

The Historic Downtown Ontario Walking Tour encompasses 14 blocks along Historic Euclid Avenue



Self Guided Walking Tour

# Historic Downtown Ontario

## Produced by:

### The City of Ontario, Planning Department Historic Preservation

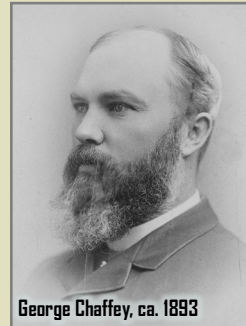
In 2003, the State of California Office of Historic Preservation designated the City of Ontario as a Certified Local Government (CLG). The CLG program encourages the preservation of historic resources by promoting a partnership among local governments, the State of California, and the National Park Service (NPS). The City of Ontario continues to work with other local agencies to ensure the protection of our historic resources.

For more information regarding the Historic Preservation program, contact the City of Ontario, Planning Department.

City of Ontario  
Planning Department  
303 East "B" Street  
Ontario, CA 91764  
(909) 395-2036  
(909) 395-2420 fax



## About Ontario



George Chaffey, ca. 1893

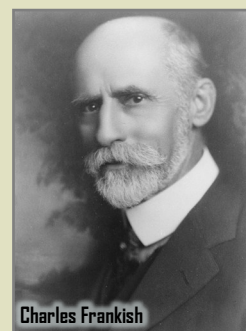
Ontario, California was founded in September of 1882 by brothers George and William B. Chaffey, and named after their hometown, Ontario, Canada. The brothers purchased the "San Antonio lands," which consisted of 6,218 acres with water rights and set aside 640 acres for the Community of Ontario. Half of the initial 640 acres was deeded to the Chaffey Agricultural College as an endowment.

The Chaffey's established four principles for the colony that had social and economic implications including: a mutual water company concept, a prohibition of intoxicating liquors, a grand thoroughfare through the City, and an agricultural college for general education. On December 10, 1891, Ontario was incorporated as a city under the California Constitution with a City Council-City Manager form of government.



Early Euclid Avenue

In 1903, Ontario was proclaimed a "Model Irrigation Colony" by an Act of Congress. The Ontario planned community had many modern innovations, many of which still show merit today. An impressive two-hundred feet wide and eight miles long, Euclid Avenue (on the National Register List of Historic Places) was the stately back-bone of the colony. Provisions for an electric railway, water rights for each landowner, a local educational institution, electric lights, one of the first long distance telephone lines, and access to water and transportation set a new standard for rural communities and irrigation practices and ensured the success of the Model Colony.



Charles Frankish

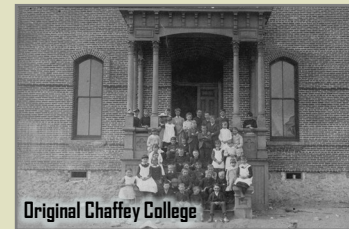
Shortly after establishing the "Model Colony," the Chaffey's left Ontario for Australia and entrepreneur, Charles Frankish became the guiding force during Ontario's early years. Frankish commissioned a water fountain to be placed near the railroad tracks on Euclid Avenue to symbolize prosperity to all visitors that passed through Ontario. The fountain has been restored and can still be viewed today at its current home in the Museum gardens.

In 1887, Ontario's unique "gravity mule car" made its first run up Euclid Avenue on a narrow gage rail system. The uphill trip took 90 minutes, but the downhill ride was only 30 minutes. A special pull-out trailer allowed the mules to ride as passengers. The mule car served Ontario until 1895, when it was replaced by an electric streetcar. After the mules were retired, they became property of a nearby rancher and, as legend has it, the mules pulled the plough uphill, but because of their training, refused to work downhill.



Oakley Family Orange Grove

Ontario first developed as an agricultural community, largely, but not exclusively, devoted to the citrus industry. The Sunkist water tower, a reminder of the heydays, remains to this day. In addition to oranges, the production of peaches, walnuts, lemons, olives and grapes were also important to the growth of Ontario and the neighboring city of Upland.



Original Chaffey College

Chaffey College was an agricultural college located on Euclid Avenue in the exact location that it was built by the Chaffey brothers. Both high school and college courses were offered at the campus from 1901 to 1960. In 1960, Chaffey College moved to Rancho Cucamonga and the original Chaffey College building became Chaffey High School.

In 1923, airplane enthusiasts Waldo Waterman and Archie Mitchell established Latimer Field. From that point on, Ontario became an aviation town. Urban growth pushed the fliers east until they took up their permanent residence located at the Ontario World Airport. During WWII, this airport was a busy training facility for pilots.



Early Ontario Airport

Since WWII, Ontario has become a diversified community. There are approximately 173,000 residents. Although the City boundaries have been extended from 0.38 square miles in 1891 to almost 50 square miles today, Ontario's Historic Downtown still retains the original irrigation system and land subdivision pattern established by the Chaffey brothers. The Euclid Avenue corridor continues to remain the stately back-bone of the city that it once was.

## Other Historical Points of Interest



**The Fallis House, 122 S. Vine Ave.**—Built around 1892 in the Queen Anne style, William Barton Fallis bought this house in 1906, the same year Mr. Fallis and his brother, Fred G. Fallis, opened the Fallis Brother's Department Store. The building had been converted into apartments and, more recently, has been rehabilitated and adaptively reused as offices.



**Graber Olive House, 315 E. Fourth St.**—The C.C. Graber Co. is Ontario's oldest continuously operating business, dating back to 1894. Graber came to Ontario in 1892 and bought one of Chaffey's ten-acre plots with his brother Charles. Mr. Graber ran the olive canning business and Mrs. Graber typed labels and handled mail order sales.

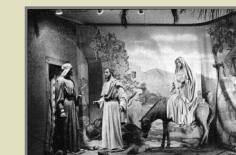


**Chaffey High School, 1245 N. Euclid Ave.**—The original Chaffey College building was converted to Chaffey High School. Chaffey College, established in 1885, as an affiliate for USC. The original buildings were replaced in the 1930's as part of the Federal Works Progress Administration.



**Logan's Candy, 125 W. B St.**—Logan's Candy has been making handcrafted candy in Ontario since 1933. Located in Historic Downtown

Ontario, Logan's Candy is one of Ontario's oldest businesses.



**Euclid Avenue Nativity Scene, North Euclid Avenue Median**—Created by world-renowned East Los Angeles artist Rudolph Vargas, the first two Nativity Scenes were first displayed on Euclid Avenue in 1959. The Euclid Avenue Nativity Scenes are displayed along the Euclid Avenue median during the holiday season.





**1 Ontario Power Co.**- 217 S. Lemon Ave.- The Ontario Power Co., est. in 1895, built this building in 1907 for their offices and power house. Later, Edison used the building. During the 1950s, the building was used as the "overflow jail." It is currently home to the Chaffey Community Museum of Art. *Local Landmark No. 36 (1998)*

**2 G.E. Hotpoint Clubhouse**-235 E. Main St.- In an effort to promote good fellowship amongst employees, the G.E. Hotpoint Club was created in 1913. By 1917, the Clubhouse was built by its members and furnished by the company. Dinners, banquets, special events and appliance demonstrations were held here.



**3 G.E. Hotpoint**- 100-400 E. Main Street.- In 1904, Earl Richardson developed the Hotpoint iron. This was the first iron that could heat to the tip, which was most practical for pressing ruffles and pleats. In 1917, the Edison Electric Appliance Co. merged with the Hotpoint Electric Heating Company.

**4 Ontario City Hall**- 225 S. Euclid Ave.- Built in 1937 with WPA funds, this Mediterranean style building served as City Hall until 1979. The Council Chamber remains intact with wooden auditorium seats. It is currently home to the Museum of History and Art, Ontario. *Local Landmark No. 2 (1993)*



**5 Frankish Fountain**- 225 S. Euclid Ave.- Built in 1886 as a symbol of prosperity, the Frankish Fountain was originally on the Euclid Avenue median. The Chaffey Brothers would turn the fountain on as nearby trains passed to show potential buyers Ontario's adequate water supply. *Local Landmark No. 3 (1993)*

**6 Citizens National Bank**- 114 N. Euclid Ave.- This Art Deco building, built in 1939, replaced the Walker Building which had been built in 1914, and was used as a skating rink. The floor of the skating rink was incorporated into this building. Designed by architects Mitcham and Harnish. *Local Landmark No. 16 (1998)*



**7 Lerch Building**- 122 N. Euclid Ave.- Built in 1913 as a theatre by Jacob Lerch, the Lerch Building later became known as the "Park Theater" and then "Euclid Theater" until 1928. By 1951, the front façade of the building had been removed and altered. The only remnant from this building's theater era is the marquees used to display movie posters. *Local Landmark No. 18 (1998)*

**8 Commercial Hotel**- 126-132 N. Euclid Ave.- The 50 room hotel with first floor retail was constructed in 1910 by local plumber D. Howard Akey. One year later, the property was sold to Mrs. Gribbin who operated a millinery (hat) shop from the building. *Local Landmark No. 19 (1998)*



**9 Mule Car**- 100 Block N. Euclid Ave.- Ontario's gravity mule car was constructed in 1887 and ran along the Euclid Avenue median. The mules would pull the car up the to the top of Euclid Avenue, then climb aboard a special platform built on the back of the car for the ride back down. By 1895, the system was electrified.

**10 Bank of Italy**- 200 N. Euclid Ave.-The Bank of Italy paved the way for modern branch banking, eventually becoming Bank of America. Secondo Guasti, Sr. and Jr. served on the Board of Directors during the 1920s. *Local Landmark No. 86 (2010)*



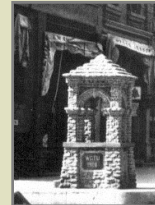
**11 Bumstead Bicycles**- 109 E. B St.- In 1909, Lloyd Garrison Bumstead purchased the Caldwell Bicycle Shop and officially changed the name to "Bumstead Bicycles." In 1912, Bumstead Bicycles relocated to this building and is still being operated in Ontario by the Bumstead family. *Local Landmark No. 87 (2010)*

**12 Ontario Town Square and History Mural**- 224 N. Euclid Ave.-In September 2014, the City completed construction of the "Ontario Through the Years" history mural in the new Ontario Town Square. The mural highlights people, events and places significant to Ontario's history.



**13 Euclid Ave. Median**- Euclid Avenue was originally laid out by the Chaffey brothers as one of the main features of their Model Irrigation Colony. Euclid Avenue is a state scenic highway. *Local Landmark No. 67 (2001) & National Register of Historic Places (2005)*

**14 WTCU Fountain**- 300 Block N. Euclid Ave.-The Women's Christian Temperance Union constructed the fountain in 1908. It was originally located on the corner directly in front of the Citizen's Bank so that everyone could enjoy a clear, fresh drink of water. The fountain was moved in 1916 to John Galvin Park and moved to its present location on Euclid Avenue in 1975.



**15 Bandstand**- 300 Block N. Euclid Ave.-The first bandstand was built on Euclid Avenue in 1892, beginning a tradition of being rebuilt and moved often. The bandstand was once located on the Euclid Avenue median, just south of Holt Blvd., at Emporia Street.

**16 Ontario Fire Dept.**- 310 N. Euclid Ave.- A fire hall building was constructed of concrete block in 1911, at this site. A new 6-cylinder Mitchell fire truck was purchased and provided by local auto dealer F. A. C. Drew. Originally, the fire hall employed two full-time employees, one to work during the day and the other to work at night. The fire station has since been demolished.



**17 Ontario Laundry Co. (Blue Seal)**- 401 N. Euclid Ave.- This streamline Moderne/Art Deco style building was built in the early 1940's, but the site has been used as a laundry since 1896. The circular tower element was designed to resemble a washing machine. *Local Landmark No. 6 (1995)*



**18 Granada Theater**- 303 N. Euclid Ave.-The 954 seat Granada Theater was built in 1926 and was the second Fox Theater built on the West Coast. In addition to showing motion pictures, it also hosted a live vaudeville theater. *Local Landmark No. 23 (1998)*



**19 People's Mutual**- 231 N. Euclid Ave.-Constructed in 1904, this building served as the People's Mutual Building. The style represents an eclectic mix of Spanish tile roofing, Italianate curvilinear brackets, and a recessed balcony with Hispano-Mauresque columns. *Local Landmark No. 22 (1998)*



**20 Masonic Hall**- 231 & 223 N. Euclid Ave.-This two-story brick commercial building was constructed in 1904. Originally, the second floor served the Ontario Lodge 301 and the May Furniture store occupied the ground floor. The building represents Ontario's early commercial enterprises. *Local Landmark No. 21 (1998)*



**21 Ostran's Dept.**- 203 N. Euclid Ave.-For over fifty years, the Ostran's Department Store served Ontarians from the ground floor of this 1908 commercial brick building. It was designed by architect Ferdinand Davis of Pomona for Mary Ellen Agnew. *Local Landmark No. 20 (1998)*

**22 Gemmel's Pharmacy**- 137-143 N. Euclid Ave.-Gemmel's Drugstore opened its doors in 1934. The two-story brick building was constructed in 1888. It had an upstairs public meeting hall and was originally occupied by Smith's Brothers Furniture. The contractor was John Gerry. He was responsible for several buildings throughout Ontario and Upland.



**23 Rose Block**- 107-111 N. Euclid Ave.-Henry J. Rose, George Chaffey's brother-in-law, came to Ontario in 1895 from Toronto. The northern portion of the store was used by Mr. Rose for his pharmacy and hardware store. *Local Landmark No. 15 (1998)*

**24 Citizens Bank Block**- 101 N. Euclid Ave.-This building was originally designed and constructed with a tall tower that gave the building a sense of dignity and importance. The building was altered in 1948 and again in the 1990s. *Local Landmark No. 13 (1998)*



**25 US Post Office** - 123 W. Holt Blvd.-Designed by architect Louis A. Simon, the Post Office is one of only a few buildings in Ontario constructed by the WPA. Murals done by Muriel Best depicting the growth of the Model Colony still remain inside the building. *Local Landmark No. 39 (1998)*

**26 First National Bank**- 100 S. Euclid Ave.-This 1928 building is one of the best examples of Art Deco architecture in the City. The bank occupied the site from 1903 until 1965. *Local Landmark No. 10 (1998)*



**27 McCann Block**- 108 S. Euclid Ave.-In 1917, Lewis E. McCann hired the Campbell Construction Company to build this 2-story reinforced concrete building which housed his hardware store. *Local Landmark No. 26 (1998)*

**28 Envoy Hotel**- 110 & 112 S. Euclid Ave.-The first floor was built by the Frankish Company in 1920. The second and third floors were built in 1921, and were used as the 50 room Envoy Hotel "in the most modern style." *Local Landmark No. 11 (1998)*



**29 Old Post Office**- 125 W. Transit St. -This Italian Renaissance Revival style building has a red tile roof and rounded arches. It was designed by famed Los Angeles architect Paul Williams and built by Charles Latimer in 1926. *Local Landmark No. 38 (1998)*

**30 Frankish Building**- 200 S. Euclid Ave.-Built in 1916, this Italianate style building was built by Charles Frankish, founder and President of Ontario Land and Improvement Company. *Local Landmark No. 12 (1998) and National Register of Historic Places*



**31 Salvation Army Building**- 214 S. Euclid Ave.- This Art Deco building was built in 1931 for the Salvation Army. During the "Great Depression," the Salvation Army relocated to these new quarters to provide services to those in need.

