Welcome to the San Leandro History Walk

The San Leandro History Walk will familiarize you with San Leandro’s past and help you understand how it has shaped the city that we know today. Although you can begin at any point along the History Walk, a great place to start is at the History Wall, located near the fountain in the downtown plaza at East 14th and Davis streets. The wall describes the historic progression of the city and its downtown area.

Three major markers located along West Estudillo Avenue highlight the development of San Leandro from its first settlers to its transformation into an urban community. Smaller informational markers are located in the greater downtown area that describe historic buildings and sites, and significant community leaders.
San Leandro History Wall
East 14th Street at Davis Street
This wall offers a general description of San Leandro history, including key events and milestones in San Leandro’s development.

Ohlone People & Spanish Ranchos
West Estudillo Avenue at Hays Street
The first people in this area were hunters and gatherers who developed a complex culture and religion centered on the natural world. Spanish colonization beginning in 1769, brought rapid transformation to a life centered on the Catholic Church and an economy based on cattle ranches and the hide and tallow trade.

Agriculture & Cherry Festival
West Estudillo Avenue at Clarke Street
The town of San Leandro got its start in the 1800s, around the time Mexico ceded California to the United States and gold was discovered. Thousands of people began coming to California and many settled in this area to farm. San Leandro developed as an agricultural community, with cherries becoming a major crop.

Transportation & Industry
West Estudillo Avenue at Carpentier Street
Differences in transportation between the Ohlone, Spanish and American periods reflect the changing culture of this area. The railroad was essential in the development of San Leandro. Industry developed alongside agriculture, with Daniel Best Agricultural Works providing the first large sustained payroll.

Estudillo Home
474 West Estudillo Avenue
The Estudillo Home was built by José Joaquin Estudillo for his family in 1850. It was a stately two-story house that included 14 bedrooms, a wine cellar, servants’ quarters and balconies. It was demolished in 1948 and now a rectory for St. Leander’s Church stands on its site.

Old Town Hall Site
250 Davis Street
This was the site of San Leandro’s city hall from 1876 to 1939. When the City outgrew the building, a new City Hall was built at its present location on East 14th Street.

County Courthouse
Corner of Clarke Street and Davis Street
San Leandro was the Alameda County Seat from 1856 until 1873. The building was destroyed in the 1868 Hayward Fault earthquake. In 1873, the County Seat was moved to Oakland.

Daniel & Meta Best Home
1315 Clarke Street
Built in the 1870s, this home was bought in 1886 by Daniel Best, a San Leandro pioneer and inventor. His business – Best Agricultural Works – was located on Davis Street, a few blocks from here, and manufactured farm machinery. Best’s son, C.L. “Leo” Best, merged the company with Holt Manufacturing Company of Stockton, California, to create Caterpillar Tractor.

Casa Peralta
384 West Estudillo Avenue
Three descendants of the Peralta family, one of the area’s first land grantees, lived in this home. In 1926, Herminia Peralta Dargie remodeled it as a grand Spanish villa. Tiles in the courtyard depict the story of Don Quixote. On National Register of Historical Places.

Del Monte Cannery & Ballpark
San Leandro Boulevard at BART Station
For most of the 20th century, the cannery on this site employed hundreds of laborers, who preserved peaches and other produce from nearby farms. The San Leandro Baseball Club, organized in 1903, constructed a ballpark in 1909 at Parrott Street and San Leandro Boulevard.

Lincoln School
West Juana Avenue between Clarke Street and Carpentier Street
Lincoln School was built in 1910 on the site of San Leandro’s first school, called Union School, which had been built in 1856. Lincoln School was torn down in 1979, but the original school bell is now located at the San Leandro Main library.

Sarmento Blacksmith Shop/Methodist Church
1363 Hays Street
San Leandro’s first church was the First Methodist Church, built on this site in 1856. Next door was Sarmento’s Blacksmith Shop. The blacksmith shop and the Sarmento home, around the corner at 308 West Joaquin Avenue, are still standing.

Masonic Temple Building
1374 East 14th Street
The Masonic Temple Building was dedicated on April 15, 1910, and is still the home of Eden Lodge #113 of the Freemasons. Instituted in San Leandro in 1857, Eden Lodge was the first fraternal order established here.

Best Building
East 14th Street at Estudillo Avenue
Built in 1910 by Daniel Best to house the San Leandro Bank, this white, terra cotta-faced building, with classic revival ornamentation on the upper floor, is typical of business buildings constructed at the turn of the century.

U.P.E.C. Building
1120 East 14th Street
The União Portuguesa do Estado da California (Portuguese Union of the State of California) was founded in 1880. The current building, built in 1964, replaced an older U.P.E.C. building on the same site. The U.P.E.C. houses a cultural center and the J. A. Freitas Library – the most complete library of Portuguese materials in California.

Peralta Home / Alta Mira Club
561 Lafayette Avenue
This house was built in 1860 for Ygnacio Peralta, one of four brothers who settled on the Spanish land grant of Rancho San Antonio. The Alta Mira Women’s Club saved the home from destruction when they purchased it in 1926. It is still their clubhouse today. On National Register of Historical Places.