



# Old Orange County Courthouse

OFFICE HOURS: MON. – FRI. 8:00 A.M. – 4:30 P.M. | TOUR RESERVATIONS: 714-973-6607

211 W. Santa Ana Blvd.  
Santa Ana, CA 92701  
714-973-6605 or  
714-973-6607

HISTORIC  
PARK

*Located in the heart of Santa Ana, the Old Orange County Courthouse stood witness to the local governmental activities and court proceedings that shaped the early history of Orange County. A California State Historic Landmark and listed on the National Register of Historic Places, this 30,000 square-foot granite and red sandstone building was completely restored in 1992 and celebrated its centennial in 2001.*

## A COURTHOUSE FOR A NEW COUNTY.

In 1893, the newly created County of Orange purchased land from William Spurgeon, the founder of Santa Ana, for the express purpose of building a permanent courthouse.

However, the first building constructed on the property in 1897 was not a courthouse, but the county jail. Not until 1900 did the County Board of Supervisors commission the design of a courthouse. Los Angeles architect Charles Strange's attractive design was remarkably similar to that of a county courthouse in Iowa, a point not lost on the early residents of Orange County, many of whom had immigrated from the Midwest. The new courthouse was the most impressive building in early 20th century Orange County.



## THE VERDICT IS IN.

The Old Orange County Courthouse has been the scene of several important and far-reaching court cases. In *People vs. Termo Corporation* (1933), the court ruled that the State of California was entitled to royalties for easements for off-shore oil drilling. During one of the most publicized trials of its era, *People of California vs. Gollum and Overell* (1947), hundreds of people flocked to the Old Courthouse for a glimpse of the young sweethearts and murder defendants. Though the six-month trial, the longest criminal trial in American history, resulted in acquittal, it led to new regulations for the sale and purchase of explosives (dynamite had been used to blow up the yacht of the victims).

## THE COURTS LEAVE THE OLD COURTHOUSE.

In 1969, the courts left the Old Orange County Courthouse for a new and larger building nearby on Civic Center Drive in Santa Ana. Soon, the Old Orange County Courthouse was recognized for its historical significance, and was designated a California State Historic Landmark and placed on the National Register of Historic Places. In 1983, restoration of the building began, and was completed in 1992. The building celebrated its centennial in 2001, and in its current capacity of OC history caretaker, home to traveling exhibitions and place of historical interest, the Old Orange County Courthouse continues to serve the people of Orange County.



## BEAUTY ALL DAY.

Stop by on your lunch hour, and be inspired for the rest of the day. Around noon, the overhead sun pours through the skylight and lights up the grand staircase, making it glow.

## THIS COURTROOM MAY LOOK FAMILIAR.

The Historic Courtroom's rich woods, ornate judge's bench, period chandeliers, and high ornamented ceiling have made it the perfect Hollywood set for many movies and TV shows. In 1915, the courthouse was used for the silent film *The Flying Torpedo*, supervised by D. W. Griffith. Over the years, movies shot in part at this building have included *Compulsion* (Orson Welles), *Norma Rae* (Sally Field), *Gideon's Trumpet* (Henry Fonda), *Frances* (Jessica Lange), *Catch Me If You Can* (Tom Hanks) and *Legally Blonde* (Reese Witherspoon).

## BRING THE WHOLE CLASS.

The Old Orange County Courthouse is a fun place for a class field trip, and brings the judicial system to life. Children can see the oldest courtroom in Southern California.



## TIE THE KNOT HERE.

You can get your marriage license at The Old Orange County Courthouse, and you can have your wedding ceremony here, too.



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Walk-ins welcome during business hours. Call 714-973-6605 to schedule a tour. Admission to the Old Courthouse Museum is free. For wedding ceremonies, please contact 714-834-2500.

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866-OC PARKS | oldcourthouse@ocparks.com | www.ocparks.com/oldcourthouse

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