

Model Colony News



Heritage Events

Upcoming Events

No events April 2020—October 2020 due to Covid-19.



Inside This Issue

| | |
|-------------------------------|----|
| Upcoming Events | 1 |
| Contact Information | 1 |
| Heritage Corner | 2 |
| Archives of Ontario History | 5 |
| Who's Who in Historic Ontario | 7 |
| Restoration Information | 11 |
| Board Members | 12 |
| Membership Form | 13 |

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VOLUNTEERS WANTED

If you would like to
volunteer your time at our
events, please contact us at:
909.984.6558
or email us at:
info@ontarioheritage.org

Heritage Corner

Citrus in the West End

The story of citrus in the West End of San Bernardino County was much the same as that in other areas of the valley – ranging from a period when nearly everyone in town was somehow connected to the industry, to today when all that remains is a legacy of names.

There were names that added an interesting dimension to the West End, like Henry Eckstein, creator of the famed Crackerjacks popcorn candy, who came to retire in Upland; Otto Christiansen, a prominent criminal attorney who defended Bugsy Siegel and became a leader in the local citrus industry; Nelson Gray, a shot putter on the 1932 U.S. Olympic team, and Harold Stewart, whose brother Lyman founded Union Oil Company.

Otto Christiansen, Nelson Gray and Harold Stewart were major West End growers, along with R.O. Price, Jack Howe, Charles Harwood, William Rohrig and Frank Buffington. Theo Davis, himself a grower who helped plant almost 50,000 of the West End's citrus trees, recalled the area as "just a citrus town".

Citrus did well in the West End where the soil was largely decomposed granite with lots of sizable rocks and good drainage. It helped keep the roots from soaking in water. (Citrus trees require lots of water but don't like to have their feet wet.) L.S. Dyer set out the first ten acres of lemon trees in 1884. In 1886, Isaac W. Whitaker was credited with planting the first orange tree, while Luther M. Holt planted the first orange grove. By 1889, citrus had become a leading crop with 450 acres in oranges. That same year, the Ontario Model Colony shipped 40 carloads of oranges and 12 carloads of lemons, for total sales of \$38,500.

Keeping the groves from freezing was an important part of the citrus industry. In 1907, a young inventor, W. C. Scheu of Grand Junction, Colorado, developed an oil-burning stack heater that was more effective than open fires in heating orchards and vineyards. In 1911, he opened Scheu Manufacturing Company in Upland and began producing a line of orchard heaters, also known as smudge pots. Smudge pots were widely adopted for grove heating after a disastrous freeze from January 4-8, 1913 wiped out a whole crop. At one time, Scheu Manufacturing sold as many as 500,000 a year.



(Continued on page 3)

Model Colony News

Heritage Corner (continued from page 2)

Smudge pots were used for 70 years in Southern California citrus groves and vineyards. The Redlands district had 462,000 for the winter of 1932-33, requiring 3,693,000 gallons of oil for a single refilling – about 330 tank car loads. It required 2000 carloads to fill all the smudge pots in Southern California.

Eventually, smudge pots fell out of favor as oil prices rose and environmental concerns increased. Scheu Manufacturing Company developed other products and still exists today; its headquarters are in the historic former Upland Police Department in downtown Upland.

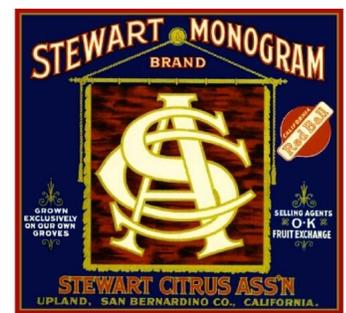
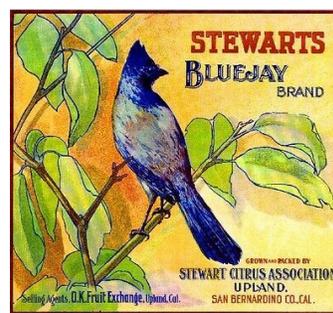
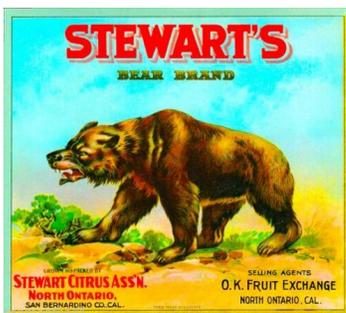
The first citrus packing house in the West End was started by N.L. Mitchell and G.T. Butterfield in 1891, and it wasn't long until there were 20. But by 1981, there are just two: Upland Lemon Growers and La Verne Co-Op, both in Upland. While packing houses of yore packed all local fruit, now 60-70% of the fruit comes from other Southern California counties.

West End citrus acreage reached its peak in the early 1940s with about 12,000 acres – 7000 of them in oranges. By 1981, only 1050 acres remain, with 850 in lemons. The citrus industry decline began in the 1940s as demands for housing caused land values to rise and the demands by new residents for cleaner air made it impossible for citrus growers to continue operating as they had.

Harold L. Stewart, an early citrus pioneer, was a successful rancher who lived to be more than 100 years old. In a 1978 interview, he said, "The citrus industry, well, it would be in pretty bad shape, especially oranges, on account of the smog, The smog affects the navels very much, Valencias some and lemons some. It's not healthy for them. The best lemon district in the area here has always been the northwest corner of Upland."

Harold's father William was one of three brothers who came to California from Pennsylvania and made successes in widely different ways in the late 19th century. Older brothers Lyman and Milton were key developers in the oil business, with Lyman being a founder of the Union Oil Co.

In the 1880s, the brothers bought acreage in the Inland Valley, with William managing their vast citrus holdings in Ontario and Upland. The family operations, on A Street in Upland, had its own packing house and shipped citrus fruit under the Bear, Coyote, Blue Jay and Monogram shipping labels. For decades, the product of their orchards were among the many tons of fruit shipped from here to the Midwest and East each winter.



(Continued on page 4)

Model Colony News

Heritage Corner

The Stewart Citrus Association, started by his father, held on until 1985. That's when an Upland business development opened at Mountain Avenue and Arrow Highway where the last 9½ acres of lemons had grown years before.

Harold Stewart was born in a house on 12th Street, today's Foothill Boulevard, just west of Euclid Avenue. As an infant he moved with his family to a larger house on West Sixth Street in Ontario, which served generations of the Stewarts and is still standing today. He graduated from Chaffey High and later received a bachelor's degree at Stanford University.

When the U.S. entered World War I, Stewart enlisted. He served in France with an engineers unit but saw no real combat. His company briefly occupied parts of Germany following war's end. Returning to Southern California, Stewart tried working in the oil fields, which turned out not to his liking as well as fairly dangerous. Finally he and Mabel, whom he married in 1918, returned to the Inland Valley and ultimately took over his father's citrus ranches. Later, his son Walter, at one time an Ontario City Councilman, joined him in the ranching operation, noted the Daily Bulletin, Jan. 6, 1999.

Howard Stewart served for more than 25 years on the board of directors of San Antonio Community Hospital and the San Antonio Water Co. He was an Ontario Rotary Club member for 50 years.

At one time, the Stewarts owned groves that stretched on the both sides of Foothill from Euclid to San Antonio Avenue. As a youth, "Foothill was just a dirt road. I recall palm and olives trees there," he told the Ontario Daily Report in 1978.

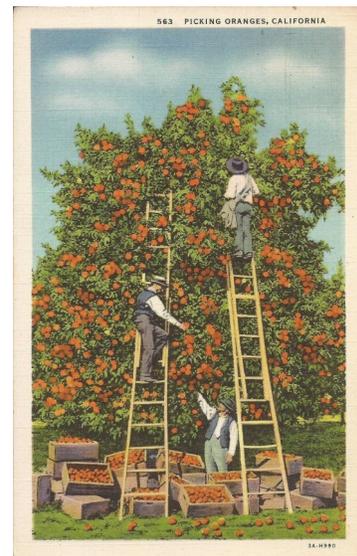
Then, remembering how smog and suburbia impacted agriculture here, he recalled "coming back from Los Angeles and the air being scented with orange blossoms. I used to wonder what would this be like without the groves. Now I know."

Sources: San Bernardino County Sun, May 24 1981; *Joe Blackstock Inland Valley Daily Bulletin, December 27, 2016*



Oakley Family 10-acre citrus grove 1880's

Photo Credit: Ontario City Library Model Colony Room



California Agriculture-Picking Oranges

1934 Postcard

Model Colony News

Page 5

2nd Quarter 2020

Archives of Ontario History

Charles Frankish

This early developer stood up to the powerful Santa Fe Railroad and won

Almost every day early in 1887, entrepreneurs in the Inland Empire strained their ears to hear the tantalizing sounds of money and success moving ever closer. That distinctive noise of great fortunes was in the form of work being done by crews grading the route of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad from San Bernardino to Los Angeles. The product of this train route would soon create new towns, new businesses and help grow what became the area's huge agricultural success.

But suddenly there was a problem, and all work stopped. Charles Frankish, the man who took over the development of what became Ontario and Upland from the departed George Chaffey, did the unthinkable. He said "no" to the Santa Fe.

The all-powerful railroads did whatever they wanted. They knew full well that all of Southern California badly needed them for shipping crops east and bringing frostbitten Easterners here to buy property and start businesses. For a month in 1887, crews had moved quickly west from San Bernardino grading the proposed Santa Fe route through empty land mostly littered with sagebrush and sand.

But on January 24, 1887, they got to the edge of the property of the Ontario Land Company and were stopped in their tracks by an injunction obtained by Frankish. The Santa Fe had determined it would run its tracks on top of Eighth Street through Frankish's development in what today is Upland. Frankish had offered the railroad rights of way between Seventh and Eighth or between Eighth and Ninth streets, but not right on the dirt street itself.

"The railroad representatives proposed to run right through wherever they pleased without the formality of asking the consent of any one," noted the Ontario Record of January 26, 1887. "An important street could not well be given up to the railroad without serious damage to property owners, and inconvenience to the whole colony." While the mess was being negotiated, the Santa Fe workers were temporarily sent to the railroad's other project in Orange County.



Ontario Land Company

Photo Credit: Model Colony History Room



Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway

(Continued on page 6)

Model Colony News

Archives of Ontario History (continued from page 5)

The Ontario Record applauded Frankish's boldness but, just like Frankish, it stood to benefit from all the expanded business the railroad would generate. "Ontario cannot well afford to 'buck' against the Santa Fe system," noted the realistic newspaper. "We trust the matter will be settled at an early day to the satisfaction of all parties concerned."

But Frankish actually prevailed. The final slightly revised route turns slightly north near Grove Avenue and crosses Upland directly between Eighth and Ninth streets, just as he wished. Frankish's objection resolved, grading through his development resumed and was completed on February 27, 1887 reported the Ontario Record. By March 25, 1887 the Santa Fe grading crew reached the San Gabriel River to meet the route of the Los Angeles and San Gabriel Railway, recently purchased by Santa Fe, to prepare the line into Los Angeles.

And the brief legal hangup notwithstanding, Frankish continued selling Ontario land. The Ontario Record on March 9, 1887 advertised lots on sale for "The Foothill Paradise," called San Antonio Heights. On April 25, put on the market were 198 choice business and residential lots in Ontario, all at 10% off list price if purchased that first day.

On the site of what would later become Upland was the "new" town of Magnolia, with "all the features of a promising town of equal merit with Azusa," as listed in an April 22, 1887 advertisement in the Herald. Magnolia failed within a year or two as too many speculators — and not permanent businessmen or residents — bought land and ultimately defaulted.



The town of Marquette, along the Santa Fe route mostly between what today is Grove and Baker avenues in Rancho Cucamonga, saw a grand auction held there on June 14. Sales were all right but subsequent downturns doomed Marquette, and by the 1890s, there was nothing left of the place.

Another community that crashed and burned was Rochester, north of the Santa Fe tracks along Rochester Avenue in Rancho Cucamonga. Charles W. Smith bought land, created a water company and sold land beginning in 1889. Things were going all right until he was sued. It turned out he didn't own the water rights he promised each property purchaser. About the only traces of what was Rochester are the street of that name and Charles Smith Avenue.

Even with some failures, gross claims and speculation, the boom created by the Santa Fe's arrival in 1887 changed the region forever.

Source: *Joe Blackstock, Inland Valley Daily Bulletin, February 12, 2019*

Who's Who in Historic Ontario

Nathaniel "N.L." Mitchell

Nathaniel Mitchell, known as "N.L.", was an early Ontario pioneer and businessman. Born in Elkhart, Indiana in 1852, he lived in various Midwestern states including Kansas and Iowa before arriving in California in 1890 with his family – wife Jessie Bell Shepard Mitchell (born 1857) and two children: 8 year old Martha Jane (called Marjorie) and 6 year old John Shepard Mitchell. A third child, Ruth, was born in 1894.

Early records indicated N.L. built the first citrus packing house in the area. It was located east of the Southern Pacific Railroad depot. In the 1900 harvest season, he shipped 46,000 pounds of fine quality grapes to Arizona, and in 1903 shipped over half a carload of Valencia oranges.

In May 1902, the Southern California Fertilizer Company was formed to manufacture and sell all kinds of fertilizer. Incorporated with capital stock of \$10,000, the company's 4000 square foot building was located east N.L.'s packing house. N.L. was one of five company directors.

Eight years later, in 1910, Southern California Fertilizer Company was sold to the Braun Chemical Company of Los Angeles – one of six businesses involved in a roll up. The other companies were San Bernardino Fertilizer Works, Redlands Fertilizer Works, Bollinger & Crane Fertilizer Works of Riverside and Braun Chemical Works of Los Angeles. N.L. was retained as the local plant manager with a territory that included Ontario, Upland, Cucamonga, Claremont and San Dimas. A contemporaneous Los Angeles Times news article reported that "the new factory will give steady employment to a goodly number of men." Shortly thereafter, N.L. traveled to Mexico to inspect deposits of guano that had been purchased by the new company, and in March 1911, it was reported that N.L. had erected a "neat house for the storage of fertilizer on a lot a short distance east of the Santa Fe station."

In August of 1909, N.L. purchased a lot at 715 N. Euclid Avenue (near the northwest corner of Euclid and G St.) to build a residence, to be nestled among the orange trees on the lot. The two-story structure was designed by Arthur I. Acker of Los Angeles in the Craftsman style; F.S. Willis was the contractor. The residence was expected to cost \$7500 to build.



(continued on page 8)

Model Colony News

Page 8

2nd Quarter 2020

Who's Who in Historic Ontario (continued from page 7)

The home was built on a concrete foundation with columns on the porch, chimneys of split field stone, and exterior of split cedar shake. The home had seven rooms and a screened sleeping balcony. The living room, dining room, stairway and vestibule were finished in quarter-sawn white oak. A prominent feature of the living room was an 18-foot terra vitrae tile mantel.

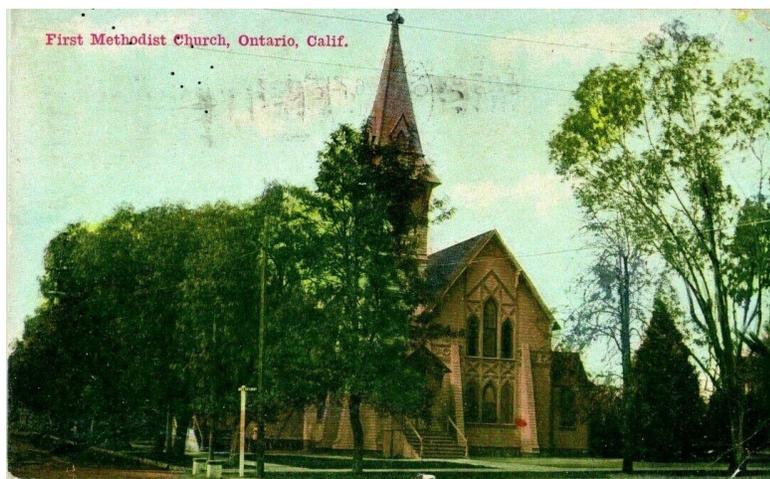
The house included many modern features including an "electric cooking apparatus". The bathroom had a tile floor and vitrolite wainscoting and a separate shower. The home also had a telephone whose number was Pacific 2201.

The Mitchell family lived in the home until 1922 when it was sold to H.I. Ross for \$25,000 – the largest transaction of its kind in Ontario at the time. At the time of sale, the house had nine rooms, three baths and a basement and was said to be one of the most attractive homes in Ontario. The number of bedrooms now totaled four, each with an individual sleeping porch.

The Ross family purchased the home so they could move into town from their ranch on West A Street.

Sadly, the home no longer exists. It was razed in 1963 for construction of the Bank of America building near the strip mall shopping center at G and Euclid.

N.L. was a prominent member of the First Methodist Church of Ontario, including serving as steward. So it was unusual when he failed to attend church services on March 20, 1917 – said to be the first time in 20 years he was not in Sunday service. When friends and fellow church members stopped by the Mitchell residence, they learned that while N.L. was preparing for church, he discovered a flock of chickens in his prize flower garden. In his haste to shoo the chickens out of his yard, he tripped on a root the chickens had unearthed and fractured his left arm. It was discovered later that the errant *chickens* belonged to Rev. Charles H. Scott, pastor of the First Methodist Church.



Postcard of First Methodist Church, Ontario, CA circa 1911

(Continued on page 9)

Who's Who in Historic Ontario (continued from page 8)

Although he was a successful businessman, in January 1919, N.L. was moved to sue 120 city officials, businessmen and ranchers for \$3.09 each for total damages of \$400. All were members of the Farmer's Society of Equity, a recently-formed co-op to market ranch products from the Ontario district. When the co-op failed, N.L. alleged he was "left to hold the sack" and sued to recover his losses.

Having sold his residence on Euclid Avenue in 1922, N.L. immediately made plans to construct a new home on East Princeton Street, in what is now the College Park historic district. The building permit that was issued in November 1922 called for "erection of a seven-room, two-story residence in Princeton Street by day labor at a cost of \$8000". The home, now designated as historic, was completed in 1923. It is in the Mediterranean Revival style.



N.L. Mitchell residence
206 East
Princeton Street
Ontario.
Built in 1923

In 2012, the home received the City of Ontario Model Colony Restoration Award for interior and exterior upgrades to the mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems.



A feature of the N.L. Mitchell residence – a system for delivering milk from the outside into the kitchen.

N.L. owned other property in Ontario – an orange ranch at Campus Avenue and I Street as well as the packing plant on East A Street. In 1926 he was granted permission to remodel the A Street building at an estimated cost of \$1000.

(Continued on page 10)

Who's Who in Historic Ontario (continued from page 9)

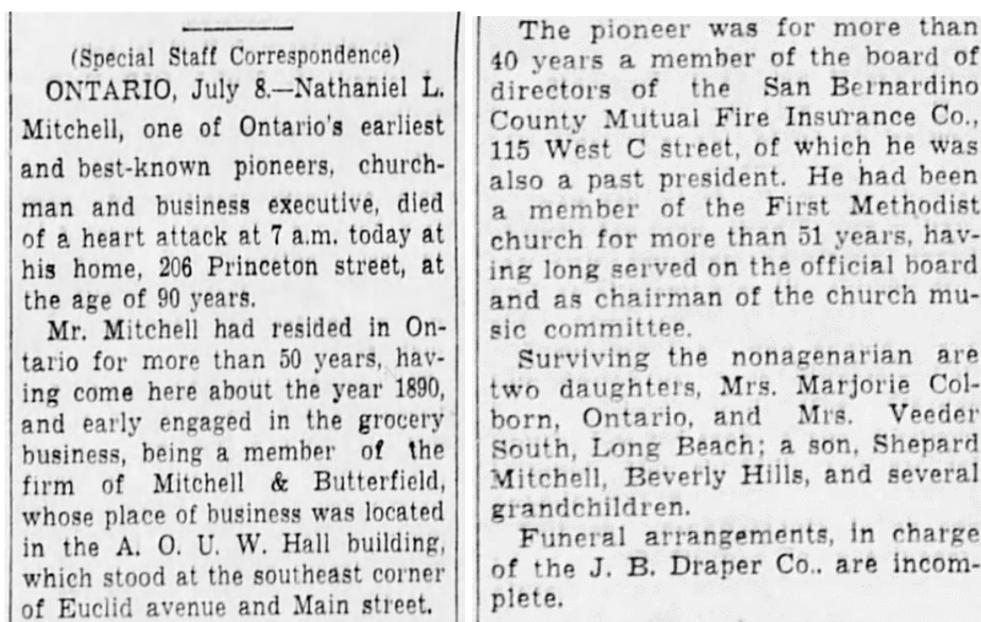
1929 was a tragic year for N.L. In July he became seriously ill and was treated by Dr. Stephen A. Craig, a prominent physician with offices in downtown Ontario. On October 7, his wife Jessie passed away at the age of 72 in their East Princeton Street home. Mrs. Mitchell had been in failing health for a number of years. She was survived by N.L., her two daughters (Mrs. Marjorie Colburn and Mrs. Veeder South) and her son, John Shepard Mitchell. Funeral services were held at Draper Chapel on the corner of Laurel Avenue and C Street.

Continuing his business activities, in January of 1939 N.L. was re-elected as a director of the San Bernardino County Mutual Fire Insurance Company. His long-time friend and business associate Grant McCarthy was elected president of the company.

In May, 1942, N.L. celebrated his 90th birthday a few months late when he hosted a dinner at the First Methodist Church. Grant McCarthy, a member of the church, recalled when he and N.L. lived in the farming section of Iowa, not far from the The Little Church in the Wildwood, made famous by a song composed by Dr. William S. Pitts in 1857 following a coach ride that stopped in Bradford, Iowa. The song is about a church in a valley near the town, though the church was not built until several years later.

N.L. Mitchell died July 8, 1942 at his home at 206 East Princeton Street. J.B. Draper Company was in charge of funeral arrangements; N.L. is buried at Bellevue Memorial Park in Ontario.

Sources: San Bernardino County Sun, Los Angeles Evening Express, Pomona Progress Bulletin and Los Angeles Times historical archives; City of Ontario Planning Department – Historic Preservation Program.



Obituary of N. L. Mitchell, [The San Bernardino County Sun](#)

[San Bernardino, California](#)

09 Jul 1942, Thu • Page 12

Model Colony News

Page 11

2nd Quarter 2020

Restoration Information



RESTORED WITH BRETT WATERMAN Airing on DIY Network/Magnolia Network

**DO YOU OWN A HISTORIC HOME THAT YOU FEEL HAS
HIDDEN POTENTIAL DESPITE ITS BAD RENOVATIONS AND UGLY ADDITIONS?**

RESTORED WITH BRETT WATERMAN CAN HELP!!

Brett will work with homeowners who would like to "undo" earlier remodels, make their home more functional and restore, enhance, and reintroduce the original style and beauty.

Seeking people who own architecturally significant homes in the following areas: La Verne, Claremont, Upland, Pomona, Ontario, Rancho Cucamonga, Fontana, Redlands, Riverside, and surrounding areas

We are looking for the following:

- *Homeowners who own architecturally significant homes (Federal, Georgian, Art Deco, Tudor, Mission, Storybook, Mid-Century Modern, Craftsman, Victorian, Spanish Colonial, and others)*
- *Homes must need restoration. Restoring your kitchen is an absolute criterion.*
- *Must have a minimum budget of 80K. Ideally 100K plus (be able to show proof of funds)*
- *Be willing to relocate for 6-8wks during the restoration (The show does not reimburse for accommodations)*
- *Families willing to be on camera*
- *Must be available and flexible schedule-wise from July 2020-Winter 2020. Casting is happening quickly!*

TO APPLY: Please send an email to Casting@essential.media with RESTORED & LOCATION IN SUBJECT. Please include your name, address, phone number, and type of home you have. Also include a photo of yourselves, an exterior house photo, and photos of the rooms you would like to be restored along with your budget amount. Only eligible candidates will be contacted.

Model Colony News

Page 12

2nd Quarter 2020

Board Members

Board Members

Petrina Delman, President

Dave Coote, Vice President

Randi Campbell, Treasurer

Charlene Wissing, Secretary

Gloria Jones, Membership Chair

Devela Bemowski, Historian

Joe Caskey

Rita Nelsen

Margot Cardona

Wendy Roldan

Ex-Officio Member

Diane Ayala, Ontario Planning Department

City Council Liaison

Debra Porada



Model Colony News

Page 13

2nd Quarter 2020

2020 Ontario Heritage Membership

We are an all volunteer local non-profit organization and we need you! Is the ongoing process of preserving our historic downtown important to you? Or learning about the rich history of the Model Colony? Our Mission Statement is "Preserving, Protecting and Promoting Our Model Colony" not only for us but for our future generations. Having historic home tours, annual historic cemetery tours, being present at local events are all part of pursuing our mission and making the public more aware of our purpose. It's an important goal but who says we can't have fun pursuing it!

If you are already a member of Ontario Heritage, we sincerely thank you! If you're not yet a member, please consider joining us on this journey. Not only will you become more aware and knowledgeable of Ontario's past history, you will be inspired to walk with us as we go forward in "Preserving, Protecting and Promoting Our Model Colony."

Benefits of Membership:

1. Participation in Ontario Heritage events such as Home Tours, Annual Historic Cemetery Tours, potlucks, local community events, historic and educational programs.
2. Discounts to events
3. E-mail Newsletters
4. Advocacy for preservation of our historical environment and cultural heritage.
5. Access to information concerning restoration and renovation.
6. The knowledge that you are part of the effort to protect, preserve and promote the Model Colony



Ontario Heritage Membership Form (December 31, 2019 to December 31, 2020)

*Name: _____

*Address: _____

*City: _____ State: _____

*Zip Code: _____

*Phone: _____

*Mobile Phone: _____

*E-Mail: _____

* Required Information

Membership Categories (For the 2020 Calendar Year)

- | | |
|---|----------|
| <input type="radio"/> Individual | \$25.00 |
| <input type="radio"/> Senior (62 years) | \$15.00 |
| <input type="radio"/> Family | \$40.00 |
| <input type="radio"/> Family-Senior | \$30.00 |
| <input type="radio"/> Corporate | \$250.00 |
| <input type="radio"/> Benefactor | \$250.00 |

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

I am interested in:

- E-mail Alert Network
- Volunteering at Events
- Other (specify) _____

Mail with Your Check Payable To: Ontario Heritage

P.O.Box 1, Ontario, CA 91762

or sign up at: ontarioheritage.org

In an effort to keep dues low, most communication will be via email, so providing us your email address is vital.