.
113 *Santa Cruz Surf*. 1899. "Death of a Pioneer," October 17, 1899, 4.

- London "Louden" Nelson bought his freedom from enslavement while in the California gold fields before relocating to Santa Cruz in 1856. Nelson died only a few years later in 1860 and left his entire estate to the fledgling public school in Santa Cruz at a time when it faced imminent closure from a lack of funding.[114]

During the second half of the nineteenth century, the Black population in the region gradually grew, and by 1860, the U.S. Census recorded 32 African American individuals living in the County. The Emancipation Proclamation formally ended the practice of slavery in the United States, was enacted on January 1, 1863. This was followed in 1865 by the end of the Civil War and the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment formally banning the practice of slavery. Between the end of the Civil War and 1870, the Black population in the Pajaro Valley grew due to an influx of newly emancipated African Americans who traveled west from former enslaving states like Arkansas and Tennessee. Many of these new Black settlers to the Pajaro Valley came in the wake of the migration to the area encouraged by Daniel Rodgers's journey west from Arkansas in the 1850s.[115] In 1867, Reverend Adam B. Smith established the Zion Chapel, a branch of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church (AME Zion Church) (no longer extant) in Watsonville, which was the first historically African American congregation in the history of the County.[116]

**Exhibit 16.** Portrait of African American pioneer Daniel Rodgers, date unknown.

**Source:** Provided by Santa Cruz Public Libraries.

Renewed focus on the Fugitive Slave Law in 1858, resulting in part from the Archy Lee fugitive slave case, led to the oppressive law no longer being enforced in California after that time.[117] This shift also prompted a period of activism in the growing Black population in the Pajaro Valley related to civil rights and education. As Black families became more established, the question of whether their children could attend school alongside White children emerged as a central issue within the developing community. Enactment of the 1855 law establishing California's public school system, which provided instruction based solely on a census of White children in each community, meant that non-White children (Black, Asian, and Latino) were excluded from attending school together, despite the system being funded by taxes collected from the entire community.[118] Reflecting state law, the fledgling towns of Watsonville and Santa Cruz established White-only school districts, and Black children in these communities were barred from attending the schools.

After a brief period in 1858 when the children attended together in Watsonville regardless of race, several White families objected, and the schools were once again segregated. Motivated by principles of civil rights and equality that were amplified by abolitionist perspectives from the years leading up to the Civil War, African American residents in the Pajaro Valley, including Daniel Rodgers and Robert Johnson, embarked on a years-long battle to

114 Maragret Koch, *Santa Cruz County: Parade of the Past* (Fresno, California: Valley Publishers, 1973), 85.
115 Reader, *To Know My Name*, 8, 10–11.
116 Paul Tutwiler, *Santa Cruz Spirituality,* 64.
117 Reader, *To Know My Name*, 8.
118 State of California, *The Law Establishing and Regulating Common Schools in the State of California.*

desegregate Watsonville schools beginning in 1861. After failed attempts to desegregate the existing schools, in 1866, Dan Rodgers donated land on East Lake Drive for the development of a school for all children in the area "irrespective of color for the purpose of education."[119] Although Black residents of the Pajaro Valley were rightfully never satisfied with the notion of segregated education, the school, colloquially known as the "*Negro School*" (Exhibit 17), was completed in 1866 and used until 1878. The school employed eight female teachers during its tenure. Black parents continued to push for desegregation during this time, culminating in a boycott of the school by the Black community in 1878. Encouraged by the ratification of the Fourteenth Amendment in 1868, which affirmed the civil rights and equal protection of emancipated African Americans in the United States, and the Fifteenth Amendment in 1870 guaranteeing voting rights for African Americans, community leader Robert Johnson filed a civil suit in 1878 suggesting that segregation of the schools was a violation of Black citizens' rights as taxpayers. The courts ruled in favor of Robert Johnson, and segregation in Pajaro Valley schools officially ended.[120]

**Exhibit 17.** Photograph of the former "*Negro School*" once located at 507 East Lake Avenue in Watsonville, circa 1960–1970s. The building was demolished following the 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake.

**Source:** Courtesy of the Watsonville Public Library, Shades of Watsonville Series. Creator: Easter Carrillo Palacios.

119 Daniel Rodgers, as quoted in Reader, *To Know My Name*, 11.
120 Reader, *To Know My Name*, 8–14.

The relatively smaller size of the Black population in Santa Cruz appears to have offered a modest advantage to the Black community there, whose children were permitted to attend school alongside White children beginning in 1869. Notably, the trustees of Santa Cruz City Schools ignored the mandate of a state bill introduced by the State Superintendent of Schools, O.P. Fitzgerald, banning Black, Asian, and Native American children from California schools, allowing Santa Cruz's three Black students to continue classes alongside their White peers. In 1880, Joseph Smallwood Francis, son of Philadelphia-born abolitionist Robert Colman Francis, who had arrived with his young family in Santa Cruz in 1868, became the first African American to graduate from a nonsegregated high school in the state of California. He began attending the University of California, Berkeley, in 1882 and was joined the following year by John "Johnnie" Lincoln Derrick, grandson of Daniel Rodgers, after Derrick graduated with high school accreditation from the Watsonville school.[121]

While the number of African Americans living in the County remained virtually unchanged between 1880 (63 residents) and 1890 (62 residents), several early Black residents of the Pajaro Valley relocated northward to the vicinity of Santa Cruz during this period, setting the stage for the Black population growth in the northern part of the County in the early twentieth century. One such man was Albert Logan, who arrived in the Pajaro Valley from Arkansas as a child around 1865 with the Daniel Rodgers group and attended the segregated school for Black children in Pajaro Valley.[122] He relocated to Santa Cruz in 1887, after which he worked as a cook in various restaurants, hotels, and construction labor camps throughout the County. He was also the long-standing caterer for the Banjo Club's annual assembly. He went on to purchase property along Branciforte Drive in Santa Cruz where he and his wife, Mary Logan (née Dimond), capitalized on the booming tourism industry and converted their home into a boarding house in 1896.[123] [124] The Logans' boarding house became an important gathering place in the Santa Cruz Black community. In her comprehensive and groundbreaking 1919 work The Negro Trail-Blazers of California, Delilah L. Beasley includes a brief description of the County, where she highlights Mary Logan, noting that she "*owns and keeps a hotel for colored tourists which is always filled during and out of season*."[125] Mary Logan continued to run the boarding house following her husband's death in 1922 until her death in 1938, at which time the property was deeded to Edward "Ed" and Inez Smith, who continued to operate the property as a boarding house for Black tourists visiting Santa Cruz. [126]

121 Reader, *To Know My Name*, 12–14
122 *The Pajaronian* (Watsonville, California), "Watsonville and Vicinity," April 21, 1870, 3.
123 *Santa Cruz Surf* (Santa Cruz, California), "Logan-Dimond," April 13, 1893, 5.
124 Reader, *To Know My Name*, 16.
125 Beasley, *The Negro Trail-Blazers of California*, 150.
126 *Santa Cruz Evening News*, "Real Estate Transfers," December 27, 1938, 6.

**Exhibit 18.** Portrait and description of Mary Logan, wife of Albert Logan, circa 1919.


**Source:** Delilah L. Beasley, *The Negro Trail-Blazers of California* (Los Angeles: Times Mirror Printing and Binding House, 1919), https://archive.org/details/negrotrailblazer0000beas_o5c3.

The Logans' story is a common one for the first- and second-generation descendants of the Black families that initially settled in the Pajaro Valley. Around the turn of the twentieth century, many Black residents left the Pajaro Valley in search of greater opportunity, resettling in places like Santa Cruz, Oakland, and San Francisco. Their migration gradually diminished the once-thriving Black community in the valley.

During the 1890s, Santa Cruz saw an influx of Black families seeking opportunities, including the family of Ida. B Wells. Wells was already a nationally renowned author and civil rights activist when she moved to Santa Cruz around 1892 with her sister, Anna, and her Uncle William and Aunt Fanny Tipton.[127] Wells, later Wells-Barnett, went on to be a fierce advocate of civil rights and women's rights, and is one of the original organizers of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), founded on February 12, 1909, the centennial of President Lincoln's birth.[128]

In 1900, there were 81 Black residents counted in the County.[129] By this time, despite the ratification of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, segregation and discrimination were overtly present in many facets of life in the County. This reality became increasingly pronounced in the first decades of the twentieth century. Owing to entrenched racism and prejudice, Black residents were largely restricted to employment as laborers in the

127 Reader, *To Know My Name*, 15–17.
128 NAACP, "Our History," accessed August 16, 2025. https://naacp.org/about/our-history.
129 Reader, *To Know My Name*, 17.

hospitality and service industries. Even leisure, entertainment, and worship were largely segregated. Despite early County baseball teams in the 1870s and 1880s including Black players, by 1900, the "*color line*" preventing African Americans from playing in professional baseball leagues was strictly enforced, from the professional level down to the local club level.[130] The first and only Black baseball team in the County was the "*Santa Cruz Colored Giants*," who played games against all-White teams between 1907 and 1908. The team members included local Black business owners, cooks, and janitors, many of whom were also members of the Santa Cruz branch of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church.[131] The popularity of the church within the Black community in the County, as reflected in the lineup of the Giants*,* is also evident in its early and sustained presence in the Pajaro Valley, beginning in 1867. By 1890, the U.S. Religious Census recorded that 50 of the County's 62 Black residents were members of the Watsonville Zion Chapel. As the Black population gradually shifted northward, a new branch was established in Santa Cruz in 1903 to serve the population there.[132]

Racism built precipitously in Santa Cruz leading up to and in the years following World War I. Phil Reader succinctly summaries this noteworthy shift in the attitude of the larger population toward Black residents in the County, stating,

> Bigotry became a policy in many quarters as blacks were banned or discriminated against at local hotels, roadhouses and Inns. Negro vacationers with their tourist dollars were unwelcome visitors at many recreational spots in the county. Finding housing and jobs became an impossible task, so many Negro families left the area in anger and discouragement. Even churches, these supposed moral pillars of the community, now refused to accept black parishioners.[133]

Outside of the normal pressure of life in the County in the 1910s and 1920s, including economic downturn, a competitive job market, and the seasonal nature of the County's main industries (agriculture and tourism), the entrance of the United States into World War I stoked a growing tension more generally toward perceived "others," which contributed to a sharp rise in discrimination against the Black population more widely. Although African American men from Santa Cruz and elsewhere had served during World War I alongside White servicemen, the social climate was one of fear and isolationism. While there is no evidence of Ku Klux Klan activity in the period after the Civil War in the County, a Santa Cruz Ku Klux Klavern was founded in 1924.[134] [135] [136] A Watsonville Klavern was founded in 1928. The Black population of the County dropped to 64 residents in 1930, then plunged to only 18 by 1940. Despite this, and in line with a national trend of record numbers of African American men enlisting for the armed services, many of the remaining young Black men in the County joined the military after the United Sates entered World War II in 1941.[137]

While enroute to their initial post in Germany, the 54th Coast Artillery, an all–African American unit, was redirected to be stationed along the coast in Santa Cruz in April 1942 following the attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941

130 Elysha Paluszek et al., *African Americans in California, 1850–1974: National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form*, Architectural Resources Group and Historic Resources Group, Draft 1, prepared for the National Park Service, 2026, 164.
131 Geoffrey Dunn, "'Black and Tan Baseball' in Santa Cruz: An Unknown History," *Santa Cruz County History Journal Number 8: Do You Know My Name?* (The Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History: Santa Cruz, 2016., 107–122), 110–115.
132 Tutwiler, *Santa Cruz Spirituality*, 64.
133 Reader, *To Know My Name*, 18.
134 Reader, *To Know My Name*, 18–19.
135 *Santa Cruz Sentinel,* "Beautiful Girl Contestants in First Public Appearance," June 6, 1924, 1, 8.
136 *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, "Klan Commends Sheriffs Action," July 25, 1924, 4.
137 Reader, *To Know My Name*, 19.

and other suspicious activity along California's coastline in the aftermath.[138] The unit was stationed at present-day Lighthouse Park.[139] Despite earlier records of this period suggesting the heightened discrimination toward Black people was somehow lessened after the 54th Coast Artillery was stationed in Santa Cruz, experiences of Black service members tell a different story. In a 2009 interview commemorating his service in Santa Cruz as part of the 54th Coast Artillery, William Jackson Sr. recalled that "Black service members were treated as second class citizens" and noted that segregation was present in all aspects of society, both on and off base.[140] African American servicemen were not permitted to the United Service Organizations (USO) center alongside White servicemen, so the Smiths converted their boarding house on South Branciforte Avenue into a USO center for Black servicemen stationed in Santa Cruz, Camp McQuaide on San Andreas Road south of La Selva Beach, and Fort Ord near Monterey.[141]

Many African American service members remained in California after the end of World War II, resulting in the considerable growth of the Black population in California, from 124,000 residents in 1940 to over 400,000 residents by 1950.[142] The Black population of the greater San Francisco Bay Area increased three-fold between 1940 an 1944 as a result of an influx of African American servicemen from across the United States who were stationed in the largest wartime shipyards on the West Coast.[143] A number of African American servicemen from the 54th Coast Artillery and other units returned to the County with their families following the end of World War II. The Black population in the County rose to 106 as servicemen relocated their wives and families or started a family for the first time.[144] Unfortunately, ingrained discriminatory practices made it very difficult for African American men and women to find homes and employment in the County, which limited their upward mobility significantly. Although the Serviceman's Readjustment Act of 1944, known as the GI Bill, purportedly afforded veterans a mortgage loan backed by the Veterans Administration, African American veterans around the country and in the County found that they were unable to secure a loan due to systematic discrimination. This systematic discrimination came in the form of racial covenants, unofficial or official racial zoning, redlining, and federal mortgage insurance policies that blatantly discriminated on the basis of race and religion.[145] William Jackson Sr. settled in the County following his discharge in 1946 but expressed frustration that he was excluded from home ownership in Santa Cruz due to the restrictive racial covenants. After difficulty securing a job at the Santa Cruz Post Office although he passed all the exams and was No. 2 on the list, Jackson Sr. was overlooked for multiple other open positions for which he was qualified before taking a similar job for the San Francisco Post Office in the 1950s.[146]

Activism efforts resisting prejudice and inequal treatment grew alongside the Black population in Santa Cruz. The Santa Cruz branch of the NAACP was chartered in 1949 with between 50 and 100 members.[147] The organization advocated for citizens of the County in circumstances of racial injustice and inequity, including in instances of continued resistance to the integration of Black families into new and developing areas of the County. The resistance to integrated neighborhoods culminated in incidents like the 1941 arson of the home of Reverend William Brent, pastor of the Missionary Baptist Church in Santa Cruz.[148] The Brent home, located on Winkle Avenue

138 KMVT, "The Better Part: 54th Coast Artillery Regiment." Interview with William Jackson Jr. YouTube video, 2009, posted May 14, 2011. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=46ZQQ00-agk.
139 Reader, *To Know My Name*, 19.
140 KMVT, "The Better Part."
141 Reader, *To Know My Name*, 19.
142 Kreta Graves-Gray, *History of the Santa Cruz N.A.A.C.P*, 1979.
143 Paluszek et al., *African Americans in California, 1850–1974*, 33.
144 Reader, *To Know My Name*, 20.
145 Louis Lee Woods II, "Almost 'No Negro Veteran … Could Get a Loan': African Americans, the GI Bill, and the NAACP Campaign Against Residential Segregation, 1917–1960," *The Journal of African American History* 98, no. 3 (Summer 2013): 392, 396.
146 KMVT, "The Better Part."
147 Gray, *History of the Santa Cruz N.A.A.C.P*.
148 Frank Perry, *Lighthouse Point: Illuminating Santa Cruz*. (Santa Cruz: Otter B. Books, 2002), 118.

in the Live Oak area, was deliberately set ablaze the night before Reverend Brent and his family were scheduled to move in. While the crime was never officially solved, neighbors were widely suspected of committing the act, reportedly motivated by a desire to maintain a racially exclusive community. Despite efforts by the NAACP and other organizations to identify those responsible, no one was ever charged.[149]

Despite this continued tension, the Black population grew to its largest numbers by far in the recorded history of the County, to over 500 residents in 1960 and over 1,000 residents by 1970. Young Black adults pushed for renewed activism related to fair housing laws and advocated for low-income housing in the County and additional representation in government and education. The Santa Cruz NAACP was very active during this period and provided the growing Black population opportunities to connect. Community efforts led to the commemoration of early African Americans who contributed to the success of the County, including London Nelson with the Louden Nelson Community Center. In 1972 there was also a push for the creation of a new college at UCSC, focused on multiculturalism and "committed to equality and freedom from oppression and to providing the highest quality education to students from diverse backgrounds."[150]

From early efforts to build a community in the agricultural areas of the Pajaro Valley and resistance to discriminatory practices, to patriotic service in the military during both World War I and World War II, to civic contributions, African Americans have unquestionably contributed to shaping the social, economic, and cultural fabric of the County. Today, there are over 3,000 African American residents in the County. As the County continues to evolve, it is vital to ensure that the legacy and lived experiences of its African American residents are honored through meaningful inclusion and valued contributions. Recognizing the enduring impact of the Black community's activism, cultural heritage, and civic engagement is essential to building a more equitable and representative future.

## 2.5.2 Chinese

Chinese migrants arrived in the County following the Gold Rush. These individuals contributed broadly to the success of agriculture in the Pajaro Valley and commercial fishing in the coastal areas of the county but also left their mark on some of the County's large manufacturing efforts and infrastructure projects, including the construction of multiple railroads.

In alignment with contemporary scholarly standards and to respectfully acknowledge racial identity and historical context, this study uses the terms "Chinese" and "Chinese American." "Chinese" typically refers to individuals born in China, especially those who migrated or were living in the United States during periods where naturalization for Chinese individuals was heavily restricted or outlawed. In contrast, "Chinese American" refers to individuals of Chinese descent born in the United States or to naturalized citizens who identify with both Chinese heritage and American nationality. Employing these terms with accuracy enhances the clarity of social, legal, and cultural distinctions among individuals and communities in the County throughout various historical eras.

### Background

> Apparitions emerging and then dissolving in the mists on the far edges of the mainstream culture, the Chinese are an integral part of California's historical landscape. Vague, indistinct, nameless, until recently no one noticed that they were the simple answer to many of the state's basic historical

149 Graves-Gray, *History of the Santa Cruz N.A.A.C.P.*

150 UC Santa Cruz, "About Oakes College," last modified October 14, 2020, accessed August 17, 2025. https://oakes.ucsc.edu/about/index.html.

> questions: Who built the railroads? Who started the commercial fishing industry? Who cleaned the rooms in all the hotels? Who cooked the food for all the lumbermen? Who helped diversify California's agriculture? Quietly and anonymously, Chinese muscle built California.[151]

Eighteenth-century French scholar of Sinology (the study of Chinese language, history, and culture) Joseph de Guignes was convinced that the account of a mystical land called "Fu-Sang" given by Buddhist monk Hui-Shen in 499 on his return to China after a long sea voyage was in reality a description of the northern California coast.[152] Although it is not possible to know if Hui-Shen's story was the first historical account of a Chinese individual in California, it is thought that Chinese people first established a presence in California alongside Europeans beginning with Spain's explorations of Alta California.[153] Spanish colonization of the Philippines began in 1565, after which Manila became an important Spanish trade hub. China had a long-established trade and migrant labor relationship with the Philippines, and Chinese migrants soon became an integral element of the Spanish maritime economy in Manila. *Naos de China*, or "China Boats," was the name given to the galleons built and partially crewed by the Chinese population of Manila. These galleons carried many Chinese merchants to Mexico, known at the time as *Nueva España* ("New Spain"), as part of the trans-Pacific trade network established by the Spanish between Manila and New Spain. Given the complexity and mutability of racial identity in colonial Spain, some of these merchants took steps to integrate into the society of New Spain and became Spanish citizens. It was in this way that some number of the Spanish who settled the inland areas of Alta California were ethnically Chinese.[154]

The Gold Rush led to California's first major wave of Chinese migration, beginning in 1849 with 325 arrivals. By 1852, over 20,000 Chinese migrants had arrived in California in search of gold in *jin shan*, or "Gold Mountain."[155] These individuals, predominately single men or those who left families behind in China, came from eight districts in Guangdong Province in southeastern China. Chinese laborers were noted as reliable and hardworking, and they saw success in the mines.[156] Despite this, instances of prejudice and discrimination toward the Chinese miners increased during the 1850s. The overt racism was fueled by the rise of White nativism, which gained traction alongside California's admission into the United States in 1850 and the arrival of many foreigners following the discovery of gold in California. State and local laws passed during the 1850s marked the beginning of a wave of legislation targeting foreigners in California, including the Chinese. This was just the beginning of a period where, as historian Sandy Lydon notes in his essay Always on the Outside: Santa Cruz and Its Many Chinatowns, "[The Chinese] lived under more legal restrictions than any immigrant group in the history of California."[157]

After Chinese migrants left the gold fields of northern California during the 1860s, many found work with the Central Pacific Railroad out of Sacramento who were racing to complete the transcontinental railroad. The company began hiring Chinese workers in 1865 to lay its tracks in response to a shortage of White workers, and by 1867, it employed over 12,000 Chinese laborers. The demand for Chinese labor continued steadily until the transcontinental railroad was complete in 1869. Central Pacific Railroad released their workforce, and many of the

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151 Sandy Lydon, "Always on the Outside: Santa Cruz and Its Many Chinatowns," in *Chinatown Dreams, the Life and Photographs of George Lee,* Geoffrey Dunn, ed. (Santa Cruz: Capitola Book Company, 2002), 39.

152 Alexander Statman, "Fusang," *Isis* 107, no. 1 (March 2016): 1, published by The University of Chicago Press on behalf of The History of Science Society, https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/26455416.

153 Flora Chou et al., *Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in California, 1850–1995: Multiple Property Documentation Form,* amended submission. Los Angeles: Page & Turnbull, November 2023. Certified February 6, 2024, by the California State Office of Historic Preservation.

154 Sandy Lydon, *Chinese Gold: The Chinese in the Monterey Bay Region*, anniversary ed. (Capitola, CA: Capitola Book Company, 2008), 16–19.

155 Chou et al., *Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in California*, 23–25.

156 Chou et al., *Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in California*, 23–25.

157 Lydon, "Always on the Outside," 40.

Chinese laborers gravitated toward the Chinese community and economic opportunity in San Francico. Other Chinese migrants pivoted toward other economic opportunities, including fishing, agriculture, service industry roles, and labor building other small railroads and infrastructure projects throughout rural areas of the state. The broad expertise that Chinese migrants brought to California's fledgling economic sectors laid the foundation for the state's historical success—as well as the success of its individual counties.[158]

## Settlement in Santa Cruz County

Chinese settlement in the County is formally recorded beginning in 1850. One 21-year-old Chinese man was noted in the first federal census of the County in 1850, and he resided on Rancho Aptos, the property of Rafael Castro in the vicinity of present-day Aptos.[159] Later, an 1855 deed transferring a portion of Rancho Aptos to Vincente Castro describes an area of property as the *Arroyo del Chino*, or "Ravine of the Chinese."[160] Santa Cruz historian Ernest Otto, who spent time visiting the Chinatown in Santa Cruz as a child, suggests that there was a Chinese fishing village along the Santa Cruz coast during the 1850s. Despite this, only six Chinese residents are recorded in the 1860 federal census.[161] The possibility, therefore, that this census data omits Chinese migrants settled in the County during this period is entirely plausible.

During the mid-1860s, Chinese migrant laborers were employed for the first time in two distinct industries on opposite ends of the County. In 1864, the first significant group of Chinese laborers in the County's history, 12 in all, arrived at the California Powder Works factory, which was situated approximately 1 mile up the San Lorenzo River from Santa Cruz. Although these laborers faced persistent discrimination and intimidation from Santa Cruz residents, they were employed by the California Powder Works Factory for over a decade completing roads and retaining walls, as well as working as coopers.[162] In the early 1870s, the Chinese community at the California Powder Works totaled approximately 35 men, who lived in a camp and were permitted to construct a "Joss House." A Joss House is an anglicized blanket term for Chinese temples. The Joss House at the California Powder works Factory was dedicated to Guan Yu. Temples like this one served as gathering places for the Chinese community in permanent camps and attracted Chinese residents from Santa Cruz during holidays.[163] Despite the relative freedom, increasing hostility from the community led to their dismissal by the company in 1878.[164]

The demand for labor in agricultural and infrastructure projects also brought Chinese residents to the southern part of the county. Wheat was the predominant agricultural product grown in the Pajaro Valley, and Native American labor had served as the main source of agricultural labor in the region up to this time. The Indigenous population experienced a steady decline due to the overwhelming effects of introduced disease and repeated violent encounters with White American and European settler populations. As a result, many grew apprehensive about accepting work, leading to a foreseeable labor shortage for the farmers in the Pajaro Valley. Some of these farmers had been miners with or had worked on the railroad crews alongside Chinese laborers and therefore knew that the Chinese work ethic was famously dependable. In anticipation of the 1866 wheat harvest, farmers in the Pajaro Valley employed Chinese labor contractors based in San Francisco, who fulfilled agreements to supply Chinese agricultural workers for the harvest. The effort was successful, and the Chinese laborers were contracted in

158 Chou et al., *Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in California*, 24.
159 Lydon, *Chinese Gold*, 20.
160 Clark, *Santa Cruz County Place Names,* 10–11.
161 United States Census Office, *Census Reports Volume I: Statistics of the Population of the United States at the Tenth Census*, June 1, 1880 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1883), 382, https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1880/vol-01-population/1880_v1-13.pdf.
162 Lydon, *Chinese Gold*, 225–227.
163 Koch, *Santa Cruz County Parade of the Past*, 215.
164 Lydon, *Chinese Gold*, 227.

subsequent years and remained an important part of the agricultural landscape in the Pajaro Valley until the turn of the century.[165] In 1870, the federal census recorded 156 Chinese residents in the County; 28 of these were Chinese farm laborers in the vicinity of the Pajaro Valley. [166] [167] The Chinese migrant workers who arrived to farm the Pajaro Valley demonstrated immense aptitude for farming and helped to quickly diversify area crops. They had knowledge about how to harvest and monetize wild crops like mustard but also the patience to cultivate high-maintenance crops like hops, which required careful trellising and kiln drying.[168]

The completion of three railroad connections to the City of Santa Cruz in the mid-1870s drove the young fishing and agriculture sectors in the County forward rapidly. The tracks for the Santa Cruz and Felton Railroad, which connected Santa Cruz to Felton, were completed in 1875. This was followed by the completion of the Santa Cruz Railroad between Santa Cruz and Pajaro, Monterey County in 1876, and of the South Pacific Coast Railway linking Santa Cruz to San Jose in 1880.[169] Chinese laborers, many of whom contributed to the construction of the transcontinental railroad, were responsible for laying the majority of tracks for railroad lines throughout the County. During the construction of Wrights Tunnel along the South Pacific Coast Railway line, 36 Chinese workers lost their lives in two separate explosions.[170]

Chinese fishing settlements materialized along the coast near the Capitola and Soquel stations on the new Santa Cruz Railroad (Exhibit 19). The railroad's proximity to the ocean in this area meant the Chinese fishermen could market their fresh catch beyond the local community. It also made it worthwhile to dry fish and seafood for shipment to more-distant markets. In 1880, 29 Chinese fishermen were recorded in the County; this was the year that anti-Chinese measures from the 1879 California Constitution, known as "The Chinese Must Go" provisions, took effect. These provisions aimed to prohibit public entities and corporations from employing Chinese laborers, encouraged local governments to restrict Chinese residency and economic activity, and laid the groundwork for restrictive regulations targeting Chinese economic independence and wealth production. Parts of these provisions, including the one that helped ban Chinese fishermen from fishing in Monterey Bay in 1879, were eventually overturned. Despite the repeal, this marked the beginning of the end of the 10-year period of commercial fishing by Chinese migrant fishermen. Ostracized along the Santa Cruz coastline, they continued to move south to avoid hostility from growing communities. Their final camp, in 1887, was established at the mouth of the Pajaro River.[171]

165 Lydon, *Chinese Gold*, 63–64.
166 United States Census Office, *Census Reports Volume I*, 382.
167 Linda L. Ivey, "Ethnicity in the Land: Lost Stories in California Architecture," *Agricultural History* 81, no. 1 (Winter 2007): 98–124.
168 Lydon, *Chinese Gold*, 66–67.
169 Clark, *Santa Cruz County Place Names*, 298, 309, 332.
170 Lydon, *Chinese Gold*, 96–99.
171 Lydon, *Chinese Gold*, 48–51, 53.

**Exhibit 19.** Photograph showing the Chinese fishing settlement outside of Capitola, circa 1880s.

**Source:** Courtesy of the Santa Cruz Museum of Art and History.

Concurrent with the development of the Santa Cruz Railroad, the California Sugar Beet Company established a plant in Soquel in 1874 and harvested their first crop of sugar beets, using Chinese labor, in 1876. The crop proved lucrative, and the acreage of sugar beets planted for the company continued to expand southward, due largely to the dedicated efforts of Chinese farmers. Despite mounting criticisms that Chinese labor was taking White American jobs, Euro-American farmers recognized and defended the value of Chinese migrant workers to some extent. In response to the insinuation that the California Sugar Beet Company only hired Chinese laborers despite the current economic depression, an area farmer noted in 1876 that because of the grueling nature of the work to cultivate and process sugar beets, "It would be impossible to obtain white labor to do this work."[172] Despite their success, the company failed to compete with the Hawaiian sugar cane industry, and shuttered it doors in 1879. By 1880, there were 526 Chinese residents recorded in the County, many in search of work. They moved seamlessly into cultivation of other crops as laborers, but also through leases and sharecrop arrangements. Chinese migrant

[172] As quoted in Lydon, *Chinese Gold*, 74.

farmers further ingratiated themselves to area farmers by being paid by piece/tonnage rather than by daily wage.[173] Chinese laborers were routinely exploited and paid less than their White workmates.[174]

Chinese workers occupied a paradoxical position in the economy of the County: they were actively recruited and relied upon for essential labor yet simultaneously subjected to social resentment and abuse for performing work that others refused to do. The "reclamation leases" from this period are perhaps the best example of this principle at work. Chinese migrant farmers assisted in the development and clearing of new reclaimed farmland in the marsh areas west of Watsonville in exchange for a short-term leases to farm the land and turn a profit. Chinese farmers cultivated a variety of crops on their reclaimed parcels, but berries—particularly raspberries, blackberries, and later strawberries—emerged as some of the most frequently planted. These leases were rarely renewed, especially when White farmers realized they could pick up farming the reclaimed land where the Chinese migrants had left off.[175] In this way Chinese farmers contributed broadly and directly to the reclamation of the fertile alluvial land that helped make Pajaro Valley agriculture successful, but they were rarely permitted to own this land or to continue to profit from their efforts to cultivate it. Overall, it was very difficult for Chinese migrants to naturalize or purchase property, but by the 1880s mounting restrictions targeting Chinese people made it impossible.

The following is a brief overview of the anti-Chinese legislation at the federal and state level that had severe ramifications for the Chinese community living in California and the County. These restrictions led to a sharp decline in the number of Chinese people migrating to California and a gradual aging of Chinese individuals, who were not replaced by younger immigrants.

- Page Act (1875) – This federal law prevented the entry of laborers and prostitutes from China, Japan, and any other country perceived as Asian.[176]
- Chinese Exclusion Act (1882) – This first-of-its-kind federal law suspended the immigration of Chinese laborers, both skilled and unskilled, for 10 years and prevented their naturalization. There were exemptions for Chinese merchants, students, teachers, diplomats, and travelers. Chinese laborers already residing in the United States could leave and reenter the country if they carried certificates identifying their exempt status, though reentry was often difficult.[177]
- Scott Act (1888) – This act prohibited Chinese laborers who had left the United States from returning, even if they held valid reentry certificates. This effectively stranded many Chinese individuals abroad and nullified prior guarantees of return.[178]
- Geary Act (1892) – This law extended the Chinese Exclusion Act for another 10 years and required all Chinese residents in the United States to carry a certificate of residence. Failure to comply could result in arrest, detention, and deportation. Legal challenges to the act were unsuccessful.[179]
- Expatriation Act (1907) – Among other provisions, this act declared that American women who married noncitizens would lose their citizenship. They could regain it only if their husbands later naturalized. This restriction did not apply to American men who married noncitizens.[180]

173 Lydon, *Chinese Gold*, 70—74, 76.
174 Chou et al., *Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in California*, 25.
175 Lydon, *Chinese Gold*, 76–77.
176 Chou et al., *Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in California*, 29
177 National Archives, "Chinese Exclusion Act (1882)," accessed August 20, 2025, https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/chinese-exclusion-act.
178 Kelly Simpson, "Exclusionary Laws and the Chinese-American Experience," PBS SoCal, May 9, 2012, https://www.pbssocal.org/history-society/exclusionary-laws-and-the-chinese-american-experience.
179 "Geary Act (1892)," Immigration History, University of Texas, https://immigrationhistory.org/item/geary-act/.
180 Simpson, "Exclusionary Laws and the Chinese-American Experience."

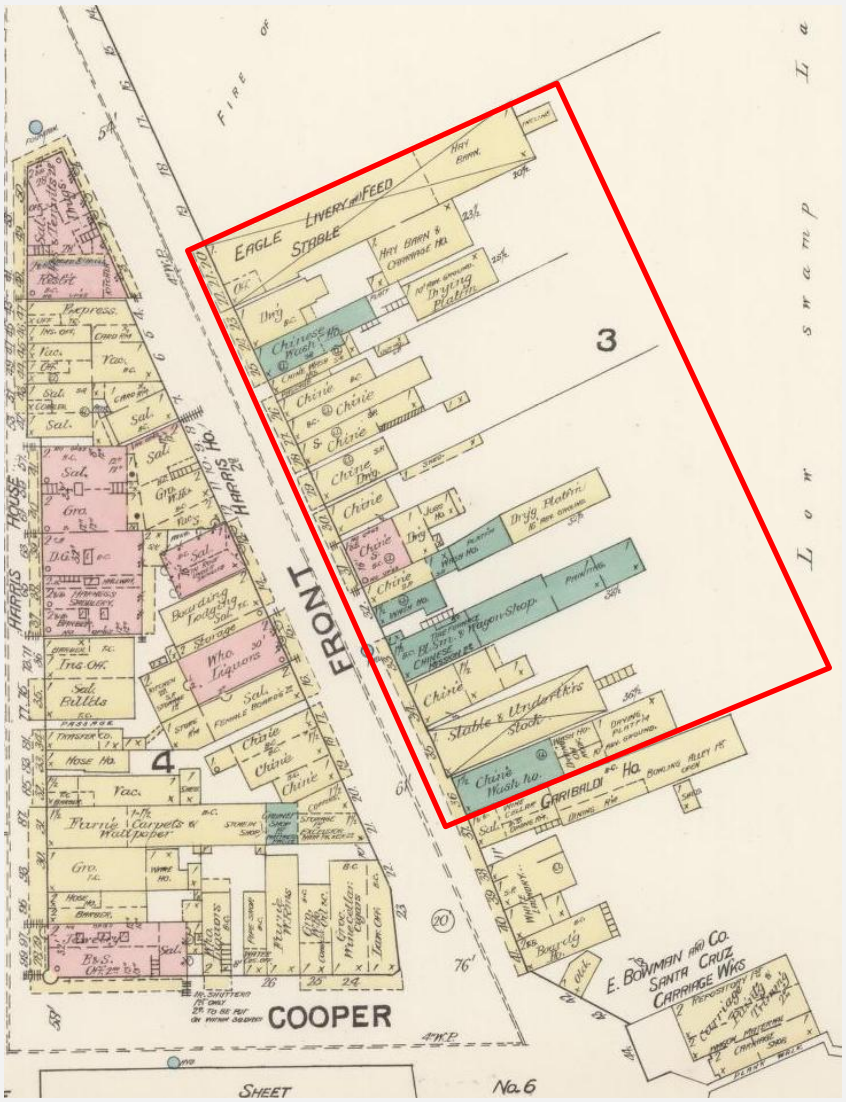
- California Alien Land Law (1913) – This state law prohibited immigrants who were ineligible for citizenship, including Chinese immigrants, from owning land or leasing it long term. Because of this, Asian immigrant communities faced significant, ongoing struggles when it came to making economic progress.[181]
- Immigration Act (1924) – Also known as the Johnson-Reed Act, this federal law established national origin quotas and effectively banned immigration from Asia. It prevented Chinese wives of American-born Chinese men from entering the United States, reinforcing family separation and exclusion.[182] [183]

Upon arriving in California, Chinese migrants commonly formed informal districts referred to as Chinatowns. These communities generally formed in larger cities or towns with significant Chinese populations, providing essential services and supporting the community for the duration of a project or a harvest season.[184] Sandy Lydon suggests that "Chinatowns did not have a life of their own; they reflected the economic and social climate of the communities in which they were located."[185] Outside of a limited range of businesses serving the local White community, such as laundries, businesses and entertainment in these areas mainly targeted the predominately male migrant Chinese population, featuring brothels, opium dens, and gambling halls. This, combined with local law enforcement's disregard for illegal activity in these areas, contributed to Chinatowns acquiring a reputation for unlawful behavior. The restrictive laws targeting Chinese residents in California only caused these informal areas to grow and thrive as Chinese residents found safety and familiarity in the insular qualities of these communities.[186]

The city of Santa Cruz's earliest Chinatown developed around 1862 along Pacific Street (then Willow Street) as a sanctuary for the small number of Chinese laborers in the city, who were predominately employed in domestic service—laundries, cooking, housekeeping, and food service. Santa Cruz's Chinatown was relocated three times before its final site was demolished in 1955 due to flood damage. The locations included Pacific Avenue Chinatown (approximately 1862–1872), Front Street Chinatown (1872–1894, Exhibit 20), Blackburn's Chinatown (1894–1905 Exhibit 21), and Birkenseer's Chinatown (1905–1955).[187]

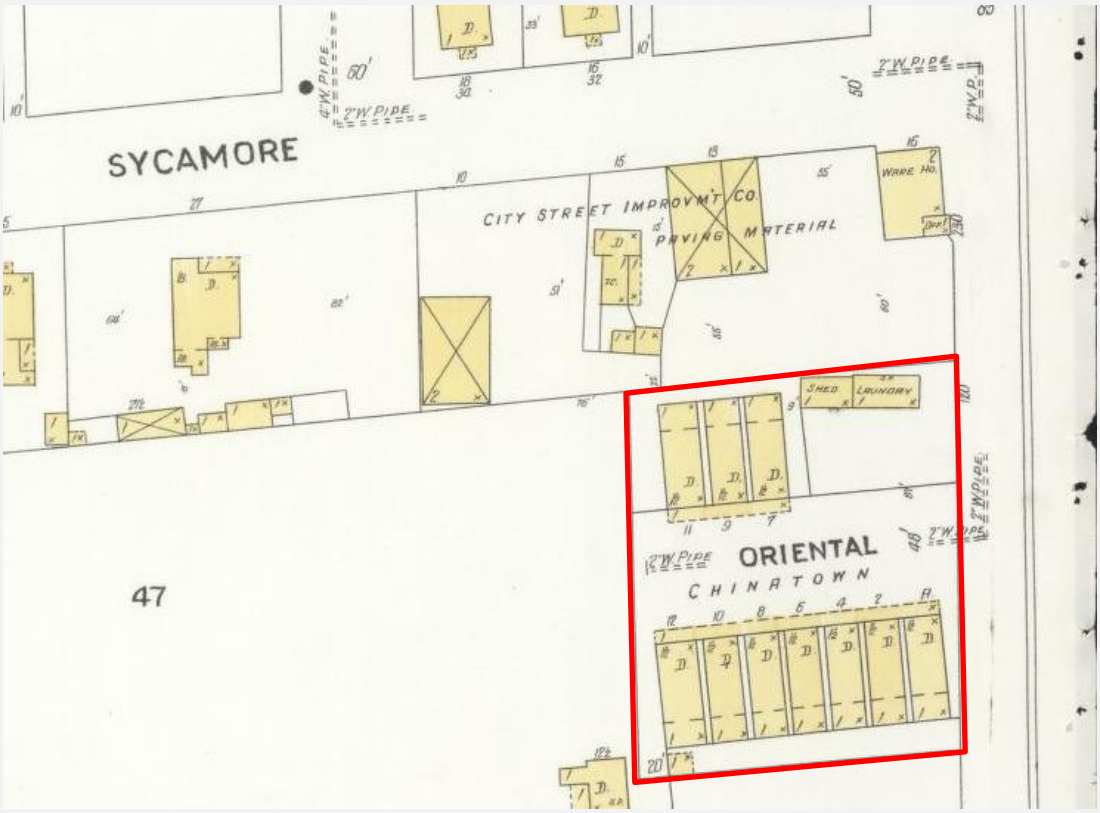
181 Ibid.
182 Office of the Historian, "The Immigration Act of 1924 (The Johnson-Reed Act)," *Milestones in the History of U.S. Foreign Relations*, U.S. Department of State, accessed August 10, 2025, https://history.state.gov/milestones/1921-1936/immigration-act.
183 National Archives, "Chinese Exclusion Act (1882)".
184 Chou et al., *Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in California*, 26–27.
185 Lydon, *Chinese Gold*, 230.
186 Chou et al., *Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in California*, 28.
187 Lydon, *Chinese Gold*, 223, 227–29.

**Exhibit 20.** Approximate location of Front Street Chinatown, 1888, Santa Cruz.




**Source:** Sanborn Map Company, "Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz County, California," May 1888, Sheet 4. https://www.loc.gov/item/sanborn00833_002/.

**Exhibit 21.** Blackburn's Chinatown on Chestnut Street, 1905, Santa Cruz (red).

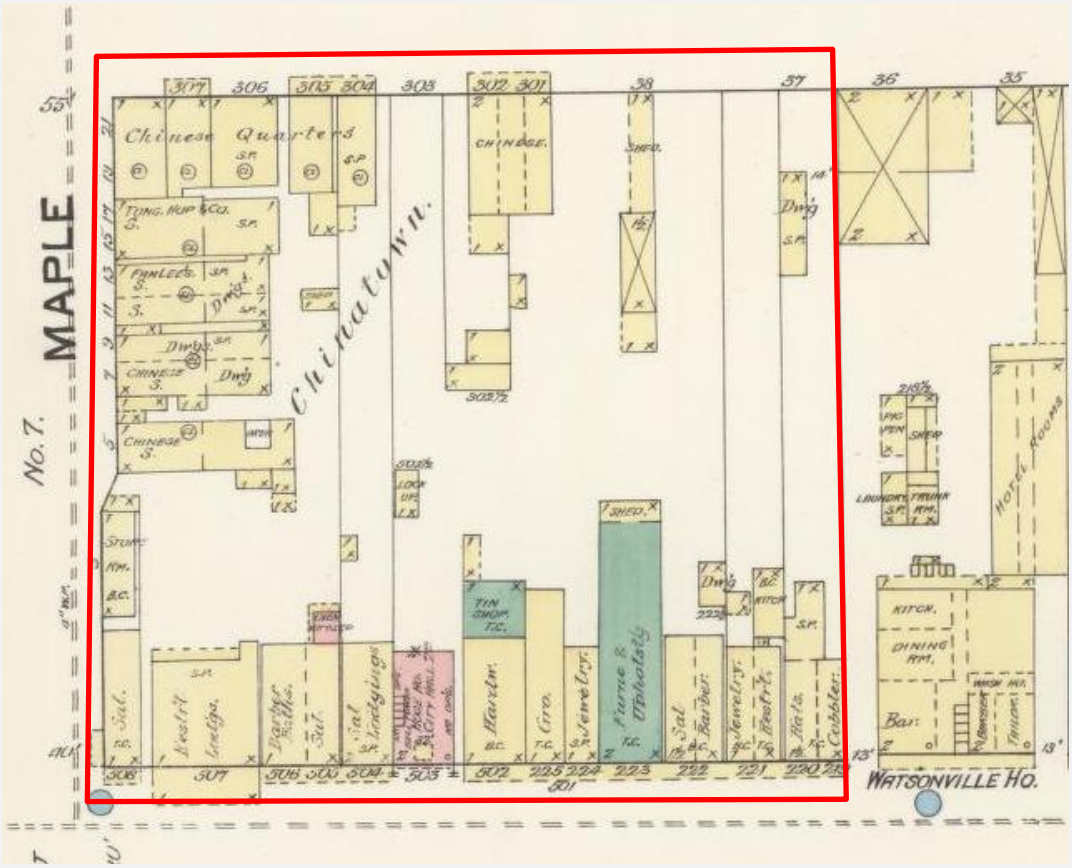



**Source:** Sanborn Map Company, "Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz County, California," 1905, Sheet 21. https://www.loc.gov/item/sanborn00833_004/.

Watsonville was home to the Maple/Union Chinatown (Exhibit 22) from circa 1865 to 1888, which supported a largely seasonal population of agricultural workers. The announcement in 1888 that Claus Spreckels, proprietor of the Western Beet Sugar Factory, intended to establish a new facility in Watsonville generated concerns among residents. Specifically, there were apprehensions that the resulting demand for Chinese laborers—understood to be an essential facet of sugar beet cultivation based on prior experience with the California Sugar Beet Company—could lead to significant growth of the Chinatown population. The expansion of the current Maple/Uniontown Chinatown in such a central, visible location concerned the Watsonville community. Plans were made in consultation with the Chinese community to move to a new site in the town of Pajaro, on the south side of the Pajaro River in Monterey County. The move to the new Chinatown, dubbed Brooklyn, provided the space and freedom the Chinese residents desired to thrive, while many continued to work in the County.[188]

[188] Lydon, *Chinese Gold*, 189–191.

**Exhibit 22.** Maple/Union Chinatown in 1888, Watsonville (red).




**Source:** Sanborn Map Company, "Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from Watsonville, Santa Cruz County, California," Sheet 2, February 1888, https://www.loc.gov/item/sanborn00921_002/.

Despite hostility from anti-Chinese and anti-immigrant laws, Chinatowns flourished. Residents came to rely on strong family networks, benevolent associations like the Chee Kong Tong (called the Chinese Freemasons) (Exhibit 23), and larger statewide umbrella organizations that consolidated local associations to provide secure loans and financially help the elderly and sick. These groups also defended civil and legal rights and covered the expenses of culturally appropriate burial arrangements, including the exhumation and repatriation of the remains of deceased Chinese individuals who had died abroad to the care of their families.[189]

[189] Lydon, *Chinese Gold*, 131–132 .

**Exhibit 23.** Chee Kong Tong Chinese Freemasons Joss House being demolished, January 1950.

**Source:** Courtesy of the University of California, Santa Cruz Special Collections, Santa Cruz County historic photograph collection.

In addition to the houses of worship—Joss Houses—built by the Confucianist/Taoist Chinese residents in these areas, groups of Christian missionaries known as Christian Endeavor Societies founded churches in established Chinatowns throughout the state and dedicated efforts to assist Chinese women who were subject to forced prostitution. Some of these women married and contributed to the establishment of the earliest substantial generation of Chinese American children born in the United States.[190] The Santa Cruz Congregational Chinese Mission was founded in 1881, and it formed a Christian Endeavor Society by 1892. By 1897, the mission had established its own church in Blackburn's Chinatown in Santa Cruz that included 29 Chinese members.[191]

By the turn of the century, the first generation of Chinese Americans began to appear in greater numbers and pursued independent businesses beyond traditional roles held by earlier arrivals from 1850 to the 1870s. As anti-Chinese laws sharply reduced the number of available Chinese laborers in the County, the industries once primarily worked by Chinese migrants in the Pajaro Valley were gradually filled by Japanese, Filipino, and Croatian workers who replaced them. As the apple industry of Pajaro Valley was cultivated by the Croatian immigrant population, the Chinese community in the Pajaro Valley began producing dried apples. Fruit dehydration was initially practiced on

190 Chou et al., *Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in California*, 30.
191 Tutwiler, *Santa Cruz Spirituality*, 346.

a limited scale by early Croatian enterprises; however, the industry achieved significant progress when Chinese individuals took over its operations in the early 1900s.[192] In 1910, six of the seven driers operating in Watsonville were Chinese owned.[193] The dried fruit industry remained popular throughout the 1940s.[194]

The impact of several decades of anti-Chinese legislation directed at restricting Chinese immigration became apparent during the early twentieth century—the population declined significantly as the Chinese community aged and was not replenished by new immigrants. Between 1910 and 1940, only 100,000 Chinese nationals entered the United States.[195] In 1890, the County recorded 785 Chinese residents. By 1910, this number had dropped to only 184.[196] Although their representation in the community was nowhere near what it had been and despite education, Chinese Americans continued to experience discrimination, which restricted employment opportunities. As a result, small businesses became a practical path for many Chinese Americans in the County, particularly among second and subsequent generations who encountered difficulties securing jobs and upward mobility aligned with their educational backgrounds.[197]

The United States's entrance into World War II in 1941 after the attack on Pearl Harbor made an immediate ally of the Republic of China, who had been at war with the Empire of Japan since 1937. As the American attitude toward Japanese Americans shifted suddenly when Japan became a new enemy, the attitude toward Chinese Americans also became abruptly more favorable. Chinese Americans, especially second- and third-generation Chinese Americans, joined the military and took on jobs supporting the war effort.[198]

The favorable attitude toward the Chinese nation in general during this period led to the repeal of the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act in 1943, allowing long-time Chinese residents to finally naturalize. This was followed by the War Brides Act of 1945, which allowed thousands of Chinese wives to arrive and finally balance what had been a predominantly male population for nearly 100 years across the state.[199] Despite this progress, Chinese Americans were often subjected to the same systematic discrimination that African Americans experienced in the postwar period, in the form of racial covenants, unofficial or official racial zoning, redlining, and federal mortgage insurance policies that blatantly discriminated on the basis of race and religion.[200] The Chinese population in the County grew only moderately during the postWorld War II period, from 363 residents in 1940 to 402 residents by 1970. The 1965 Immigration Act abolished the national origin quotas established by the 1924 Immigration Act, thereby facilitating increased immigration from Asia, including China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, to the United States. President Richard Nixon's 1972 visit to China contributed to the normalization of diplomatic relations with China. Overall, this enabled greater Chinese immigration to California during a period marked by expanding opportunities for Chinese Americans, who were finally able to access equal education and employment opportunities. Santa Cruz saw its Chinese population rise during this period, surpassing its 1890s record high of 785, to 830 by 1980.[201]

Chinese Americans have made significant contributions to the cultural and historical development of the County, encompassing early settlement, labor efforts, and the maintenance of community identity through the

192 Ivey, "Ethnicity in the Land," 104–105.
193 Betty Lewis, *Watsonville: Memories that Linger, Volume 2* (Valley Publishers: Santa Cruz), 77–78.
194 Ivey, "Ethnicity in the Land: Lost Stories in California Architecture," 104.
195 Chou et al., *Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in California*, 31.
196 Lydon, *Chinese Gold,* Appendix.
197 Ibid, 461.
198 Chou et al., *Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in California*, 32
199 Ibid., 33–34.
200 Woods, "Almost 'No Negro Veteran … Could Get a Loan,'" 392, 396.
201 Lydon, *Chinese Gold*, Appendix.

establishment of Chinatowns. Although they encountered exclusion and displacement, their perseverance enabled the continuation of cultural traditions and encouraged multicultural cooperation.

## 2.5.3 Croatian

Croation immigrants to the County historically settled in the Pajaro Valley and Salsipuedes areas, where they nurtured and brokered the fledgling apple industry into an enormously successful enterprise that shipped Pajaro Valley apples around the world.

### Background

Owning to the complex cultural and political history of the area now considered Croatia, the Croatians arriving in the Pajaro Valley beginning in the 1870s were recognized by several different names, which could denote nationality, country of origin, or ethnicity. Because of the variety of names, the history of the Croatians in the County has been stratified across several different groups. Beginning in 1814 the Austrian, and later Austro-Hungarian, Empire controlled the area of present-day Croatia, causing some of the immigrants to identify as Austrian or Hungarian upon arrival during this period. However, few considered themselves part of these nationalities, instead preferring to cite their specific island of origin (e.g., Dalmatian, Konavlian, or Braˇcan), or more commonly, to refer to themselves by their ethnic identity as Slavs or Slavonian.[202]

The region of present-day Croatia along the Adriatic Sea, from which many Croatian immigrants to the Pajaro Valley originated, was historically part of the influential Dubrovnik Republic, which flourished between 1358 and 1808. While the names referring to Croatian immigrants during this period were not standardized, the immigrants carried with them several specific cultural traits and practices deeply rooted in social and economic customs specific to the former Dubrovnik Republic region.[203] These specific traits, including a long maritime heritage and expertise in shipping and trade practices, alongside a unique communal-style familial structure, formed the foundation for the economic success of Croation immigrants who first settled in the Pajaro Valley and built a robust apple empire in the decades to follow.[204]

Due to its status as a Roman Catholic stronghold on the edge of a vast region that embraced Islam and Orthodox Christianity, the Dubrovnik Republic was granted special authorizations by the Pope to conduct trade with the Muslim Ottoman Empire.[205] The Dubrovnik Republic became a strategic trading hub between the East and West, and its people were known for their expertise in maritime and overland trade, as well as related industries like ship building and packing.[206] [207]

Croatians from this region also adhered to a unique family structure in which multiple branches and generations of a family lived together in small communities called *Zajednica* (Croatian for “society” or “community”) to pool and preserve resources. The primary function of the family unit was to work in unison to ensure the survival of the unit, even if it meant that individuals within the Zajednica had to sacrifice personal comfort and ambitions. The

202 Donna F. Mekis and Kathryn Mekis Miller, *Blossoms into Gold: The Croatians in the Pajaro Valley* (Watsonville, CA: Capitola Book Company, 2009), xxiv-xxv.
203 Ibid., 26.
204 Jody Biergiel Colclough et al., *Harvesting Our Heritage* (Santa Cruz: Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History, 2017), 54.
205 Mekis and Miller, *Blossoms into Gold*, 7.
206 Ibid., 8–9, 15.
207 F. W. Carter, “The Commerce of the Dubrovnik Republic, 1500–1700,” *The Economic History Review* 24, no. 3 (August 1971): 370.

inheritance structure of the Zajednica was predominately agnatic primogeniture, meaning the first-born son stood to inherit all the property and possessions. Occasionally, if the Zajednica decided that a first-born son was unfit to inherit this responsibility, the Zajednica could override this tradition in support of another male family member deemed competent.[208] This inheritance structure routinely meant that financial support for the families of subsequent male heirs, who would stay on the family property after marriage, was not possible. This led many to seek employment as seamen in the shipping trades or to immigrate abroad seeking fortunes and property of their own.[209]

## Settlement in Santa Cruz County

As early as the 1850s, Croatian immigrants who arrived in San Francisco during the Gold Rush in the 1850s established a reputable presence as fishermen, restauranters, and fruit traders.[210] The fruit business urged some of these immigrants south toward San José and the commercial farms developing in the Santa Clara Valley. When the fruit sales, specifically apples, were impacted by the presence of a red scale and the coddling moth in Santa Clara Valley in the early 1870s, a Croatian fruit merchant from San José named Marko Rabasa became interested in the potential for apples from the Pajaro Valley.[211] The first apples in the Pajaro Valley area were planted for experimental and family use by Jesse Carr in 1853, with the first commercial orchards in the area following in 1858.[212] Rabasa traveled to the area in 1873 with a cart and speculated on several young apple orchards that had not seen damage from red scale or the coddling moth. He purchased apples directly from several farms and saw a reasonably large profit that year. Rabasa returned the following years and sought to establish speculative blossom contracts with Pajaro Valley farmers.[213]

The blossom contracts removed the uncertain financial burden of crop failure and market oversaturation from the grower and placed it on the broker (Rabasa), who was responsible for coordinating transportation of the apples to market once the apples were ready to be harvested.[214] The completion of the Southern Pacific Railroad to the town of Pajaro on the southern side of the Pajaro River from Watsonville in 1871, followed by the Santa Cruz Railroad's Watsonville–Santa Cruz line in 1876, presented an obvious solution to the need for regional shipment of apples to market. By 1884, Rabasa shipped so many apples from the Pajaro Valley to his business partner in San Francisco, Luke George Sresovich, that he convinced Sresovich to open a packing house in Watsonville to support their operation. That same year, Rabasa purchased the orchard property planted by Jesse Carr in 1853 and began to lease other apple orchards in the Pajaro Valley, setting the stage for a full-scale production, purchasing, packing, and shipping enterprise.[215]

The first Croatians to permanently settle in the Pajaro Valley arrived to take advantage of the blossom contracts offered by Rabasa and other prospective Croatian buyers. Rabasa and Sresovich turned to the networks of newly arrived immigrants drawn to the Slavonic Illyrian Mutual Benevolent Society, a benevolent society established in San Francisco by an assembly of Slavic immigrant groups, including Croatians, in 1857. The Society acted as a

208 Donna F. Mekis and Kathryn Mekis Miller, interview by Fallin Steffen and Matthew Sundt, July 28, 2025, transcript on file with the County of Santa Cruz.
209 Mekis and Miller, *Blossoms into Gold*, 26
210 Pajaro Valley Historical Society, *Ethnic History of the Pajaro Valley* (Watsonville, CA: Pajaro Valley Historical Society, December 2023), 14.
211 Mekis and Miller, *Blossoms into Gold*, 26
212 Colclough et al., *Harvesting Our Heritage*, 52.
213 Mekis and Miller, *Blossoms into Gold*, 66–67.
214 Ibid., 68.
215 Mekis and Miller, *Blossoms into Gold*, 70.

support system and was at the center of cultural and social life for Slavic immigrants.[216] Given the challenges of land ownership within the traditional Zajednica family structure, the promise of individual land ownership and a secured blossom contract proved highly appealing to prospective Croatian immigrants living in San Francisco, San José, and other parts of the United States, as well as those still residing in the homeland.[217] Croatian immigrants came to establish apple orchards on newly subdivided parcels formed from the former Mexican land grants in the Pajaro Valley.[218]

The arrival of Croatian immigrants in the Pajaro Valley coincided with the decline in available Chinese migrant labor throughout both the Pajaro Valley and California more broadly as a cumulative result of the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, the 1888 Scott Act, and the 1892 Geary Act.[219] As the Chinese labor force aged and was not replenished by younger workers, labor shortages in the burgeoning apple industry emerged.[220] In response to the need for labor, Croatian immigrants established a robust recruitment network by calling on their relatives who were being subjugated and starved under Austro-Hungarian rule. Most of these immigrants to the Pajaro Valley came from small villages in the Dubrovnik region, which saw over half of the male population, mostly between 16 and 20 years old, immigrate during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[221] Many left with work already secured upon their arrival in California.[222]

Unlike in the home country, a man could work hard and live frugally and be able to lease land of his own after only a couple years, after which he could erect a small packing house on his property to turn even more profit.[223] Edward Sanford Harrison noted his favorable impression of the apple industry in the Pajaro Valley in the 1892 History of Santa Cruz County, stating the industry offered "opportunities for men of limited means to acquire profitable homes. While the valley lands are held at high prices, there is much property in the foothills and mountains which can be bought comparatively cheap and if planted to orchard in a few years will make their owners possessors of a competence."[224]

As the number of orchards and small operations grew, packing houses (Exhibit 24) developed on orchards in response to the need to reduce the overall cost of picking, packing, and shipping.[225] Although a perishable commodity, apples are a tough and resilient fruit that can be shipped long distances, even internationally, with minimal damage.[226] The Croatians were the first to take a chance and ship a perishable good such a long distance. The cost to ship was determined by carload, which was the minimum tonnage required to fill a railcar to be eligible for a carload rate.[227] This meant that while the cost to ship a full railcar would be higher overall, the cost per unit, or box, would be less than for a partial shipment. Smaller farms and growers sold their apples by the ton to large packers and distributers that would "pack out" their apples to keep the overall tonnage price cheaper.[228]

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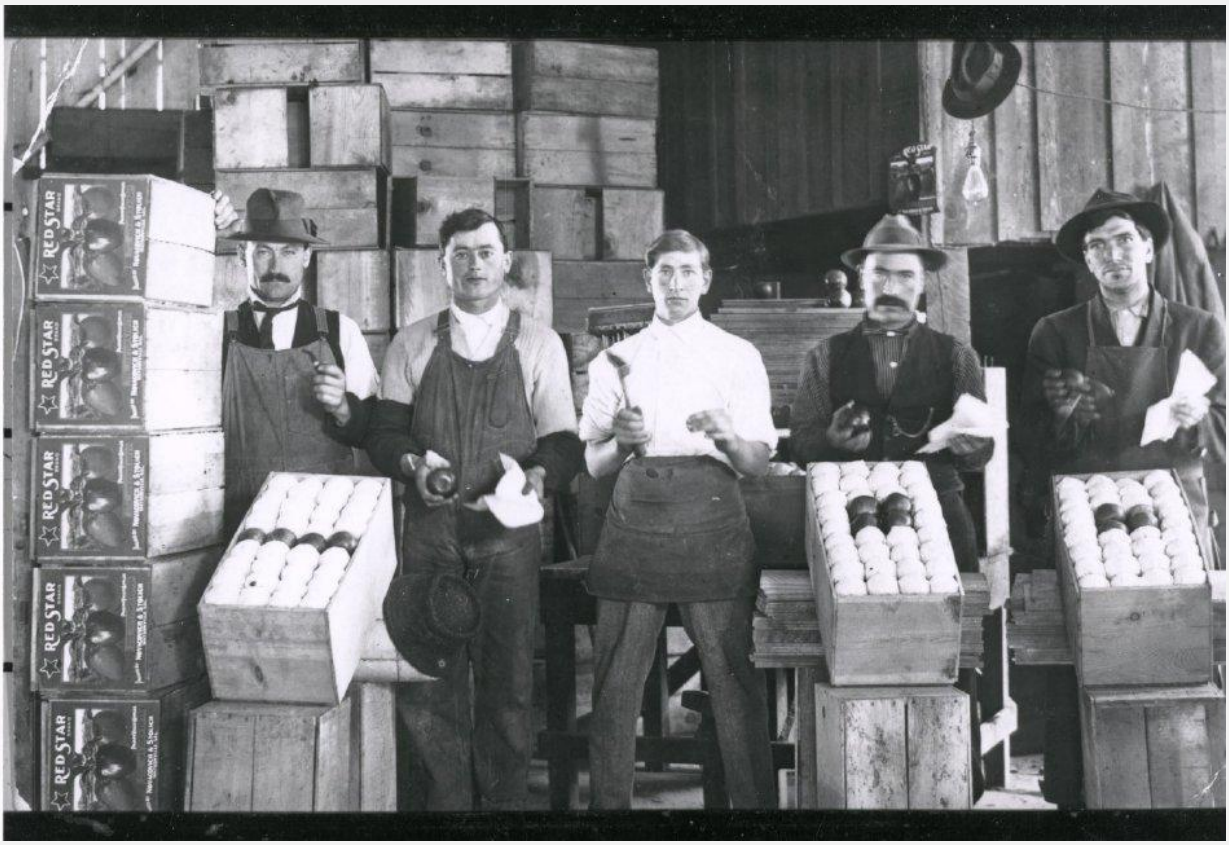
216 Wayne S. Vucinich, "Yugoslavs in California," *The Historical Society of Southern California Quarterly* 42, no. 3 (September 1960): 287–309, https://www.jstor.org/stable/41169470, 289.
217 Mekis and Miller, *Blossoms into Gold*, 71.
218 Ibid., 71.
219 Ibid., 75
220 Ibid., 77
221 Mekis and Miller, "Condensed Talking Points" for *Blossoms into Gold,* 6.
222 Mekis and Miller, *Blossoms into Gold*, 77.
223 Ibid., 72.
224 Edward Sanford Harrison, *History of Santa Cruz County, California*, California County and Regional Histories (Santa Cruz: Author, 1892) , 183. Digitized by the New York Public Library, January 23, 2008. Accessed via Google Books.
225 Mekis and Miller, *Blossoms into Gold*, 73.
226 Ibid., 82.
227 Federal Highway Administration, "Freight Glossary and Acronyms," U.S. Department of Transportation, Office of Freight Management and Operations, accessed August 2025, https://ops.fhwa.dot.gov/freight/fpd/glossary/.
228 Mekis and Miller, *Blossoms into Gold*, 73.

**Exhibit 24.** Croatian Apple Packers in Watsonville, circa 1900.




**Source:** Courtesy of the Pajaro Valley Historical Association.

Despite a reduction of allotted blossom contracts beginning in 1891, recently immigrated Croatians arrived into a strong, established distribution network that reflected the values of self-preservation and reliance on family inherent to the Zajednica.[229] The concept translated well to the distribution model, which relied on a considerable system of growers, packers, shippers, and laborers working together toward a common goal. This made them very economically competitive because they often did not have to pay market premium for use of the services rendered by their family members.[230] The model was so successful that non-Croatian farmers and businessmen in the area banded together in 1894 to form the Pajaro Valley Fruit Exchange in direct challenge to the dominance of the Croatian distribution network they could not gain access to.[231]

While the Pajaro Valley Fruit Exchange failed by 1897, those few years of competition, as well as the opening of auction house–style sales in New York in 1896, pushed Croatian packers and distributors toward methods of consistency and standardization in apple handling, cleaning, and storage to ensure the best product on the market.[232] This drove the industry forward rapidly at the end of the nineteenth century. Shipments of apples grew

229 Ibid., 80.
230 Mekis and Miller, "Condensed Talking Points", 12.
231 Mekis and Miller, *Blossoms into Gold*, 92.
232 Ibid., 97, 104.

fivefold, from over 100,000 boxes shipped from the area in 1885 to over 500,000 boxes by 1898, followed by another fivefold increase to 2,500,000 boxes by 1903.[233] By the early 1900s, virtually all the packing houses in the Pajaro Valley were owned by Croatians and were concentrated around the railroad tracks in the western area of Watsonville.[234] This area became the center of Croatian life in the Pajaro Valley and is known as the Croatian Colony.[235]

The Croatian community continued to grow in the early twentieth century. According to U.S. Census data, in 1900, there were approximately 190 people listed with Slavic surnames out of 3,500 people living in Watsonville. By 1920, the community had increased to 1,000 Croatians out of 5,000 people.[236] The thriving apple industry in the Pajaro Valley played a central role in the community life of many Croatians residing in the area. This is demonstrated by their use of the packinghouse as a space immensely important to the economic viability of the community but that could also be converted for use during community celebrations like weddings and baptisms as the initial wave of male bachelor immigrants married and started families. Some of these men returned to the home country to find a Croatian wife, but the arduous journey prompted others to often marry non-Croatian women, especially during the early years. After the Expatriation Act of 1907 was enacted and American women would be forced to adopt the nationality of a foreign-born husband, the practice waned considerably again in favor of wives from the old country.[237] These women fitted seamlessly into the established Croatian distribution network, often as apple sorters, in the very packinghouses where they celebrated their marriages in the new world.[238]

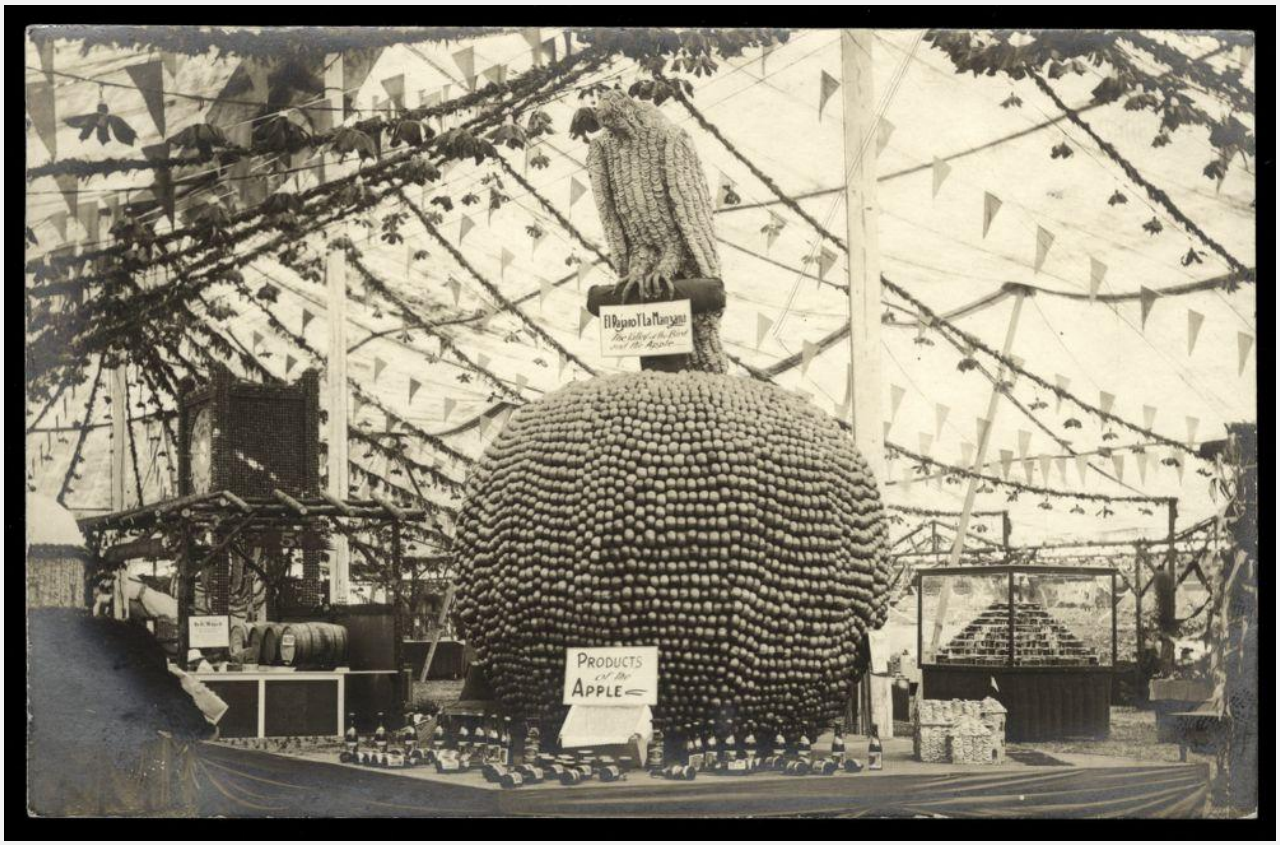
Continuing the inherent community support mindset of the Zajednica, just like the early Croatian immigrants to San Francisco turning to the Slavonic Illyrian Mutual Benevolent Society to establish a new life in a new place, there were several similar organizations that formed in the Pajaro Valley during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to support recent immigrants and the larger community, such as the Austrian Benevolent Society, established in 1894 as a branch of the San José society, followed by the Austrian-American Benevolent Society in 1898. The Croatian Sokol Lodge No. 352 was established in Watsonville in 1907. This lodge later became associated with the Croatian Fraternal Union.[239] These societies organized social functions including picnics, dances, barbeques, and banquets for society members and their families. The benevolent societies provided an appropriate, sanctioned outlet for socializing within the safety and homogeneity of the Croatian community. While many Croatians were traditionally Roman Catholic and were very involved in the church, there was safety in associating with other immigrant populations like the Italians, Portuguese, and Irish, who were also Roman Catholic. Despite the evidence of religious devotion by the Croatian community, however, especially in the second generation of Croatians in the Pajaro Valley,[240] Paul Tutwiler notes in Santa Cruz Spirituality that "the Croatian Catholics … do not seem to have left an ethnic religious imprint on the Catholic Church there.[241]

Commercial efforts in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century placed great emphasis on marketing and consistency as a way to remain competitive against other emerging markets and distribution networks. Orchardists in the Pajaro Valley were invited to participate in the 1894 San Francisco World's Fair as a top industry in California. Outside of new contacts that wanted to purchase their goods, the event helped the network of growers and distributors to recognize the regional fair as a new marketing tool for Pajaro Valley apples. This notion eventually

233 Mekis and Miller, *Blossoms into Gold*, 82.
234 Colclough et al., *Harvesting Our Heritage*, 55.
235 Mekis and Miller, *Blossoms into Gold*, 154.
236 Mekis and Miller, *Blossoms into Gold*, 56.
237 Ibid., 156
238 Mekis and Miller, *Blossoms into Gold*, 159.
239 Ibid., 160–163.
240 Mekis and Miller, *Blossoms into Gold*, 159.
241 Tutwiler, *Santa Cruz Spirituality*, 18.

led to the Annual Apple, an apple festival held between 1910 and 1913 in Watsonville (Exhibits 25 and 26). The Pajaronian reported the slogan of the festival was "An apple show where apples grow."[242] The four-day event attracted between 30,000 and 40,000 visitors in its first year but also drew mixed reactions from the Croatian community.[243] A limited number of individual packers took part in the festivities, including the grand parade; specifically, The Pajaronian reported that only 20 of approximately 80 packers operating in Watsonville participated during the festival's second year in 1911. Most Croatian packers did not participate. In 1914, the Apple Annual was relocated to San Francisco prior to its discontinuation in 1916. [244]

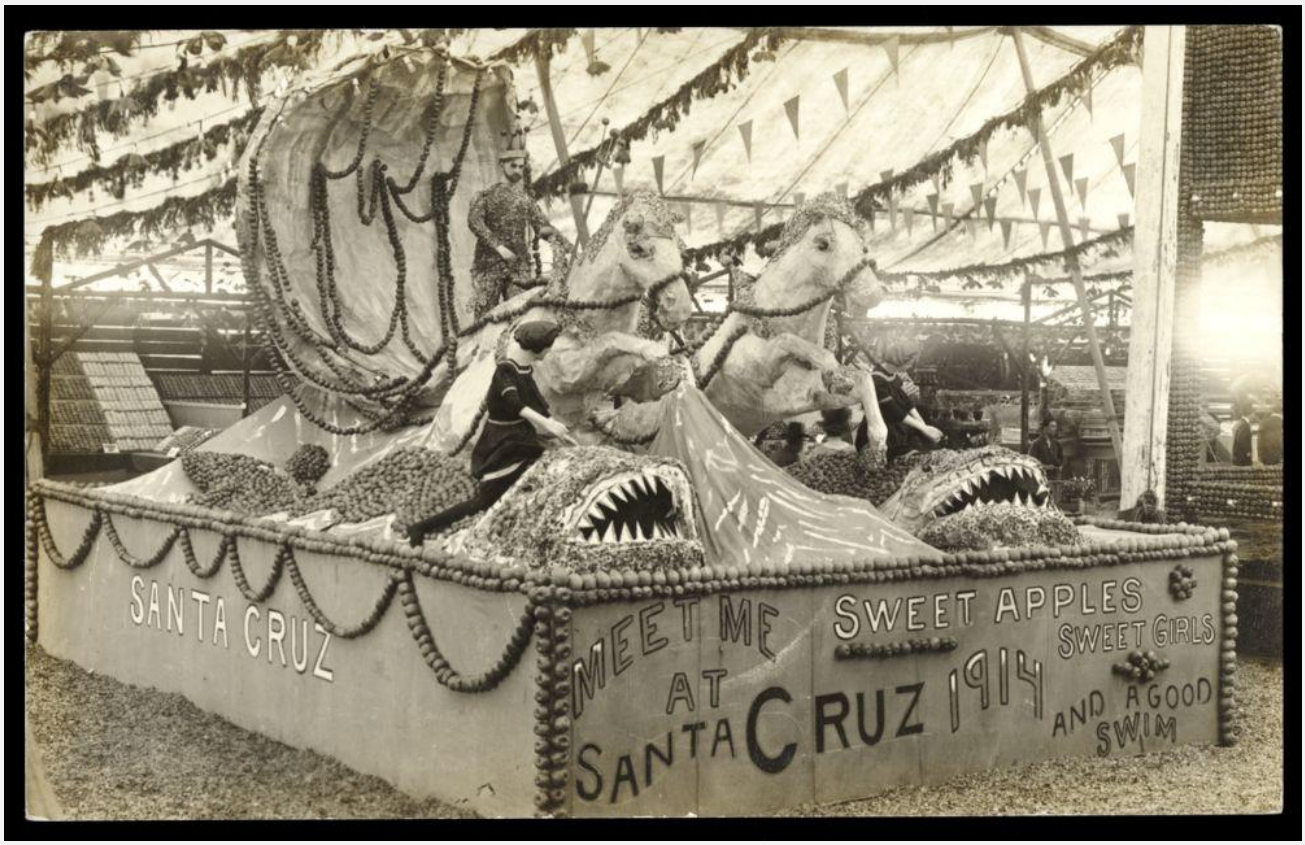
**Exhibit 25.** Display at the Apple Annual, circa 1914.




**Source:** Courtesy of the University of California, Santa Cruz Special Collections, Santa Cruz County historic photograph collection.

242 *The Pajaronian*, "Line of Apples Will Encircle the World," August 18, 1910, 5.
243 Colclough et al., Harvesting Our Heritage, 56.
244 *The Pajaronian*, "Grand Industrial Parade Was Held," October 12, 1911, 5; Colclough et al., *Harvesting Our Heritage*, 56.

**Exhibit 26.** Display at the Apple Annual, circa 1914.




**Source:** Courtesy of the University of California, Santa Cruz Special Collections, Santa Cruz County historic photograph collection.

Croatian immigration naturally slowed during World War I and the postwar period. Citing a common Austro-Hungarian Empire, many Pajaro Valley Croatians approved of the United States's entrance into World War I in 1917 and enthusiastically joined the American armed forces. Others, who identified as Austro-Hungarians, were barred from military service as enemy aliens.[245] Despite this, Wayne Vucinich suggests in The Yugoslavs of California, "World War I ended in a Slav and an American victory. Austria-Hungary collapsed beyond recognition and nothing in the world could have resurrected it. The Yugoslav lands [including modern Croatia] of Austria-Hungary were united with Serbia and Montenegro to form a Yugoslav state."[246] The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, as it was initially called, was formed in 1918. Following nearly a decade of colloquial use, the name was officially changed to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1929.

As discussed in the introduction above, the Croatians living in California had hitherto been associated with a range of terms denoting nationality, country of origin, or ethnicity. The consolidation of the Yugoslav, or the "Southern Slavic Unity" during the period following World War I illuminated this collective of people who had immigrated from

245 Vucinich, "Yugoslavs in California," 292–293
246 Ibid., 293.

this corner of the world.[247] This recognition, alongside general national security concerns following the end of World War I, contributed to anti-immigration sentiments in the 1910s and 1920s targeting Eastern and Southern Europeans.[248] This led to the enactment of the Immigration Act of 1924 (the Johnson-Reed Act), which established an immigrant quota system limiting new visas to only 3% of the total number of each respective nationality already living in the United States in the 1910 census. The act effectively halted Croatian immigration to the United States and therefore the Pajaro Valley, while simultaneously including few to no restrictions for immigrants originating from Western Europe and the British Isles.[249] In The Yugoslavs of California, Wayne Vucinich briefly summarizes the impact this had on the psyche of the Croatian population who were born in California during the interwar period:

> In the 'thirties, the generation of American-born Yugoslavs became increasingly more detached from the colony, many of them deliberately seeking to lose all Yugoslav identity. Changes in names became more frequent. Vuciniches turned into Allens, Paiches into Pages, Obrens into O'Briens, Obradoviches into O'Bradoviches, Giogovatses into Gordons! One detected more and more concern in Yugoslav newspapers about a lack of national consciousness among the American-born, and of the corruptive influences of American society. The leaders of various organizations urged the founding of more junior branches of societies in order, through them, to instill patriotism and pride in Slav heritage among the youth. This they did not consider antithetic to American patriotism; being a good Slav did not mean that one could not also be a good American.[250]

This assimilation coincided with the beginning of the long decline for the apple industry in the mid-1920s, after which time strawberries and other profitable crops began to gain prominence in the Pajaro Valley, and apples were no longer seen as the dominant crop.[251] Leading members of the Croatian community began to diversify and apply their business acumen to other economic ventures, many of which were tangentially related to the apple industry.[252] This helped the Pajaro Valley Croatians to maintain their prominence within the apple market until the 1930s, after which time they were unseated by emerging competition in other states like Oregon and Washington, who had adopted the Croatians innovative distribution practices. The Pajaro Valley apple industry remained competitive until the 1960s.[253] While this diversification meant a movement away from the industry that had initially been so fruitful, the Croatian community continued to carry with them the core values that had initially made them so prosperous, including a willingness to adopt a community mindset and a historical penchant for trade. By the beginning of World War II, the descendants of the first Croatians who arrived in California nearly a century before had established themselves in politics, banking, industry, and business throughout the County.[254]

In the face of natural assimilation pressures, the Croatian community in the Pajaro Valley experienced significant transformation during and after World War II. While earlier generations had maintained a degree of cultural isolationism in support of the Croatian Colony, younger American-born Croatians from the 1930s onward increasingly embraced individualist American values. Notably, young Croatian men began to marry non-Croatian women. Many Croatians from the County also served in the U.S. Armed Forces during World War II, reflecting their growing identification with American society. Meanwhile, prominent Croatians expressed moral outrage at the

247 Ibid., 292.
248 Office of the Historian, "The Immigration Act of 1924 (The Johnson-Reed Act)."
249 Ibid.
250 Vucinich, "Yugoslavs in California," 296.
251 Colclough et al., *Harvesting Our Heritage*, 54.
252 Mekis and Miller, *Blossoms into Gold*, 112–113, 116.
253 Mekis and Miller, *Blossoms into Gold*, 113–114.
254 Vucinich, "Yugoslavs in California," 296–297.

internment of Japanese Americans, who had been their neighbors, coworkers, and fellow immigrants in Pajaro Valley for several decades.[255]

The post-World War II period also saw the arrival of Croatian immigrants fleeing the newly formed socialist federation of Yugoslavia under Josip Broz Tito. Although racially categorized as White, these newcomers and established members of the Croatian community often faced suspicion and discrimination during the McCarthy era due to their Eastern European origins. Despite these challenges, efforts to preserve cultural identity persisted through institutions such as the Yugoslav Radio Program; the Yugoslavian American Cultural Organization, later renamed the Slavic American Cultural Organization; and the Adriatic Club, which served as vital hubs for community cohesion and heritage in the Croatian community.[256]

## 2.5.4 Japanese

### Background

Like many other groups in the County, Japanese immigration to the United States did not begin until the nineteenth century. The Japanese government did not allow emigration between 1638 and 1885, isolating its citizens for over 200 years to halt the spread of Christianity, specifically Roman Catholicism, introduced by Portuguese missionaries during the sixteenth century.[257] In the United States, the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 stopped the flow of Asian immigration and left an agricultural labor vacuum in California soon filled by Japanese workers who could now freely leave their country. Although there had already been a handful of Japanese settlers in the Sacramento region since 1869, the first immigrants to Pajaro Valley were 12 laborers who entered the country in 1892 to work at a sawmill and a hop farm.[258] Sakuzo Kimura was one of these first Japanese immigrants to the area, but the names of others in the group are unknown. Kimura, a farm labor contractor, spoke proficient English and was tasked with finding work for his fellow laborers until his untimely death a few years later.[259]

In the early twentieth century, Japanese immigrants in California were subjected to escalating restrictions that mirrored those put upon the Chinese decades earlier. In 1913 California passed the Alien Land Law, explicitly restricting the right to file for citizenship to White individuals and "people of African descent," effectively excluding Japanese immigrants from the naturalization process.[260] The law also prohibited Japanese residents from owning land. Many residents were working as sharecroppers at the time, so some Issei (first-generation immigrants) attempted to bypass the law by listing their children (Nisei) as landowners, as they had birthright citizenship.[261] The 1924 Immigration Act further entrenched exclusion by barring Japanese nationals from entering the United States altogether through the establishment of harsher immigrant quotas.[262] With Japanese immigration halted,

255 Mekis and Miller, *Blossoms into Gold*, 219–220.
256 Ibid., 221, 223–224.
257 Lydon, *The Japanese in the Monterey Bay Region,* 12.
258 Kathy McKenzie Nichols and Jane W. Borg, *Nihon Bunka, Japanese Culture: One Hundred Years in the Pajaro Valley.* Watsonville, CA: Pajaro Valley Arts Council, 1992), 4.
259 Sandy Lydon, *"A Half-Century of Service: The Watsonville Japanese-American Citizens League, 1934–1984"* (1984), Santa Cruz Public Libraries Local History Collection, accessed August 14, 2025, https://history.santacruzpl.org/omeka/items/show/134382.
260 Cherstin M. Lyon, "Alien Land Laws," *Densho Encyclopedia*, accessed August 5, 2025, http://encyclopedia.densho.org/Alien_land_laws/.
261 Kenny Kusumoto, interview by Fallin Steffen and Matthew Sundt, July 28, 2025. On file with the County of Santa Cruz.
262 Office of the Historian, "The Immigration Act of 1924 (The Johnson-Reed Act)."

agricultural employers turned to other sources of labor, leading to increased migration from Mexico and the Philippines to fill the gaps.[263]

Following the attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941, suspicion and fear of Japanese Americans intensified. In February 1942, President Franklin Deleno Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, granting the War Department authority to designate military zones and remove individuals deemed a threat to national security.[264] This order paved the way for the mass incarceration of Japanese Americans living near the West Coast. Between May and August of 1942, approximately 110,000 people of Japanese ancestry were forcibly relocated to 10 internment camps scattered across inland regions of the country. In Watsonville, 900 people (10% of the population in 1942) were "evacuated" from their homes and sent to the Poston War Relocation Camp in Arizona.[265]

The end of World War II in 1945 meant that Japanese Americans could return home after the camps closed. However, many families found their homes and businesses gone, their land sold, and their communities changed. Many internment camp survivors chose not to stay in the County. Accounts from the time estimate that only one-third of the Japanese population of Watsonville returned.[266] Fortunately for some, neighbors and friends had safeguarded their property during internment, which allowed for the slow reestablishment of the Japanese community. Strawberry production increased and Japanese owned businesses resumed operations as new families began to settle in the area toward midtwentieth century.[267] During this time, Congress passed Public Law 414 (1952), which allowed for Japanese naturalization, and the Alien Land Law was repealed in 1956, granting Japanese immigrants the right to own land once again.[268]

After years of petitioning and campaigning, President Ronald Reagan signed the Civil Liberties Act in 1988, which formally acknowledged the injustices of internment camps and forced incarceration. Also known as the Redress Bill, the act required the federal government to issue letters of apology and financial reparations to camp survivors.[269]

### Settlement, Employment, and Economic Roles

Early Japanese immigrants had a higher education level than other groups who came to the Pajaro Valley seeking employment; they were often literate and had received a formal education in Japan.[270] Regardless, they were relegated to farm labor, first working in the sugar beet fields for the Spreckels Factory in Watsonville and later in the orchards and strawberry and vegetable fields.[271] Prior to the Alien Land Law of 1913, some Japanese immigrants became sharecroppers and small landowners. These men would lease land to farm and hire other Japanese workers to help provide them with better working conditions than on larger, Anglo-owned farms.[272] Although the immigrant population in the early twentieth century was largely composed of men, some women came from Japan through traditional arranged marriages. Known as "picture brides," these women typically did not work

263 Chou et al., *Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in California*, 61.
264 Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Executive Order 9066: Resulting in Japanese American Incarceration (1942)," February 19, 1942, General Records of the United States Government, Record Group 11, National Archives, https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/executive-order-9066.
265 Nichols and Borg, *Nihon Bunka*, 2.
266 Sheila McElroy and Becky Urbano, *Watsonville Historic Context Statement*, prepared for the City of Watsonville by Circa: Historic Property Development (2007), 136.
267 Ibid.
268 Nichols and Borg, *Nihon Bunka*, 2.
269 Ibid., 3.
270 McElroy and Urbano, *Watsonville Historic Context*, 133.
271 Kusumoto, oral history interview.
272 McElroy and Urbano, *Watsonville Historic Context*, 68.

in the fields with their husbands and instead were responsible for overseeing the home and "solidifying the … community in Watsonville."[273]

Built in 1897, the Redman-Hirahara Farmstead near Watsonville is one of the most recognizable features of the agricultural landscape near Pajaro Dunes. Its history represents a common sequence of events for Japanese American families during and after World War II. The house was built by architect William Henry Weeks (known for designing several California schools and the Cocoanut Grove at the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk) for sugar beet farmer, James Redman, who lived there until his death in 1921.[274] After the death of Redman's widow in 1937, the home and 120-acre farmstead were sold at auction to J. Katsumi Tao, Mitoshi Hirahara's brother-in-law who was a naturalized citizen and could own property after the passage of the Alien Land Law.[275] Mitoshi, his wife, and their children worked in the surrounding farmland until 1942, when they were sent to the Rohwer Center in Arizona and forcibly incarcerated until 1945.[276] When internment camps closed and Japanese families returned home to Watsonville and other California cities, they faced the difficulty of a housing shortage. No new homes were built during the war, and over half of the returning population did not own land, so communal housing became commonplace.[277] The Hirahara's were one of the fortunate families who were able to return to their homes after the war, as it had been taken care of by an attorney friend of the family. The house, which was equipped with a large barn in the rear of the property, was likely home to as many as four families after World War II.[278] Eventually, the Hirahara family had to leave the home once again after the 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake destroyed its foundation and rendered it uninhabitable.[279] The house has remained vacant since this period and is currently facing demolition.

273 Ibid., 134.
274 Suzi Aratin, "Redman House," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1978), Section 8.
275 Ibid.
276 War Relocation Authority, Photograph Note, 1945.
277 Ibid., 2.
278 *The Register-Pajaronian*, "Historic Find at Redman," July 28, 2005, 1.
279 Ibid.

**Exhibit 27.** Lettuce fields surrounding the Hirahara home after their return home from forced incarceration at the Rohwer Center in Arizona.


**Source:** WRA no. H-732, War Relocation Authority Photographs of Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement, 1942–1945, BANC PIC 1967.014--PIC, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. Photographer: Charles E. Mace, Watsonville, California. 1945.

Japanese Americans who did return to farms and landownership after World War II would sometimes participate in the Bracero Program, which brought Mexican nationals into the United States as laborers. Some Japanese families, like Eugene Gondo and his wife Hisako, built labor camps for the braceros who worked on their land in exchange for food and housing. It became common for braceros to work for Japanese growers in the 1950s and 1960s as the postwar agricultural economy recovered and Japanese Americans farms prospered.[280]

Japanese immigrants were allowed to apply for citizenship beginning in 1952, and the Alien Land Law was repealed in 1956 by Proposition 13, both of which bolstered Japanese upward economic mobility.[281] Although some Japanese Americans remained in the agricultural industry, many Nisei children attended college after World War II. This generation sought more professional, white-collar employment after graduation, with many of them becoming

280 *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, "Labor Barracks is Okayed for Hecker Pass Road," July 10, 1955, 15.
281 Lyon, "Alien Land Laws."

dentists, doctors, lawyers, business owners, or part of the burgeoning high-tech industry in nearby Silicon Valley.[282] Professional jobs were scarce in the Pajaro Valley, but the population was still increasing, which allowed new Japanese-owned businesses, such as barbershops, grocery stores, and nurseries, to flourish.[283] Fishing also became a favored pastime, and two Japanese businesses, Yagi Tackle Shop and the Pajaro Valley Fish Market, were popular destinations in Watsonville.[284] Agriculturally, a new group of Japanese immigrants arrived in the Pajaro Valley during the 1950s from the Kagoshima region and began to cultivate a flower industry. Greenhouses and nurseries became commonplace, while strawberries continued to be the primary crop.[285]

## Social Institutions and Community Identity

Because most early Japanese immigrants to the Pajaro Valley were men, there was a need for camaraderie and support. Since anti-Asian policies encouraged discrimination and bolstered exclusion, these men formed "labor clubs, employment clubs, and societies for contract labor, living arrangements and mutual aid" which quickly became the center of social life in the Japanese community.[286] The *Shinyu*, meaning "good friends," labor club was established in 1893 and used a labor boss system: a designated contractor secured work for the club's members and acted as a mediator between them and the employer. Almost a dozen of these establishments existed in and around Watsonville by 1910 and offered food and housing in addition to employment services.[287]

By 1900, almost 400 Japanese immigrants were in the Pajaro Valley. Watsonville soon became home to a Japantown at the southern end of Main Street. It included public baths, grocery stores, a tofu factory, schools, stores, doctors, and cultural institutions such as the Westview Presbyterian Church, the Watsonville Buddhist Temple, and the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL). These three institutions were largely responsible for culture-keeping, including the formation of a Japanese-language school, and community support.[288] The Watsonville JACL, known as the Japan Society in its early years, was formed in 1910 to offer legal aid to immigrants. This became especially important after the Gentlemen's Agreement of 1924 that restricted Japanese immigration. The society helped its members acquire documents to travel between the United States and Japan and facilitated the entry of picture brides.[289] Nisei residents formed the Watsonville Citizen's League, a JACL descendent, in the 1930s at the behest of the older Issei generation, to maintain continuity and leadership within the community. This became especially important throughout the World War II and internment period. In 1947, the group renamed themselves the Japanese American Citizens League and continued to offer community services in the Pajaro Valley.[290]

The Watsonville Buddhist temple also served as a central institution for the Japanese American community in the Pajaro Valley, beginning in 1906 when services were conducted at the Opera House on East Beach Street.[291] As the congregation began to grow, a campaign for a permanent building began to coalesce with the arrival of Reverend Jinno Inouye from Japan in 1907.[292] After the purchase of a lot on the northeast corner of Bridge and Union Streets, fundraising continued for the construction of the temple. Although the average wage for a Japanese

282 Kusumoto, oral history interview.
283 McElroy and Urbano, *Watsonville Historic Context*, 136.
284 Kusumoto, oral history interview.
285 Ibid.
286 Nichols and Borg, *Nihon Bunka*, 5.
287 Ibid., 7.
288 McElroy and Urbano, *Watsonville Historic Context*, 110.
289 Ibid., 133.
290 Ibid., 134.
291 Ibid., 109.
292 Ibid., 110.

farm laborer was 10 cents an hour, it took the congregation only a year to raise the $7,500 needed for the building, which was dedicated in 1908 as a temple of the Jodo Shinshu Nishi Hongwanji tradition of Buddhism.[293] The temple was more than just a religious institution, serving as the social center of the Japanese American community, with Japanese school classes beginning in 1919 that taught cultural and linguistic traditions, as well as sponsoring Boy Scout troops and offering childcare.[294]

During World War II and the forced removal of Japanese Americans from Watsonville, the Buddhist temple was closed. The Japanese school operating on Union Street was also disbanded, in 1941. As people returned to the area after internment ended in 1945, the temple reopened and operated as a temporary shelter and community aid center. Membership surged during the postwar years, and the temple moved east to its current location at 423 Bridge Street in 1958.[295] The Japanese-language school also reopened around this time under private instruction, with temple sponsorship reinstated in 1968. The original temple was demolished in 1972 for the construction of the Del Sol Market and Salvation Army complex.[296]

293 Ibid.
294 Kusumoto, oral history interview.
295 Ibid.
296 McElroy and Urbano, *Watsonville Historic Context*, 109.

**Exhibit 28.** Postcard showing the Watsonville Buddhist temple, date unknown.

**Source:** Provided by Santa Cruz Public Libraries, Local History Collection.

Baseball became part of Japanese American social life beginning in the 1920s, as the sport enjoyed increased popularity around the country.[297] Japanese teams in the County were sponsored by churches, businesses, and civic groups. Barred from mainstream baseball, these teams formed their own leagues to play against other Japanese teams as well as players in the "*Negro Leagues*" and other minority groups. Baseball soon became so ubiquitous in the Pajaro Valley that Sunday was known as "baseball crazy day," and citywide tournaments were held regularly.[298] The Watsonville Apple Giants were one of the more prolific teams, with players adopting irreverent

[297] Kerry Yo Nakagawa, *Through a Diamond: 100 Years of Japanese American Baseball* (San Francisco: Rudi Publishing, 2001), 111.
[298] Ibid., 110.

nicknames like “Porky” Takata and Harry “Tar” Shirachi.[299] Baseball became such a source of joy for the Japanese community that it was commonplace for teams to be formed at war relocation camps (Exhibit 29).

**Exhibit 29.** A crowd of 2,000 people watches a baseball game in Amache, Colorado, between incarcerated Japanese residents of the Granada War Relocation Center and a local team. 1943.


**Source:** WRA no. B-826, War Relocation Authority Photographs of Japanese American Evacuation and Resettlement, 1942–1945, BANC PIC 1967.014--PIC, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. Photographer: Joe McClelland.

## Social Justice and Activism

Civil disobedience in the face of Executive Order 9066 is perhaps the most recognizable social justice movement associated with Japanese Americans in California. Fred Korematsu, a San Francisco Bay Area native living with his family in San Leandro, refused to comply with the order and did not accompany his family to the assembly center at the Tanforan Racetrack in San Bruno. Korematsu successfully avoided the authorities until May 1942, when he was arrested and imprisoned at Topaz War Relocation Center in Utah.[300] At Topaz, he was contacted by a lawyer working for the American Civil Liberties Union who offered to represent Korematsu as a “test case” to challenge the

[299] Ibid., 49.
[300] Chou et al., *Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in California*, 308.

constitutionality of Executive Order 9066.[301] The case went to the U.S. Supreme Court in 1944, but a Court majority upheld Korematsu's conviction and did not address the mass incarceration program. Three justices dissented with the opinion and argued that racial discrimination was the motivation for mass incarceration, which was a violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.[302]

During the Civil Rights Era, Japanese Americans began a campaign to draw national attention to the injustices committed against them by the federal government only decades earlier. The Redress Movement had dual goals of securing reparations and an acknowledgement of the suffering caused by their forced removal and incarceration. In December 1969, a group of Nisei organized a pilgrimage to Manzanar, the internment camp located in Inyo County where over 120,000 Japanese Americans were incarcerated.[303] The journey was made by 150 people, who helped to restore the Manzanar cemetery while also drawing attention to the 1950 Emergency Detention Act, which allowed the federal government to detain anyone suspected of espionage.[304] The journey to Manzanar emboldened the first calls for reparations at the 1970 JACL National Convention in Seattle, which spurred the creation of the National Coalition for Redress/Reparations in Los Angeles. Pilgrimages to other internment camps followed in an effort to pay respects and have survivors tell their stories. In California, Governor Jerry Brown signed Assembly Bill 2710 into law in 1982, which provided $5,000 to each Japanese American state employee fired in 1942 because of Executive Order 9066.[305] The U.S. Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians released their recommendations in 1983 for recognition of the injustice toward Japanese Americans, which consisted of "issuance of a national apology along with redress through monetary compensation." Finally, President Ronald Reagan signed the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, granting reparations of $20,000 and a formal apology to every surviving U.S. citizen or legal resident of Japanese descent who was incarcerated.[306]

Although the federal government followed through with the recommendations of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, Japanese Americans in California continued to speak out about the injustices of internment and encouraged younger generations to become involved. Mas Hashimoto, a history teacher in the County and survivor of the camps, led the first reenactment of the forced removal of Japanese Americans from Watsonville on the 60th anniversary in 2002.[307] Speaking about what spurred him to stage a reenactment, Hashimoto emphasized that "it was for the non-Nikkei [Japanese diaspora] … we need[ed] to get the story out to others, that their constitutional rights could be trampled."[308]

Japanese Americans in the Pajaro Valley continue to enrich the area's cultural and economic landscape and ensure that future generations of Nikkei preserve their history. For over 100 years, they have worked to build a rich and indelible legacy showcasing resilience in the face of discrimination and injustice. Through community building, economic mobility, and a commitment to self-determination, Japanese Americans continue to thrive in the County, while their stories and civic contributions remain paramount to understanding the region.

301 Ibid.
302 "Korematsu v. United States." Oyez. Accessed August 14, 2025. https://www.oyez.org/cases/1940-1955/323us214.
303 Chou et al., *Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in California*, 43.
304 Ibid., 44.
305 Ibid.
306 Nichols and Borg, *Nihon Bunka*, 3.
307 Tony Nuñez, "Mas Hashimoto, Watsonville's 'Icon' of Integrity, Dies," *The Pajaronian,* June 23, 2022, https://pajaronian.com/mas-hashimoto-watsonvilles-icon-of-integrity-dies. Accessed August 19, 2025.
308 Mas Hashimoto, interview by Tom Ikeda, Segment 34, July 30, 2008. On file with the JACL of Watsonville.

## 2.5.5 Filipino

### Background

Filipino migration to the United States happened in three waves beginning in 1898, which marked the end of the Spanish-American War and saw Spain cede Guam, the Philippines, and Puerto Rico to the United States. With the Philippines now recognized as a U.S. territory, two main pathways to migration emerged: military service or labor. After the war, American naval bases continued to operate in the country and recruited Filipino men to either serve locally or along the West Coast. This practice led to large concentrations of Filipinos living around naval installations in California, where they were able to support themselves by engaging in other maritime industry work.[309]

The territory status of the Philippines also meant that its citizens were exempt from "Asian quotas" that sought to limit the number of Chinese, Japanese, and other East Asian migrants. Filipinos were expected to assimilate both at home and abroad to prepare the country for future self-governance. This paternalist attitude allowed for an influx of more than 20,000 migrants, mainly single men, to the West Coast by way of Hawaii between 1909 and 1934.[310] The first generation of Filipino migrants is known as the *Manong* ("older brother") generation. These men filled the labor vacuum created by the 1917 and 1924 Immigration Acts, which leftmany industries without enough workers. Due to the dwindling number of Chinese and Japanese immigrants, anti-Asian sentiment shifted to Filipinos because of their high visibility, with 4,000 migrants entering the United States each year. In 1934, the Tydings-McDuffie Act finally subjected Filipinos to the 1924 immigration quotas in exchange for their home country's independence, which would be achieved after 12 years and guided by the Americans.[311]

The second migration wave was the result of World War II. The Philippine Commonwealth Army incorporated into the U.S. Armed Forces after threat of war with Japan (U.S. bases maintained in the Philippines meant the U.S. Navy had Filipino servicemen).[312] After the Selective Service Act revision allowing them to serve in the Army and an amendment to the Nationality Act (1940) gave them naturalized citizenship after service (16,000 Filipinos in California became citizens), 40% of California Filipinos volunteered for service. Those not in the army found other wartime employment and were "encouraged to take over property that had been managed or owned by Japanese Americans forcibly removed and incarcerated."[313] This second wave included women and children who were either war brides or families of Filipino servicemen who had been naturalized. Prior to World War II there were 20 Filipino men for every Filipina woman, but the second migration wave saw the gender ratio begin to equalize.[314]

The third migration wave occurred in the years following the 1965 Immigration Act and continued through the beginning of the new millennium. In comparison to the migrants in the first half of the twentieth century, this wave was composed mainly of professionals rather than blue-collar and agricultural workers or military servicemembers.[315] The Filipinos who came to the United States during the 1960s and 1970s were looking to escape President Ferdinand Marcos's dictatorship and seek better employment. Between 1980 and 2006, the

309 Chou et al., *Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in California,* 61.
310 Dawn Bohulano Mabalon, *Little Manila is in the Heart: The Making of the Filipina/o American Community in Stockton, California (*Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013), 40.
311 Chou et al., *Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in California*, 229.
312 Ibid., 66.
313 Ibid., 67.
314 Ibid., 68.
315 Ibid.

number of Filipino/a immigrants to the United States tripled, and they became the second-most populous immigrant group, after Mexican migrants.[316]

## Settlement, Employment, and Economic Roles

Owing to their status as U.S. nationals, Filipinos were allowed to bypass the usual waystation of Angel Island in the San Francisco Bay and settle directly in San Francisco at the turn of the twentieth century. The first wave of migrants dispersed into the Central Valley, with Stockton becoming a cultural hub due to the year-round agricultural work that was available.[317] Farther south, Pajaro Valley provided the same opportunities. The Pajaro Valley, including Watsonville and surrounding areas, had become known as the "Frozen Food Capital" because of the refrigeration facilities located on Beach Road by Apple Growers Ice and Cold Storage Company in 1929. This allowed farmers to ship fresh produce around the country and increased the need for farmworkers, as growers were able to store more product and expand their outputs.[318] Much like Stockton, Watsonville became a similar enclave of Filipino men who worked in the fields picking lettuce, beans, and strawberries. Smaller pockets of Filipino migrants were established in the northern area of the County in Corralitos, Aptos, Santa Cruz, and Davenport, with some men traveling along the coast to follow the harvest seasons.[319] Outside of agriculture, Watsonville's proximity to the coast meant those not employed in the fields could also engage in maritime industry work like fishing, canning, and shipbuilding. Once Filipina women began to settle in the County, a more gendered division of labor emerged, with women taking on cannery jobs, service work in restaurants and hotels, and domestic roles (housekeepers, nannies, and nurses) in the cities.[320]

Unlike Filipino men employed in manual-labor-oriented industries, women used their jobs outside the factory and fields as an extension of their own family and community lives.[321] An example of this trend is Rosita Tabasa, who came to Watsonville in 1933, opened Philippine Gardens, also known as Oriental Café, in 1938. The restaurant became one of many Filipino-owned establishments that functioned as a cultural hub and stayed in business until 1989. This domestic employment trend continued after World War II with the increase of Filipina employment in the healthcare industry, namely as nurses or caretakers. The Exchange Visitor Program initiated by the Philippine and U.S. governments was meant to educate Filipina nurses on American medical practices and maintain friendly foreign relations between the two countries. Many Filipinas involved in the program decided to stay in the United States instead of returning to the Philippines.[322]

Other forms of white-collar employment increased with the Immigration Act of 1965, which officially abolished the national origins quota system. Instead, the new immigration law focused on family reunification and skilled employment, meaning that new immigrants were often health care professionals, engineers, and scientists instead of laborers. By 1970, 40% of all doctors and 20% of all nurses educated in the Philippines had immigrated to the United States.[323]

316 Mabalon, *Little Manila*, 71.
317 Ibid.
318 McElroy and Urbano, *Watsonville Historic Context*, 65.
319 Kathleen Gutierrez, Meleia Simon-Reynolds, Steve McKay, and Roy Recio, interview by Fallin Steffen and Matthew Sundt, April 24, 2025. On file with the County of Santa Cruz.
320 Chou et al., *Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in California*, 226.
321 Gutierrez et al., oral history interview.
322 Chou et al., *Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in California*, 233–234.
323 Ibid., 70.

## Social Institutions and Community Identity

Because Filipino migrants before World War II were primarily single men, dance halls became popular and allowed them to socialize with women. In Watsonville, the dance hall became the center of migrant night life. The Palm Beach Dance Hall, located near River Road in Pajaro Dunes, was a "taxi dance hall," which meant that women were paid to dance and socialize with the single men there. Palm Beach specifically catered to Filipino farm workers in the area, which also contributed to tensions in the area. The women attending these dances were White or Mexican, which became a problem for other White residents of the County once public sentiment toward Filipinos began to sour.[324]

Outside of dance halls, spaces where Filipinos could mingle with non-Filipinos were limited. County officials and White residents employed exclusionary tactics to keep Filipinos segregated. In response, many Filipino-owned and -operated businesses and community spaces opened beginning in the 1920s. Chief among them was the Aglipay Lodge No. 27, a chapter of the Caballeros de Dimas-Alang fraternal organization and mutual aid society, whose members met at the Watsonville Veterans Memorial Building on East Beach Street. The Veterans Building and Elks Lodge were the home bases of most Filipino fraternal orders. The Caballeros de Dimas-Alang was founded in San Francisco in 1920 as an offshoot of the same organization started in Manila in 1906. Originally established to promote Philippine liberation from the United States after the Spanish-American War, the organization drew heavily from Freemason rituals and customs.[325] Much like its purpose in the Philippines, "membership in [the organization] gave immigrants … a collective voice in the political landscape of … Filipina/o American communities" when they were not afforded that by their new home country.[326] Additionally, fraternal organizations allowed Filipino men whose families had not immigrated with them to feel a sense of brotherhood and togetherness.

Once the female Filipina population grew, women felt they needed their own community meeting places. The Dona Aurora Quezon Lodge, a female chapter of the Caballeros de Dimas-Alang named after a former first lady of the Philippines, was established after World War II to provide them with an outlet.[327] The Filipino Community Hall of Watsonville at 2248 Freedom Boulevard hosted events and meetings. The Filipino Women's Club of Watsonville, founded in 1951 by Rosario Nieva Alminiana, hosted cultural events and was a space for non-Filipina who married Filipino men to be in community with other women and learn Filipino cultural practices. Through partnership in these groups, "Filipinas created the networks responsible for organizing queen contests, dances, fundraisers, conventions, parades, carnivals, sports tournaments, cultural performances, and church functions—all events and sites within which Filipina/o American cultural traditions were created."[328]

Barbershops became important cultural spaces, places where men, especially elderly, single farm laborers, gathered and relaxed. Manila Barbershop at 2415 Mission Street in Santa Cruz was operated by Arsenio "Archie" Soblechero Lopez.[329] There was also Universal Barbershop, located at 150 Main Street in Watsonville, opened by

[324] University of California, Santa Cruz (UCSC), and the Tobera Project, *1930 Watsonville Anti-Filipino Race Riots: Mapping Historic Refusal*, University of California Humanities Research Institute, accessed August 4, 2025, https://wiith-map.ucsc.edu/historicalmap/.
[325] Una Lynch, *Reconsidering Rosita Tabasa: Watsonville's Revered Matriarch,* July 17, 2023, online exhibit, https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/fa463a6a8e3c4e90b2850932c85fa039, accessed August 14, 2025.
[326] Mabalon, *Little Manila*, 109–110.
[327] Lynch, *Reconsidering Rosita Tabasa.*
[328] Mabalon, *Little Manila*, 170.
[329] Gutierrez et al., oral history interview.

Amando Alminiana in 1934.[330] Church were another place to socialize and feel a community connection. The Presbyterian church in Watsonville at 75 Marchant Street was home to a largely Filipino congregation.[331]

## Social Justice and Labor Activism

The Filipino experience was unique because they were U.S. nationals due to the territory status of the Philippines and therefore did not consider themselves "immigrants." They assimilated into American culture in many ways, but chief among them was the prevalence of Filipino men marrying White women. The large number of Filipinos who entered the United States to find work and replace the dwindling Chinese and Japanese labor force were soon accused of stealing jobs as the Great Depression loomed large over the country. Filipinos were not allowed to own land, so they were unable to become sharecroppers as some Japanese immigrants in the Pajaro Valley did in the first half of the twentieth century. The general feeling toward Filipinos can be summed up in this Evening Pajaronian article paraphrasing a resolution passed by county Judge J.D. Rohrback in 1930:

> With the arrival of every boatload of Filipinos says the judge, a boatload of American men and women are thrown out of the labor markets to lives of crime, indolence, and poverty because, for a wage that a White man cannot exist on, the Filipinos will take the job and through the clannish low standard mode of housing and feeding practiced among them, will soon be well clothed, and as the judge says, strutting about like a peacock and endeavoring to attract the eyes of the young American and Mexican girls.[332]

The mounting racial tensions of the 1920s finally exploded into the Watsonville Anti-Filipino Race Riots in 1930, when a White mob terrorized the local Filipino community for 5 days, from January 19 to 23,[333] culminating in the murder of Fermin Tobera. Eight White men stormed Murphy Ranch on San Juan Road, where Tobera was killed when a rioter shot into the side of a bunkhouse where he and other Filipino workers were hiding to protect themselves from the violence.[334]

Following the riots and continued discrimination and exploitation, the Filipino Labor Union was formed in Salinas in 1933.[335] This first venture into labor organizing helped spark the 1934 Salinas lettuce strike, which was bolstered by farm workers from the Pajaro Valley. Filipino lettuce cutters and White packing shed workers joined forces to demand higher wages and union recognition. The growers immediately tried to break apart worker solidarity by refusing to negotiate with Filipinos and unleashing more retaliatory violence on the community, including burning down labor camps.[336] While this strike was unsuccessful, it laid the groundwork for labor activism in the 1950s and 1960s. Larry Itliong, who had been involved in the Filipino labor movement in Stockton and Delano since the 1930s, made efforts to build bridges with Mexican farmworkers. Itliong and the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee initiated the walkout that became the 1965 Delano Grape Strike.[337] The Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee

330 Christina Plank, *More than their Labor: Sites of Manong Labor and Leisure in the Pajaro Valley,* September 3, 2021, *Online Exhibit*, https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/e060a801d7754ff8b22d9ece97c286eb, accessed August 14, 2025.
331 Gutierrez et al., oral history interview.
332 UCSC and the Tobera Project, *1930 Watsonville Anti-Filipino Race Riots Map*.
333 Ibid.
334 Ibid.
335 Chou et al., *Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in California*, 114.
336 Ibid.
337 Ibid., 183.

soon merged with the National Farm Workers Association, led by Cesar Chavez, to form the United Farm Workers (UFW) in 1966. The strike lasted 5 years and achieved better wages and safety measures for farm laborers.[338]

The cross-cultural alliance frayed soon after, when Cesar Chavez publicly supported Philippine dictator President Ferdinand Marcos and alienated many Filipino UFW leaders who opposed Marcos's rise to power.[339] Philip Vera Cruz, a founding member of the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee and the vice president of UFW, resigned in protest and distanced himself from UFW. Other Filipino organizers like Pete Velasco followed suit, as they felt their voices were becoming increasingly marginalized within the union.[340]

The Filipino community in the County established a vibrant and lasting presence despite decades of exclusion, labor exploitation, and racial violence. In addition to their role in the region's agricultural sector, Filipinos shaped the Pajaro Valley economy through work in canneries, healthcare industries, and small business ownership. They created cultural infrastructure with churches, barbershops, fraternal orders, and women's clubs that fostered belonging and helped to preserve Filipino traditions. Crucially, Filipino labor organizers forged cross-cultural solidarity with Mexican farmworkers that catalyzed a broader movement for workers' rights. Even though these alliances later fractured, Filipino cultural, social, and political contributions to the County endure.

## 2.5.6 Italian

Italian immigrants historically settled in the County following the Gold Rush, where they contributed broadly to the social and economic fabric of the County in the areas of fishing, agriculture, and specialized trades.

### Background

Italian fishing vessels originating from the city of Genoa or the broader Liguria region in northwestern Italy began arriving along the California coast in the 1830s. Some of these early fishermen decided to stay in California, including Matias Sabici, the first Italian commercial fisherman who settled in Monterey during the 1830s. Many of these fishermen appreciated California's climate and landscape, and upon returning home, they described the region's suitability for winemaking to their relatives and friends. Despite Liguria not historically being associated with winemaking, individuals from this region interested in viticulture began arriving in California during the 1840s to establish vineyards.[341] After the discovery of gold in California, many Italians migrated to the region during the Gold Rush. Rather than pursuing mining, a significant number arrived as skilled craftsmen—woodworkers, sculptors, masons, and glass blowers—attracted by the economic opportunities in rapidly growing settlements. By 1850, there were 229 Italians residing in San Francisco.[342] These early immigrants did not come to escape a crisis in their homeland, but rather to seek new opportunity as fishermen, farmers, merchants, and skilled laborers. Some Italian immigrants during this period came as single men, working hard to send money home and maintaining the option

338 Ibid.

339 "Filipino Group Says 'Chavez' Falls Far Short in Crediting Larry Itliong," *The Reporter*, April 11, 2014. https://www.thereporter.com/2014/04/11/filipino-group-says-chavez-falls-far-short-in-crediting-larry-itliong/, accessed August 15, 2025.

340 Hansook Oh, "Remembering the Delano Manongs: The Filipinos behind Chavez and Huerta," *Daily Sundial*, March 27, 2012, https://sundial.csun.edu/51119/opinions/remembering-the-delano-manongs-the-filipinos-behind-chavez-and-huerta/, accessed August 15, 2025.

341 Bancroft Library, "Timeline of Italian Americans in California," Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, last updated May 7, 2007, archived January 16, 2018, Wayback Machine, https://web.archive.org/web/20160108043621/http://vm136.lib.berkeley.edu/BANC/collections/italianamericans/timeline.html.

342 Bancroft Library, "Italian Americans in California," Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, last updated May 4, 2007, archived January 16, 2018, Wayback Machine, https://web.archive.org/web/20180513155628/http://bancroft.berkeley.edu/collections/italianamericans/exhibit.html

to return to their homeland. There were others who brought their families and purchased land, intending to set down roots. By 1860, there were more Italians in California than any other state.[343] Italy's modern nationhood is rooted in a complex cultural and political history, as the country once consisted of multiple autonomous kingdoms, duchies, and principalities prior to its unification as the Kingdom of Italy in 1861.[344] Consequently, immigrants from these regions who settled in California, both before and after unification, frequently identified themselves by their specific region of origin (e.g. Liguria, Sicily, or Naples) rather than as Italian. The U.S. immigration system supported this to a degree, by separately recording the number of northern and southern Italians entering the country.[345]

Despite fewer than 25,000 Italians entering the United States between 1830 and 1870, San Francisco maintained a sizeable Italian community that coexisted with the other groups of European and Asian immigrants who flowed into the city.[346] Motivated by the example of benevolent societies formed by the French and Chinese immigrants, Italians from various regions who settled in San Francisco joined together under the identity of the newly unified Italian nation to establish mutual aid associations in California. These organizations were created to aid and support newly arrived Italian immigrants.[347] A celebration of Christopher Columbus organized by Italian immigrants in San Francisco in 1869 notably commemorated "the first Italian-American," suggesting a rising awareness of a collective identity.[348]

A significantly larger influx of Italian immigrants arrived in the United States and California between 1880 and 1915, prompted by a convergence of political, social, and economic factors that contributed to widespread crisis in Italy. Although unified since 1861, stark contrasts between the wealthy northern industrialized regions and the poor rural agrarian southern regions kept the country ideologically and politically separated. Southern Italians faced growing famine, poverty, and natural disasters, but did not receive adequate support from the Italian government. Unlike earlier waves of Italian fishermen and craftsmen who came to seek a new life, these new immigrants were largely unskilled laborers and farmers from the southern areas of Italy attempting to escape poverty. Many were single men intending to return home after earning money. Anti-Chinese legislation led to a decline in the Chinese migrant workforce, resulting in a significant labor shortage in industries across the state. Because this later wave of Italian immigrants was willing to engage in various forms of employment wherever opportunities were available, many took on the work formerly filled by the Chinese migrant laborers. As many as 30–50% of this generation of Italian immigrants returned home within a few years, so many that they are known in Italy as *ritornati*, or "those who returned."[349] In spite of the ritornati, the sheer number of Italians immigrating to the United States during this period meant that there were still a great number who settled permanently. During the 1880s, 300,000 Italian immigrants came to the United States, followed by 600,000 in the 1890s. In 1890, California continued to be home to the largest group of Italians in the United States.[350]

343 Bancroft Library, "Italian Americans in California."
344 Office of the Historian, "A Guide to the United States' History of Recognition, Diplomatic, and Consular Relations, by Country, since 1776: Italy," U.S. Department of State, Office of the Historian, https://history.state.gov/countries/italy.
345 Bancroft Library, "Italian Americans in California."
346 Library of Congress, "Early Arrivals," *Immigration and Relocation in U.S. History: Italian.* https://www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/immigration/italian/early-arrivals/.
347 Bancroft Library, "Timeline of Italian Americans in California."
348 Bancroft Library, "Italian Americans in California," as quoted.
349 Library of Congress, "The Great Arrival," *Immigration and Relocation in U.S. History: Italian,* https://www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/immigration/italian/the-great-arrival/.
350 Bancroft Library, "Italian Americans in California."

## Settlement in Santa Cruz County

Genoese fishermen begin arriving in the vicinity of the County around the mid-1870s, to a shoreline that had been occupied and fished by Chinese fishermen for over a decade.[351] The keeled Italian fishing boats, known as *feluccas*, were not suitable for the shallow waters along the Santa Cruz coastline. As a result, Italian fishermen frequently sailed to Monterey for several seasons after settling in the County. Unable to compete with Chinese fishermen near the Santa Cruz and Capitola wharfs because of the shape of their boats, Italian, Portuguese, and Californio (descendants of Spanish-speaking colonial settlers of California) fishermen leveraged their influence in the Santa Cruz Workingmen's Party to impose political pressure and restrictions on Chinese fishing operations in the County. This coincided with anti-Chinese measures, known as "The Chinese Must Go" provisions included in the 1879 California Constitution, that took effect in 1880. By 1888, the Italians, along with the Portuguese and Californio, overtook the dominance of the Chinese fishermen.[352] Some of these early Italian families, like the Stagnaro, Loero, and Ghio families, settled in the Westside neighborhood of Santa Cruz in the vicinity of Bay and Laguna Streets.[353] They continued to be prominent names in commercial fishing for the next 100 years (Exhibit 30).[354]

**Exhibit 30.** Italian boats anchored off the wharf in Santa Cruz, circa 1900–1912.


**Source:** Courtesy of the University of California, Santa Cruz Special Collections, Santa Cruz County historic photograph collection.

351 Koch, *Santa Cruz County Parade of the Past*, 198.
352 Lydon, *Chinese Gold*, 49, 51, 53.
353 Sheila O'Hare and Irena Berry, *Images of America: Santa Cruz California* (Arcadia Publishing: Charleston, South Carolina: 2002), 53.
354 Koch, *Santa Cruz County Parade of the Past*, 198.

Italian immigrants who arrived in the County during the late 1860s also established themselves in the foothill regions of the Santa Cruz Mountains, where they found employment in logging and developed small-scale vineyards, orchards, and market gardens. Donald Clark discusses the area north of Santa Cruz between the San Lorenzo River and Ocean Street in Santa Cruz County Place Names, noting that "Italian Gardens" is a nickname for a section of Santa Cruz "first settled in 1869 Pete Monteverde and Antonio Cappelli, soon to be followed by the Pedemontes, Rossis, and other Italians who converted the area into vineyards and lush gardens and orchards." (Exhibit 31)[355] Italians began participating in the fresh fruit and vegetable merchant industry in this manner.

**Exhibit 31.** Photo showing the area called "Italian Gardens" looking west from Graham Hill Road towards the San Lorenzo River, circa 1895 to 1920.


**Source:** Courtesy of the University of California, Santa Cruz Special Collections, Santa Cruz County historic photograph collection.

The 1880s saw tremendous viticulture expansion in the Santa Cruz Mountains, both in Santa Cruz and Santa Clara Counties. Until this period, wine production was limited to use of the "mission variety" wine grapes brought by Franciscan Padres for cultivation and consumption at the missions across California, including Mission Santa Cruz.

[355] Clark, *Santa Cruz County Place Names,* 157.

Famed European varieties were planted by a range of European immigrants to California accustomed to drinking fine European wines, including Italians, but also French, Portuguese, and German.[356]

Although families from Sicily and southern Italy began arriving in California around 1900, most immigrants to northern California, including Santa Cruz, continued to come from Liguria and other northern Italian regions. In general, Italians assimilated into California society at a relatively fast rate. and experienced a somewhat swift advancement to the middle class in California compared both with the Italians in the eastern United States and other immigrant groups in California. Italian Americans in California encountered less prejudice and had increased economic mobility overall, allowing them to naturalize and integrate more quickly when compared to their experiences in other regions.[357]

The Italian wine industry in Santa Cruz continued strongly into the early twentieth century with new immigrants to the area. The ratification of the Eighteenth Amendment in 1919 marking the beginning of Prohibition led to economic challenges for vineyards throughout California. Vintners responded by selling their products as "sacramental" wine or medicinal elixirs, or simply participated in bootlegging to make ends meet.[358] Filippo "Phillip" and Giovanni "John" Bargetto moved to Soquel in 1919 after closing their San Francisco winery as Prohibition took hold. In 1922, they purchased a 52-acre property known as "the Ranch," in modern-day Glen Haven, north of Soquel, within an established Italian immigrant community similar to Italian Gardens.[359] The Bargettos began new lives as produce vendors in this small community made up of individuals working as "lumberjacks, truck farmers, and vegetable peddlers."[360] Although their new ventures supported them and their growing families, they missed making wine. In 1924, the Bargettos began a bootlegging business with wine they had been making for personal use on the ranch. While some of the wine they produced went straight to the local consumer in gallon jugs, most of it was incorporated into weekend dinners served in the family home. The Bargettos served meals—with wine included—to high-profile members of society including judges, police officers, firefighters, lawyers, and doctors. By catering to such influential clientele, they enjoyed a degree of social protection that shielded them from prosecution during Prohibition that might have otherwise hindered their operations.[361] Although the Bargettos saw difficulties during the Great Depression, the passage of the Twenty-First Amendment repealing Prohibition on December 5, 1933, was coincidentally the same date the Bargetto Winery was formally established in Soquel. Raffaelle "Ralph" Bargetto, son of founder Giovanni Bargetto, noted in a 1992 interview that "[He] always laughed that on Repeal Day … we started with vintage wines."[362] The Bargetto Winery saw continued success, and although the family sold the original ranch property in 1944, the Bargetto family currently continues to own and operate the winery.[363]

Italians known as *Italiani della costa*, or "coastal Italians,"[364] settled along the northern coast of the County in the vicinity of Davenport. The Italian immigrant community in this region included seasonal agricultural laborers and property owners who managed coastal ranches. They are recognized for their significant contribution to the cultivation of two crops, Brussel sprouts and artichokes, that remain prominent in the area's agricultural industry today. Brussels sprouts were first cultivated outside of Davenport in 1915 by Agostino Puccinelli, and the first artichoke was planted as an experiment in 1916 by Aquilino Ettore Morelli also outside Davenport. This coincided with the artichoke's rise in popularity nationally, and Davenport became the largest producer of artichokes in the

356 Bargetto and Dunn, *Vintage Bargetto*, 23.
357 Bancroft Library, "Italian Americans in California."
358 Bancroft Library, "Timeline of Italian Americans in California."
359 Bargetto and Dunn, *Vintage Bargetto*, 33–34, 40–42.
360 Ibid., 33.
361 Bargetto and Dunn, *Vintage Bargetto*, 40–42.
362 As quoted in Bargetto and Dunn, *Vintage Bargetto*, 49.
363 Bargetto and Dunn, *Vintage Bargetto*, 53.
364 Comelli, *La Nostra Costa (Our Coast)*, 5.

state. The cool, wet coastal climate was also ideal for growing Brussel sprouts and artichokes, as well as lima beans, broccoli, cauliflower, peas, and rhubarb. Produce was packed up on ice at coastal packing sheds, which were first staffed by Italian immigrants, followed by Filipino and Latino migrant laborers who began arriving in the 1920s and sent to market by train.[365]

**Exhibit 32.** View of an artichoke field along Coast Road, circa 1920.


**Source:** Courtesy of the University of California, Santa Cruz Special Collections, Santa Cruz County historic photograph collection.

This period saw a new wave of immigrants from Italy that included World War I veterans and individuals fleeing fascism under Prime Minister Benito Mussolini. Mussolini rose to power in Italy in the 1920s and soon targeted his political opponents. Many Italians immigrated to avoid being conscripted into the army or persecuted by the regime.[366] At the same time, general national security concerns and increased immigration following the end of

[365] Orlando et al., *Images of America: Davenport*, 78–79.
[366] Bancroft Library, "Timeline of Italian Americans in California."

World War I contributed to anti-immigration sentiments already present in the 1910s and 1920s targeting Eastern and Southern Europeans, including Italians. The Immigration Act of 1924reduced the movement of Italian immigrants to the United States and consequently to the County, while including few to no restrictions for immigrants from other areas of Western Europe. Italian immigration nevertheless persisted, although at a reduced rate, and by 1940 California's Italian population reached 100,911. Italians represented the largest foreign-born ethnic group in the United States during this period.[367]

Following the attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941, suspicion and fear of "enemy aliens"—Japanese, Italian, and German immigrants—intensified. In February 1942, President Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066, granting the War Department authority to designate military zones and remove individuals deemed a threat to national security.[368] This order paved the way for the relocation of Italian immigrants living near the West Coast. On January 25, 1942, enemy aliens—Italians, Germans, and Japanese nationals without American citizenship, and some naturalized citizens—were restricted from all areas west of Highway 1 in Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties as part of the establishment of a military zone along the coast. Those Italians immigrants residing in these restricted zones, which was a great number because of their fishing-based livelihoods, were required to register and relocate away from the restricted area by February 24, 1942. After relocation, they were required to adhere to a 9:00 p.m. curfew, and limit travel strictly to commuting between home and work. [369] Executive Order 9066 impacted the Italian immigrants in the County who were not naturalized. They were forced to physically move from the coastal properties they had owned for decades to temporary lodging on the far side of Highway 1. Italian fishermen working at the Santa Cruz Municipal Wharf, including the descendants of the families who had first arrived in Santa Cruz in the 1870s and now had sons serving in the U.S. military, were immediately restricted from taking their boats to sea and fishing.[370] Italian artichoke and sprout farms along the North Coast who had struggled during the Great Depression years were hit with a major labor shortage as Italian laborers were pulled from the fields. Their situation drew public sympathy and advocacy from local Italian leaders, who criticized the government's inability to distinguish loyal residents from potential threats and called for policies that would allow these men to resume their livelihoods. Italians were later reclassified as "non-enemy" on Colombus Day, October 12, 1942, and allowed to return to their homes and livelihoods.[371]

Although they faced prejudice and discrimination based on their Italian heritage, many first- and second-generation Italian American men from Santa Cruz were drafted into the U.S. Armed Forces during World War II. This reflected their growing identification with American society and desire to assimilate broadly into all levels of American life during this period. Similarly, the unification of earlier Ligurian immigrants from the north of Italy with the Sicilian immigrants from the south as "Italians" and the resulting treatment by the U.S. government solidified a pan-Italian identity that helped to contribute to a resurgence in Italian American pride and efforts to preserve Italian cultural identity. This development was demonstrated by the formation of local chapters of benevolent societies such as the Order of the Sons and Daughters of Italy in America, which was established nationally in 1905 and founded Watsonville Lodge No. 2016 in 1951.[372] Additionally, organizations like the Santa Cruz United Order of the Druids Grove 42—while not originally formed as an Italian entity in the 1920s—maintained a predominantly Italian membership until the order disbanded in 1969. Italian Americans are present in various industries and

367 Bancroft Library, "Timeline of Italian Americans in California."
368 Roosevelt, "Executive Order 9066."
369 Geoffrey Dunn, *Male Notte: The Untold Story of Italian Relocation During World War II*, 1996, 2, Santa Cruz Public Libraries Local History Collection.
370 *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, "Twelve Unhappy Enemy Aliens of Santa Cruz," February 1, 1942, 7.
371 Dunn, *Male Notte*, 6.
372 Janey Malatesta Leonardich, oral history interview response, April 24, 2025. On file with the County of Santa Cruz.

communities throughout the County. Over a century since the start of significant Italian immigration to the region, descendants still observe traditions and heritage from their ancestors today.

## 2.5.7 Latino

People of Mexican descent have historically lived in the County, since before California achieved statehood in 1850. The early permeability of the United States/Mexico border until the 1920s allowed for a sense of self that was both Mexican and American, although not yet Mexican American. The term "Hispanic" or "Spanish" was used to describe these early migrants who were still counted as "White" on the U.S. Census.[373] The terms "Latino" and "Chicano" gained popularity after World War II and during the Civil Rights Era to self-identify, rather than using a term that had been imposed upon them. "Latino" remains the catch-all term for people with ancestry rooted in Latin America. This study uses "Latino" to most often refer to people of Mexican descent but acknowledges that later immigrants to the Pajaro Valley came from other parts of Latin America like El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua. "Chicano" is used to describe Mexican Americans who were born in the United States and is commonly associated with the UFW movement of the 1960s.

### Background

California was part of Mexican territory prior to the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, which ceded the area to the United States and created the first Mexican Americans. Land ownership became ambiguous, with many Californios unable to satisfactorily prove their claims to the new government. Anglo settlers took advantage of the bureaucratic confusion and would either appropriate 160 acres of a former rancho through the Homestead Act or would illegally take possession of land without obtaining a deed.[374] While Mission Santa Cruz had 650 inhabitants, both mestizos (Mexican citizens of European and Indigenous ancestry) and Indigenous, in 1850, they were soon in the minority after a deluge of White migrants came west during the Gold Rush.

By 1900, over 8,000 new Mexican immigrants had settled in California and found work on the railroads or in agriculture, two industries that boomed at the end of the nineteenth century as a result of technological advances.[375] Working in tandem to bolster the Mexican American population were restrictions on Asian immigrants by the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and the Immigration Act of 1907, which increased the demand for laborers, while the start of the Mexican Revolution in 1910 heightened the movement of people across the border looking for higher wages and political stability. This pattern of U.S. reliance on Mexican labor would continue through World War II, though in different forms.[376] The creation of the Border Patrol as a federal agency in 1924, along with new requirements of "an eight-dollar head tax, a literacy test, and a physical exam" to enter the United States, increased the incentive to stay in the United States permanently or cross the border illegally to avoid paying the head tax. Those who crossed into California with the intention of staying would often bring family members, wives, and children, which increased the number of Mexican women now living and working in the United States.[377]

373 "Hispanic" did not appear in the U.S. Census until 1970; "Latino" was not used until 2000 and did not specify country of origin until 2010.
374 Homestead Act of 1862.
375 California Office of Historic Preservation (CA OHP), *Latinos in Twentieth Century California: National Register of Historic Places Context Statement* (Sacramento: California State Parks, 2015), 9, accessed August 4, 2025, https://ohp.parks.ca.gov/pages/1054/files/latinosmpdf_illustrated.pdf.
376 David G. Gutiérrez, *American Latino Theme Study: Immigration*, U.S. National Park Service, accessed August 4, 2025, https://www.nps.gov/articles/latinothemeimmigration.htm.
377 CA OHP, *Latinos in Twentieth Century California*, 11.

After the massive job losses and lack of government assistance that followed the stock market crash of 1929, public sentiment toward immigrants began to sour. Mexican migrant workers had been viewed as "desirable" because they would return to Mexico during the offseason, which happened less frequently once the border became more heavily militarized. Once migrants established themselves in the United States, they were seen as competitors with White migrants (or "Okies") from the Dust Bowl areas for what few jobs and assistance remained during the Great Depression, which prompted laws at the state and federal level discouraging the employment of Mexican workers and encouraging deportation. Most of these deportations were done violently through raids on Mexican neighborhoods, and they ended up "repatriating" many American citizens in the process. Between 100,000 and 400,000 people were deported from California as a result of these dragnet operations.[378]

Following a familiar pattern, the United States found itself in need of immigrant labor once again during World War II. Executive Order 9066, forcibly removed and interned people of Japanese descent (immigrants and native-born), who were the Pajaro Valley's primary strawberry growers, leaving a need for agricultural workers remained. Once again finding itself looking to Mexico for a solution, the United States created the Emergency Farm Labor Agreement in 1942 and allowed Mexicans to legally cross the border in exchange for work and housing.[379] The agreement came to be known as the Bracero Program, which comes from the Spanish word *brazos* (arms) to refer to workers. The benefit for Mexico was ostensibly to learn American agricultural techniques, while the United States gained a cheap and dispensable labor force. Braceros were frequently subjected to exploitation by their employers and to discrimination from the communities where they were placed. Labor laws designed to protect other workers were not enforced, and the deliberate linkage of workers' visas to their employment status discouraged braceros from organizing or attempting to negotiate with their bosses.[380]

Despite this systemic mistreatment, the Bracero Program was seen as a success and continued to be renewed annually until 1964 because of the increased demand for agricultural products after the postwar population boom. It was during this 22-year period that the distinction between "legal" and "illegal" workers crystallized with the implementation of "*Operation Wetback"* in 1954. Some migrant workers did not participate in the Bracero Program but still crossed the border in search of employment. The purpose of the operation was to capture and deport these undocumented workers. However, like the repatriation effort during the Great Depression, the laborers rounded up during these mass removal campaigns were often Mexican Americans and not Mexican nationals.[381] Some agribusinesses in both California and Texas would hire non-bracero workers and would "notify border enforcement just prior to payday, facilitating the deportation of workers without the financial obligation of compensation."[382] These unjustifiable actions paved the way for increased farm worker labor organizing, like the UFW in Delano and Salinas, and set off a series of strikes and solidarity actions in the 1960s and 1970s.

Latino migration into the County and the Pajaro Valley continued to increase into the 1980s, with more Central American migrants crossing the border to escape political instability at home. Indigenous Mexicans also began to settle along the Central Coast of California and presented a new challenge to community building and worker solidarity because of the language barrier between the existing Spanish-speaking Latino population and the Mixtec-speaking new migrants.[383] The Republican Party and other conservatives categorized the increased Latino

378 Ibid., 14.
379 Samuel S. Cao, *California's Bracero Program*, Santa Clara University Digital Exhibit, 2024, https://dh.scu.edu/exhibits/exhibits/show/california-s-bracero-program/intro, accessed August 12, 2025.
380 Ibid.
381 Ibid.
382 Ibid.
383 Lisa Kresge, "Indigenous Oaxacan Communities in California: An Overview," (Davis, CA: California Institute for Rural Studies, 2007), 8–9, accessed July 29, 2025, http://lib.ncfh.org/pdfs/7340.pdf.

presence in California as an "invasion," which led to the passage of Proposition 187 in 1994. The law ended bilingual education in the state and denied public services to undocumented immigrants.[384] Although this initiative was repealed in 1999 for being unconstitutional, 59% of California voters had approved Proposition 187, a majority that reflected a successful fearmongering campaign.[385]

## Settlement, Employment, and Economic Roles

The Latino population of Watsonville, where many farms and canneries were located, had reached 17% of residents by 1960.[386] Because most Mexican immigrants during the first half of the twentieth century were migrant laborers, their settlement patterns in the County coincided with proximity to agricultural areas in unincorporated areas like Amesti, Interlaken, and Freedom, which are clustered around the north edge of Watsonville.[387] These laborers were men who had crossed the border alone to send money back to their families and frequently did not have a permanent residence because they planned to return to Mexico once the harvest season was over. Instead, they would live communally, with up to nine men to a room furnished with bunk beds, but with seldom a toilet.[388] Sometimes they lived in shacks located on farmland where they picked strawberries, lettuce, and beans. Once the Bracero Program took effect in 1942, migrant workers lived in labor camps on the outskirts of the County and would be taken in trucks or buses to work in the fields for up to 10 hours a day.[389] The labor camps were arranged as barracks-style housing: several long, single-story buildings with rows of cots packed together inside.[390] It was also common for these men to work at canneries at night after their day shifts were over.

384 Ronald Mize and Alicia Swords, *Consuming Mexican Labor: From the Bracero Program to NAFTA* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 98.
385 CA OHP, *Latinos in Twentieth Century California*, 113.
386 McElroy and Urbano, *Watsonville Historic Context*, 139.
387 "Grace Arceneaux: Mexican American Farmworker and Community Organizer, 1920-1977," interviewed by Meri Knaster, 2003, 111. *Regional History Project: Agricultural History of Santa Cruz County Oral Histories*, University of California at Santa Cruz, accessed August 14, 2025, https://escholarship.org/uc/item/5gb519xk.
388 "Jose Galvan Amaro: Mexican American Laborer, Watsonville, California, 1902–1977," interviewed by Meri Knaster, June 1977, 44. *Regional History Project: Agricultural History of Santa Cruz County Oral Histories*, University of California at Santa Cruz, accessed August 14, 2025, https://escholarship.org/uc/item/6173d6k4.
389 Cao, *California's Bracero Program*.
390 Ibid.

**Exhibit 33.** Photograph of Gondo Camp on Hecker Pass Road, facing east toward the foothills. Two braceros sit in the foreground.

**Source:** Leonard Nadel, "Photographs of Mexican Braceros," 1950–2006, bulk 1956–1960. Collection ID: NMAH.AC.1313. Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC.

Gondo Camp on Hecker Pass Road east of Watsonville was one of the more prolific labor camps during the Bracero era. Built in 1955 and run by a Japanese family who had returned to their farm after wartime internment, the camp was notorious for its terrible conditions.[391] Because the Bracero Program was sanctioned by the United States and Mexico, both countries investigated these reports as part of a widespread Department of Labor effort.[392] They found "serious violations" of the international agreement to provide clean and sanitary living quarters. Gondo Camp was shut down in 1957 and the 300 workers who lived there were moved to another camp.[393] Despite this action and subsequent investigations by the government, nothing substantial was done on a systemic level to improve conditions for the braceros.

For the women who immigrated to the United States, either as children with their parents or wives with their husbands, it was common to work in the canneries and other food processing plants located around Watsonville and the Pajaro Valley. They participated in agricultural labor as well, but less often than their male counterparts. The rise of urbanization and decline of agricultural and factory jobs created another gendered division of labor for Latinas. Women increasingly became domestic workers beginning in 1970, as "those with … disposable incomes outsource their domestic and childcare needs to a paid labor force most often supplied by immigrant women."[394]

391 *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, "Mexico Withdraws Workers from Watsonville Camp," August 15, 1957, 1.
392 Ibid.
393 Ibid.
394 Mize and Swords, *Consuming Mexican Labor*, 129.

As the tourism industry in the County began to increase in the post World War II years, Latinas also found work as maids or food service workers around popular vacation areas like the Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk.[395] Although some economic diversity was introduced to the Pajaro Valley, agricultural and migrant labor remained the primary source of employment for Mexican nationals and Mexican Americans into the twenty-first century.[396]

## Social Institutions and Community Identity

While the Latino community in the United States has long been considered a Roman Catholic majority, the County has had a population of practicing Latino Pentecostals since at least the Great Depression.[397] An offshoot of Protestant Christianity that was already popular in southern states, Pentecostalism surged upward in California Latino communities through immigrants already practicing the religion. It was much rarer for those who arrived in the United States as Catholics to convert.[398] The main Pentecostal church in the County was the Apostolic Church located at 115 Van Ness Avenue in Watsonville, also known as the Apostolic Assembly, which went through several iterations, beginning in 1935 as the Full Gospel Tabernacle.[399] In the 1946 county directory, the church is sited at 117 Van Ness Avenue and was then called the Apostolic Mexican Church. The congregation then moved to 113 East Front Street around 1960 and became known as the Iglesia Apostolica de la Fe En Cristo Jesus (Apostolic Assembly of the Faith in Jesus Christ). The church went by this name in both Spanish and English at East Front Street through 1989.[400] For Mexican immigrants who were practicing Catholics, the Holy Cross Church in Santa Cruz and St. Patrick's Catholic Church on Main Street in Watsonville were the two main parishes.[401] Holy Cross was originally located at the site of Mission Santa Cruz but was moved to High Street in 1889 following the collapse of its façade. St. Patrick's was built in 1903, although a congregation had existed since 1865, and was destroyed in the Loma Prieta Earthquake. Its replacement, which was dedicated in 1994, is still extant in downtown Watsonville.[402]

The intersection of work and family among Mexican communities in the Pajaro Valley played a large part in shaping their identity and care networks throughout the twentieth century. Many family members would often work for the same bosses in canneries or in the orchards and fields. Mexican and Chicana workers were at the heart of these networks, and women's wage labor was often deeply entwined with household responsibilities: women needed to sustain both paid work and domestic obligations.[403] Extended families would provide childcare, emotional support, and survival strategies to navigate the economic hardship and inequality prevalent in these workplaces for both men and women.[404] This cultural interdependence was highlighted during the 1985–1987 Watsonville Cannery Strike, primarily organized by women, with the strikers leveraging community bonds to organize, maintain picket lines, and build solidarity. Many of the cannery workers used their dual roles as mothers and workers to legitimize their demands and galvanize community support.[405]

395 Ibid.
396 Veronica Terriquez, "Latina Wage Gap in Santa Cruz County" (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Los Angeles).
397 Paul Tutwiler, *Santa Cruz Spirituality*, 79.
398 Ibid., 80.
399 Ibid.
400 Ibid.
401 Tutwiler, *Santa Cruz Spirituality,* 19.
402 Ibid., 21.
403 Cruz P. Takash, "A Crisis of Democracy: Community Responses to the Latinization of a California Town Dependent on Immigrant Labor" (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1990), 97.
404 Patricia Zavella, *Women's Work and Chicano Families: Cannery Workers of the Santa Clara Valley* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987), 93–94, accessed August 25, 2025, http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctt1wn0qrh.
405 William V. Flores, "Mujeres en Huelga: Cultural Citizenship and Gender Empowerment in a Cannery Strike," *Humboldt Journal of Social Relations* 22, no. 1 (1996): 57. accessed July 30, 2025, https://www.jstor.org/stable/23263042.

Community identity also came in the form of Latino cultural events where Mexican Americans could gather and participate in shared heritage celebrations even though they were living in a predominantly White region. Fiestas Patrias parades, commemorating Mexico's independence, and Dia de los Muertos altars and religious services both served to make Latino culture visible and accessible to people living in the County.[406] Folklórico dance groups and youth clubs emerged in the 1930s and 1940s, often organized through church networks or mutual aid societies, offered ways for children to engage with their cultural backgrounds as descendants of immigrants. These cultural practices functioned as acts of "cultural citizenship" and further merged the idea of engaging in one's communities as a form of political expression.[407]

## Social Justice and Labor Activism

Throughout the twentieth century, Latino communities in the United States played a significant role in shaping labor and civil rights movements as a form of self-determination in response to their continued exploitation as workers. The Mexican Repatriation Act of 1929,[408] led to the forced removal of thousands of Mexican nationals and Mexican Americans across the country. In the County and the Pajaro Valley, communities that had grown around agricultural hubs were disrupted, and local economic instability caused by the Great Depression deepened due to a self-inflicted labor shortage. This process was reversed during World War II when the Bracero Program shuttled Mexican nationals back across the border to fill agricultural jobs left vacant by Filipinos fighting abroad in the military and Japanese farmworkers' forced incarceration in internment camps. Once in the United States, conditions were harsh: workers were sprayed with Dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (commonly known as DDT), subjected to invasive searches, and forced to endure long hours harvesting crops like lettuce and strawberries, which required the laborer to constantly bend at the waist. Orchard workers faced constant exposure to pesticides, which caused illness, skin discoloration, and even death.[409] Henry Pope Anderson, a member of the Citizens for Farm Labor, described the way braceros were treated as disposable commodities: "They [braceros] are viewed as objects, as chattels … you rent a bracero for six weeks or six months, and if he gets damaged, you don't care. You'll never see him again. You get next year's model—a newer, younger, healthier one."[410]

Labor organizing along the Central Coast and surrounding areas began in 1930 with the Fruit and Vegetable Workers Union, who were affiliated with the American Federation of Labor. Filipino farmworkers were the first to coordinate a strike of lettuce workers in Salinas and Watsonville in 1934 demanding better wages. The strikers blocked entrances to packinghouses and disrupted shipment transport, and their efforts were often met with retaliatory violence. Although the strike raised packing shed wages from $0.15 to $0.35 per hour, the highest in the state at the time, "[it] did not affect any fundamental change in the way management and labor dealt with each other."[411]

Labor activism surged again after World War II with the Delano Grape Strike in 1958 led by Cesar Chavez and the UFW in solidarity with Filipino farm laborers and activists.[412] Chavez and Dolores Huerta were instrumental in organizing strikes across the inland areas and Central Coast, culminating in another lettuce strike in the Pajaro Valley and nearby Salinas in 1970. This strike echoed earlier efforts, once again highlighting the persistent

406 Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History, *Celebrating Life & Death: Día de los Muertos*, October 16, 2019, accessed August 14, 2025, https://www.santacruzmah.org/blog/dia.
407 Flores, "Mujeres en Huelga," 73.
408 Benny J. Andrés, "Invisible Borders: Repatriation and Colonization of Mexican Migrant Workers along the California Borderlands during the 1930s," *California History* 88, no. 4 (2011): 15, accessed July 29, 2025, https://doi.org/10.2307/23052283.
409 McElroy and Urbano, *Watsonville Historic Context*, 138–139.
410 Cao, *California's Bracero Program*.
411 Chou et al., *Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in California*, 180.
412 CA OHP, *Latinos in Twentieth Century California*, 78.

exploitation of farm laborers.[413] One of the most significant labor actions came with the Watsonville Cannery Strike from 1985 to 1987. Led largely by Mexican and Chicana women, the strike drew 1,700 participants and centered on demands for fair wages, job security, and respect. The movement became an example of feminist and self-determination ideologies, catapulting Latinos into the political spotlight once again. Oscar Rios, a prominent strike supporter, was elected to the Watsonville City Council in 1989 and later became the city's first Latino mayor.[414]

Outside of labor activism, other social justice movements led by Latinos gained momentum as well. Organizations like the League of United Latin American Citizens and the Mexican American Political Association emerged in response to housing discrimination and the lack of Latino representation in local government. In 1969, students at Watsonville High School staged a walkout to protest unequal educational opportunities and demand culturally relevant curriculum.[415] More grassroots organizations began to populate the region, with Hope Ministries and Barrios Unidos expanding the scope of activism. Initially focused on curbing gang violence in the County, they later partnered with the UFW to advocate for farmworker and migrant rights.[416]

Latino communities in the County have been important in shaping its labor history and cultural identity since the early days of California statehood. Through many decades of hard work, resilience, and organizing, Latinos built networks rooted in family, religion, and shared struggles while facing systemic neglect and exploitation. Cultural traditions and events helped establish a sense of community ownership, while grassroots activism produced political knowledge and real change. Latinos in the Pajaro Valley have become a majority ethnic group since the early 2000s, and their history continues to inform the future of the region.

## 2.5.8 Portuguese

Portuguese immigrants arrived in Santa Cruz County following the Gold Rush, where they settled and contributed broadly to the social and economic fabric of the County in the areas of fishing, agriculture, and dairy production.

### Background

The first Portuguese who settled in California following the Gold Rush were whalers and fishermen who primarily originated in the Azores, a group of nine islands located approximately 900 miles off the western coast of Portugal. The whaling industry played a vital role in producing whale oil, which was utilized for various purposes like fueling oil-burning lamps and lubricating machine parts prior to the discovery of petroleum and invention of kerosene. [417] Whaling ships arrived at the small ports on the Azores islands during the 1700s seeking men who wanted employment as whalers. By the mid-nineteenth century, Portugal was among Western Europe's poorest nations. Its largely agricultural economy left rural regions, including the Azores and Madeira, facing overpopulation and scarce employment as industrialization lagged compared with other areas of Europe.[418] Azorean men saw whaling as an

413 CA OHP, *Latinos in Twentieth Century California*, 104.
414 Flores, "Mujeres en Huelga," 59.
415 CA OHP, *Latinos in Twentieth Century California*, 112.
416 *The Register-Pajaronian*, "People of the Valley," August 12, 1998, 11.
417 Nelson Ponta-Garça, *Portuguese in California* (NPG Multimedia Productions: San Jose, California, 2021), 26.
418 Frederick G. Bohme, "The Portuguese in California," *California Historical Society Quarterly* 35, no. 3 (September 1956): 233–252, published by University of California Press in association with the California Historical Society, https://www.jstor.org/stable/25155067, 233.

opportunity to escape the poverty and overcrowding on the islands and earn passage to America. Some of the whalers left their ships after arriving at San Francisco's port while travelling to the Arctic whaling areas.[419]

During the Gold Rush, many Portuguese whalers left the sea in search of gold in the inland counties of California. When they failed to find success in California's gold fields, many returned to an occupation in whaling or fishing.[420] Shore-based whaling began in California during the 1850s, following the direct observation of whales along the state's coastline. John Davenport established a whaling station in Monterey in 1854, which was the first in California. The initial operations were conducted with Portuguese crew members.[421] By 1879 there were 27 whaling stations operating off the coast of California. Portuguese immigrants were significant contributors to California's whaling industry until its decline in the 1880s due to competition from cheaper petroleum and kerosene.[422] Many Portuguese turned to commercial fishing, and by the 1880s most of the San Francisco fish market was run by Portuguese and Italian fishermen. It is estimated that in 1888 nearly 20% of the immigrant population engaged in commercial fishing in California were Portuguese.[423]

Mass migration from Portugal to the United States commenced around 1870. Between 1861 and 1870, only 2,658 Portuguese immigrants entered the United States. This number increased significantly in the following decade as 14,082 Portuguese immigrants arrived in the United States between 1871 and 1880.[424] The 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act and similar laws reduced California's Chinese population, causing a major labor shortage in key industries across the state. With the whaling industry in steady decline, Portuguese immigrants took on the work formerly ascribed to Chinese migrant laborers in California during this period, including agriculture, fishing, and dairying. Portuguese immigrants during this time continued to be Azoreans; significant migration from mainland Portugal to California did not begin until after 1910.[425]

## Settlement in Santa Cruz County

Azorean whalers and fishermen begin arriving and settling in the vicinity of Santa Cruz County during the 1880s, to a shoreline that had been occupied and fished by Chinese migrants for several decades. Unable to compete with Chinese fishermen near the Santa Cruz and Capitola wharfs because of the shape of their boats, Portuguese, Italian, and Californio fishermen instead leveraged their influence in the Santa Cruz Workingmen's Party to impose political pressure and restrictions on Chinese fishing operations in Santa Cruz County. This coincided with anti-Chinese measures, known as "The Chinese Must Go" provisions included in the 1879 California Constitution, that took effect in 1880. By 1888, Portuguese, Italians, and Californios had become the primary groups involved in fishing in the Monterey Bay. In Monterey Bay, most White fishermen were of Portuguese descent, and Chinese fishermen outnumbered them by a ratio of two to one. Despite this, the catch attributed to the highly skilled Portuguese fishermen was three times greater than that of their Chinese counterparts.[426] The area known as "Portuguese Flat" refers to Santa Cruz's Westside neighborhood near Trescony Street, where many of the early Portuguese fishing families settled.[427]

419 Portuguese Historical Museum, *Portuguese Shore Whalers of California 1854–1904, a*ccessed August 2025, https://portuguesemuseum.org/?page_id=1808&exhibit=26&event=218; Bohme, "The Portuguese in California," 237.
420 Portuguese Historical Museum, *Portuguese Shore Whalers of California 1854–1904*.
421 Alverda Orlando et al., *Images of America: Davenport*, 20
422 Portuguese Historical Museum, *Portuguese Shore Whalers of California 1854–1904*.
423 Bohme, "The Portuguese in California," 239.
424 Ibid., 233.
425 Ibid.
426 Ibid., 239.
427 Clark, *Santa Cruz County Place Names*, 249.

Portuguese immigrants attracted to agriculture settled in the Pajaro Valley and along the northern coast of the County in the vicinity of Davenport and included both seasonal agricultural laborers and property owners who managed ranches and dairies. Portuguese immigrants participated in agriculture but do not appear to have made significant contributions to the County's agricultural development beyond their individual efforts.[428]

The Portuguese did make notable contributions to the region's dairy industry, particularly many of those who arrived during the later wave of immigration after 1910. Frederick G. Bohme describes how the dairy industry provided a source of upward mobility for many Portuguese immigrants in California:

> The general prosperity of the dairy industry has caused an almost complete change in the living habits of these Portuguese. On their arrival and for many years thereafter, they often had been content to live at a mere subsistence level, with little interest in education or community participation. Now, with prosperity and some urging by their American-born children, comfortable and substantial homes have been built; they have encouraged the erection of churches in their midst; and their mutual benefit societies and the Roman Catholic Church (of which 98% are members) have given them social and community outlets.[429]

Portuguese immigrants integrated into California society with notable ease and experienced relatively rapid advancement to the middle class when compared to many other immigrant groups. Their transition was facilitated by economic opportunities in fishing, agriculture, and dairy production, and they faced limited prejudice in California, allowing them to naturalize and participate more actively in the social and economic life of the state. This also provided them the freedom to express aspects of their cultural identity openly, including wide-spread participation in Portuguese fraternal benefit societies.

The history of Portuguese fraternal benefit societies in California is robust, with many organizations that have been—and continue to be—incredibly active throughout the state. They were established during the early years of Portuguese immigration to counteract the challenges faced by Portuguese communities abroad and to promote Portuguese culture. Portuguese fraternal benefit societies participated in charitable activities, offered support to their members, and worked with other organizations and individuals to improve various aspects of community well-being. Many of these societies were founded on the principle that, upon the death of a dues-paying member, their family would be provided with support, such as funeral assistance. The functions of the major organizations listed below have evolved over time, and several have grouped together or split off into new organizations since 1868; however, the Portuguese fraternal benefit societies in California remain united in their continued promotion of Portuguese culture and community.

- The Associação Portuguesa Protectora e Beneficiente (APPB), or Portuguese Protective and Benevolent Association, was founded in San Francisco in 1868. This organization gradually expanded to include lodges throughout the state.[430]
- The União Portuguesa do Estado da Califórnia (UPEC), or Portuguese Union of the State of California, was founded in San Leandro, California, in 1880 by 30 Portuguese immigrants with the intent of providing

428 Circa. Historic Context State for the City of Watsonville. Prepared by Circa for the City of Watsonville Planning and Community Development Department. (2007), 136; Portuguese Historical Museum. Agriculture and Occupations: Dairying," https://portuguesemuseum.org/?page_id=1808&category=&exhibit=22&event=170.

429 Bohme, "The Portuguese in California," 243.

430 Portuguese Historical Museum, "Fraternal Benefit Societies: Luso-American Financial," https://portuguesemuseum.org/?page_id=1808&category=&exhibit=27&event=220

assistance to the families of deceased countrymen and guaranteeing a respectable burial.[431] It became one of the most influential Portuguese societies in California. Initially, the plan required each surviving member to contribute $1 upon a member's death, which was then given to the deceased's family. By 1892, this evolved into a comprehensive insurance system.[432]

- The Irmandade do Divino Espírito Santo de Mission San José (IDES), or Brotherhood of the Holy Spirit of Mission San José, was incorporated in 1887 in San José, California. It was known as the "Irmandade da Missão" for short. Every member contributed $1 to the widow of a deceased member. This practice formed the foundation for the early family protection programs of the IDES. The IDES is credited with the popularization and spread of the Festa do Espírito Santo, Festival of the Holy Spirit, a Portuguese religious celebration dedicated to the Holy Spirit which continues to play a large role in the lives and customs of the people of Portuguese descent in California. [433]
- The Sociedade do Espírito Santo (SES), or the Society of the Holy Spirit, began in 1895 in Santa Clara, California. The original organizers sought to preserve their heritage and provide financial support for their fellow countrymen in times of serious illness or death.[434]
- The Sociedade Portuguesa Rainha Santa Isabel (SPRSI), or the Portuguese Society of Queen Saint Isabel, was established in Oakland, California, in 1898 for Portuguese women. The organization served to maintain church altars and offer support to members during periods of need.[435]
- The União Portuguesa Protectora do Estado da Califórnia (UPPEC), or Portuguese Protective Union of California, was established in February 1901 for Portuguese women. Its mission included charity, offering protection, intergroup cooperation to promote the general welfare of its members, and providing death benefits to beneficiaries upon a member's death.[436]
- The União Portuguesa Continental do Estado da Califórnia (UPC), or the Continental Portuguese Union of California, was founded in Oakland in 1917. In contrast to other societies that were largely organized by Portuguese immigrants from the Azores Islands, the UPC was organized by Portuguese immigrants originating from continental Portugal.[437]

In 1957, the UPC and APPB merged to form the United National Life Insurance Society, which was later renamed Luso-American Life Insurance Society.[438] The SPRSI came under the umbrella of Luso-American Life Insurance Society in 2008 before the organization's name changed again to Luso-American Financial in 2016.[439] In 2010, UPEC, IDES, SES, and UPPEC merged and formed the Portuguese Fraternal Society of America.[440] Today, Luso-

431 Portuguese Historical Museum, "Fraternal Benefit Societies: U.P.E.C," https://portuguesemuseum.org/?page_id=1808&category=&exhibit=27&event=223.
432 Nelson Ponta-Garça, *Portuguese in California*, 48.
433 Portuguese Historical Museum, "Fraternal Benefit Societies: I.D.E.S," https://portuguesemuseum.org/?page_id=1808&category=&exhibit=27&event=219.
434 Portuguese Historical Museum, "Fraternal Benefit Societies: S.E.S.," https://portuguesemuseum.org/?page_id=1808&category=&exhibit=27&event=221.
435 Portuguese Historical Museum, "Fraternal Benefit Societies: S.P.R.S.I.," https://portuguesemuseum.org/?page_id=1808&category=&exhibit=27&event=222.
436 Portuguese Historical Museum, "Fraternal Benefit Societies: U.P.P.E.C," https://portuguesemuseum.org/?page_id=1808&category=&exhibit=27&event=224.
437 Portuguese Historical Museum, "Fraternal Benefit Societies: Luso-American Financial," https://portuguesemuseum.org/?page_id=1808&category=&exhibit=27&event=220.
438 Ponta-Garça, *Portuguese in California*, 52.
439 Portuguese Historical Museum, "Fraternal Benefit Societies: Luso-American Financial."
440 Portuguese Historical Museum, "Fraternal Benefit Societies: I.D.E.S."

American Financial and the Portuguese Fraternal Society of America constitute the two major Portuguese fraternal benefit societies in California, but smaller local organizations are still active throughout the state.

The Colónia Portuguesa do Divino Espírito Santo (CPDES) was founded in Santa Cruz in January 1928 by five Portuguese residents. Officially named on April 25, 1928, the society began meeting in a private home near Seabright Avenue before acquiring a permanent hall for its activities in 1953 (extant) located at 216 Evergreen Street in Santa Cruz. The society adopted a symbol featuring a crown with a cross, dove, and spear—each representing aspects of Christian faith and Portuguese heritage.[441] Like most of the Portuguese fraternal benefit societies, the annual Festa of the Holy Ghost organized by the CPDES is the single most important annual event within the community (Exhibit 34).[442]

**Exhibit 34.** Member Antonio Evangelo marching in the CPDES Festa Parade, 1953.

**Source:** Courtesy of Colónia Portuguesa do Divino Espírito Santo (CPDES).

441 Colónia Portuguesa do Divino Espírito Santo, "Who We Are," https://www.santacruzportuguesehall.org/about-us.
442 Bob Comancho, interview by Fallin Steffen and Matthew Sundt, July 28, 2025, transcript on file with the County of Santa Cruz.

The Festa of the Holy Ghost has its origins in the story of a miracle attributed to Queen St. Isabella of Portugal, who, during a famine, secretly fed the poor and, legend claims, witnessed bread in her cloak transform into roses when confronted by her cruel husband, King Dinis. After her prayers were answered with the arrival of a food-laden ship, she gave her crown to a peasant girl, initiating the tradition of the Holy Ghost crowning and procession, which remains the most important religious and cultural celebration for Portuguese communities in the Azores and the United States.[443]

Community connection through these organizations was helpful during the 1920s, when general national security concerns and increased immigration following the end of World War I added to anti-immigration sentiments already present in the 1910s and 1920s targeting Eastern and Southern Europeans, including Portuguese. The Immigration Act of 1924 reduced the movement of Portuguese immigrants to the United States and consequently to Santa Cruz County, while including few to no restrictions for immigrants from other areas of Western Europe. "Among foreign born groups," Bohme claims, "the Portuguese have never been numerically significant (less than 100,000 in the entire United States at the height of foreign influx); What is significant is the fact that 35.4% of them lived in California as of 1940, the others being centered around New Bedford, Mass. and in Hawaii and Rhode Island. Moreover of the native born Portuguese in the United states, 49.1% were residents of California."[444]

Many Portuguese Americans served in the U.S. Armed Forces during World War II, showcasing a desire to demonstrate increased ties and assimilation into American society. Although Portugal was officially neutral, it supported the Allies by allowing a U.S. base to operate in the Azores. At home in California, Portuguese fraternal benefit societies also contributed by selling millions in defense bonds and stamps.[445] By 1950, there were approximately 26,000 Portuguese residents of California. The post-World War II era witnessed the arrival of Portuguese immigrants who sought refuge from challenging circumstances. The eruption of a submarine volcano near Capelinhos on Faial Island in the Azores between 1957 and 58 marked a particularly difficult and often frightening period, resulting in the emigration of over 130,000 individuals between 1957 and 1977.[446]

The enduring legacy of the Portuguese community in the County is rooted in centuries-old traditions like the Festa do Divino Espírito Santo, sustained through fraternal societies, and shaped by migration from the Azores. These customs and practices continue to enrich the cultural and historical fabric of the region. From shore whaling and dairying to civic engagement, Portuguese Americans have preserved their heritage while contributing meaningfully to the County's development.

## 2.6 Themes and Associated Property Types

### 2.6.1 Theme 1: Making a Nation

The Making a Nation theme explores the role these diverse communities took in shaping the development of the County and how that is reflected in their migration patterns and contributions to residential and commercial development, as well as the formation of cultural and ethnic enclaves. It examines how broader historical forces,

443 Frederick G. Williams, "Portuguese Bilingualism among Azoreans in California," *Hispania* 63, no. 4 (December 1980): 724–730, published by the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese.
444 Bohme, "The Portuguese in California," 243.
445 Portuguese Historical Museum, "Portuguese Americans in the Armed Services: World War II," https://portuguesemuseum.org/?page_id=1808&category=&exhibit=1&event=100; Ponta-Garça, *Portuguese in California*, 53.
446 Portuguese Historical Museum, "Capelinhos Eruption: The Diaspora," https://portuguesemuseum.org/?page_id=1808&category=&exhibit=3&event=26.

including employment patterns, discrimination, prohibitive federal and state laws, restrictive covenants, and racial zoning, initially influenced these communities and how those influences shifted over time.

### Associated Properties

Properties associated with migration and settlement patterns in California are common to each of the communities discussed in this study. Some may be significant to multiple communities and encompass a wide range of property types, depending on their individual association. Related resources can be found throughout the County, with a range of location and timeframe due to the migration and settlement history discussed in each respective community narrative.

- Properties associated with immigration or migration in the County include civic buildings, such as the site where an important court case was determined.
- Properties associated with migration within the County may reflect movement driven by employment opportunities in industries such as mining, railroads, irrigation and infrastructure development, logging, agriculture, and fishing. These properties may include work-related sites such as production facilities, transportation hubs, and utility structures. Examples include factories and production sites, lumber mills, rail lines, agricultural landscapes, and packing sheds. Buildings used for temporary or long-term housing of workers or visitors, such as boarding houses, labor camps, and modest dwellings, may also be significant.
- Properties associated with settlement patterns and neighborhood formation may include residential buildings and areas, commercial buildings or corridors, and community-serving buildings. These may be linked to the development of cultural enclaves or the presence of significant individuals or events.
- Districts or groups of buildings and structures, as described above, may also be significant if they collectively reflect patterns of immigration, migration, settlement, or neighborhood formation associated with this theme.

### Significance

- Properties with a strong association to this theme may be eligible to qualify under NRHP Criterion A, CRHR Criterion 1, and/or County Criterion 1.
- Properties with a strong association with an individual or group of individuals who played a significant role in this theme may be eligible to qualify under NRHP Criterion B, CRHR Criterion 2, and/or County Criterion 2.

### Integrity

- Properties are required to exhibit sufficient integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association, while integrity of design, materials, workmanship, are less essential or not necessary.

## 2.6.2 Theme 2: Making a Living

The Making a Living theme explores the historical contributions of various communities to the County's workforce. It encompasses key economic sectors, including labor, business and commerce, and skilled occupations. The theme addresses the restricted opportunities faced by immigrant groups, primarily due to the discriminatory practices of the local White population and labor unions, and also highlights the development of minority-owned and -operated enterprises and other areas where the community members achieved success.

Properties associated with labor, business and commerce, and skilled occupations in the County are common to each of the communities discussed in this context statement. Some may be significant to multiple communities and encompass a wide range of property types depending on their individual association. Related resources can be found throughout the County, with the range of location and timeframe owing to the history discussed in each respective community narrative.

- Properties associated with labor activities may include production and processing facilities, transportation infrastructure, and utility structures. These properties reflect the physical spaces where labor was performed and may be significant for their association with immigrant and minority labor contributions, technological innovation, or economic development. Examples include farms, factories, manufacturing sites, canneries, packing houses, wineries, processing and packing plants, fruit dehydration sites, railroad depots, wharfs, bridges, lime kilns, cement plants, grain mills, and logging mills. Properties related to labor may also consist of cultural landscapes, including farmsteads, orchards, and agricultural fields.
- Properties associated with labor may also include worker housing, such as residential buildings and temporary accommodations, that reflect the lived experiences of laborers in the County. These properties may be significant for their association with labor migration and the socioeconomic conditions of working-class residents. Examples include labor camps, bunkhouses, communal housing for returning internment survivors, the modest dwellings of migrant workers, and multifamily residences used by agricultural workers.
- Properties associated with business and commerce may include retail and food-service establishments and minority-owned enterprises. These properties may be significant for their role in supporting economic independence, community cohesion, and cultural identity. Examples include grocery stores, barbershops, restaurants, fish markets, tackle shops, nurseries, cafés, laundries, packing houses, medical clinics, law offices, and examples of businesses operated by second- and third-generation immigrants.
- Districts or groups of buildings and structures, as described above, may also be significant if they collectively reflect patterns of labor, business and commerce, and skilled occupations associated with this theme.

### Significance

- Properties with a strong association with this theme may be eligible to qualify under NRHP Criterion A, CRHR Criterion 1, and/or County Criterion 1.
- Properties with a strong association with an individual or group of individuals who played a significant role in this theme may be eligible to qualify under NRHP Criterion B, CRHR Criterion 2, and/or County Criterion 2.

### Integrity

Properties are required to exhibit sufficient integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association, while integrity of design, materials, workmanship, are less essential or not necessary.

## 2.6.3 Theme 3: Making a Life

The Making a Life theme highlights how these diverse communities built strong connections through fraternal and social organizations and religious and spiritual venues, as spaces that fostered civic, social, and political engagement. It also examines their participation in sports, leisure, and entertainment.

Properties associated with fraternal and social organizations, religious and spiritual venues, and sports, leisure, and entertainment in the County are common to each of the communities discussed in this study. Some may be significant to multiple communities and encompass a wide range of property types, depending on their individual association. Related resources can be found throughout the County, with the range of location and timeframe owing to the history discussed in each respective community narrative.

- Properties related to religious and spiritual venues demonstrate the multiple functions of faith-based institutions in communities. These locations, such as churches, temples, and mission buildings, have acted as gathering places, educational centers, and sites for social support.
- Properties associated with sports, leisure, and entertainment represent the diverse ways communities have built social connections and cultural expression through enjoyment. These include dance halls, community centers, clubhouses, and recreational facilities.
- Districts or groups of buildings and structures, as described above, may also be significant if they collectively reflect patterns of fraternal and social organizations, religious and/or spiritual venues, and sports, leisure, and/or entertainment associated with this theme. .

### Significance

- Properties with a strong association with this theme may be eligible to qualify under NRHP Criterion A, CRHR Criterion 1, and/or County Criterion 1.
- Properties with a strong association with an individual or group of individuals who played a significant role in this theme may be eligible to qualify under NRHP Criterion B, CRHR Criterion 2, and/or County Criterion 2.

### Integrity

- Properties are required to exhibit sufficient integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association, while integrity of design, materials, workmanship, are less essential or not necessary.

## 2.6.4 Theme 4: Pursuing Social Justice

The Pursuing Social Justice theme explores the ways in which diverse communities in the County have advocated for equity, inclusion, and civil rights. It highlights the efforts of individuals and groups to challenge discriminatory practices, secure access to equal education, housing, and fair wages, and build coalitions for labor rights and political representation. This theme recognizes that social justice movements have taken many forms—from grassroots organizing and legal challenges to cultural expression and civic engagement—and that these efforts have shaped both the built environment and the social fabric of the County.

Properties that are reflective of this theme in the County are common to each of the communities discussed in this study. Some may be significant to multiple communities and encompass a wide range of property types depending on their individual association. Related resources can be found throughout the County, with the range of location and timeframe owing to the history discussed in each respective community narrative.

- Properties associated with this theme may include civic buildings, schools, community centers, places of worship, labor camps, and residential and commercial areas that served as sites of activism, resistance, and community organizing.

- In addition to physical properties, this theme may encompass intangible heritage resources, which might encompass past civic actions, protest movements, and community organizing efforts that occurred in public spaces. Sites of marches, demonstrations, rallies, and similar events, even if lacking permanent structures, may hold historical significance for their association with pivotal moments in the County's social justice history.
- Districts or groups of buildings and structures, as described above, may also be significant if they collectively reflect efforts toward equity, inclusion, and civil rights associated with this theme.

## Significance

- Properties with a strong association with this theme may be eligible to qualify under NRHP Criterion A, CRHR Criterion 1, and/or County Criterion 1.
- Properties with a strong association with an individual or group of individuals who played a significant role in this theme may be eligible to qualify under NRHP Criterion B, CRHR Criterion 2, and/or County Criterion 2.

## Integrity

- Properties are required to exhibit sufficient integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association, while integrity of design, materials, workmanship, are less essential or not necessary.

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# 3 Recommendations

This section offers recommendations for additional research and further study to advance a more thorough understanding of the County's historic built environment. The following topics are identified as priorities for future study:

## Supplementary and Focused Historical Contexts

To ensure historical resources in the County are properly identified, evaluated, and preserved, the existing historic context framework must be updated and extended to include topics that were not addressed in the 1994 Context Statement or this study. Additional focused historic context statements will help capture the County's evolution and will support informed decisions about its architectural and cultural heritage, as well as any new themes that may broaden the interpretive framework for evaluating resources. Future research should explore themes including but not limited to the suggestions outlined below:

- Post-World War II suburbanization and commercial development
- Education
- Additional ethnic and cultural groups
- Civil rights movements, including local activism and community organizing
- Environmental conservation efforts
- Agricultural innovation
- Public infrastructure

## Update the Santa Cruz County Historic Resources Inventory

A systematic update of the County's existing Historic Resources Inventory is recommended. An update offers an opportunity to document historical resources that were not previously identified or that have since reached historic age in the County. The process should include the identification and evaluation of properties in remote or underrepresented areas of the County, as well as those associated with communities whose contributions were not explored in earlier surveys. This update effort should also include a reexamination of previously documented properties through updated fieldwork and documentation that will provide current information about their integrity, significance, and eligibility.

## Oral Histories: Existing and New Generational Narratives

Oral histories containing firsthand accounts provide valuable insights for community members, researchers, and historians trying to understand a place and its history. Recommendations for future research could include additional oral interview efforts with descendants of previously documented individuals to record perspectives across generations, especially concerning immigrant experiences and their changing role in the region's cultural landscape.

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# Appendix A

Oral History Questionnaire Responses and Oral History Transcripts