

Pajaro Valley Agricultural Timeline

| Time Period | Pajaro Valley Migrations/Labor | Agriculture Product | Agriculture and What Affected Movement of People in and Out of Pajaro Valley. |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| 3000 BC - 1760 AD | Indigenous Peoples | Year-Round Harvest | The Costanoan Rumsen Ohlone Tribe are the indigenous people of the Central California Coastal area. The Ohlone did not make permanent villages, rather they followed a year-round harvest, traveling approximately 100 square miles between the ocean, the rivers, and the hills and meadows. They existed peacefully in this region for thousands of years before Spanish Missionaries arrived in the 1760's. |
| 1542-1601 | Spanish | | Spanish explorers Juan Rodriquez Cabrillo rounds Monterey Peninsula and sails into the bay, naming it La Bahia de los Pinos. |
| 1602 | Spanish | | Spanish explorer Sebastian Viscaino officially names the port Monterey in honor of Count de Monte Rey, the Viceroy of New Spain who had ordered Viscaino's expedition. California is now Alta Mexico |
| 1770--1834 | Mexico | | Mission Period: The Franciscans set up 6 missions in Ohlone territory, the closest to Watsonville being Missions San Juan Bautista (1797) and Santa Cruz (1791.) 1817-1833: Secular Land Grants to Mexican Citizens which took property from the native population, Large Land Grants to Families in Pajaro Valley, all descendants of Mexican Citizens |
| 1821-1868 | | Cattle Ranching | |
| 1837-1844 | Irish, Northern European, American | | Under Mexico's liberal land ownership laws immigration from Europe and United States increases. The first of steady stream of Irish immigrants arrives in the Pajaro Valley, the largest foreign-born group in the region into the 1880s, just ahead of the Chinese. |
| 1846 | Mexican | | Mexico declares war on the United States, who seizes control of legal land titles from priests. |
| 1848 | Mexican | | The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo is signed, ending the US-Mexico War and ceding all of Alta California, Utah, Nevada, and parts of Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico and Wyoming to the United States. |
| 1850 | Portuguese | Whaling Grain Dairy | The first of a steady stream of Portuguese immigrants from the Azore Islands arrive in Pajaro Valley, first working in the whaling industry and then turning to farming, specifically cereal grains. They eventually dominate the dairy industry in Santa Cruz County. |
| 1852 | General Population Expansion | Potatoes | The demand and subsequent high price of potatoes, destined for the miners fueling the California gold rush, |

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| | | | spurs a rush of people into the Pajaro Valley, mostly from the gold mines, to grow potatoes |
| 1860 | Danish | Wheat | Immigrants from Denmark arrive in the Pajaro Valley and begin cultivating wheat |
| 1860-1861 | African-American | | African American Daniel Rodgers, a freed slave, arrives in Watsonville with his family, after first coming to the Pajaro Valley in 1848 as a slave. In 1861, he purchases and farms 80 acres near Freedom Boulevard. By 1870 there are 70 African American residents of Watsonville. |
| 1865 | | Strawberries | Strawberries are first cultivated |
| 1866 | Chinese | | The first crews of Chinese laborers destined specifically for the agricultural fields arrive in Pajaro Valley. The Chinese remain the primary farm workers in the area until the 1890s. |
| 1869 | | | The City of Watsonville is incorporated. |
| 1870 | | Grain/Potatoes | Grain and potatoes are the predominant crops. |
| 1871 | Croatian | Apples | Croatian immigrants begin their move toward dominating the apple industry in Pajaro Valley. |
| 1871 | | Agricultural Hub | Railroad is completed. Watsonville becomes an agricultural hub, and the second largest city in Santa Cruz County. |
| 1874 | Italian | Fishing | Italian fishermen arrive and dominate the fresh fish market. The fishing industry has been the exclusive domain of the Chinese since the 1850s, but they have focused on the abalone, sea urchin and dried fish markets |
| 1880 | Chinese | | Chinese immigrants in the Monterey Bay region (Santa Cruz, Monterey and San Benito counties), who work primarily as laborers, exceed 1,000. Total population of Watsonville in 1880 is 1.8K |
| 1880 | | Strawberries | The first commercial shipment of strawberries leaves Watsonville |
| 1882 | Chinese | | The US Congress passes the Chinese Exclusion Act, placing a 10-year ban on immigration by Chinese laborers. The prohibition is extended twice before it is made permanent in 1904. |
| 1888-1898 | Chinese and Japanese | Sugar Beets | The Spreckles sugar beet processing mill is completed on a 25-acre site in Watsonville. The first year 1,000 tons of beet sugar are produced. By 1892 an average of 350 tons of beets are processed daily, generating 45 tons of sugar. By 1895 Watsonville farmers devote 11,000 acres to beets, producing 19,945 tons of sugar. The planting and harvesting of the beet fields are dependent upon Chinese and Japanese laborers. |

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| 1888 | | | The US Congress passes the Scott Act, which prohibits Chinese who have lived in the US from returning if they leave |
| 1898-1911 | | Fruit Trees Replace Grains | Changes in technology and agriculture shaped the first years of the 20th Century. The automobile makes its local debut. |
| 1904-1907 | Japanese | | Japanese men begin their American lives as hired laborers; some eventually become farmers. A loophole in immigration law allow Japanese women to enter the country to join their husbands. Watsonville Japanese Association is founded and meets until 1942 when Japanese residents are interned in Salinas and then in Arizona until the end of World War II in 1945. |
| 1908 | | 14,000 Acres devoted to Apples | The US government restricts immigration by Japanese laborers |
| 1910 | Mexican | | Watsonville hosts its first of four annual apple festivals, called the Apple Annual, to celebrate Pajaro Valley's largest and most valuable agricultural crop. Mexican immigrants begin pouring into the area to escape the turmoil and violence of their revolution. |
| 1910-1920 | | Lettuce | Lettuce, a notoriously difficult crop to ship long distances, benefits from other advances in refrigerated transport. Trials with refrigeration, combined with expanded lettuce cultivation, opens up vast new markets to Watsonville farmers. |
| 1931-1944 | | | Large numbers of Americans head west to the rich soils of the central and coastal valleys of California, trying to escape the poverty brought on by the Depression and the Dust Bowl in the lower Plains States. Farmers, mostly from Arkansas, form communities in Corralitos, Aromas, Pajaro and the southern part of Watsonville. |
| 1936 | Mexican and Filipino | | Mexican and Filipino farm workers, who had organized themselves into labor unions, stage strikes in the Salinas lettuce fields. Each group strikes again in 1936. |
| 1942 | Japanese | | Japanese residents in Pajaro Valley are sent to internment camps for the duration of World War II, leaving farms nearly empty of workers |
| 1942-1964 | Mexican - Braceros | | The Bracero Program is started to encourage Mexican farm workers to replace Japanese and Filipino workers who have been either arrested or deported because of the war. |
| 1970 | | Apples remain the largest crop | The United Farm Workers calls for a strike in the Pajaro Valley and Salinas lettuce fields, resulting in a series of bloody conflicts with the police and sheriff's departments. |

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| | | | UFW, led by Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta, had staged successful grape boycotts in the late 1960s and early 1970s in a fight for higher wages and improved working conditions |
| 1975 | | | California Legislature pass the Agricultural Labor Relations Act (ALRA), to, “ensure peace in the fields” of California by guaranteeing justice for all agricultural workers and stability in agricultural labor relations In the first few months there are 429 elections involving 50,000 voting farm workers. In 2017-18 only one certification election is conducted. |
| 1985 | | | Cannery workers associated with the Teamsters Union walk out on strike from the nation's two largest frozen food suppliers, Watsonville Canning and Richard A. Shaw Frozen Foods. The strike lasts for 19 months against Watsonville Canning. Although the Teamsters claim victory, Watsonville, which had dominated the frozen food market since the end of World War II, loses its industry dominance. Many of the companies move their operations to Mexico to exploit lower wages and less restrictive environmental controls, putting thousands of Watsonville residents out of work. |
| 1997 | | | The UFW organizes a march through Watsonville to launch its national strawberry campaign. |
| 2005-2017 | | | Dangers of heat stress and low wages gain public attention leading to legislative action. In 2005, the California Legislature pass some of the most stringent heat laws in the nation. The law is revised in 2015, requiring employers to pay workers for recovery periods. In 2016, California passed AB 1066 which extends overtime pay to farm workers who worked more than 8 hours a day or 40 hours a week. |
| 2020 | | | Farmworkers are widely recognized as essential workers during the Corona Virus outbreak. |

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