Early Inhabitants
Nine thousand years before Huntington Beach (HB) became Surf City USA, or even Huntington Beach, this area was inhabited by descendants of Asian nomads who crossed the Bering Straights and migrated down the North American continent along the west coast. This was more than three thousand years before the pyramid were built in Egypt, and even predates England’s Stonehenge. These first visitors to Huntington Beach found a warm climate, food and water.

European Settlement
While the explorer Juan Cabrillo claimed the area for Spain as early as 1542, European settlement can be traced to a Spanish soldier, Manuel Nieto, who in 1784 received a Spanish land grant of 300,000 acres as a reward for military services. Later Rancho Los Nietos, as he named his grant, was bought by Abel Stearns and became the Stearns Rancho Company in the 1850s. The company raised cattle and horses in Huntington Beach. In fact, Beach Boulevard was originally a cattle route. As cattle ranching declined, it was replaced by agriculture because of the presence of peat in the wet soil made HB a fertile place for farming.

The 20th Century
The first city name in the 20th century was Shell Beach for the little rock clams in the sand. Later it became Pacific City when a group of investors, the West Coast Land and Water Company (WCLW), started promoting real estate and tourism. They envisioned a West Coast Atlantic City here. However, by 1902 the development. The HB Company, after the purchase, entered into an agreement with the Pacific Electric Company, owner of the Red Cars, to bring the electric rail through HB. With this, the city’s name officially became Huntington Beach.

On July 4, 1904, the city’s first Independence Day Parade took place, starting the city’s longest-held community tradition. The parade commemorated the arrival of the first electric passenger train. Incorporated in 1909, the city might have been a sleepy, agricultural town for years if it weren’t for Standard Oil of California’s “Discovery Well” on May 24, 1920. Hundreds of oil wells sprang up almost over night and the city went from sleepy to sizzling. The population leapt from 1500 residents to 7500 in just three months. Tent cities were erected and more tiny cottages were slapped together to house oil workers. At the same time, houses and other structures were razed or moved to other parts of town to allow for in-city drilling. Some houses were bought directly from the owners. Sears, Roebuck Catalog of Houses, 1920, where for as low as $672 you could buy a five-room house kit, pick it up from a railway and either assemble the whole house yourself or hire someone to do it. Previously some lots were given away from Topanga Canyon in Los Angeles to a Hawaiian of Irish descent, was billed as the “man who can walk on water” for the event. In the 1920s, Hawaiian Duke Kahanamoku, a multiple Gold Medal Olympian considered the father of surfing, surfed under the HB pier. He was the first surfer inducted into the Surfing Hall of Fame. In 1955, the city’s first surf shop Gordon’s Surf Boards, opened under the Huntington Beach Company (led by Henry Huntington) purchased Pacific City from WCLW. After that WCLW retained a few lots, but was no longer part of the city.
Evangeline Hotel at Knott’s Berry Farm. Revival Church architecture. The grass development of a fire department, street incorporation and worked for the Beach and its Hunt trustee in member of the ground floor and lived upstairs. It here. He was a Hall family ran a photography studio on the 1904 and moved Photography Studios moved in. In the 1960s Palace Hotel 7.

The spacious Evangeline Hotel at 421 8th St. was built in 1905. This Craftsmen-style building opened in 1906 as an elegant 18-room hotel. Civil War veterans who attended the Grand Army of the Republic gatherings often stayed here. At the end of the 20th century, it was a youth hostel.

11. 504 7th St. was built in 1905 and originally had a barn in back. The palm tree in front was planted in 1905 and continues to thrive. Notice the original concrete block sidewalk and the writing, Magnolia Ave, in cement.

12. The Mid-Century Modern Street Library was built in 1951 and designed by the Los Angeles architecture firm of McLellan, Macdonald and Markham. It features a marble entrance, floor-to-ceiling windows and is one of the first examples of innovative concrete tilt-up construction. A grandpatron in the

13. The library sits on Triangle Park. First used as a park in 1912, it was a baseball diamond surrounded by signboards with advertisements promoting the city. It was deeded to Hill in 1917 by the Huntington Beach Company.

14. Notice the beach cottage at 415 8th St. It was moved to this site from the oil fields in the 1930s. Many houses were moved for safety from dangerous oil fires or to make way for more drilling.

15. The Community Bible Church, originally known as the First Baptist Church, was dedicated in 1956. Three years before HB was incorporated. This is one of the oldest churches still standing in the city.

16. The Beach Court at 303-327 6th St. and other courts like it provided residences during the rapid period of growth in the oil boom industry. Those courts, built in 1923, are examples of Spanish Colonial Revival architecture. Silent film star Rudolph Valentino is said to haunt this court.

17. The 1910 Craftsman bungalow at 317 5th St. has a large basement, quite unusual for a beach house, while 311 5th St., built in 1931, is Zigzag Moderne.

18. 211-220 5th St. are circa 1908 examples of Neo-Classical Commercial architecture. This building once housed the City Hall, Fire Department and City Jail. The facade was restored in the 1930s, but later on in the tour the original brick exterior can be seen. 210 5th St., now Luggati’s restaurant, was built circa 1920 and was both the city’s garage and part of an auto dealership. In the 1930s and ’40s it was a bowling alley.

19. The Shank House, a two-story Craftsman Bungalow, was built in 1913 for Dr. George Shank, one of the first doctors in HB. The only original brick exterior can be seen. 210 5th St., now Luggati’s restaurant, was built circa 1920 and was both the city’s garage and part of an auto dealership. In the 1930s and ’40s it was a bowling alley.

The Beach Court at 303-327 6th St. and early 1900s the Pacific Electric (PE) Railway Museum was established here. Among the other courts like it provided residences during the rapid period of growth in the oil boom industry. Those courts, built in 1923, are examples of Spanish Colonial Revival architecture. Silent film star Rudolph Valentino is said to haunt this court.

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19. The Shank House, a two-story Craftsman Bungalow, was built in 1913 for Dr. George Shank, one of the first doctors in HB. This bungalow was moved from its original location on 20th St. to here around 1926. The Red Development Agency obtained the property in 2004 for use as a police substation.

20. Built in 1916, these brick and mortar jail cells are now used as a freezer storage for nearby restaurants. Notice the original brick exterior of the old jail. An art deco commercial architecture seen earlier in the tour.

21. This Deco/Modern building at 411 Olive was built during the oil boom years in 1935 and was once the office of Dr. Hawes, a general practitioner who treated burns from oil fires. In the 1980s, the HB International Surfing Museum was established here. Among the exhibits is one on the preservation of the old Surf Theater on HB’s 5th St, demolished in 1970s. The exhibit has vintage theater seats and screenings of classic surfing movies like “Endless Summer.”

22. The United States Post Office, built in 1930 and 1931, was the work of Architect Louis A. Simon. He also designed the Federal Courthouse in downtown Los Angeles. Many original features and historic pictures.

23. At 217 Main St. is the Talbert-Lasher Building, circa 1904. Originally Pioneer Feed & Fuel Co, it is one of the oldest commercial buildings in town. HB’s first gas pump was here. This Western False Front building had many businesses based here including a Japanese market. It is currently Longboards Restaurant and was restored in 1996. At 213 Main St is The Sugar Shack, built in 1919, and established as a restaurant in 1967. This building has been host to businesses including the Huntington Beach Sheet Metal Works (1919) and Huntington Beach Electric (1924).

24. At the corner of Main and Walnut the site in 1928 was Standard Market. Note the plaque at HSS Clothing Store. Around the corner at the restaurant entrance find an informative plaque about the market’s history.

25. Across the street at 127 Main the Streamline Moderne building, circa 1935, now Beach Island, was originally the HB Cut Rate Drugs. It was built during the city’s second oil boom.

26. At 117 Main St. is Penz’s Tavern, originally the Pacific City School (1905). Around 1914 it was rebuilt as the real estate offices of Seely & Lavering. After the discovery of oil in HB in 1920 and the arrival of thousands of roughnecks," H.F. Linder began building in 1922, turning it into Palace Pool Hall on the first floor and the Palace Hotel on the second. It remained a pool hall under different names and is now used 1952 when Brownell Photography Studios moved in. In the 1960s the Hall family ran a photography studio on the groundfloor and lived upstairs.

27. Pierside Pavilion is where the legendary Golden Bear once stood. Opened in 1929. It was demolished in 1966 to make way for downtown redevelopment. It was an entertainment venue featuring stars such as Linda Ronstadt, Arlo Guthrie, Robin Williams, The Doors, Steve Martin and Jerry Garcia, among many others.