

Ontario & Pomona

Once rural citrus-growing areas, Ontario and Pomona have seen many waves of immigrants from around the world as they grew into densely populated suburbs of metropolitan Los Angeles.

Semi-nomadic Tongva Serrano Indians foraged and hunted in these lands, as evidenced by the remains of a Serrano village found nearby. Both Pomona and Ontario were settled by Spanish missionaries in the 1830's, with Anglo-Americans arriving in the 1860's. When California lands were moved from the control of the Catholic Church into private ownership, land owners increased the use of irrigation and promoted settlement to the area.

Entrepreneurs in Ontario built a decorative fountain by the train tracks to show that water was plentiful for agriculture, but to save water it was only operated when a train was passing. Ontario was dry in other ways – this so-called “Model Colony,” which offered both agricultural resources and the comforts of urban schools and churches, forbade the sale and consumption of alcohol. Many easterners with lung diseases were drawn to the low-humidity climate by promises of a healthy environment.

The promoters were quite successful, particularly after the railroad went through in the 1880's. The population grew dramatically, with waves of immigrants joining the early Mexican and Spanish settlers...from Germany, Switzerland, and other European countries, followed by Filipino and Japanese farmers. Early farmers planted lemon and orange groves in the rocky soil, and soon grape vines, olive groves and dairy farms were added. Today Pomona has a population of nearly 160,000 and Ontario is home to over 170,000.

The train stops in both Ontario and Pomona. There is still plenty of evidence of agriculture, including Ontario's Sunkist plant and a historic cannery which has been made into a museum. Ontario is also well known for a large entertainment and outlet mall complex called Ontario Mills, and the Indoor American Wilderness and Aquarium.

Pomona hosts the Los Angeles County Fairgrounds, a botanic garden, and numerous historic buildings.

Source(s):

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pomona,_California

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ontario,_CA

<http://www.city-data.com/city/Ontario-California.html>

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