

PETALUMA'S RICH HISTORY



The history and events that shaped the West and California are reflected in Petaluma's landmarks and historic attractions. Rich in authenticity, Petaluma's heritage can be traced through Native American tribes, Mexican settlements, the discovery of gold, railroad expansion, and the San Francisco earthquake.

Chartered in 1858, Petaluma is one of California's oldest cities.

The city's riverfront location made it a bustling destination during the mid-19th century Gold Rush when the river carried produce, poultry and dairy products from this fertile valley to the rapidly exploding populations of San Francisco and Oakland.

Spared much of the 1906 earthquake destruction, Petaluma boasts buildings of up to 150 years old and whose facades are some of the best examples of iron front building architecture in the entire United States. These gems house specialty stores, restaurants, and galleries in our walkable downtown.

HISTORIC DOWNTOWN



Because of its riverfront location and fertile land, Petaluma experienced boom times in the decades following its founding in 1858 and by 1880, it was the largest shipping point for dairy products in the entire state. The city's prosperity at the turn of the century is reflected in well-preserved commercial, industrial and residential buildings. Boasting some of the best examples of iron-front architecture in the country, Petaluma's downtown is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Described as the man who built Petaluma, Brainerd Jones career began around 1900 and spanned five decades. He designed Victorian homes to Arts & Crafts bungalows, the stately Carnegie Library (now the Petaluma Historical Library & Museum) to the downtown Post Office, never taking a cookie-cutter approach.

HISTORIC HOMES



Petaluma's prosperous past laid the foundation for residents to build homes that have stood the test of time. Several streets that border the downtown district are studded with homes that span architectural styles from 1860 through 1925. Spanish Revival, Queen Anne, Colonial Revival, and Victorian Stick, are some of the styles represented on the tree-lined streets.

Visitors enjoy studying the facades of the homes and discovering the abundant details unique to their architectural style. For example, the 1885 Queen Anne style home at 5th and D Street, is asymmetrical in design, includes a polygonal tower and angled bay windows, favorite features among architects designing Queen Anne homes.

A RIVER RUNS THROUGH IT

The Petaluma River turned a small settlement into a thriving city in the mid 1800s and has been an important center of commerce and recreation ever since. During the peak of the riverboat era, there was

more tonnage and dollar value hauled on the Petaluma River than on any other river in the state. The schooners, sloops, and paddle wheelers transporting people and goods made Petaluma the third-busiest inland port in the state.



Today, you're much more likely to see sleek and maneuverable kayaks and paddleboards on the river. It is a recreational asset attracting watercraft enthusiasts, bird watchers, and boaters. The river continues to contribute to the community's vitality and economy.

PERFORMING ARTS MECCA

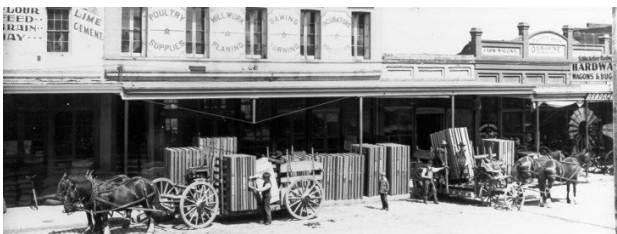


While Petaluma was growing as a commercial and agricultural center, the city's reputation as a performing arts mecca was keeping right in step. Numerous opera houses and theaters provided Petaluma's burgeoning population "fireproof films" in addition to staging popular dramas and plays.

Several entertainment venues from the early 1900s still attract audiences from the greater Bay Area. A 1908 two-room schoolhouse has been an opera or playhouse for 50+ years, most of that time as Cinnabar Theater. Now home to Mercury Theater, this intimate theater regularly presents plays and musical performances.

Described as the North Bay's premier music venue, the Mystic Theatre was built in 1911 to host vaudeville performances. The Mystic has an illustrious history and has hosted diverse artists, including Van Morrison, Iris Dement, Stephen Marley, Warren Zevon, and Carlos Santana.

ROOTED IN AGRICULTURE



During the Gold Rush era, Petaluma was transformed from a humble hunting camp into a commercial and transportation hub. Poultry, grain, and dairy products from the fertile agricultural region were shipped down the river to rapidly growing San Francisco and Oakland, bringing growth and prosperity to Petaluma.

Much of Petaluma's identity is tied to the dairy and poultry industries, a heritage that the community celebrates to this day. It began in 1879, when Lyman Byce and Isaac Dias invented the first practical incubator, enabling eggs to hatch away from the chicken so hens could stay in constant production. It was estimated that by 1908, at least 75 percent of the county's population raised poultry.

Following World War I, the Petaluma egg industry fell on tough times. In 1918, the Chamber of Commerce reached out to Bert Kerrigan, a public relations genius who came up with the tag line "The World's Egg Basket." Petaluma's Butter & Egg Days Parade harkens back to his National Egg Day parade that featured a giant egg basket touting "4 million Petaluma Hens lay 450 million eggs annually," that gained national attention.