

# LEUCADIA 101

THE *Art and Soul* of ENCINITAS

## First Inhabitants

In the early ages, some of the area's first inhabitants were the [Kumeyaay Indians](#). They were a peaceful people who lived close to Batiquitos Lagoon, which borders Leucadia to the north. They hunted, fished, and raised their families for many, many decades until [Gaspar De Portola](#), a Spanish explorer, arrived with his expedition.

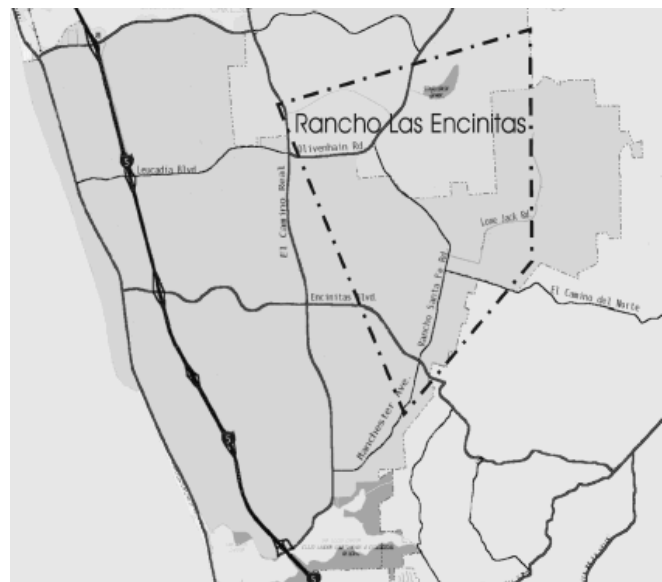


De Portola explored this area and then eventually moved north out of the area. The Indians remained in the Batiquitos Lagoon/Leucadia area undisturbed for several years, but by 1850, very few Indians were still living in this area.



## The Ranchos

The Spanish explored the San Diego area like other parts of California, claiming the land for Spain in the late 1700s and establishing a chain of missions. Mexico overthrew the Spanish in 1821 and seized all the mission lands, and thus began the rancho period of land grants given to political followers and social favorites. The 1842 land grant for our area was labeled "[Rancho de los Encinitos](#)" named for the small oak trees ([Encinitos](#)) that are native to our area.





Eventually, this became two ranchos adjacent to each other, [San Dieguito Rancho](#), which is now referred to as Rancho Santa Fe, and became and still is today, a very exclusive community with large homes and properties. The other rancho was named [Las Encinitas Rancho](#), and this is the area where Leucadia was settled, along with the other four communities that make up what is referred to as the Greater Encinitas area: [Olivenhain](#), Cardiff-by-the Sea, Old Encinitas and New Encinitas, which in its early days was called Green Valley. It is very hard to talk of Leucadia's early beginnings before it was its own established community without the mention of the other four communities since the original land we all exist on was one big parcel.



In 1845, California was declared a territory of the United States and a border was established with Mexico, and in 1850 California was admitted to the Union as a free state. In 1860, the owner of Las Encinitas Rancho sold his land to two merchants, Joseph S. Mannase and Marcus Schiller, but it changed hands many times until 1880 when Frank Kimball bought it and promoted it with advertising, bringing in the settlers to find their paradise here.

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## Settlers in 1800s



Australian Salt bush

In 1875, Nathan Eaton, a Civil War veteran and native of New York, was the first non-native American Indian to settle the area now known as Leucadia. Eaton settled the first 80 acres south of Batiquitos Lagoon. He might have been a very early “hippie” because of his lifestyle. Eaton had a wagon with four wheels on a shaky frame held together with bale-rope. Two mules harnessed by rawhide strips and more bale-rope pulled the wagon. His house was made of boards and metal powder cans that he collected from the railroad construction camp. Eaton was a beekeeper and introduced the [Australian salt bush](#) to Southern California. He kept his pockets full and scattered the seed as he drove around with his mule team. But the bush proved to be a nuisance wherever cultivation was attempted. He also successfully grafted figs onto sycamore trees.



The Greek Isle of Lefkada, from which Leucadia takes it's name.

In addition to Eaton, early English spiritualists settled in the area and gave the community its name of Leucadia, which is a [Greek Island](#) whose names means Sheltered Paradise or Place of Refuge in Greek (both meanings have been referenced.) They also named our streets after Greek and Roman Gods, such as Neptune and Vulcan. But the town was once known as the town of [Merle](#), named after the second son of E.B. Scott, a newspaper man and railroad superintendent, who helped lay out the town in 1888. A geological map of 1898 gives proof that Merle was a registered town. In his collection of anecdotes, E.B. Scott refers to his application for a post office in a section of Leucadia, which is now located at 1160 N. Coast Hwy 101. The post office has maintained its classic early identity and has become a community landmark adding to the charm of historic Leucadia. Some postmarks from a few old postcards in 1908 still bear the Merle cancellation stamp. So for many years this tiny community had two names, but Leucadia is the name it is recognized by today.

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## Railroad, Water System, Tree and Flower Growing History



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### The Railroad and our Eucalyptus trees

In 1881, when the [Santa Fe Railroad](#) came through town after Leucadia was settled, the railroad planted countless [Eucalyptus trees](#) thinking because of this hardwood's strength and speedy growth; it would be equitable to use the trees for its railroad ties. They were wrong, since the wood split when dried and, therefore, became useless. However, these early



Santa Fe Railroad  
Encinitas Depot ca. 1887

Eucalyptus trees grew into huge beautiful trees along what is now Highway 101, and the canopy that covered the Highway became iconic with Leucadia and part of its history. People coming from Los Angeles knew they were getting close to San Diego, just 28 miles south of Leucadia, when they saw the beautiful tree canopy covering Leucadia's section of Highway 101. The Santa Fe Railroad also had a stop where the old stagecoach stop was, located near Hillcrest and Vulcan Ave. When the train stopped, passengers would jump off to pick flowers growing alongside the tracks. Then in 1947, the station was dismantled, and turned into just a whistle stop at this location. In 1887 a beautiful [Victorian style train depot](#), designed by Fred F. Perris, was built in downtown Encinitas on Vulcan Ave. and what is now D Street. This location was chosen for its proximity to Cottonwood Creek as a water source, much needed for the steam locomotives of the early days. In the mid-1930's, as the automobile gained popularity, the station became a flag stop

and by 1968 had permanently closed. Cardiff resident Jim Bowen purchased the depot building in the early 1970's and had it moved north to 510 North Coast Highway 101 in Leucadia, where it served as an arts and crafts store. Bob and Jay Sinclair then purchased the building in 1980 and had it converted into a coffee shop.



Panniken Coffee and Tea, today

Today this building is home to [The Pannikin Coffee & Tea](#), and is a well preserved visual centerpiece for Leucadia, painted in cheerful lemon tones. This local landmark continues to be a favorite meeting place and popular coffee house for residents and tourists.

## Water System

The history of Leucadia is also deeply rooted in the [South Coast Land Company](#), which acquired the fertile acres from Charles Woodward. The South Coast Land Company, the biggest land promoter in the area, subdivided a large area east of Highway 101 in early 1924, naming it South Coast Park. The company heralded South Coast Park as "the principal subdivision in point of both area and population containing 1050 acres under irrigation." In 1925, the development of a Civic Center (the area surrounding what is now known as Leucadia Roadside Park) for South Coast Park was promoted to attract businesses. In order to achieve the dream of "building a city", it was necessary to provide business services. A local 1925 advertisement calls for the needs of "a first class general store, a good garage and several smaller shops." The full development of the South Coast Land Company depended upon acquiring additional water, so the owners negotiated a contract for water from Lake Hodge's dam, which was and still is located between Escondido and Rancho Santa Fe, both east of Leucadia/Encinitas area. The San Dieguito Irrigation District was formed, and Leucadia became the first of the Encinitas communities to have piped in water. Up until this time, farming without water in our dry climate was very difficult, and many people gave up and left. But after water was pumped here, farming and ranching boomed.



The original South Coast  
Land Company Building -  
Now Garcia's Barbershop

## Avocados



Farmers in Leucadia grew a good cash crop of a new fruit that had just been introduced to America: [the avocado](#). A "green gold" coast of avocado trees was envisioned for the Leucadia area in the middle 1920's. The industry was touted as having "phenomenal growth... having been told of its possibilities as a "green gold" crop". The climate was just perfect for this fruit as we have no frost and it can tolerate less water than other crops. Leucadia originally had very large tracts of land east of the freeway where people grew avocados for many years. Today, these areas have been subdivided for the most part, with more houses built, and still referred to as "Avocado Acres," which was the original subdivision name given to it back in the 1920s by South Coast Land Company.

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## Flower Growing History



The growth of the floral industry is credited to [Thomas McLoughlin](#) who moved from Seattle to Leucadia in 1924. McLoughlin, president of the South Coast Horticultural Association, was instrumental in creating the Encinitas Mid-Winter Flower Shows, an annual event that ran from 1925 through 1935. In addition to growing avocados commercially, Leucadia/Encinitas became popular for the flora-agricultural business of growing flowers on a commercial scale. Flower growers found success here with our temperate climate and lots of fairly inexpensive land available. The development of polyethylene plastic film made it possible to construct simple wood frame structures that were enclosed with the plastic film. These wood frame structures were more economical to build than the traditional steel and glass greenhouses. Air freight became a viable

option as the cost for the service decreased. This opened up national markets to growers. Growers from the Los Angeles area, squeezed out by urbanization, migrated to San Diego County after World War II. These growers ran successful flower fields and greenhouse growing operations for many decades, and some still do today.



Though it sits right on the border of Encinitas proper and Leucadia, the [Paul Ecke Ranch](#), begun by [Paul Ecke Sr.](#) in 1925, is where the domestically grown [Poinsettia Flower](#) has its beginnings and is now a household word since the 1950's when Paul Ecke Jr. went on TV and promoted this flower for the December holiday season... and the rest, is as they say, history. But like the avocado industry in Leucadia, many flower growers have since sold their properties and sub-divided in favor of building homes.



So today, we see fewer and fewer flower growers in Leucadia and in the greater Encinitas area. Even the Paul Ecke Ranch will stop its operation in the next few years to come, but it will still have a historical presence with the original "ranch home" remaining for public tours, helping to preserve this part of our agricultural heritage.

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## Leucadia Roadside Park

Leucadia Roadside Park is one of the three public parks in Leucadia, but is the oldest of the three and is located on North Coast Hwy 101. It was once known as "Spirit Woods" and was reputed to have been the outdoor meeting area to congregate for the English spiritualists who settled Leucadia in the 1870s. Folklore has the spiritualists dancing in white flowing robes in this park. The English spiritualists made the Eucalyptus trees planted by the railroad useful by also planting Cyprus tree groves evenly placed with the Eucalyptus trees. During the 1930s depression, President Roosevelt drove through town and some kids



climbed into the trees to wave to him! Sadly, all the old cypress trees in Leucadia Roadside Park are gone, but new cypress trees were planted a few years ago and are thriving. Today Leucadia's Roadside Park hosts the Leucadia 101 Main Street events: [Summer Fun on the 101](#): Leucadia's Music Festival and the [LeucadiArt Walk](#) art show. It is a very small park but is always green and well taken care of. Leucadians treasure this park and its history.



Leucadia Roadside Park

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## Highway 101 History



Hwy 101 before paving

In the early 1900s, [Highway 101](#) was converted from a wagon path to a paved road. In 1913, businesses sprang up in Leucadia on the new two-lane paved road as it became easier for visitors to come south from the Los Angeles and other areas to the north as they passed through commuting to San Diego. As the transportation improvement of the railroad in the 1880's brought growth to the North Highway 101 Corridor area, so did the widespread use of the automobile bring growth in the late 1920's. The combination of the availability of the private automobile and California's climate opened the doors to the development of a tourism industry in the Encinitas-Leucadia area. Highway 101, the state highway connecting Los Angeles and San Diego, was the main approach to the area from the North.



The [eucalyptus and cypress trees](#) that had been planted a few decades earlier provided a shaded roadside strip for travelers who had just traversed the wide open coastal plains. Services for travelers such as gas stations, produce booths, tourist camps, and restaurants began to sprout up along the roadside.

From the mid 1920's through the 1930s, the North Highway 101 corridor spawned a myriad of roadside businesses as the popularity of the automobile endured the depression. Along the coast highway, hotels, restaurants and other establishments catering to vacation tourists have shown marked expansion.

By the 1920's tourism had become an integral part of the economy of the North Highway 101 corridor. In 1925, The

Automobile Association of America gave the new two-lane paved road the name of “Coast Hwy 101”, or in some other areas of California, “Pacific Coast Highway.” Eventually shortened to “Hwy 101”, the highway became the main street for many beach towns such as ours where it is not only visitor serving, but provides the central location for the business district that serves its residents as well. Also just an interesting point of recent history, in 1997, Leucadia played an active role in the resurrection of the iconic California Hwy 101 Shield sign that dots Hwy 101 and was the first city to replace the classic sign.

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## Electricity



Electricity lights up Leucadia in 1915 and the Leucadia/Encinitas communities are booming! Businesses that thrived were small markets, a gas station or two, old-fashioned horseshoe shaped motels that were designed for motorists to pull in, park and get right to their room or cabin, and small cafes. Such a small café that was part of Leucadia's early business community was opened by The Vienna family, the Blue Goose Café, serving food to travelers since the early 1920's. In 1975, it became Sub Palace, specializing in sub sandwiches and remains as such today, and is still very popular with the locals and visitors alike.

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## Business Development on Hwy 101 in Leucadia



Log Cabin Motel

In 1935, remnant of auto court days, [The Log Cabin Motel](#) was built, a little roadside village of red cabins where famous guests have stayed. These guests include Sammy Davis Jr. and Sr., both of whom were regulars in cabin No. 5, back in the 1960's. The cabins are now charming apartments. During the 1940's the Shamrock Café was a favorite spot for celebrities to take a break en route between Mexico and Hollywood. With the opening of the Del Mar Racetrack in 1937, the Hollywood stars were frequent patrons. The Shamrock Trailer Park next door, which

is still operational and still goes by its original name, housed many jockeys during racing season.



*The Shamrock Café*, whose claim to fame occurred when a longtime local resident has a vivid recollection of an incident in the *Shamrock Café's* parking lot. He and a friend, tired and hungry from cutting eucalyptus trees into firewood, stopped at the Shamrock Café late one evening and saw two men fighting in the parking lot. About that same time, actor John Wayne, who had been at the Del Mar Race Track, drove up. The story is Wayne walked, or rather “swaggered” over to the men and said, “What’s going on here, boys?” Then he just reached down and picked them both up by the scruff of the neck and said, “OK, that’s enough of this fighting.” He then walked them inside, and

bought drinks for “the house.”



*The Shamrock Café* went through several incarnations, but in 1970, it became *Cap'n Kenos* when owner Gerry Sova bought it and named it after a recent trip to Las Vegas. Initially Gerry ran the bar and restaurant as well as cooked and served tables. Today 42 years later, the restaurant is a local treasure, renowned for the 400 Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners that Gerry serves annually for only \$3, or if cash is tight there's no charge – no questions asked. Cap'n Kenos is still popular with locals and visitors, looking much like it did in the 1970s. We say it is a little like a step back in time when you walk in the door! Other restaurants along the highway became local landmarks. A favorite attraction at the north end of Leucadia was *Noah's Ark Café*. Constructed to resemble an ark, it was flanked by carved wooden animals that dotted the hillside, adding to its

theme. It closed in the 1960s and was demolished. Like the Shamrock Café, it has also gone through many owners and name changes over the years. Today, it is no longer in operation as the current property and the parcel adjacent to it are planned for a world class resort to be built there in the coming years. Another business that was once part of Leucadia's early and colorful business district was *Ruby's Bar*. Owner Ruby Nelson was known for staging dancing girls without a license, selling hamburgers to marines and smoking cigars soaked in Crook's Rum! It is now Royal Liquor Store. Another Leucadia favorite was *Mrs. Wilson's*, a small store with two gas pumps in front, located at 616 N. Coast Hwy 101. *Mrs. Wilson's* was famous for its pecan bars, and a huge billboard on the street beckoned motorists to stop for the candied treats. [A Head –Start Pre-School](#) is located there now, and has been part of our community since the 1980s.



Noah's Ark Cafe

There was a Tudor-style building next to Leucadia Roadside Park that belonged to famed native artist [Streeter Blair](#). He used this building as his studio and antique shop. In the 1960's, Sotheby's auction found a container with over 100 of his paintings, which were bought by collectors like Vincent Price and Jonathan Winters. The Streeter Blair home sadly burned to the ground in 1953 and a small business center now occupies that location.

As the population grew, the primary school located in downtown Encinitas was too small, and another school was built in 1927 on Vulcan Avenue, which runs parallel to Hwy 101. The new school was named Central School and is still used today, although it has been enlarged and with a slight name change to [Paul Ecke Central School](#), as the Ecke Family was and still is, a generous donor to school. This is the location where Leucadia 101 Main Street holds its weekly [Farmers Market](#) since 2005 and shares its proceeds with the school's PTA for special programs and projects. Our market has become one of the best markets in San Diego County!



In 1965, Hwy 101's popularity forced the development of the north/southbound Interstate 5 freeway, Sorrento Valley north past Oceanside. Although not in the Leucadia 101 Main

Street Program area, Interstate 5 is only a mile from Hwy 101, and when it opened many restaurants and other businesses found it hard to survive with people now bypassing the Hwy 101 route for the more modern and faster new freeway. As a result many businesses closed during the 1970's along the coastal route due to lack of business, not only in Leucadia but all along the



Hwy 101 from Oceanside to Del Mar. In recent years, from the 1980's to present, revitalization efforts have brought a renaissance to historic Highway 101 and returned it to a bustling center of activity. What was never lost and still remains alive and strong today are Leucadia's roots in the surfing and beach culture. Our western border is the Pacific Ocean, and some of the most beautiful and popular surfing beaches in all of Southern California are located right here in our backyard! Visitors may choose to travel via the freeway from points north, south or east to get here, but they eventually have to get off the freeway to get to our beaches. And once here, visitors need places to stay, eat, get gas and buy supplies such as food, sunscreen and surfboards! "Mom & Pop" businesses are iconic here and very much a part of our early business district history of the 1920s-1950s, and made a successful comeback in the 1960s through the 1980s after Interstate 5 was built. They are the core of our business district, serving our residents year-round and visitors during the summers, the height of the tourist season. The small business ethic "keep it simple and keep it local" has helped to solidify

## Natural and Demographic History

Leucadia is located about 28 miles north of San Diego city limits. As previously mentioned, it is bordered to the north by Batiquitos Lagoon and the Pacific Ocean to the west, and climbs gradually uphill to the east. Like all of Southern California, its natural habitat is one of low -growing, drought tolerant Coastal Sage Scrub, with such native trees as Coastal Live Oaks

and Sycamores. One of the lowest points is Hwy 101, where there is another hill that borders it to the west, before dropping off down to the beach. Unfortunately, as beautiful as our hills are, since they border Hwy 101 to the east and west, this makes Hwy 101 the low point and flooding is a problem during the rainy season. The bluffs that run along our entire western side were formed by the accumulation of mineral and organic sediments laid down by the Pacific Ocean during the last ice age. Many sections of these bluffs have become unstable with the water runoff that human habitation on the bluffs has brought. In the last few years, newer sub-pump stations were installed along our stretch of Hwy 101 to get the runoff to the main drainage line as well as “pump trucks”, as we call them, purchased by the City to collect water in trouble spots, and then drive to the main drain’s access points, and empty their trucks. Both these improvements have greatly improved the winter flooding issues on Hwy 101. A little known part of our history that has to do with our geography is that a location in Leucadia was established by the military to be used as a lookout point during World War II. It was manned by volunteers to look out for enemy aircraft and submarines that might be in our coastal area. A small, temporary shed type building was constructed at this location and named *Station White*. Why was Leucadia chosen for this important task? As mentioned above, there are hills east of Hwy 101 that are at such a high elevation, the ocean can be seen for many miles to the west of course, but also to the north and south of all of Encinitas. The location for *Station White* was specifically chosen as a lookout spot at the top of the hill in Leucadia because of its elevation, of course, but also because it is closest to the ocean, only 2 miles to the east, and had...and still does.... an unobstructed view of the ocean. Today, this hill has been developed into a very desirable residential neighborhood that still has this beautiful, panoramic view of the ocean. A bronze plaque marks the location on the ground near the sidewalk in this neighborhood to commemorate where *Station White* once stood and explain its historic role during World War II, and this location has been given the status of historic view corridor, which means nothing can be built or grown to obstruct this view.

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## Population Growth

In 1986, the physical area known as the unincorporated community of Leucadia, along with four other unincorporated nearby communities: Olivenhain, Cardiff-by-the Sea, Old Encinitas (downtown, and residential neighborhoods west and east of Hwy 101) and New Encinitas (newer “planned” commercial districts and residential areas that are more tract in nature), became incorporated together by a vote of the citizens into what is now the City of Encinitas, with its own local government and municipal departments that maintain the city’s infrastructure. What records there are of population numbers in our early days just refer to Encinitas, but means the whole Encinitas area of five communities. For instance, there is an anecdotal comment made in one of local history books that says when this certain family moved to Encinitas in 1883, the population doubled from 11 to 22! That gives us idea of how sparsely populated our area was in its beginning. We read certain names of people buying land, selling land and farming land, etc, but there are very few references to the population. One line written in one of our local history books says that by the late 1880s, there were a total of 160 people in the Encinitas area, which means again, all five communities combined. In 1900, the census count, again for all five communities, was 536. Jumping ahead to 1960 when our communities were assigned their own tract numbers for census records, we can finally know the population of our individual communities, and for Leucadia it was 3,559. If originally the area drew people who wanted to farm or ranch, in the late 1950s and 1960s, the new sport of surfing drew people to enjoy our beaches. Once here, why not stay and surf every day! This sport and all its associated industry also played a significant role in the growth of Leucadia as did the “peace and love” movement in the late 1960s and 1970s. Our small town, like many beach towns in California, was attractive to settle in for people who were known as “hippies” and who could enjoy the good climate and casual laid back lifestyle here. In 1980 the population grew to 8,001 and our current population is approximately 9,685, based on 4,211 residences in Leucadia times 2.3 average number of persons per household. Since the greater Encinitas area is 98% built out, we don’t see our population significantly growing.