

# HISTORIC SITES & TOUR



**La Quinta**  
GEM of the DESERT

PlayInLaQuinta.com  
#VisitLaQuinta

## LEGEND

- 1-9 = Historic Site Viewpoint La Quinta
- P = Historical Society Plaque

Driving time for the tour is approximately 45 minutes.



### Special Note of Thanks

Our sincere thanks to the La Quinta Historical Society for their help and assistance with this map including the use of many of its photographs and graphics. The Society has also established a historical site recognition program in which the Society recognizes important sites in the City's history with a La Quinta Historical Society Plaque identifying the site and its role in La Quinta's history. Sites on this map that have received the Society's recognition have been so noted on the map.

## HISTORIC SITES TOUR

### 1. Vale La Quinta

The original Vale La Quinta Subdivision sales office is now the cornerstone of the La Quinta Historical Museum. To the east of the museum stands the original lumber yard and building.

### 2. The Village

The town's original commercial district began with the Vale La Quinta sales office and lumber yard next to the community park and one small market along Calle Estado. The market was located in one of two small adjacent brick buildings built in 1936 which later housed the Café La Quinta and the Marcella Press newspaper. These buildings now house the El Ranchito restaurant.

### 3. Cove Casitas

Scattered throughout the Cove are over 50 of the remaining adobe casitas built in the 1930s as part of the Vale La Quinta land sales program. Most are still private

residences today, an exception is the La Quinta Palms Realty building converted from an original residential casita built in 1938. Keep an eye out along the route to the Bear Creek Trail site and see how many of the original casitas you can spot.

### 4. Bear Creek Canyon

Evidence of native habitation in the La Quinta area dates back 2,000 plus years and is closely related to the previous existence of Ancient Lake Cahuilla and the proximity of the Santa Rosa Mountains. The Cahuilla Indians who populated this area spent time on both the desert floor and in the Santa Rosa Mountains using trails up Bear Creek Canyon at the top of the La Quinta Cove.

### 5. Desert Club

Circa 1937. Designed by renowned Baroque movie palace architect S. Charles Lee, the Desert Club was a haven for celebrities and wealthy businessmen. Originally an Art Deco design with pool, grounds, restaurant, and tennis courts the club was gutted by fire in 1965. The building was then remodeled in

the Spanish Colonial style. Membership in the Desert Club could be purchased individually or through the sale of casitas built throughout the cove. After changing ownership several times the club closed and its last owner, the Fritz Burns estate, transferred the property to the City of La Quinta in 1989. The clubhouse and pool were removed to create Fritz Burns Park.

### 6. Rancho Xochimilco ("so-chee-meelkoh")

In 1961, Howard Ahmanson, planted a citrus grove and built a hacienda style adobe ranch house, known for housing his collection of Toltec art and statuary, Mr. Ahmanson named the ranch Rancho Xochimilco. The house and several examples of his statuary collection can be viewed as part of the City's Silver Rock Golf Course and clubhouse.

### 7. Ancient Lake Cahuilla

For approximately 1,000 years, the Colorado River fed into the 100 miles long Ancient Lake Cahuilla which as recent as 400 years ago stretched from La Quinta to the Imperial Valley. Today you can still see the lake's high waterline

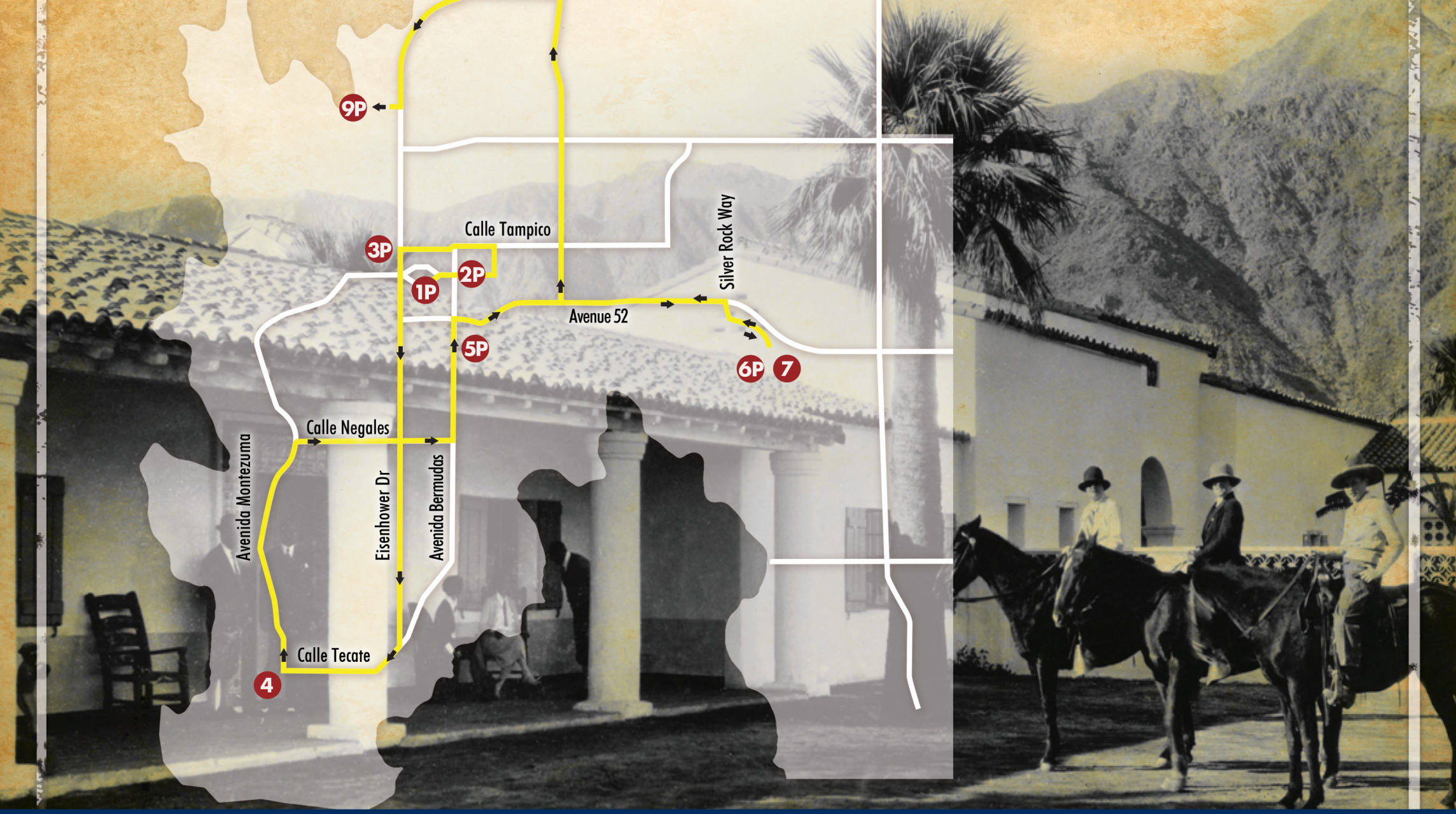
on the rock outcroppings next to the Silver Rock clubhouse and even more prominently throughout the southeastern portion of La Quinta along the base of the Santa Rosa Mountains.

### 8. Bradshaw Trail/Point Happy

The Bradshaw Trail traveled through La Quinta at Point Happy where travelers were provided water, livestock fodder and a place to shelter from wind storms and flash floods. Point Happy later became the site of the area's 1st school house.

### 9. La Quinta Hotel

Designed by Gordon Kaufman and built by Walter Morgan, the La Quinta Hotel became the iconic cornerstone of the community and namesake of the future City of La Quinta. Many original adobe structures built for the hotel's opening in 1926 are still used today, several of which are identified as eligible for listing on the National and State Registries of Historic Places. This is the perfect place to end our tour so feel free to take some time here to stroll among the historic buildings and grounds, dine, and relax.





# HISTORIC SITES & TOUR



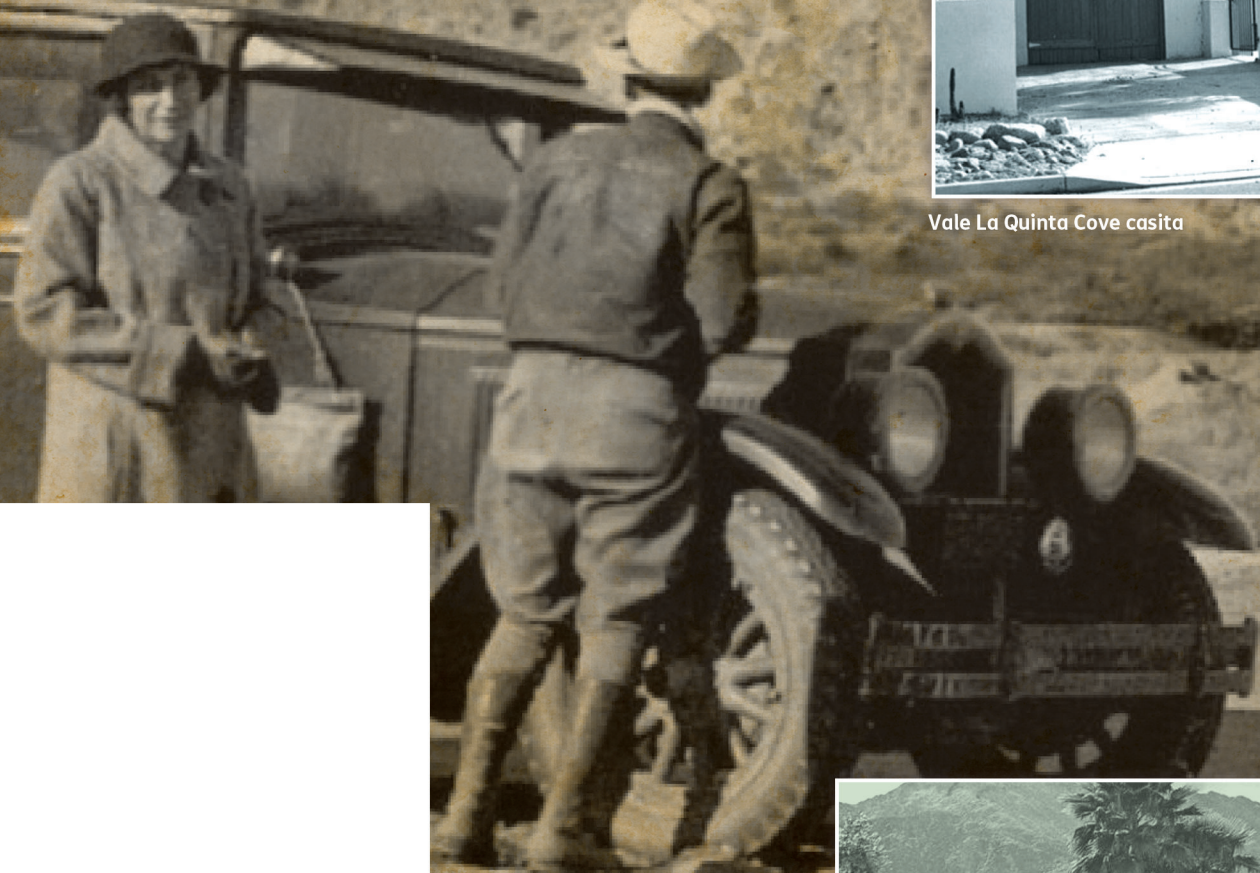
Vale La Quinta sales office and lumber yard



Ancient Lake Cahuilla shoreline



Vale La Quinta Cove casita



Bradshaw Trail/Point Happy



La Quinta Hotel casitas

## WELCOME

400 years ago, La Quinta was the site of Ancient Lake Cahuilla's northwest shoreline and early Cahuilla Indian encampments. From the Ancient Lake Cahuilla shoreline to the numerous adobe structures still in use today, evidence of our history abounds throughout La Quinta.

In 1862, William Bradshaw pioneered a route from San Bernardino to the newly discovered gold fields at La Paz, Arizona. Passing through Point Happy and on toward La Paz, the Bradshaw Trail was used by miners, supply wagons and passenger stage service up until 1877. In the early 1900s the area became the site of "Happy" Lundbeck's homestead and store followed by Chauncey Clarke's Point Happy Date Gardens and Arabian Horse Ranch in 1922.

The La Quinta Hotel opened in 1926 as a true desert hideaway. Developed by Walter Morgan and designed by famed architect Gordon Kaufman, the hotel combined its isolated location and classic Spanish Colonial Revival Architecture with horse back riding, a nine-hole golf course and the tranquility of the desert's natural beauty. Quickly it became a favorite of Hollywood legends Frank Capra, Errol Flynn, Greta Garbo, and Bette Davis along with many others. Today, you can still stroll through the original hotel lobby or stay in one of the hotel's classic adobe casitas.

"Vale La Quinta," now known as "The Cove," was La Quinta's first residential development. Begun in the 1930s by "Harry" Kiener, the subdivision used a vacation oriented sales program associated with the Desert Club resort. To encourage sales, a lumber yard and 2-story Monterey style office and residence, a land sales office, and 50 adobe bungalows were constructed, many of which remain today.

## ONLINE

For more information regarding Historical Sites & Tour please visit [www.LaQuintaHistoricalSociety.com](http://www.LaQuintaHistoricalSociety.com)

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