

Chapman House and Ranch

Chapman Park

1903; destroyed in 1960

Victorian

Status: Local Landmark



Chapman Park, dedicated by the Chapman family to the City of Fullerton in 1955, is the only reminder of the once famous and impressive Chapman Ranch complex that was situated in this part of the town. It was the home of Charles C. Chapman, Fullerton's first mayor in 1904, and a persuasive force in the area's history. In the early 1900s the Chapman house (pictured), which was situated at the northeast corner of what is now Commonwealth Avenue and State College Boulevard, became the center of business and social activities. As one of the largest residences in the county, and it was often used as a public meeting auditorium, ballroom, and roller skating center. Unfortunately, the house was destroyed by fire in 1960.

The ranch property, consisting of nearly 500 acres in its prime, contained both walnut groves and America's oldest Valencia orange trees. Mr. Chapman developed new techniques for grading and marketing this particular variety of orange, and by the 1920s Charles Chapman was widely known as "the father of the Valencia orange industry."

The Chapman family was the moving force in some of the major development activities of the time. The Chapman Building, the California Hotel (Villa del Sol), and the Alician Court Theatre (Fox Theatre) are three landmark properties in Fullerton attributed to the efforts of the Chapman family. In the city of Orange, he founded the educational institution that became Chapman College.

Located at the northeast corner of the park, a bronze plaque commemorates the Chapman house and ranch as well as the historic first shipment of Valencia oranges to the East Coast.