San Fernando Valley State College

THE OXNARD AREA:
""
An Analysis of the Changing Patterns of Land Use

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in GEOGRAPHY

by

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ABSTRACT

THE OXNARD AREA:

An Analysis of the Changing Patterns of Land Use

by

Gilbert Garcia Cuevas

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This study will trace the changes in land use patterns in the Oxnard Area, and the effect of urban expansion on agricultural land use, particularly during the last two decades.

Initially the Oxnard Area was occupied by the Chumash Indians. This indigenous people occupied the area for thousands of years without significantly altering the environment. The Chumash were subsequently displaced, first by the Spanish, then by the Mexicans and finally by the Anglo-Americans. With each change in the composition of the inhabitants there was a corresponding change in the pattern of land use in the Oxnard Area. From the simple hunting and fishing economy of the Chumash, the area was
used primarily for cattle grazing during the Spanish and Mexican eras, and it was not until the latter part of the nineteenth century that field and orchard crops became the dominant form of land use.

Although the City of Oxnard was founded as early as 1897, the city experienced only moderate growth until after the end of World War II. Since 1950, the growth of the population in the Oxnard Area has been rapid, by previous standards, and the population growth has in turn brought about the reduction of the prime agricultural lands of the Oxnard Plain.

In a state where class I and II soils occupy only six percent of the total state area and just ten percent of all the crop land, the significance of what occurs in the Oxnard Area can vitally affect what occurs in the 180 square mile Oxnard Plain, an area almost totally in the class I and II soil category.

The purpose of this study then, is not only to analyze the processes bringing about change in the Oxnard Area, but also to show the extent of such changes as have occurred, particularly during the past two decades, the period from 1950 to 1970.
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Site and Location

The Oxnard Area as it is delimited for purposes of this study conforms with the Oxnard City Planning Area. This area is bounded on the south and west by the Pacific Ocean, on the north by the Santa Clara River, and on the east by the Calleguas Creek, the Revlon Slough and the Camarillo Hills. Within this area 2,800 acres are in the Port of Hueneme (including over 1,650 owned by the Navy); 13,566.64 acres are within the city limits of Oxnard, and about 11,300 acres in the Del Norte Community. The total acreage of the study area is approximately 51,200, or eighty square miles.

The Oxnard Area is situated in the southwestern end of the Oxnard Plain along the Pacific Coast at a latitude of approximately 34 degrees north, 119 degrees west. The heart of the area under study is approximately sixty two miles northwest of Los Angeles and only a few miles southeast of Ventura (Map I).

The Oxnard Plain penetrates approximately fourteen miles inland and seven miles to either side of the City of
Map I:

Outline map of California showing the location of the Oxnard Area.
Oxnard; therefore the focal area can be considered flat with the possible exception of the northeastern corner of the Del Norte Community. The area's elevation averages about forty five feet above sea level.

The Background

During the past two decades Ventura County, and within the county, the City of Oxnard, have become one of Southern California's most rapidly expanding areas of urban development.

In 1950 this relatively small city claimed some 21,567 inhabitants, but the 1970 census reveals that its population has now swelled to more than 70,000. Today, evidence of high and low density urban development is apparent everywhere in Oxnard: there are vast new residential subdivisions, new shopping centers, and new schools. Additionally, such attracting items as uncongested highways, the deep water harbor of Port Hueneme, and available land are increasingly encouraging the movement of industry from the Los Angeles area. Such large firms as the 3M Corporation, Raytheon Company, and the Aerospace Division of the American Brake Shoe Company have located plants in Oxnard within the past decade, and the locational
advantages, the expansive areas of the city set aside for industrial use, together with the improving transportational facilities currently under construction, presage the even more rapid future growth of industry sites in the Oxnard Area.

Oxnard, founded in 1897, is situated in some of the best agricultural lands of Southern California, as reflected by the very high value of the area's crops. Ventura County's total crop value for 1970, for example, was $184,214,500.00\(^2\) (an all time high), suggesting the high agricultural productivity of the area, the most productive part of which is in the Oxnard Plain (Maps II, and III).

The encroachment of urban development on prime agricultural land is illustrated by the rapid growth of the city's boundaries. When Oxnard was incorporated as a city June 30, 1903, the total acreage was 1,647.08. By 1940 it increased in size by 107.08 acres, but the total acreage expanded to 2,318.13 by 1950. By 1953, after fifty years of growth, it had increased to 2,580.12 (4.03 square miles),\(^3\) compared to its present area of 21.20 square miles.\(^4\)
Map II:

Elevation map of Ventura County.

Map III:

Land cover map of Ventura County.
ELEVATIONS

NUMBER OF FEET
- SEA LEVEL TO 1000
- 1000 TO 2000
- 2000 TO 3000
- 3000 TO 5000
- 5000 TO 7000
- 7000 TO 8826

Source: U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey

LAND COVER

TYPE | ACRES
-----|-------
TIMBER CONIFERS | 53,000
GRASS, WOODLAND GRASS | 99,000
OTHER CONIFERS AND HARDWOODS | 223,000
CULTIVATED, URBAN, AND INDUSTRIAL | 227,000
CHAPARRAL, SAGEBRUSH, AND BARREN | 587,000

TOTAL 1,189,000

Source: California Forest and Range Experiment Station
Significance of Area Under Study

Ventura County, which is approximately the same size as the state of Delaware, embraces an area of about 1,851 square miles. The northern half, or fifty percent of the county area, is comprised of the Los Padres National Forest, and of the remaining area only about 200,000 acres, or 312 square miles can be considered choice developable area since the rest of the land has a slope greater than ten percent.5

By far the largest single area available for development is the Oxnard Plain. This 180-square-mile area of flat land is almost entirely within Class I and II* land use categories and has traditionally been an important producer of agricultural products. In 1970, for example, the value of the total production of lemons in Ventura County amounted to $53,842,000,6 which represented about one-half of the supply of lemons produced in the United States.7 The Oxnard area's share of this total was considerable.8 A list of other agricultural products could similarly be used to stress the importance of the land in this climatically favored region.

*Class I and II soils are those categorized as very good and good soils for farming.
The Oxnard Area lies in the heart of the Oxnard Plain; therefore, the pattern of the area's growth can have a vital bearing on the ultimate way in which the rest of the land in the Oxnard Plain is used.

Since an understanding of the dynamic aspect of the present landscape can only be understood by relating the inherent agricultural value of the Oxnard Area to the value of the area for residential, commercial, and industrial settlement, the focus of this study is on the multiple interaction of forces bringing about change, as well as on the extent of this change during the past two decades.
FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER ONE


CHAPTER TWO: THE PHYSICAL SETTING

Geology

The Oxnard Plain is a broad floodplain which has been formed by meandering streams and backfilled lagoons. A longitudinal cross-section of this plain would show a wedge of continental sediments thickening landward and overlying marine sediments that thicken seaward.

Strong earth movements in the early phases of the Pleistocene folded and tilted the beds over a broad area of Ventura County so that a great deal of erosion subsequently ensued. Upper Pleistocene sand, gravel, silt, and clay having a thickness of over 200 feet in the Oxnard Plain, were laid down on this eroded surface.

Moderate earth movement and a period of erosion preceded the deposition of Recent material, but all surficial deposits of the Oxnard Area are of relatively recent geologic age. During Recent geologic time, Calleguas Creek and the Santa Clara River have deposited alluvial material on the plains, while windblown sands and back-bay deposits and other shallow marine sediments were deposited along the oceanfront. Geological cross-sections
based on several well cores reveal that these strata of alluvial material thicken toward the City of Oxnard and diminish toward the Santa Monica Mountains.  

There are two known faults in the Oxnard Area. The Santa Rosa fault extends from a point a few miles east of Camarillo to Mugu Laguna, striking northeast to southwest. The Santa Clara fault parallels the left bank of the Santa Clara River and extends inland about five miles from the coast.

Climate

The climate of the Oxnard Area is similar to that of other coastal regions in Southern California. It is a typical Mediterranean type characterized by long, dry summers and short, wet winters. Under the Köppen classification the climate is Csb with a gradation to Csa toward the interior.

The ocean is a major climatic control because of its moderating influence upon the climate of Oxnard. Cool, moist winds from the ocean during the summer months, the small diurnal and annual temperature ranges and rare frosts in the winter are among the characteristics of the coastal environment. The mean annual average temperature in the
City of Oxnard is 59.3°, and the maximum and minimum range of average monthly temperatures are 69.7° and 48.8° respectively.9

One of the most important elements in the coastal climate of the Oxnard Area is the moderating influences of summer advection fogs. During the nights of the summer months, continental air of low humidity descends over the land mass, but the rapidly cooling ground cools the lower air so that the normal situation is a temperature inversion up to 1800 feet. When the pressure in the interior decreases, a cool, moisture-laden stratum of marine air moves inland.10

The morning fogs of the Oxnard coast, by inhibiting insolation, tend to reduce daytime temperatures. The resulting lack of a wide temperature range makes the coastal lands suitable for the culture of subtropical crops such as citrus, avocados and flowers. The fog condition also aids the growing of lima beans by providing a temperate climate, high humidity and cooling breezes.

The prevailing winds from the Pacific Ocean are of light to moderate velocity. The highest velocities occur in the spring. About seventy-five percent of the annual precipitation occurs from December to March, inclusive.
Mean seasonal precipitation is about fourteen inches.  

**Hydrography**

The Oxnard Area lies in a ground water hydrologic unit known as the Oxnard Plain Basin, which has an areal extent of approximately 46,460 acres. Most of the ground water of the Oxnard Area lowland is supplied by the Santa Clara River, its major surface stream; only the eastern third of the plain depends on other sources. The Santa Clara River watershed extends sixty-six miles from east to west and eighty-seven miles from north to south. Ninety percent is mountainous and although almost fifty percent of the watershed lies in Los Angeles County, ninety percent of the total annual water supply available to the Oxnard Area originates in Ventura County.

Coming into the lowland the ground water sinks rapidly into the alluvium of the northern and eastern margins and moves toward the ocean through several pervious beds, or aquifers, which are interbedded with impervious strata. These aquifers are not continuous strata but exist as lenses in the lowland materials.

Two principal water-bearing formations underlie the entire Oxnard Plain Basin and are known to have undersea
extensions. The shallower of these formations, known as the Oxnard Aquifer, is a thick, continuous layer of coarse, gravelly deposits which is exposed in the Oxnard Forebay Basin.

The main axis of the aquifer lies along a Saticoy-Oxnard-Port Hueneme line, along which the top of the aquifer is about 150 feet deep in the vicinity of Saticoy and approximately 250 feet below the ground surface at Port Hueneme.\textsuperscript{15} The Oxnard Aquifer crops out in the walls of the Mugu and Hueneme canyons, close to the shoreline.\textsuperscript{16}

The Fox Canyon Aquifer, the deeper of the two formations, underlies almost all of the coastal plain, including the Pleasant Valley Basin as well as the Oxnard Plain Basin.\textsuperscript{17} Other than the Oxnard Aquifer, the Fox Canyon is the most widely distributed and exploited water-bearing zone beneath the Oxnard Plain. Beneath the City of Oxnard, the top of the Fox Canyon Aquifer is at a depth of approximately 1,100 - 1,300 feet, and the thickness of the main zone is as large as 350 feet. The offshore extent is difficult to determine because of structural deformation and probable faulting.\textsuperscript{18} In addition, the sediments, predominantly fine to medium sand and gravel, become progressively finer towards the sea.\textsuperscript{19}
Between the two main water-bearing formations cited, there are several lesser sand and gravel deposits, but their extent, area of recharge and information as to their hydraulic continuity with either of the two principal aquifers or with the ocean are not known.  

Soils

By far the most extensive groups of soils in the Oxnard Plain are alluvial. These are young soils derived from sediments that have not undergone material changes or internal modification since their deposition. Characteristic of these soils is their relatively high organic content as compared with soils of more inland and therefore less humid areas of the southern part of the state.  

The soils of the Oxnard Area are members of the Camarillo-Hueneme-Pacheco association. This series consists of poorly drained, sandy loams sixty inches or more deep, formed on alluvial fans and plains, in stratified alluvium derived predominantly from sedimentary rocks.  

Over ninety percent of the soils in the study area are in the capability classes I and II, which places them in the very good to good category for farming. Only narrow strips along the coastal area and along the Santa Clara
River bed fall into capability class VIII, considered unsuited for farming (Map IV).

At the present time most of the soils are used for vegetable, lemon, strawberries and field-crop production.
Map IV: 

Land suitable for farming in the Ventura area.
FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER TWO


6. Ibid.

7. Ibid.


11. Ibid.

12. Perling E. Soring, "Supplementary Water Supply" (pamphlet prepared for the Oxnard


14. Ibid.


17. Ibid., p. 33.

18. Ibid., p. 33.

19. Ibid., p. 34.

20. Ibid., p. 38.


CHAPTER THREE: THE EARLIEST SETTLERS

The Indian Period

The Oxnard Area has long provided a suitable habitat for man, but no group of people occupied the area for so long and changed the landscape so little as the Chumash Indians.

A map of aboriginal settlement in the Ventura area (Map V), shows that there were a number of villages in the Oxnard region. These villages, or rancherias, as they were designated by the Spanish, were the most apparent sign of land use on the aboriginal landscape. There were no cultivated areas, for the Chumash were not agriculturists. However, evidence of their occupation of the area has accumulated over the years from the artifacts these primitive people left behind.

Though it is difficult to get a clear picture of the Chumash because of the scarcity of the written record, it is evident that these people were predominantly a coastal people more nearly maritime in their habits than any other California group. Their estimated total population at the start of the mission era varied from 10,000 for
Map V:

Approximate 1760 Chumash village locations and populations.

Source: James Davis
MAP I: Approximate 1760 Chumash Village Locations and Populations
those living along the coastal area from Ventura to Point Concepcion as recorded by Father Crespi, to 20,000 for the entire Channel area, as recorded by Father Palou. These estimates did not cover the entire Chumash area, for the country of the Chumash was very large. It included all of Santa Barbara County, most of Ventura County and parts of San Luis Obispo, Kern and Los Angeles counties—in all about 6,500 square miles. The largest concentration of these people was along the coastal area of Santa Barbara. Thus, those who inhabited the Oxnard region were few in number. Only one rancheria in the area, that of Muwu, had a population larger than 300 people.

Beyond the bounty of the sea the Chumash Indians depended on wild fruits, seeds and nuts. Acorns, strained of their tannic acids, as well as the small game they could kill with their primitive weapons, supplemented their diets. These people lived in hemispherical, thatched huts constructed with willows bent and tied at the top and covered with tule mats. Apparently each Chumash rancheria had its local domain which centered on a water course. The villages on the coast were usually built on high ground where a creek ran into the ocean, so that both fresh water and a quick launching spot for their canoes were accessible.
There must have been seasonal movements for acorn and general seed gathering, hunting and especially for fresh water. Particularly in the dry summer months would group migrations to the permanent water in the headwater canyons have been necessary.\(^4\)

Probably the most unusual thing about the Indians of Ventura County was their remarkable skill in building and managing launches. Their finest technological achievement was the *tomol*, or planked canoe. The only boat remotely like it was the dugout canoe with raised plank sides of the Araucanian Indians of southern Chile.\(^5\) These *tomols* were worked with no other tools than their shells and flints. The seams were joined by sewing and the joints were fitted with pitch. They varied in length from twelve to twenty-four feet and were decorated with shells and painted with hematite derived dyes. In these canoes they made daring voyages as far as Santa Catalina Island as well as to the closer San Nicolas Island.\(^6\)

In other respects the technological level of the Chumash was simple and non-specialized. They had no knowledge of pottery, and cooking was done with steatite *ollas* and *comals*, or cooking stones.\(^7\)

As hunters and gatherers, the inland Chumash led a
primitive existence as they were dependent almost entirely upon wild foods for their sustenance. Consequently their utilization of the wild landscape was subject to the natural distribution and abundance of plants and animals. Territoriality was for this reason intensely defined and aggressively maintained. In large part warfare, in the form of raids but with occasional formal duels between villages, was an aggressive adjunct of subsistence serving to maintain territorial boundaries and to guard against theft of foodstores.8

In its natural state then, the Oxnard Area, with its paucity of wild plants and animals, cannot be considered to have been an ideal area for non-agriculturalists such as the Chumash Indians. Though there is evidence of human settlement in the area for thousands of years before the coming of the Spaniards, the Indians' mode of existence precluded a large population. Yet small as their population was, their precarious existence was sadly upset with the arrival of the white man. From 1770 to 1910, according to Kroeber, the California Indian population declined nearly ninety percent. In the case of the Chumash, the decline was total.9
Spanish Explorations

Only fifty years after Columbus discovered America and eighty years before the landing of the Mayflower, Juan Rodriguez Cabrillo, sailing for the Spanish Crown, explored the southern California coast. In 1542 Juan Paez, the Cabrillo diarist, recorded the following:

On the following Monday, the 9th of the said month [of October] we left the Bay of Los Fuegos [Santa Monica Bay] and, sailing this day about six leagues, anchored in a large bay [Laguna Mugu, nineteen miles by coastline south of San Buenaventura]. From here we departed the next day, Tuesday, and sailed about eight leagues along a coast running from northwest to southwest...\textsuperscript{10}

Such was the brief encounter with the Oxnard Area of the first European visitors to Alta California.

Cabrillo had been sent along the coast toward Cathay, apparently with instructions also to look for the western entrance to the Strait of Anian. Accordingly, he stopped only at those locations which he thought might be of future use to the Spanish Crown. Among the sites where possession was taken in the name of the King was the pueblo de las Canoas, or what is now the townsite of San Buenaventura.

Early in December of 1602, another Spanish
navigator, Sebastian de Viscaíno, came upon the scene, in command of three ships. Sighting two large islands on the second of December they passed between the first and the mainland "whereupon a canoe came out with two Indian fishers who had a great quantity of fish." After a brief exchange with these natives they left, recording only the barest sketch of the indigenous population. Thereafter, for 167 years, nothing more was recorded about the area.\textsuperscript{11}

**The Mission Period**

The missions established throughout the length of California during the latter part of the eighteenth century were designed to be supply depots for Spanish military outposts. The establishment of these outposts was deemed necessary by the Spanish Crown as a means of warding off Russian designs on Alta California. Under the guidance of the Franciscan missionaries, the missions were to provide clothing, arms, provisions, and even men for the defense of the Province. These tasks the missions would accomplish after the Franciscans fulfilled their primary obligation—the conversion of the indigenous inhabitants.\textsuperscript{12}

Under the Laws of the Indies all Spanish provincial lands belonged to the Crown and were awarded in the form of
grants or concessions, either to institutions or individuals.\textsuperscript{13} Since there were so few Spaniards in Alta California, even up to the end of the Spanish period, the mission lands completely dwarfed individual or pueblo grants. Also, Spanish colonial policy did not aid widespread settlement, but instead preferred that settlers live in communities, the better to insure defense and preserve order. The gathering of the Indians at the various missions thus satisfied governmental policy as well as the church goal of rapid conversion of the Indians.\textsuperscript{14} Since the Spanish government restricted foreign trade in the colonies and private lands were not to infringe on the church lands, the success of the missions was virtually assured.

Although the founding of a mission in the Ventura region was long delayed, Mission San Buenaventura eventually came to be among the most successful of the twenty-one missions in California.

The beginning of Spanish settlement in Ventura County may be traced to the founding of Mission San Buenaventura, and it was only after its completion that the first pioneer settlers began to settle near the site. Actual Spanish settlement in the Ventura region, planned
as early as 1768, did not begin until 1782. In fact, the founding of San Buenaventura, which was to have been among the first missions founded by Father Serra proved instead to be his last. The mission was founded on Easter Sunday, 1782.\textsuperscript{15}

Progress of the mission, as well as the settlement within the county was slow at first. Only two adults were baptized in 1782, and by 1785, the neophytes' population had increased to only 133. After 1786, however, the converts came in great number, and by 1816 there were 1,328 Indians and thirty white settlers near the mission.\textsuperscript{16}

The conversion of the Indians to Christianity and their coalescence into settlements around the mission greatly altered the Indians' previous mode of existence. From a primitive subsistence economy, the indigenous population, under the guidance of the Franciscans, began to learn all of the basic trades, including animal husbandry and agriculture. As the mission began to prosper, Indians from throughout the region gravitated to the mission site.

Practically all of present-day Ventura County came under the jurisdiction of Mission San Buenaventura. In the Oxnard Area, over 48,000 acres were granted to the mission and there is evidence to indicate that at least a portion
of the region between Hueneme and the Mugu Laguna was 

promised to the mission as well.\textsuperscript{17}

Although irrigation networks were established along 
the lower Ventura River Valley by the missionaries, and 
the cultivation of a variety of crops and orchards was in-
troduced at an early date, by far the most important 
economic activity during the Spanish mission period was 
cattle grazing. Crop lands were of minor importance and 
were found in only a small portion of the Oxnard Area. 
There is no record of crop land in the area before 1800 
although cattle production was common. In fact, almost all 
of Ventura County was pasture for the mission. By 1825, 
for example, the mission owned 37,000 head of cattle, 
30,000 sheep, 600 horses, 500 mules and 200 goats. The 
production of the cultivated area amounted to only 1,750 
bushels of wheat, 500 bushels of corn, 400 bushels of 
beans and 2,000 bushels of barley.\textsuperscript{18}

Despite the apparent success of Mission San 
Buena Ventura, events were in progress as early as 1820 
that ultimately were to bring about the dissolution of the 
entire mission system.
Secularization of the Missions

Disagreement and dissatisfaction with the mission system had been growing for years, first under Spanish and, after 1822, under Mexican rule. Finally, in 1833, the Mexican government ordered the Franciscan Missions to be put under civilian control, the Indians released, and their lands returned to them. All did not work out as smoothly as planned. The Indians did not care to leave the missions nor did they care to work for themselves without the mission discipline. There had also been a rapid decrease in the Indian population due primarily to disease. In fact, the survival of the Indians seems to have been in direct ratio to their distance from the mission influence. The Ventura mission, once one of the most successful with one of the largest Indian populations, had only 263 neophytes by 1839.19 These rapidly decreased in number and only a little over one hundred years later, there were no survivors of the native Indian population left in Ventura County.20

Ostensibly, the Secularization Act was designed to benefit the Indians and make them self-sustaining people. Actually, it led to the rapid disintegration of the mission-controlled communities and brought about the
The Rancho Period

With the adoption of the Secularization Act, there was a significant change in the cautious land-grant policy that had prevailed before 1833. From the time of the accession of Governor Pedro Fages, in 1782, to the close of the Spanish period, for example, less than twenty large private land concessions were made in California. In contrast, between the passage of the Secularization Act and 1846, California governors issued over 500 concessions to private claimants.

As early as 1834 all of the lands under control of Mission San Buenaventura were taken over by the state, the church retaining only the grounds immediately about it, containing 36.27 acres. By 1847, all of the Oxnard Area was parceled out to private holders. Eight ranchos were formed, although only a few formed part of the study area. Among the ranchos in or near the study area were the following:

Rancho Santa Clara del Norte: Grant of 13,989 acres to Juan Sanchez, May 6, 1837. Most of this rancho was situated in the northeastern extension of the Oxnard Plain.
Rancho El Rio de Santa Clara o La Colonia:
Grant of 48,883 acres in 1837 to eight soldiers — hence named the colony. It was the largest—and one of the most valuable—of the Oxnard Area ranchos and occupied all of the Oxnard Plain south of the Rancho Santa Clara del Norte.

Rancho San Miguel: Grant of 4,694 acres to Raymundo Olivas, July 6, 1841.

Rancho Guadalasca: Grant of 30,594 acres to Isabel Yorba, May 6, 1846²⁴ (Map VI).

The Rancho Period, in the Oxnard Area, as well as in other parts of Southern California, was a tranquil and carefree period. From an economic and social point of view rural life in California was much like the rural life of Old Spain. Rich land and adequate labor was abundant. The sale of animal products became the major source of revenue. In fact, contracts and promissory notes were often made payable in terms of cattle, hides or tallow. Hundreds of thousands of cattle roamed throughout Southern California. Because the sale of fresh meat in quantity was restricted until the cities began to grow in the 1840's, the cattle were often killed only for their hides.²⁵

The discovery of gold and the sudden influx of
Map VI:

Ranchos in the Oxnard Area during the Spanish-Mexican period.
miners into the Mother Lode area in 1848 created a market for fresh meat which the cattle ranches of the Oxnard Area helped supply. The rapid rise in cattle values brought great prosperity to the rancheros—and they spent it lavishly. The importation of cattle across the plains from western states and the eventual settlement of the central and northern part of the state, however, eventually created problems for the southern cattle ranchers. The abundance of cattle nearer the mines brought a decline in the prices of cattle, and, to compete with the northern producers, the rancheros of the south allowed their ranges to become over-stocked, hoping to make up by quantity for the decrease in value. Unwilling to accept the economic realities, many southern ranchers continued to live in a luxurious manner, borrowing heavily to do so, and often at ruinous interest rates. It was not unusual, for example, for these people to mortgage their ranchos at interest rates as high as fifteen percent compounded monthly. The prices for southern cattle, however, were not to attain the highly inflated rates of the early 1850's again. Full-grown steers that sold for from thirty to forty dollars soon after the discovery of gold dropped to only two dollars per head—if they could be sold.
Another element that contributed to the financial ruin of the cattle barons was litigation. The careless methods of granting lands under Mexican domination created innumerable problems which had to be settled in court, often at the expense of the owner. There were overlapping grants, indefinite boundaries, incursion of squatters and lost titles, all of which involved extensive court proceedings, and the lawyers' fees often exceeded what the ranchers could pay. 28

Although the cattle industry of the south was sorely crippled by the competition, litigation and usurious interest rates, it still survived. Subsequent events, however, in the form of adverse forces of nature ultimately completed its final undoing.

The winter of 1855-56 heralded one of the dry years. One hundred thousand cattle starved to death in the southern coast counties during the summer and fall of 1856. But it was the famine years of 1863 and 1864, when for two seasons not enough rain fell to start the green feed, that finally put an end to the industry. A million animals, cattle and horses, starved to death in the Southland. Over two-thirds of all cattle in Ventura County died. 29 This calamity forced a change in the industry of Southern
California as the rancheros had no money to restock their ranges nor to cultivate them. Slowly, as California grew in population and became a part of the United States in culture, the ranchos declined, for the most part because the owners were deeply in debt and one of the only ways they could avoid losing all of their possessions was through subdividing their land.

Early American Occupance

The beginning of growth and development in Ventura county dates to the subdivision of the large ranchos into small tracts. The break-up of the ranchos induced immigration and settlement by small farmers and fruit raisers. In 1866, the Briggs tract near Santa Paula was cut up and placed on the market. Two years later the great ranchos of Santa Paula and Saticoy and the Rancho de Santa Clara o La Colonia were also subdivided, providing the new immigrants with the opportunity to experiment with new crops. By 1873 there were over 155 farmers in the county owning a combined total of 338,761 acres.30

Although the drought-accelerated disintegration of the great ranchos brought about an increased devotion to small farms and a more intensive agricultural development, it was the extension of the Southern Pacific Railroad to
the Southland and the extensive publicity given to the entire area that precipitated a land boom throughout all of Southern California. Railroad passenger fares dropped precipitously as railroad firms competed with each other so that for a period in 1887 the price of passage from Kansas to Los Angeles dropped as low as one dollar. Also, promoters who had been trained in Middle West land booms flocked to California where their initial success spurred more intensive efforts to sell the land.

The underlying reason for the land boom's intensity was the good prospects for farming. In this respect, although the influence of the boom was modified by its smaller population and slower agricultural development, when it came it was no less vigorous in the Ventura region than in any of the coastal valleys. Agriculturally, Ventura County was in a favorable position. Wheat had been successfully farmed since the 1860's, particularly in the Oxnard Area, and in May, 1871, the Santa Clara Irrigating Company was formed with the end of providing a twelve-mile canal that would irrigate the lands of the Colonia Rancho, thus insuring even larger wheat production. The completion of a wharf in Hueneme in 1872 also facilitated shipping of the crops that were being grown.
By 1879 there were about 7,000 settlers in the county. The cultivated area was about 75,000 acres. The chief crops were barley, 36,000 acres; corn, 19,000 acres; wheat, 13,000 acres, but orchards and vineyards were also becoming important as there were over 37,000 acres of both in the county as well.\(^{32}\)

Although the most successful farming areas were initially in the Santa Paula area, the farmers in the Oxnard Area subsequently proved that the conditions on the plain were even better suited for farming. After the establishment of the sugar refinery there in 1898, the growth of the area was assured.
FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER THREE


4. Ibid.


6. Ibid., p. 43.


11. Ibid.


14. Ibid.


16. Ibid.


18. Guinn, op. cit., p. 65.


21. Ibid.


24. Ibid.


27. Ibid.


30. Ibid.


CHAPTER FOUR: THE FOUNDING OF OXNARD, 1903

Agriculture - Basis for Settlement

The rise of Oxnard and the swift agricultural development of the Oxnard area in the last half century are closely related. The city, which lies at the highest point of the rich, fertile plain south of the Santa Clara River, was built contemporaneously with what was to be the largest sugar factory in the United States. Before that time the area was a great barley field with an occasional farmhouse dotting the landscape between El Rio and Hueneme. Much of the vast, flat stretch of land was devoted to the growing of grain and beans, though there was also at that time much waste land.¹

The founding of Oxnard actually took place in 1897. At that time Albert Maulhardt became interested in production of beet sugar. The broad acres south of the river were not deemed the most productive, but Maulhardt thought they would raise sugar beets. He traveled to San Francisco for a consultation with Henry Oxnard. Oxnard was interested and made a trip to the vicinity to determine the best location. He investigated Ventura, but the sentiment there
was unfavorable. Thomas Bard, a prominent local farmer, discouraged the project at Hueneme, and finally Maulhardt and a group of farmers purchased 200 acres of land from Thomas A. Rice adjoining what are now Saviers and Wooley Roads.

At first there was no intention of building a town, but as the small group of farmers headed by Maulhardt were working to bring a new enterprise to the county, people began to gather into its neighborhood, building small houses and stores, as well as a few saloons.²

The original townsite extended from Wooley Road on the south to the alley north of Magnolia Street, and from Saviers Road on the east side to "F" Street on the west. Initial subdivision called for residential lots of 140 feet in depth and 50 feet in width, at the rear of which were located 20 foot alleys. Residential development proceeded west from Oxnard Boulevard and "A" Street, with commercial establishments concentrated along west Fifth Street, "A" Street, and the western side of Oxnard Boulevard.³

By 1900, the town had a population of 1,000, mostly men employed in sugar beet fields and in the sugar refinery.⁴ Many of these early settlers, however, came to till the land, and although they did work in the sugar factory
and as field hands, they did so on a temporary basis. Their ultimate goal was to acquire land for themselves.

There had been complications before 1889 in that only a little more than one percent of Ventura County farm-land was irrigated and the traditional use of the land before this period was in livestock raising. From the middle 1800's over 87,000 longhorns roamed Ventura and neighboring Santa Barbara counties, and more than 114,000 sheep grazed in Ventura County alone as late as 1880. It was only after the disastrous droughts of 1863-64 and 1876-77, which killed thousands of head of stock, that commercial agriculture began on any scale. Prior to this, food was raised chiefly for subsistence in the ranch home gardens. Wheat, barley, corn, beans, and a few fruits and vegetables were the staple products. Cultural, economic and legal prejudices all helped to maintain the dominance of livestock over crops until after 1890.5

The supremacy of livestock raising in this period, however, did not prevent experimentation with "new" crops, new at least, to the American settlers from the East. The success of many of the new crops, together with the large influx of settlers and the development of eastern markets led to a rapid transition from an intensive grain-raising
economy to an intensive one of field and tree crops. The high humidity and fogginess of the coastal area reduced transpiration and enabled many crops that ordinarily required some irrigation to be grown without it. Roots long enough to tap the ground water were a help. Lima beans needed no irrigation; apricots, olives, and sugar beets demanded only a little water during excessive droughts. Citrus fruits and alfalfa, which do require several waterings during the season, were not introduced until after 1917.

The transition in the types of crops produced in the Oxnard area, from the more extensively raised grains to a wide variety of intensive crops enabled more pioneer easterners to acquire their own lands. At the same time it also created a serious labor shortage as the new crops required a great deal of hand labor. Sugar beets had to be thinned, topped and hoed, bean fields had to be kept free of weeds during the growing season and later stacked and threshed, and the trees needed spraying and pruning. Also, there was a need for more hands in the developing packing plants.
Population Growth

The rapid intensification of agriculture led to a rapid increase of population in all of Ventura County. The incoming easterners, however, were not easily disposed to working for others for the low pay that was customarily the pattern, particularly if there were other opportunities. Their performance in the field was therefore inadequate and the importation of foreign labor which was more willing to do the tedious work soon followed.

Chinese, Japanese, and a smaller number of other nationalities such as Filipinos, West Indians and Hindus were used as field hands after 1897, although the latter three groups never became as numerous as the Chinese and Japanese. 8

The Chinese were the first prominent group to work in the fields. The labor for the vegetable industry in 1890, for example, was largely provided by these people. Much of the work in the early bean and wheat fields was also done by them. They never were very numerous, however, their highest number, according to U. S. Census Bureau, being only 451 in 1890. The increasing anti-Chinese feeling, as well as the subsequent passing of the Exclusion Acts caused their decline. By 1940, only 140 Chinese
remained in the county.\(^9\)

Migrants from Japan began to arrive in Southern California in the 1890's, attracted mainly by glowing accounts of high wages and great employment opportunities. Available jobs for these newcomers were largely manual labor on farms, on railroad construction, and as domestics. San Bernardino, Riverside, Los Angeles and Oxnard were the major areas where Japanese settled.\(^10\)

In the latter part of the nineteenth century a number of Japanese immigrants were attracted to Ventura County by its new sugar beet industry. From the time of the opening of the plant in 1897, the Japanese gradually became an integral part of the area's agricultural scene. Both sugar beet and citrus industries attracted an increasing number of workers, and in 1919 Japanese in Ventura County numbered approximately 2,000, the majority of them living in the Oxnard Area.\(^11\)

The influx of Japanese to the county decreased in 1916 when the sugar beet industry began to decline. By 1940 there were only 672 Japanese in the county. World War II and the relocation of most of the Japanese in California removed them as an important element in Oxnard area agriculture.
Neither the Japanese nor the Chinese attained the importance in numbers of the Mexican and Mexican-American, however. First introduced into the Oxnard Area in number by the sugar beet company at Oxnard, they kept coming at intermittent intervals until by 1970 the percentage of people of Spanish surname in the City of Oxnard was approximately thirty percent.\textsuperscript{12}

The availability of this source of cheap labor facilitated the further expansion of agriculture in the Oxnard Area. And the source of this labor supply did not dry up as the social and economic turmoil besetting the Mexican Republic between 1910 and 1917 prompted many Mexicans to emigrate to the United States. At a later date, during the administrations of Alvaro Obregon and Plutarco Calles (1920-1934), another wave of Mexicans arrived in the American Southwest, so that between 1900 and 1930 nearly ten percent of Mexico's adult population came to the United States.\textsuperscript{13}

As can be seen from Table I, Oxnard's population increased consistently in numbers from 1900 through 1940, even though the percentage increase declined during the depression years. The exceptionally large increase from 1940 to 1945 was due to the operation of the two nearby
naval bases, although the war effort also prompted the expansion of agricultural crops. In 1939, for example, there were 1,745 farms with a total of 457,560 acres as compared to 2,002 farms and 521,208 acres under cultivation in the county by 1944.14

### Expansion of Agriculture in the Oxnard Area

The resolution of the labor shortage after the turn of the century brought about a dramatic increase in land under cultivation, but there was not another shift in the type of crops under production until the problems of irrigation and improper drainage were solved after 1920.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>2,555</td>
<td>1,555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>4,417</td>
<td>1,862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>6,285</td>
<td>1,868</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>8,519</td>
<td>2,234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>25,333</td>
<td>16,814</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>40,265</td>
<td>14,932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>71,300</td>
<td>31,038</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Before 1920 most of the lowland had too high a water table, which resulted in extensive accumulation of alkali. Both conditions prevented any sizeable plantings of more intensive crops, especially those requiring irrigation.\textsuperscript{15}

Large-scale drainage enterprises, rapid improvements in well machinery and techniques, rising land values, and a general increase in market prices helped to eliminate the problems associated with the alkali deposits. Increases in tree-crop acreage contributed heavily to the expansion of irrigation so that the two complementary processes further increased the value of the land. Orchards in Ventura County increased from 29,000 acres in 1917 to almost 66,000 acres in 1950; irrigated acreage rose from 31,700 in 1919 to more than 107,689 in 1949.\textsuperscript{16}

Extension of irrigation was not confined to tree crops. Yields in field crops increased with the application of water. As early as 1903 irrigation of sugar beets raised yields dramatically. In 1927 irrigated lima beans produced an average of 1600 pounds an acre, in contrast with only 600 pounds for dry-farmed beans.\textsuperscript{17} The advantages of irrigating the rich lowland of the Oxnard Area is reflected by the fact that in 1947, only 4,900 of 74,800 acres of irrigable land in the area was still dry farmed.
Expanding acreage of more valuable crops played a major part in the decline of farm size in the lowlands of Ventura County. Rapid increases in the rural population and the consequent diminution of farm area made imperative the raising of crops which produced higher revenue. Increasingly higher revenues in turn have raised land valuations and thus have favored still further the smaller farm. Farm valuation had risen from a modest $13,118,520 in 1890 to a staggering $212,226,855 in 1950. Cattle ranging "ranchos" in the Ventura lowland prior to 1848 ranged in size from 4,000 to 50,000 acres. By 1949, according to field sampling by Howard Gregor, over sixty-two percent of the farms specializing in grain, row, and tree crops were less than 100 acres in extent. In that same year there were 2,049 farms in Ventura County as compared to 1,745 in 1939.18

The great increase in irrigation that began in the 1920's then, contributed substantially to the higher crop productivity, and the drainage of the lowlands opened up new lands for agriculture. But the expansion of land in farms was also accompanied by rapid population growth, representing an overflow of the rapid immigration into neighboring Los Angeles County, and a response to the
discovery of the important oil deposits in Ventura. The war years also brought huge numbers of people to California. Between 1940 and 1946 the population of California increased thirty-eight percent, the fastest rate of gain of any state, against the national increase of six percent. During these years California's population increased by 2,643,000 people; during this same period, the population of Ventura County increased by over 50,000.19

While population growth is not as important as in former years it can be said that the growth of the City of Oxnard paralleled the expansion of agriculture, particularly before 1942. The population make-up also reflects the early attempts to resolve the labor problem as the ethnic composition of the city reveals a Mexican-American population that is proportionally higher than any other city in the county. The descendants of the early Chinese and Japanese immigrants can also be found in higher percentages than in other Ventura County cities.

Most of Ventura County's increase in population in the recent past has been in urban centers, as evidenced by the fact that approximately sixty percent of the total county population lived in and immediately beyond the political boundaries of Oxnard and Ventura by 1950.
Oxnard experienced the fastest growth after 1942, partially because of the Naval Base at Hueneme, but also because of its importance as the primary agricultural marketing and processing center of the Oxnard Area and Ventura County. In 1949 the city had approximately fourteen plants (half of them built since 1942) engaged in such operations as vegetable and fruit canning and packing, sugar refining, and production of farm machinery. In the same year a total of 3,843 persons were employed in the city during the harvest season.20

Food processing plants have traditionally been the largest single employers in the Oxnard Area. As of 1969 there were approximately 2,300 people employed in food manufacturing. As of June 1970 there were sixty-five processing, canning, packing and shipping plants in the City of Oxnard.21

While many of the residents of Oxnard have now moved into higher paying occupations there is a relatively large section referred to as the Colonia in which a high proportion of the residents are still involved as field laborers. Though this section of the city, which is situated in the north-eastern quadrant of Oxnard, is as old as Oxnard itself, many of its former residents have
moved out into other sections of the city upon finding more suitable employment. The more recent immigrants from Mexico, as well as a high proportion of the city's black population, still live there where many serve as a labor reservoir for the work to be done in the fields.
FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER FOUR


2. Ibid.


7. Ibid.


9. Ibid.


11. Ibid., p. 504.


16. Ibid., p. 17.


CHAPTER FIVE: THE DECADES OF URBANIZATION 1950 - 1970

Introduction

In all areas experiencing rapid change, the causal factors must be investigated for an adequate understanding of the developing patterns. Such causal factors are often found outside the delimited area of study, and one of the most difficult tasks of the geographer is to interweave the significant phenomena outside the study area with those of the focal area without excessive elaboration.

From the time Oxnard was founded in 1897 until after World War II the city remained mostly an agricultural center. The basis for its industrial development can be traced to the completion of the deep water harbor at Port Hueneme in 1942, and the Construction Battalion Center there. The great number of military and civilian personnel working at the base installation throughout the war years brought many new residents to the nearest large city, Oxnard. But it was the unprecedented migration into Southern California after the war years that brought about the greatest transformation of the landscape in the Oxnard.
area. With the spillover of people from the Los Angeles region into the peripheral areas it was not long before land values started rising sharply, first in Orange County and then in Ventura County. The increased value in land in turn has continued to bring about a shift in the patterns of crop production, a shift that of necessity has been toward high value, hard to duplicate specialty crops. But even the higher value of the crops has not been enough to stem the transformation of prime agricultural land to housing developments and shopping centers.

The Assault on Agriculture

California has traditionally been an agricultural state, and for the last twenty-two years has had the largest value of agricultural production in the nation. In 1969, gross cash receipts from farm marketings in the state totaled $4.38 billion.¹

Ventura County, which ranked fifteenth among the 3,100 counties of the United States as regards value of farm products sold in 1959, has contributed significantly to agricultural production in California. It has long been a leading producer of many crops and livestock commodities² (Table II).
### TABLE II
**LEADING CROPS - VENTURA COUNTY**
**VENTURA COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commodity</th>
<th>State Ranking</th>
<th>Nationwide Ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avocados, Fuerte</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broccoli</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabbage</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrots</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celery</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eggs, Chicken</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grapefruit</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lemons</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oranges, Navel</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oranges, Valencia</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peas, green</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peppers, Bell</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spinach, fresh</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Despite the importance of the land for such specialty crops as have been cited, the nature of agricultural production in Ventura County is changing. Using 1949 as a base year when 136,063 acres were harvested in Ventura County, the average decline in acreage over a twenty year span is about 800 acres per year. If, however, one uses
1959 as a starting point, the reduction of crop lands in Ventura County becomes increasingly notable. As can be seen from Table III, fruit and nut and field crops have declined in acreage while vegetables, cut flowers, and nursery stock increased. And while the production value of crops has risen in the past decades (production value was $60,994,000.00 in 1950), total acreage has declined an average of 1,800 acres per year.³

The overall trend is one of increasing crop specialization and value in Ventura County even though acreage is declining. As cultivated acreage continues to shrink, the remaining land becomes increasingly valuable so that the crops produced are heavily weighted in favor of high value, hard-to-duplicate specialty crops.⁴ The steady ten percent average annual increase in the assessed valuation of property during the 1950-1970 period has been to a large degree the cause for much of the change in crop production patterns.⁵

The retention of agricultural lands in the Oxnard Area does not appear very promising despite the traditionally high value of the crops produced. Even with the realization that productive acreage will undoubtedly increase in value, projection figures provided by the Ventura
TABLE III
TOTAL VENTURA COUNTY AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION
1959 AND 1969

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fruits and Nuts</th>
<th>Harvested Acres</th>
<th>Changes in Harvested Acres</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Production Value</th>
<th>Changes in Production Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>53,821</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>51,444</td>
<td>-2,377</td>
<td>-4.5</td>
<td>$56,595,032.28</td>
<td>$30,057,767.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vegetable Crops</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>35,894</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>24,191,246.76</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>38,979</td>
<td>+3,085</td>
<td>+8.0</td>
<td>44,171,000.00</td>
<td>19,979,753.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Field Crops</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>32,326</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5,566,751.65</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>18,817</td>
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<td>-58.2</td>
<td>5,189,800.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cut Flowers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>810</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,001,960.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>1,733</td>
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<td>+52.4</td>
<td>3,287,000.00</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>1,065,968.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>2,732,900.00</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1,666,932.00</td>
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<td>Dairy Products</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>3,358,014.65</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>3,621,000.00</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>1959</td>
<td>10,935,675.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>1969</td>
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<td>13,739,025.00</td>
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<td>Apiary Products</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>105,700.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>363,000.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>257,300.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL Bearing and Nonbearing Acres</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>137,550</td>
<td>$102,821,348.34</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>119,562</td>
<td>17,988</td>
<td></td>
<td>170,693,200.00</td>
<td>$67,871,851.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ventura County, Annual Report and Crop Statistics, Agricultural Commissioner, Santa Paula, California
County Planning Department, indicate that class I and II prime agricultural lands in Ventura County will decline at an annual rate of 1,800 acres for the next ten years, given the present absorption trends. The underlying reasons for this can be seen by examining the relative value of agricultural production when compared to other land uses. In 1969, Ventura County had a total value of agricultural production, processing and packaging of $170,693,000.00. This figure, however, is not the sum of economic consequences of agriculture and its related industries. The inputs from other sectors of the economy require secondary inputs in order for these industries to make their sales to the agricultural sector's production (which in this instance, is the primary activity). This economic process is termed the multiplier effect. The multipliers used are estimates taken from multipliers developed by the Agricultural Extension Service in California in 1969. The multiplier for crop agriculture is 3.37 and for livestock agriculture, 2.01. Differences in the two figures are largely accounted for by the fact that crop agriculture is much more labor intensive than livestock agriculture, and wages are a strong catalyst to economic activity. Thus, crop agriculture, with a value of
$142,034,500 and livestock and related agriculture with a value of $28,658,700.00, with their respective multipliers, gives a total economic contribution of agriculture to Ventura County of $536,260,252.00.8

Utilizing the same computations, but with other multipliers for other sectors of the economy, the residential, industrial, commercial, and governmental sales or expenditures in Ventura County are estimated to have the following impact by 1980:9

a. Residential $2,909,750,430.00
b. Industrial 1,543,400,309.00
c. Commercial 1,277,208,432.00
d. Governmental 432,905,656.00
e. Agricultural 355,858,677.00

Given these figures it is clear that other forms of land use will be more profitable than the use of the land for agriculture.

While the above given figures will only be correct to the extent that the projected population figures for 1980 are correct, the present growth pattern for the county does not make the Ventura County Planning Department's 1980 population projection figure of 800,000 for the county seem unrealistic.10 Based upon available data and recent
trends the population of California is expected to reach 22,100,000 in 1975. This represents an overall gain of 2,244,000 people or 11.3 percent since 1969. During this period, Southern California's population should increase at a slightly higher rate than that of the state, totalling 13,200,000 by 1975. This increase of 1,499,700, or 12.8 percent, would equal 66.8 percent of California's total population gain. By 1975, then, 59.7 percent of the state's population should live in Southern California (Table IV).

Space for the projected population growth is available in Ventura County. At urban densities of 2.2 to 3.2 dwellings per acre and a family size of 3.5 to 3.7 per family dwelling, suitable land in Ventura County can accommodate nearly three million people, provided additional water becomes available.

A Regional Analysis and Future Trends

A regional analysis indicates that land in Ventura County should have greater attractiveness for development in the future than land in other suburban counties in the Los Angeles region. The traditional orientation of intensive urban growth in the region since 1950 has been in a
### TABLE IV
POPULATION GROWTH AND PROJECTIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City of Oxnard</td>
<td>21,567</td>
<td>40,265</td>
<td>71,300</td>
<td>129,500</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan Oxnard</td>
<td>46,751</td>
<td>85,772</td>
<td>109,825</td>
<td>170,000</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ventura County</td>
<td>114,647</td>
<td>199,138</td>
<td>384,080</td>
<td>700,000</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>92.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>to 872,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles Metropolitan Area</td>
<td>4,151,687</td>
<td>6,042,431</td>
<td>7,260,000</td>
<td>7,780,000</td>
<td>45.5%</td>
<td>20.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern California</td>
<td>6,141,780</td>
<td>9,634,636</td>
<td>12,778,000*</td>
<td>14,455,000*</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>32.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*14 Counties

Source: California Department of Finance, Financial & Population Research Section; General Telephone Company; U. S. Bureau of the Census; Ventura County Planning Department; and the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce.
southeasterly direction into Orange County. Unlike Ventura County, the mountainous regions of Orange County lie largely in the southern half of the county so that a large part of the area bordering Los Angeles County is land suitable for urbanization. There has been no impediment to population growth along much of the common border. In addition, Orange County lies relatively close to downtown Los Angeles, a strong business center, and to East Los Angeles, a major industrial center. Under these circumstances such cities as Cypress, Fountain Valley and La Palma have experienced a 1,200 percent population increase in the 1960-1970 period.

Because of the exceptionally rapid growth in Orange County, however, the available land for urban settlement is now higher in price than land in Ventura County. Such large holdings as the Irvine Ranch in Orange County have successfully slowed mass housing development because of the development policies of the owners. Development is taking place at even greater distances from the coastal area, at distances limited soon by mountain areas. The intense heat and smog conditions which exist in such locations suggest that development could not be as desirable as in Ventura County.
Ventura County lies along the western border of Los Angeles County. The urbanized areas of each county are common to each other at three points: the San Fernando Valley-Thousand Oaks area connected by the Ventura Freeway; the San Fernando Valley-Simi Valley area connected by the Simi Freeway; and the Newhall, Saugus-Fillmore area connected by U. S. Highway 126. These three connecting corridors thread through mountains and eventually reach the Oxnard Plain (Map VII).

Despite the rugged terrain lying between the Oxnard Plain and Los Angeles County, the easy accessibility to Los Angeles from four points (Santa Paula, Simi, Thousand Oaks, and the Oxnard coastal area) makes the travel time to Los Angeles shorter than from points east of Los Angeles of similar distance. The intensity of development in Orange County has effectively congested existing freeway facilities to a point where outlying developments are not as readily and easily accessible as in the past. 16

A shift in the orientation of regional growth has taken place since 1960. In the 1960-62 period twenty-four percent of the new suburban growth occurred west of central Los Angeles, almost fifty percent of which occurred in Ventura County. Table V shows the total growth pattern in
Map VII:

Population distribution in Ventura County.
POPULATION DISTRIBUTION
VENTURA COUNTY
JANUARY 1, 1966
EACH DOT REPRESENTS APPROX. 200 PERSONS
VENTURA COUNTY PLANNING DEPARTMENT
the Southern California counties. In a ten year period
the total in this portion of the state was 9,106,763, which
was a 59.5 percent increase over 1950. This increase
represented a population equal to the total of the state
in 1920.17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>1950</th>
<th>1960</th>
<th>Percent Increase</th>
<th>Percent Urban 1950</th>
<th>Percent Urban 1960</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Imperial</td>
<td>62,975</td>
<td>72,105</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>49.4</td>
<td>63.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>4,151,687</td>
<td>6,038,711</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>97.4</td>
<td>98.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange</td>
<td>216,224</td>
<td>703,925</td>
<td>225.6</td>
<td>67.5</td>
<td>95.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverside</td>
<td>170,046</td>
<td>306,191</td>
<td>80.1</td>
<td>57.5</td>
<td>66.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Bernardino</td>
<td>281,642</td>
<td>503,591</td>
<td>78.8</td>
<td>66.5</td>
<td>74.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Diego</td>
<td>556,808</td>
<td>1,033,011</td>
<td>85.5</td>
<td>82.0</td>
<td>88.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Luis Obispo</td>
<td>51,808</td>
<td>81,044</td>
<td>57.6</td>
<td>48.8</td>
<td>55.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Barbara</td>
<td>98,220</td>
<td>168,962</td>
<td>72.0</td>
<td>65.0</td>
<td>68.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ventura</td>
<td>114,647</td>
<td>199,138</td>
<td>73.7</td>
<td>54.8</td>
<td>62.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As might be expected from the foregoing, growth in
the Oxnard Area has been moderate (by Orange County
standards), while growth in the eastern part of the county
has been rapid. For example, the population in Simi Valley
increased 600 percent, from 8,100 in 1960 to 59,000 in
1969.18 Although much of this population works in Los
Angeles County, it is logical to expect industrial growth
in eastern Ventura County and on the eastern portion of the
Oxnard Plain since large populations tend to attract
industry and commerce. In dynamic growth areas, the growth
of industry and population are complementary and reinforce
each other, further increasing their rate of growth. The
prime direction of growth will eventually be along the
coastal plains rather than beyond the mountains, due to the
availability of land, the more favorable climate, and the
attraction of the ocean.

A most important factor directing the pattern of
growth toward the coast is that the Oxnard Plain is the
largest single region of suitable land in the sphere of the
Los Angeles megalopolis which has a relatively low density
of population. There are strong concentrations of people
in this area but also vast undeveloped sections.

Based upon studies conducted by the Gruen Associates,
a planning consultant firm which prepared a comprehensive
planning study "Oxnard-2000, The General Plan for the City
of Oxnard, California," it has been calculated that approx-
imately eighteen percent of Ventura County is capable of
urbanization. This represents only a gross approximation
of prime land for urban development, since some hillside
land is prized for residences while some flat land is not
prime because of swamps, river beds and other similar factors.

The Primary Study Area of Map VIII represents the delimited perimeter of the contractual region of the Gruen Associates. Approximately ninety-four percent of this Primary Study Area capable of becoming urbanized lies in the three corridors to Los Angeles County.$^{19}$
Map VIII:

Oxnard Study Area (Gruen Associates)

Source: Victor Gruen and Associates
FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER FIVE


2. Ventura County Planning Department, "The Case for the Preservation of Agricultural Lands" (Ventura County Planning Department Publication, 1970), p. 5 (Mimeographed).

3. Ibid., p. 6.

4. Ibid., p. 7.


6. Ibid.

7. Ventura County Department of Agriculture, "Ventura County Annual Report and Crop Statistics" (Ventura County Department of Agriculture, Ventura, California, 1969), p. 12.

8. Irving Hoch and Nickolas Tryphonopoulos, A Study of the Economy of Napa County, California (University of California: Division of Agricultural Sciences and the Giannini Foundation of Agricultural Economics, 1969) p. 40.


10. Ibid., p. 12.

12. Lee, op. cit., p. 3.


16. Ibid., p. 10.


18. Ibid., p. 9.

CHAPTER SIX: CURRENT GROWTH

FACTORS OF OXNARD

Locational Advantages for Commerce and Industry

One of the more interesting results of the economic expansion of Oxnard is its challenge to the older city of Ventura. When Oxnard was started in 1898, Ventura had already existed for over a century. By 1950, however, Oxnard had exceeded Ventura in population, 21,567 to 16,534. A large proportion of this population increase in Oxnard in 1940-45 was due to a wartime influx of people who were working at the adjacent newly-established naval base on the coast. In December, 1942, 3,200 civilians were employed at the Pacific Naval Air Base. Before the end of the war, more than 10,000 civilian workers and 21,000 military personnel were either in training or operating the base. An additional 1,000 civilian longshoremen were employed at the waterfront to load the ships with equipment and supplies that were being shipped to the advanced bases in the Pacific.

The spurt of economic activity initiated by the
expenditure of such a huge payroll during the war years was unquestionably a major factor in the growth of the business area. The sudden nature of the growth, similar to the growth in the initial stages of the city's development, gave Oxnard a "boomtown" appearance. There were rows of cantinas in the barrio of the Colonia, and along Oxnard Boulevard, the street running parallel to the commercial center. There were more rows of wild nightclubs extending into the city of Port Hueneme. Still, despite its appearance, many inhabitants of surrounding towns moved into the city as they found better employment opportunities in the area. Whereas before the war many residents of Santa Paula and Fillmore had been fruit-pickers, the newly established packing plants and the base provided dramatic salary increases and technical job training and job opportunities. By the time the war was over a significant number of county residents had moved to Oxnard. Also, many of the military personnel remained after the war. And as more housing began to be constructed, the need for more and better planning soon became manifest so that a planning department was established in the city after 1950.4

The establishment of the planning department, more
than any other factor, has enabled the city officials to make some rational decisions affecting the growth and appearance of the city in the post-war period. Even though the activation of the naval base during the Korean conflict and during the more recent Viet Nam war has brought surges of new transients, the transformation of the city has progressed at a steady pace. The effect of this transformation has been far reaching in that Oxnard has become a more desirable place in which to live. Vast new shopping areas in the Ventura area have in more recent times met severe competition from the newer, larger ones in the Oxnard area. The downtown shopping area of Ventura, once the most attractive and busiest in the county, has now deteriorated badly, so that today almost half of the formerly thriving businesses are out of service. In contrast, the city of Oxnard, by means of a federal grant to renew the central business district, has been able to prevent such a process from occurring in the heart of the City.

The city planners' deliberate policy of diversifying the economic base and modernizing the city is now a continuous process, but one which was born out of a number of setbacks. During the war the city stretched its
resources to provide an adequate sewer system, find new sources of water, and expand its network of roads. In this regard it was ahead of the other cities in the county because they had no similar population pressures. But the readjustment period after the war also brought more problems to Oxnard, for many wartime residents left, and the layoff to personnel at the Hueneme Base affected Oxnard more than any other area of Ventura County.

After the war the city of Oxnard elected a mayor, Edward Carty, who was a prime mover in the establishment of the planning department and a new approach to city government. During his term in office he became president of the League of California Cities, and as a spokesman for better cities, he was successful in conveying the timeliness of the long term planning to the city council.5

The city has tried to attract non-military industries to the area, and the success of this policy to date has improved the tax base, which in turn has enabled the city planners to make general improvements on the city's appearance. Using a "pay as you go" policy to finance capital improvement, the city has built a new recreation center, acquired numerous parks, and has just built a new city hall and library and a 1,600 seat auditorium and
convention center. This circular effect has been helped by a number of factors, foremost of which is the availability of land in the Oxnard area. Whereas the surrounding cities of Santa Paula, Fillmore, Ventura and Camarillo are surrounded by hills or mountains, Oxnard is surrounded by flat expanses of land. Capitalizing on this land availability, the city initiated a drive to incorporate more territory, particularly after 1950.

With large land tracts under its jurisdiction the city of Oxnard has been able to advertise the availability of land for industry in its maps and brochures (Map IX). The proximity of this land to the major freeways, the Southern Pacific Railroad lines that pass through the heart of the city, and the harbor and airport, is not accidental; having such a large inventory of land in the appropriate places is part of the design to attract industry. A total of 1,022 acres of land are currently available for industry, but, of this total, approximately fifty-five percent is vacant. Further, the "General Land Use Plan" for the city provides an additional 1,200 acres reserved for heavy industry adjacent to the present heavy industry (M-2) area. This plan sets aside nearly 2,000 acres where heavy industry may locate with assurance that
Map IX:

Existing and proposed industrial areas in Oxnard.

Source: Oxnard Planning Department, 1970.
residential development will not later encroach.7

The interest to prospective industrial firms, generated by such overtures, is partially reflected by the increase in manufacturing employment. In 1960 there were 7,025 people in Ventura County working in some manufacturing concern; by 1970 the total increased to 14,400. Over half of this total are employed in Oxnard.8

The resolution of the water problem which occurred when the city connected with the Metropolitan Water District in 1967 has enabled Oxnard to provide an unlimited water supply at reasonable rates. The availability of this new water source has permitted a blend of the cheaper water from the local aquifers ($5.00 per acre foot) with water from the United Conservation Water District ($23.00 per acre foot) plus the water from the Metropolitan Water System ($70.00 per acre foot). The upgraded quality of the water and its relatively low cost (approximately $40.00 per acre foot) has enabled even such high water use industries as the Facelle Company, a Division of International Paper Company, to locate in Oxnard within the past two years.9

The physical attributes of the Oxnard area and its proximity to the Los Angeles area, combined with the
deliberate policy of attracting new industry to the area has been successful to date. Up to now the newer industries have been "clean" industries, in that they have not caused serious pollution problems. Whether or not this trend continues depends to a great extent on the vigilance of the city officials, but the 973 acres that were absorbed by industry in the county in 1969 as compared to only 64 acres in 1968 and 31 acres in 1967 suggests that the main consideration will not be pollution problems but rather the location of industry.

Land Planning

The lure of available open land, which the city of Oxnard has been using as a means of attracting industry, has a long history in the state of California. The "last frontier" also provided other lures: the gold of the Mother Lode, romance associated with the Spanish ranchos, the mild climate, and the rich soils capable of producing verdant citrus orchards. All of these and numerous others served to bring about a population stampede to the Golden State. In a state that only had 100,000 people a little over one hundred years ago, the lures were not imaginary but real, and the process of growth itself served as testimony to this. Moreover, the growth of the population
tended to perpetuate even more growth as the economy of the state expanded.

It was not until after World War II that the changes in land use brought about by urban needs occasioned more thought on the consequences of rapid growth, particularly by those mindful of the scarcity of productive lands in the state. For, paradoxically, the most valuable and limited agricultural areas in California were the very areas that became subjected to one of the most intensive urbanization ever recorded. But although the problems of land use have received much attention, most notably in the institutions of higher learning, the process of learning about these problems has been slow, for the issue has not been popular with those still coming to California, nor to the builders and bankers, least of all to the politicians, whose decisions on land policies are so often governed by what is profitable to the community, if not themselves.

The diminution of the states' agricultural lands are particularly serious in California, though, because of (1) the limited amount of agricultural lands (only one-fifth of the total state area), and (2) its high national ranking as a provider of specialty crops, due in great
part to peculiarly favorable climatic conditions.\textsuperscript{12}

For many immigrants who have come to the state in the past century there has been no problem, for unlike the typical western settler, not many of the immigrants were farmers. In fact, by 1870 California was already among the ten most urban states in the country. Further, since the turn of the century, these immigrants, mostly from the Middle West, arrived in cars and have "wanted homes and not tenements."\textsuperscript{13}

The combination of the great mobility provided by the car, the availability of land and a growing population in part initiated the present problem of diminution of agricultural land. But the pattern of urban growth has also been a factor because the growth has been outward, the single-family home is a ubiquitous feature of the California landscape.\textsuperscript{14} The pattern is dramatically evidenced in Oxnard where single-family tract homes abound. They are conspicuous because most of them are new. Approximately 9,024 single-family dwellings were built in the City of Oxnard between 1951 and May of 1967 out of a total of 13,783 units. By June of 1967, 52,000 people lived in 13,000 such dwelling units located on 2,100 acres--an average of 6.5 dwelling units per acre with
approximately 3.7 people per unit.15

The "building out" process has been a most serious factor in the displacement of agricultural lands adjacent to many California cities such as Oxnard, for the common practice has been for the assessor to raise the rates of these lands to the level of the urban areas. The higher assessed values have made many formerly prosperous farmers sell out because of the unprofitable returns. In fact, many farmers have themselves become adept at land speculation, holding on to certain lands until the "appropriate" time.

With such effects of new urban districts on adjacent farm lands, it becomes readily apparent that the more numerous and dispersed the expanding urban areas become, the more land urbanization will eventually absorb and the faster the rate of urbanization will be. Engelbert lists seven spatial patterns of urbanization which are generally taking place within a fifty-mile radius of California cities: peripheral expansion of the urban core; urban encirclement, resulting in agricultural islands; "leap frogging;" industrial dispersal; planned decentralization (military projects, greenbelt communities, etc.), radial expansion along major avenues of traffic; and diffusion,
the growth of widely dispersed suburban tracts.\textsuperscript{16}

Along the eastern corridors of Ventura County leading to Los Angeles, radial expansion has been most significant, restricted as the topography is for peripheral expansion. In the case of Oxnard, not one, but a variety of spatial patterns of urbanization have taken place, and the completion of the city's circulation system in the next decade should affect large areas such as the Del Norte community, which to date have remained mostly agricultural. Radial expansion can be expected there since connecting links to the existing freeways are scheduled to pass through the heart of the area.

By far the most common patterns of urbanization in the City of Oxnard have been diffusion and urban encirclement. Map X, for example, reveals the pattern that has taken form since 1950.

When Oxnard was originally incorporated, June 30, 1903, for example, only 1,647.08 acres of land were included within the city's boundaries. Although spotty settlements sprang up in the peripheral areas, no other land was incorporated by the city until February 14, 1930 when the Carty Addition of 81.86 acres was made. As late as 1940 only four additional acres had become incorporated
Map X:

Growth in the Oxnard Area.
GROWTH IN THE OXNARD AREA

INCORPORATED AREA

1903
1910
1950
1960
1970

SOURCE OXNARD PLANNING DEPT
S. COFFIELD
for a total of 1,754.06 acres. The city had, in fact, been larger prior to 1939, for in that year 277.34 acres, the Casad Addition, was excluded from the city proper. 17

Despite the increased economic activity that occurred in the Oxnard Area during the war years, the city boundaries expanded very little during the 1940-1945 year period. During that time period only five annexations were made, and all of them were in units of less than sixty acres. The total area at the end of the war was only 1,889.79 acres, or 2.95 square miles. 18

A similar pattern of incorporation occurred in the immediate post-war period, from 1945 to 1950. From the beginning of 1945 to the end of the decade, seven annexations were made, the largest parcel being the Laurent Tract, with 217.46 acres, and four of the rest being smaller than 40 acres. At the end of 1949 there were 2,311.83 acres or 3.61 square miles within the city limits.

In the decade of the fifties, and especially from 1960 to 1970, the pattern of incorporation changed dramatically. Whereas the process of incorporating new lands had been extremely slow from 1903 to 1949 (a total of fifteen incorporations), the total number in the 1950-1960 period was sixty-seven; and from 1961 to 1970 there were
149 annexations involving a total of 9,130.15 acres, or 14.27 square miles of new land. ¹⁹

More significant than the total land area acquired by the city during these two decades, however, was the pattern of these annexations. Up to 1950 the city's annexations were always on lands immediately bordering the city proper. In the mid fifties a new pattern emerged whereby the city began to incorporate territory at a considerable distance from the city center. In 1957 an annexation arm extended south along a narrow corridor to acquire 60.44 acres of beach front called the Oxnard Beach. During the 1951-1960 period the direction of growth was oriented toward the southern end of the city, but during this time period there was another long-arm annexation, this time to the western limits of the area along the coast. ²⁰

It was during the 1960-1970 period that the long-arm annexation pattern became most common. The 160 percent growth of the city's population during the 1950-1970 time period had a great deal to do with the annexation process, but the pattern of annexation can only be attributed to the scarcity of adequate laws protecting farm lands from urban encroachment. It must be added, however,
that "planning decisions for the city are not altered in any way by the goodness in the quality of the land." 21

Although attempts are currently being made to establish a solid basis for "green belts" in Ventura County and particularly in the Oxnard environs, the farmers persist in their demands to maintain the option to sell their lands if and when they decide they no longer want to farm. Under these conditions, the prospects for farming lands in the Oxnard Area do not appear promising.
FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER SIX


3. Port Hueneme Naval Construction Battalion Center, "An Unofficial Guide to the Naval Construction Battalion Center, Port Hueneme" (Port Hueneme Naval Construction Battalion Center publication, Port Hueneme, California, 1970), p. 4.


5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.


8. Ibid., p. 4.


10. Ibid.

12. Ibid., p. 314.


15. Oxnard City Planning Department, "Statistics on Areal Growth of the City of Oxnard," (Oxnard City Planning Department, January 1971). (Mimeographed).


18. Ibid.

19. Ibid.


21. Ibid.
CHAPTER SEVEN: LAND USE CHANGES 1950-1970*

Extensive changes have occurred in the Oxnard Area in the past two decades. During this time period the City of Oxnard has not only grown in population and area, but it has also taken on a new appearance. Prior to 1950, for example, the central business district had an area of approximately 420 acres, and on the eastern side of the city there were large fields of crops and orchards. By 1960 this business area had more than doubled to 870 acres and large residential tracts began to replace the open fields. New shopping centers were built in the northern part of the city as well as in the south end.

By far the largest development in tract homes in the 1950-1960 period occurred between the cities of Oxnard and Port Hueneme. While some construction had begun before 1950, it was after the beginning of the Korean conflict that operations were expanded at the Port

*The data for this chapter was obtained through the use of aerial photographs and U. S. Geological Survey Maps. The gross changes were planimetered and they represent only approximations of the major land use changes.
Hueneme Naval Construction Battalion Center. Approximately one thousand acres of land were used for the development of housing between Saviers and Ventura Roads, and Channel Islands Boulevard and Pleasant Valley Road. This housing was developed to accommodate the civilian and military personnel working at the Base. In the area north of the Ventura Freeway, between Ditch Road and Vineyard Avenue, there was also a significant housing development. Over 690 acres were developed for residential use (Maps XI and XII).

During the decade of the fifties the area for housing increased from an approximate total of 2,000 acres to over 6,662 acres. During this same time period there was an overall reduction of land in field crops. In 1950 there were over 36,773 acres in field crops and by 1960 the total had diminished to about 33,920. The area in orchards increased during this time period, from 13,523 to 15,840 acres in 1960.

By far the greatest amount of urban development occurred in the 1960-1970 period. During this time period the area taken up by business enterprises increased by approximately 1,165 acres, from 1,670 acres in 1960 to over 2,835 acres in 1970. Over 224 acres were taken up by
Map XI:

Patterns of land use of the Oxnard Area, 1950.
PATTERNS OF LAND USE

Oxnard Area  1950

[Map of Oxnard Area showing various land uses and features such as residential, business, undeveloped land, and others.]
Map XII:

Patterns of land use of the Oxnard Area, 1960.
PATTERNS OF LAND USE

Oxnard Area 1960

SOURCE: aerial photographs, 1960
S. calif.
the development of the Esplanade, a shopping center in the north end of Oxnard and a number of industrial plants were established in various parts of the Oxnard Area. The airport facility near the center of the city was also expanded by about 130 acres.

The area for residential use has also expanded greatly within the past decade. Large new tracts were developed in the northern part of the City as well as along the beach area. A chain of beach resort communities with such fanciful names as "Silverstrand," "Hollywood-by-the-Sea," and "Mandalay Beach" were expanded during this period. Current developments include large hotels, commercial and multi-unit residential areas, approximately 300 dwelling units in Hollywood-by-the-Sea and over 600 dwelling units in the Silverstrand area. It has been estimated by the Oxnard Planning Department that the ultimate population of Silverstrand will be approximately 3,000 people and Hollywood-by-the-Sea, 2,000.

Approximately 10,458 acres within the Oxnard Area are now in residential use as compared to only 6,662 acres in 1960. The greatest encroachment on agricultural land for residential use has occurred between Saviers Road-Oxnard Boulevard and Pleasant Valley and Gonzalez Roads.
which parallel the central business district. Other new housing tracts have been built in the southern end of Oxnard Boulevard near Point Mugu.

During the 1960-1970 period there was a further diminution of land in field crops, although this reduction was not as extensive as in the preceding decade. In 1960 there were approximately 33,920 acres of land in field crops whereas in 1970 the total had decreased by approximately 1,907 acres to 32,013. The area in orchards also declined from a total of 15,840 acres to approximately 13,491.

Although rapid change in land use has been characteristic in most of the Oxnard Area, particularly in the land closest to the heart of the city, there are sections that have experienced very little change in the past twenty years. One of these sections is the Del Norte Community, which is in the northeastern part of the study area. The area contains approximately 11,300 acres and is bounded on the west by the Santa Clara River and on the south by the Ventura Freeway. Although it is situated in the future growth area of Oxnard the area has experienced little change because of severe drainage problems that have not yet been resolved.
Other factors have served to keep this area from changing. Almost the entire Del Norte area is prime agricultural land, and the high returns on the land together with the comparatively lower tax rates for most of the area which is unincorporated, has enabled the farmers to maintain profitable operations. The unincorporated status of most of the community will not easily change as the area is physically isolated from the City of Oxnard by the Ventura Freeway. This barrier presents additional problems and high costs in the expansion of utility services since these services must eventually cross the freeway.

Other parts of the Oxnard Area have remained relatively unchanged. Much of the southeastern as well as the northwestern sections have remained unincorporated areas although annexation arms already extend as far as the beach area clear up to the mouth of the Santa Clara River. Only the southeastern sections south of Hueneme Road appear to remain free of immediate annexation plans although even this area may eventually succumb to change after the circulation system is finally completed (Map XIII).
Map XII:

Pattern of land use in the Oxnard Area, 1970.
PATTERNS OF LAND USE

Oxnard Area 1970

Source: aerial photographs, 1970
S. Calif.
CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSIONS

The Oxnard Area has long provided a habitat for man. Initially used by the Chumash Indians for thousands of years, it was subsequently used by the Spanish, the Mexicans, and after 1848, by the Americans. The Chumash Indians changed the landscape very little as they were a hunting-and-gathering group with some maritime interests. All historical evidence indicates that they were not agriculturalists.

The first cultivation of the area began with the founding of the Mission San Buenaventura in 1782. The introduction of agriculture by the Spanish missionaries was significant in that they proved that the Area was highly suited for a great variety of crops. The success of the early experiments with these crops was not lost on the American settlers who later came to the area.

After the dissolution of the large Mexican cattle ranches a rapid change in land use occurred. The grazing of cattle, which was the principal type of use during the Spanish and Mexican period, gave way in time to intensive farming. The great influx of American settlers into the
area expedited the change particularly after the 1860's.

The establishment of the sugar beet factory in the Oxnard Area in 1898 led to the founding of Oxnard. From its inception as a small factory town, Oxnard grew slowly, and it was not until the beginning of World War II that a large influx of new residents began to live in and near the city. Most of the new settlers were attracted to Oxnard because of the numerous packing houses within the city as well as the proximity to the Naval Construction Battalion Center at Port Hueneme. A great number of military personnel also remained in the area after the war.

The post-war population boom added a significant number of new citizens to the area as did the overflow of the increased immigration into Los Angeles County. The establishment of a planning department for the city as well as the determined effort on the part of the city managers to attract more new industry to Oxnard were among the most significant factors bringing about increased population growth after 1945.

In the past two decades especially, there has been a decided change in the landscape of the Oxnard Area. New shopping centers, housing projects and industrial plants
occupy space that formerly was used for agriculture. In the peripheral areas of the city, orchards have been up-rooted and farmers have concentrated on high value, hard to duplicate specialty crops. The city policy of incorporating large areas that are presently used for farming is raising the taxes on the land so that farmers are speculating on land sales, further reducing the land formerly used for agriculture.

Since 1950 approximately 8,429 acres of land have been developed for residential use. Approximately 2,300 acres have been developed for various business enterprises, and over 2,480 acres of land formerly used for the production of field crops have been taken out of agricultural production.

The availability of federal funds for urban renewal has made it possible for the city planners to improve the appearance of the City of Oxnard so that it is becoming a more attractive place in which to live. The abundance of flat open land suitable for development and the improving transportation networks is also encouraging the movement of people from other parts of the Country to settle in the City. An increasing number of people are also moving into the area from Los Angeles County.
In all probability, then, the City of Oxnard can be expected to continue its growth pattern. In 1970 there were over 1,585 trade and selected service establishments and there has been a concerted effort on the part of the city officials to continue the diversification of industry. Manufacturing industries now include electrical machinery, electronic and transportation equipment, metal forgings and fabricating, apparel, paper-chemical, plastics, food processing, hydraulic equipment, aerospace, and medical and precision instruments. Although government installations now provide an annual payroll of $258 million and there is a likelihood of a reduction in federal spending after the Vietnam conflict, still, the installations should remain operative as the primary function of the Point Mugu Pacific Missile Range at least, is in the area of research and development of new weapon systems.

Such growth as can be anticipated in the City of Oxnard should affect the manner in which the land is used in the rest of the Oxnard Plain. Extensive plans are already underway to develop the Del Norte Community, an area in the northeastern quadrant of the city. A linking of the Ventura Freeway and Highway 126 through this agricultural area should bring about rapid changes in land use
there. Also, the large plants that have been established recently are scattered over a wide area in the eastern edge of the city. Between these large plants, new housing developments are being built at an increasing pace.

Finally, efforts to maintain an agricultural preserve have continued to fail because of the farmers' insistence on maintaining an option to sell their land if and when they desire to do so. Under the increasing pressure to expand non-agricultural enterprises, and with higher costs to meet, the farmers should in time sell out.
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Persons Interviewed

Paul Wolven, Oxnard City Manager, Oxnard, California
Steven Cook, Assistant City Manager, Oxnard, California