

Antelope Valley Indian Museum State Historic Park



Our Mission

The mission of California State Parks is to provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.



California State Parks supports equal access. Prior to arrival, visitors with disabilities who need assistance should contact the park at **(661) 946-3055**. If you need this publication in an alternate format, contact interp@parks.ca.gov.

CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS

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Antelope Valley Indian Museum

State Historic Park

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(661) 946-3055

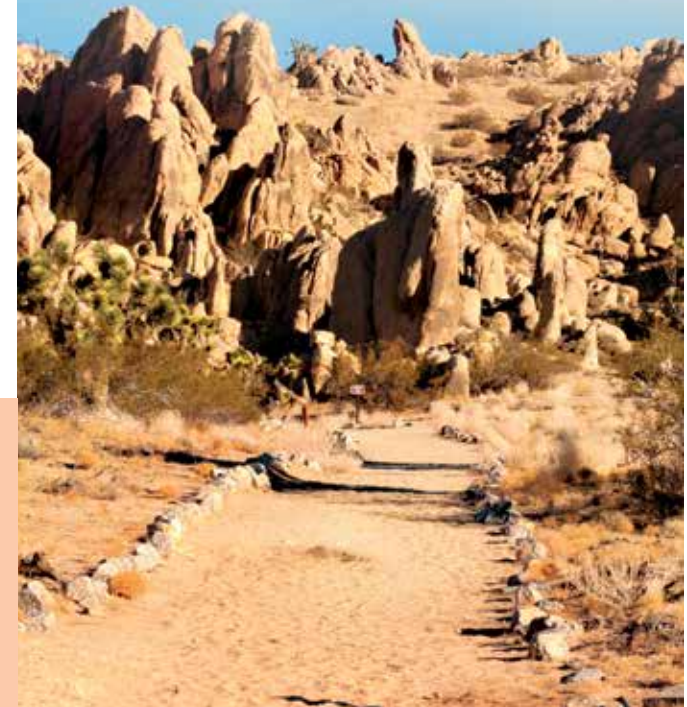
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*"Nestled in the rocks and
buttes of the Mojave
Desert on Piute Butte
is a precious gem that
contributes immeasurably
to the mosaic beauty of
the desert, the Antelope
Valley Indian Museum."*

– Shirley Harriman

Antelope Valley Woman Magazine



Standing snugly among the majestic granite outcroppings of Piute Butte, the Antelope Valley Indian Museum incorporates the bedrock into its interior and exterior design. The folk art construction of this one-of-a-kind building—listed on the National Register of Historic Places—is a Tudor Revival-style structure, inside of which is incorporated an entire natural rock formation. Located in the Mojave Desert at the northeastern corner of Los Angeles County, the museum displays artifacts of the American Indian groups of three major cultural regions—the Southwest, the Great Basin, and California.



Perhaps as many as 2,000 years ago, speakers of the Shoshonean language group—the Kitanemuk, Tataviam, Kawaiisu, and Serrano cultures—became the valley's inhabitants. In the late 1700s, their lives were drastically changed by the arrival of the Spanish and

other Europeans.

Franciscan priest Father Francisco Garcés passed among the native people in 1776 on a trip through the Mojave Desert, keeping a diary that has been invaluable in determining what groups lived here. Contact with European and American immigrants increased gradually until the Indians found themselves being “resettled” in the mission system.

In 1853 Fort Tejon was established just west of the valley, ostensibly to “protect” the Indians. Though many Indians deserted the fort over the years, the U.S. government continued relocating them to reservations into the 1900s.

THE COLLECTORS

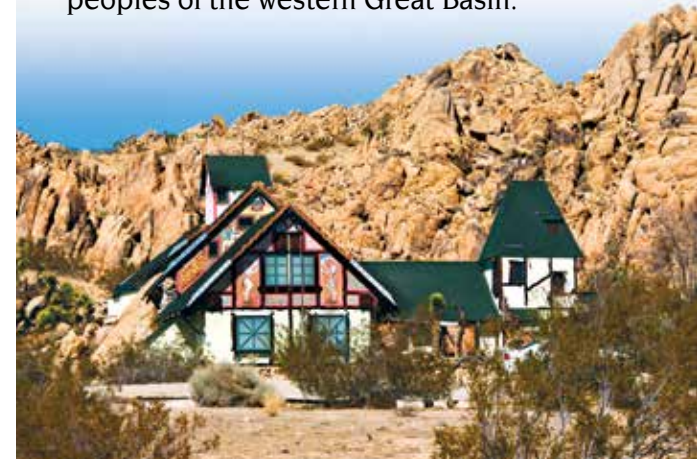
Howard Arden Edwards, a theatrical set painter and self-taught artist, so admired the grandeur of the Antelope Valley that he decided to make Piute Butte his home. In 1928 he homesteaded 160 acres, and with his wife and teenage son started construction on their home. The home included an exhibit area that Edwards called

his Antelope Valley Indian Research Museum to display his large collection of prehistoric and ethnographic American Indian artifacts.

In 1939 Grace Wilcox Oliver, a student of anthropology, bought the Edwards home. She added her own collections, converted the living quarters to exhibit rooms, and opened it in the early 1940s as the Antelope Valley Indian Museum. Ms. Oliver operated the museum for more than three decades, continuing to add to the collection over time.

In 1979, with the support of local groups and individuals, the State of California purchased the museum. Grace Oliver donated its artifacts at that time.

California State Parks designated the museum as one of its regional Indian museums in the mid-1980s. The collection of prehistoric, historic, and contemporary artifacts comes from various geographic regions: the Southwest region is represented in the Kachina Hall and Southwest Room; the upstairs California Hall houses artifacts from California Indian cultures. The Great Basin and Antelope Valley rooms present the peoples of the western Great Basin.



PARK HISTORY

American Indian Peoples

At the end of the Ice Age, lakes, springs, and a variety of natural food resources provided the native people with all they needed to survive and thrive here. For at least 4,000 years, groups traded with each other along vast routes that extended from Mexico to Northern California, and from the coast to the Southwest.

Artifacts discovered by archaeologists have been dated as far back as 11,000 years, though little is known of these ancient cultures. Later artifacts attest to the everyday lives of these people over time. Grinding tools reveal how they processed plants for food, while spear and arrow points provide insight into their hunting methods.

THE COLLECTIONS

Many of the museum's thousands of artifacts are rare or one-of-a-kind items:

Pottery—A variety of storage, cooking, utility, and decorative types originating from the Southwestern and Southern California cultures.

Baskets—Twined and coiled baskets, bowls, cradleboards, hats, and footwear from three cultural regions were used for storage, carrying, winnowing, and cooking, as well as for decorative and ceremonial purposes.

Food preparation tools—Bowls and cooking vessels were made of pottery, stone, and basketry. Stone utensils include mortars and pestles for grinding acorns and seeds.

Hunting/fishing equipment—Spears, darts, and arrows tipped with flaked stone points were the Indians' primary hunting tools. Fishhooks of bone and shell were also used.

Work tools—Knives, anvils, drills, scrapers, axes, and arrow-shaft straighteners were made of flaked and ground stone.

Clothing—Clothing items include a Hopi men's wearing robe (circa 1860) and fragments of 2,500-year-old sea grass garments made by California coastal and Channel Islands groups.

Textiles—The museum displays a number of Navajo rugs, mats, saddle blankets, and a chief's wearing blanket.

Adornment—Jewelry made by various cultural groups is on display.

Paintings—The museum displays several tempera paintings by Navajo and Zuni artists,



as well as murals, paintings, drawings, and design motifs by Howard Arden Edwards.

Katsina Dolls—Originating from the Hopi Tribe, authentic katsina dolls are carved from cottonwood root and decorated with fabric, paint, feathers, beads, and yarn. The dolls are an important element in Hopi (and some other Puebloan) religious expressions.

In the Antelope Valley Indian Museum, exhibit styles of former owners blend with contemporary exhibits. They illustrate more than 80 years and several eras of evolution and change in the way American Indian materials are displayed and interpreted in museums such as this one.



The museum has made every attempt to provide reliable identification and descriptions of the artifacts, but staff cannot guarantee complete accuracy. If any errors are found, please contact the curator at (661) 946-3055.

INTERPRETIVE SALES

The interpretive sales area features authentic handcrafted American Indian jewelry, katsina dolls, and pottery. Publications on American Indian history and crafts are also available.

ACCESSIBLE FEATURES

The park's terrain affords no wheelchair-accessible activities here. However, parking, restrooms, and routes of

travel meet current accessibility guidelines. Accessibility is continually improving. For updates, visit <http://access.parks.ca.gov>.

PLEASE REMEMBER

- Pets are not permitted in the museum or on the nature trail; horses are not permitted in the park.
- No food, drinks, or smoking are allowed inside the museum.
- Call the park to make advance arrangements for guided tours (led on designated weekdays only, for groups of ten or more).
- Guided tours for school groups (led on designated weekdays only) are free and require advance arrangements. Adult tours are also available.
- The park is open only on weekends.
- Admission is charged.
- The park closes when the museum closes.

NEARBY STATE PARKS

- Antelope Valley California Poppy Reserve
15101 Lancaster Road
Lancaster 93534
(661) 724-1180 or 946-6092
- Saddleback Butte State Park
Avenue J and 170th Street East
Lancaster 93534 (661) 946-6092

This park is supported in part through a nonprofit organization. For information contact: Friends of the Antelope Valley Indian Museum
P.O. Box 1171 • Lancaster, CA 93534
(661) 946-3055

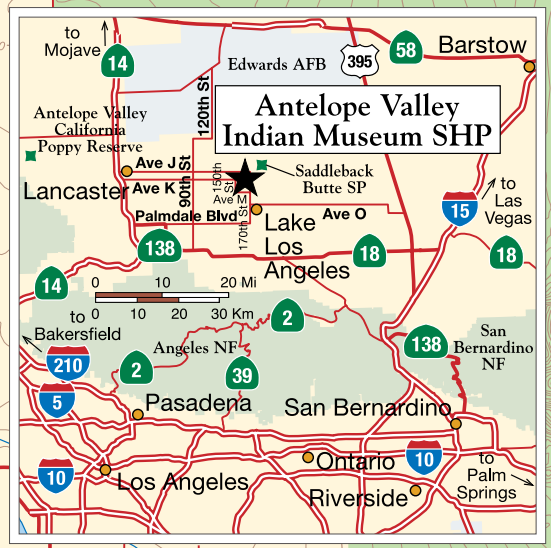
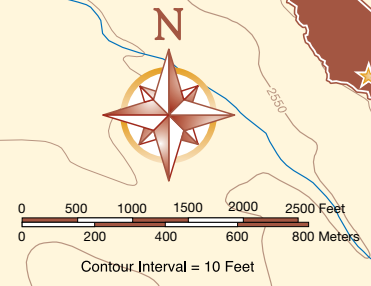
Antelope Valley Indian Museum

State Historic Park

Legend

- | | | | |
|--|--------------------|--|--------------|
| | Paved Road | | Exhibits |
| | Graded Road | | Nature Trail |
| | Trail | | Parking |
| | Historic Buildings | | Picnic Area |
| | Accessible Feature | | Restrooms |

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SADDLEBACK BUTTE STATE PARK

MOJAVE DESERT

ANTELOPE VALLEY INDIAN MUSEUM STATE HISTORIC PARK

PIUTE BUTTE

3195ft 974m

3037ft 923m

Museum

see detail map right

