

CITY OF SAN BUENAVENTURA HISTORIC LANDMARKS, DISTRICTS, and POINTS OF INTEREST

Landmark Number: **86**

Historic Name: **Erle Stanley Gardner Office**

Address: **21 S. California Street, Room 306**

Designated: **February 6, 1995**

Description:

In the eyes of the world, Erle Stanley Gardner is possibly Ventura's most famous and prolific resident. Gardner wrote 155 books and over 400 articles, and was once ranked by Guinness World Records as one of the world's best-selling authors. The author of 82 Perry Mason mystery novels moved to Oxnard from his native Massachusetts in 1911. He practiced law after passing the bar without a law degree. Gardner moved to Ventura in 1915 when he joined the prestigious firm of attorney H. Frank Orr. His office was located in the northeast corner of the First National Bank Building (Landmark #36). His custom wood desk was so massive it would not fit in the elevator and had to be brought in through the 3rd story window. He was a workaholic and would dictate his novels into an Edison wax drum recorder so his secretaries could type his manuscripts from these recordings. The first Perry Mason novel, "The Case of the Velvet Claws," included many Ventura references. He resided in Ventura until 1934. The specific office Gardner occupied does not retain any of Gardner's personal objects.



Photo by David Barker (2000)