

Haunted Ventura

Fly this seaside city and say you've seen a ghost

The statue of Father Junipero Serra surveys all that is stunning, and spooky, about the city once his.



Spirits. Specters. Ghosts. Believe or don't believe but know: haint-hunter (and historian) Richard Senate has a story of spooks for you. Listen in. The setting is a city where hauntings are as much a given as the sea – the Pacific – that so beautifully sparkles beside it. Here, the days are bright with California sunshine and the nights...well, here the nights come especially alive with the legend of phantoms that live in the city's prettiest buildings, and the lore of phantasms that thrive in its interesting sights.

Let us dispense with suspense. That city is Ventura.

"Haunted Ventura," as Senate calls it. Affiliated with the historical society here, the ghost-tracking history buff loves to share the city's seldom-spoken secret with all who accompany him on his narrated walks to Ventura's haunted spots. "I have a great many stories of ghosts and legends," he says.



The Old Pier from which Mr. John Proctor was swept by surging seas to his death in 1927. Does his spirit wander here still? (above) Whispers and warnings and eerie figures seen: one of Ventura's possibly haunted buildings (left)

Stories to spook – or at least amuse – any flyer up for fun who wings-in to Camarillo (CMA), Oxnard (OXR) or Santa Paula (SZP) eager to walk along.

Let us follow Senate, shall we, as he shares with *Flying Adventures* some of the tales that make Ventura such fly-in fun for ghost-story lovers and others sure to find lots of fascination in a city so rich in color and history.

Stop one is the *Olivas Adobe* (215 W. Main St.). “The adobe is long been rumored haunted,” says Senate. “Built in 1847, the hacienda was the home of the rich and powerful Olivas family – Don Raymundo, his wife and 21 children. And not only have museum staff actually seen a ghostly lady in a long black dress of the 1880s, but a group visiting the house asked this ghost to show herself and a nightgown displayed on a bed leapt off! Trust me,” he adds, “I believe this is one of the most haunted houses in the nation.”

The old *Mission San Buenaventura* (211 E. Main St.), the city's splendor of a California landmark, has long been known to house a phantom padre who wanders the chapel and grounds, a padre eager to help people, says Senate. “It is an un-named saint who I believe is Juan Senan, a monk buried under the altar.” He adds: “I have heard of people who saw this padre and had their prayers instantly – mysteriously – answered.”

At *Ventura City Hall* (501 E. Poli St), the stunning 1912 beaux-arts style former courthouse is the reputed home of a black-robed judge and a woman who once upon a time was held in the women's jail, says Senate. Both these specters have been seen again and again – and not in anyone's dream, he adds. Up at *El Caballo* (113 E. Main St. on Valdez Alley), the spirit of Lucas Garcia, lynched in 1869, inhabits the tiny brick building

that before it served as Ventura's first jail was part of a seven-mile aqueduct developed in the late 1790s by Spanish padres and constructed by Chumash labor. “I am innocent!” the ghost is said to yell each day the clock strikes midnight. And then there is Mr. John Proctor. Senate claims the spirit of this famous Ventura resident, who in 1927 was swept off city's *Old Pier* by surging storm waters, today wanders the site to warn anyone tempted to linger there in bad weather that it is better to seek safety indoors.

At *Junipero Serra's Cross* in Grant Park, the ghost of an Indian maiden dressed entirely in white appears with some regularity. Says Senate: “She lives here to warn other young girls never to trust handsome men.” Legend holds that in mission days the maiden was lured to this spot by Spanish soldiers who attacked and, to be sure they never were

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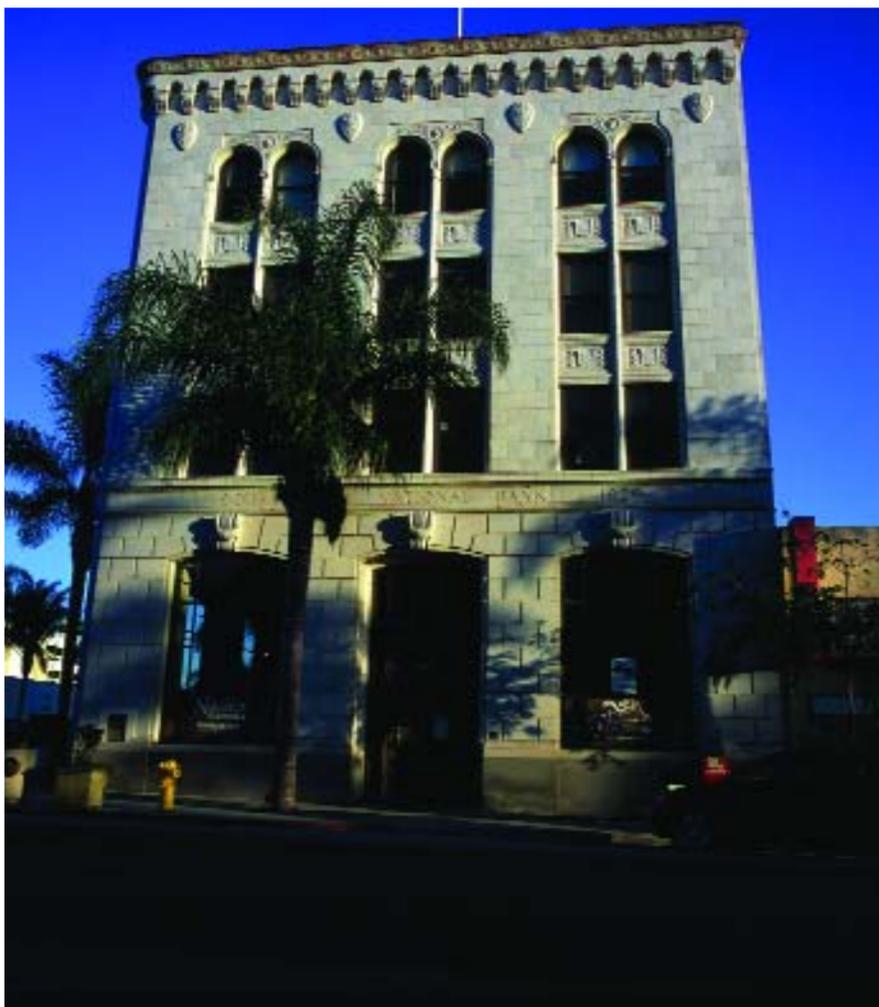
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At Camarillo

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identified, blinded her before sending her off to die. No less eerie is the lore surrounding the office of Earle Stanley Gardner (494 E. Main St.). Here, says Senate, the attorney and author penned his famous *Perry Mason* novels, and here, whispers and screams routinely are heard by visitors. He adds: "Things are always being moved around, too." Blame it on the ghost in the gray flannel suit.

Spirits. Specters. Ghosts. Believe or don't believe, but know: if you fly to delightful Ventura for a tour of its colorful, story-rich sights, you will fly away at the end of the day or days convinced, as is haint-hunter Senate, that this is city where all that is interesting lives.

Fora narrated walking tour of Ventura's possibly haunted and surely intriguing attractions, contact Richard Senate at venturahunts.com, or through the Ventura Convention & Visitors Bureau, ventura-tourism.com (800) 483-6214.

SANTA PAULA AIRPORT (SPZ) & CAMARILLO AIRPORT (CMA)

SANTA PAULA AIRPORT (SPZ)

AIRPORT DATA

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Approaches: None
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AIRPORT RESTAURANTS

Logsdon Restaurant 805.525.1101

CAMARILLO AIRPORT (CMA)

AIRPORT DATA

Elevation: 75'
Runways: 8/26 6,010'
Approaches: GPS, RNAV, VOR
ATIS / ASOS: 805.484.3351 805.388.9294

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Profile map viewed from Camarillo Airport to Santa Paula Airport looking north

Maps provided by Voyager Flight Planning Software

