

# Fun Facts



**BELLEVUE  
MEMORIAL PARK**  
ONTARIO CEMETERY ASSOCIATION

## The Chaffey Family

Under the shade of majestic Deodar Cedars, Oaks and Magnolia trees in one of the older sections of Bellevue Memorial Park, a bit of Ontario's history comes to life through nine members of the Chaffey family who rest here. The most well recognized of the Chaffey's to our City of Ontario, are George Chaffey, who along with his brother William, founded Etiwanda and Ontario in 1882. Born January 28, 1848, in Brockville, Canada, George (Jr.) came to Southern California to join his family who had emigrated here and worked for his uncle Elswood Chaffey in the insurance business. George was a licensed engineer and designed his own ships, one of which was pictured on the cover of Scientific American, named the "Geneva," and recognized for its speed and shallow draft.



**George Chaffey**

The Chaffey's were described as honest men who had great foresight, and businessmen who held beauty and the artistic in as great esteem as they did money. With his brothers William Benjamin and Charles, George developed the concept of a mutual water company, a new system of allocating water to agricultural lands, which led to the founding of the towns of Etiwanda and Ontario, and the development of the citrus industry. In 1882 they purchased 560 acres of land in Etiwanda from Capt. Joseph Garcia, which included his home and Garcia's interest in the water rights of Day Canyon and the Creek to the East. They also purchased 640 acres from the Southern Pacific Railroad which they had surveyed and mapped. The brothers then contracted with Mr. N. W. Stowell to install the miles of concrete pipe which was manufactured in his pipe yard. In March of 1882, George and William created the firm of Chaffey Brothers Ltd. whose principal place of business was Etiwanda. The Chaffey's organized and incorporated The Etiwanda Water Company in 1882, and later that year purchased a large tract of land that became known as Ontario and Upland. This land was surveyed and mapped by the same Mr. Stowell, and the San Antonio Water Company and a school were formed.

The City of Etiwanda was named after an Algonquin Indian chief who was an old family friend, and the City of Ontario was named after the Chaffey's Canadian home province. In Etiwanda, George Chaffey became the first person west of the Rocky Mountains to design and install a hydroelectric power system to generate electricity that lit two towering 3,000-candlepower arc lights on his property. Located in what is now Rancho Cucamonga, the Chaffey-Garcia House (Etiwanda), was the first in Southern California to use Edison's electric incandescent lamps. Chaffey also installed the world's first long-distance telephone line. In Ontario, Chaffey integrated his four key principles: wide scale

irrigation of the land, construction of one main thoroughfare (Euclid Avenue), establishment of an agricultural college, and prohibition of liquor sales.

In speaking of the long lineage of the Chaffey family, James Neill Northe wrote, “The family had consistently remained apart from all religious and political struggles, and while there were one or two exceptions, most of them were noted for their adherence to things practical, although in the long family line there is shown no Chaffey who was ever known as a courier of favors or interested in petty intrigue; no Chaffey lived but gave to his country, without stooping to grasp for himself; the family were honest citizens, devoted to their native land and welded together in an allegiance second to none for king and country.”



George and William Chaffey were most successful in their promotion and sales for the next several years as a land boom was flourishing in California. William was especially interested and involved in the fruit growing industry, which was to become his life-long career. When Alfred Deacon, Victoria’s Minister for Water Supply, (later to become Prime Minister of Australia), came to California, he inspired William to look at the potential for developing irrigation colonies along the Murray River in Australia. In 1887 William brought his family from Riverside, California to Australia where they settled in Mildura. George and his family were

already there, along with other family relatives. George and William formed another partnership in Mildura known as Chaffey Brothers Ltd., and William built a magnificent mansion on the river which he named Rio Vista. Today Rio Vista is a museum and part of the Mildura Arts Center Complex. William has been credited with planting the divider strips both here on Euclid Avenue, and in Mildura, with Pepper Trees that are still in existence today. William had taken Pepper Tree seeds with him when he moved to Mildura and created the same divider on Deacon Avenue. The trees were not as successful there, but two of his original Pepper Trees are still preserved as landmarks in nearby Renmark, South Australia.

After 12 years in Australia, George was persuaded by a colleague to return to America to join him in a business venture when the Chaffey Brothers Ltd. fell into bankruptcy. One of the most notable projects George completed was a complex irrigation system which brought water from the Colorado River to the Imperial Valley in California, garnering him well-earned wealth and respect. George worked with his son, Andrew, a banker, who oversaw their financial dealings and spent much of the rest of his life in the banking business and water development in Southern California. His brother William reconciled to stay in Australia, and although he was tempted in 1898 to return to America, he changed his mind after many friends wrote to him expressing their deep regard and respect for him, and convinced him to stay. William stayed on in Mildura and devoted his talents to the welfare of the community, becoming Mayor of Mildura, founder of the Mildura Winery (today known as Beringer-Blass), and the founder of the Australian Dried Fruits Association which he pioneered. To his friends and family William was affectionately known as “The Boss.” He died in Mildura, Australia on June 5, 1926 at the age of 69.

George Chaffey died on March 4, 1932 at the age of 84 in San Diego, California, and is interred here at Bellevue Memorial Park. The following are the names and dates of all nine of the Chaffey family members who are interred at Bellevue Memorial Park in the “N” Section.

**George Chaffey (1848 – 1932)**

**Andrew Taylor McCord Chaffey (1874 – 1941) & Maud Taylor MaCalister Chaffey (1878 – 1951) Husband and Wife.**

**Andrew being one of the sons of George and Annette Augusta Taylor McCord Chaffey**



**John Burton Chaffey (1883 – 1940)**  
**Another son of George and Annette Augusta Taylor McCord Chaffey**

**Benjamin Chaffey (1909 – 1985) & Freda Harvey Chaffey (1907 – 1973)**

**Husband and Wife.**

**Benjamin being the son of John Burton Chaffey**

**Moira Elswood Chaffey (1888 – 1975)**

**Olga Elswood Chaffey (1882 – 1965)**

**Sheila Elswood Chaffey (1886 – 1974)**

**Three daughters of Elswood Chaffey and Elizabeth Campbell Boswell Chaffey**