

# Smoke Signal

CHATSWORTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
10385 Shadow Oak Drive, Chatsworth, CA 91311  
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Co-Presidents: Linda & André van der Valk

September 2015, Issue #4

Editor: Ann Vincent

## Co-Presidents' Message

By Linda & André van der Valk

Summer is almost gone and we are looking forward to Pioneer Day. Ann Vincent and her committee have been busy getting things ready. Linda Dunham and Donna Nachtrab are working on publicity and the Chores of Yore. Last year they worked on a Pioneer Challenge for the kids and it was a big success so it is coming back this year.

We are having our Chili Cook-Off sponsored by The Munch Box. If you have a great chili recipe come and join in the fun. There are 1st, 2nd and 3rd place prizes which consist of a trophy, ribbon and cash prize for 1st place. 2nd and 3rd places receive a ribbon and cash prizes. Just contact us at the acre and we will send you out an application.

Chatsworth Historical Society  
**Pioneer Day**  
**Chili Cook-off**



- Chili Samples 50¢ each
- Judging starts at 11:00 am
- Chili available until it runs out
- Prizes awarded at 1:00 pm

The contract has been signed for remediation of the park and work will begin in October. We are not sure how long it will take. However, the road to the Acre will be open and at some point we may lose our parking while they work on remediation of the parking area.

I wanted to provide the membership an update on some of our life long members. Ruth Grant, whose mother used to teach at Chatsworth Park Elementary, had a heart attack and is now home. Betty Summers, our cottage curator, had a pacemaker inserted and Connie Ager one of our active docents is having cataract surgery. We send hopes of a speedy recovery.

See you at Pioneer Day  
Linda and André

Chatsworth Historical Society  
Board of Directors 2015-2016

Co-Presidents .....	Linda & André van der Valk
Programs .....	Linda Dunham
Membership.....	Keith Watts
Treasurer.....	Jim Van Gundy
Recording Secretary.....	Donna Nachtrab
Smoke Signal Editor.....	Ann Vincent
Museum Curator.....	Virginia Watson
Cottage Curator.....	Betty Summers
Research Director.....	Ray Vincent
Hospitality.....	Jelena Csanyi
Garden Director.....	Annette Campbell
Director-at-Large.....	Beverly King
Director-at-Large.....	Connie Ager
Honorary Member.....	Bea Berman
Honorary Member.....	Elaine Campbell

## Upcoming Events

### General Meeting

**Tuesday, Sept 15, 2015 7pm**

### Chumash Program for the State Park

Presented by State Historic Park volunteers, come learn about the Chumash Educational Materials used for interpretive hikes at the Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park.

### PIONEER DAY

**Sunday, Oct 4, 2015 11-3pm**

This is our big fundraiser, and we need your support to help our volunteers maintain the Acre and museum for the future! Mark your calendar and plan to be there.

### General Meeting

**Tuesday, Oct 20, 2015 7pm**

### Western Child Star – Robert Winckler

Presented by his son, Bill Winckler, who will share his father's stories of growing up as a child star.

### Wednesday Morning Docent Workshops

Docents meet on Wednesday mornings from 9-noon to work on museum and garden projects.

**Please Note:** Our Membership Roundup has been moved to the month of June, no longer September...

**25th Annual  
Chatsworth Historical Society**

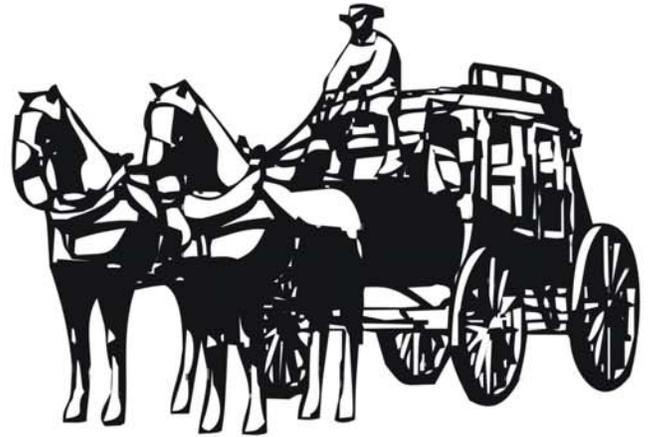
# Pioneer Day

Sunday, Oct. 4, 2015

11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Bring your children  
& grandchildren

Take the  
Pioneer  
Challenge



## **Old-time fun for everyone!**

- CHILI COOK-OFF
- Vendors
- Bake Sale
- Woodcarvers
- Blacksmith
- Leather Crafts
- Panning for Gold
- Spinning Wheel Demo
- Veteran Quilt Display
- Design a Quilt Craft
- Rock Chippers
- Bee Keeping
- Indian Artifacts
- Telegraph Station
- Chores and  
Games of Yore



### Chatsworth Museum Exhibits

Featuring  
Our Equestrian Heritage  
along with Chatsworth Pioneer Families

### Tour Minnie's 1911 Cottage

Location: Homestead Acre,  
Chatsworth Park South  
(West end of Devonshire St.)  
10385 Shadow Oak Drive, Chatsworth, CA

Information: (818) 882-5614  
chatsworthhistory@gmail.com  
www.historicalsocieties.net

Donation: Adults: \$5,  
Children ages 6-12: \$1  
(Free for kids under 5)

Park your car at the Chatsworth Train Depot (10038 Old Depot Plaza Road)  
and use our free shuttle service, every 15 minutes from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

## Docent Doings During the Summer:

### DIGITAL ARCHIVES UPDATES

We added all 398 Newsletters to our Digital Archives at [chatsworthhistory.com](http://chatsworthhistory.com) Go to Publications, Smoke Signals to view them. The newsletters were scanned by volunteers during the past two years, and bring back lots of memories. It tracks our entire 50+ year history, please visit the site. We have also added all of the Grapevine newspapers that we have located. Again, if you have any old publications that we may not have, please contact us, thanks!

### HUELL HOWSER CHATSWORTH VIDEOS ARE NOW ONLINE

KCETOnline has published our Huell Howser episodes on YouTube, click on the links below...

Munch Box

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wu\\_iNMzv9UE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wu_iNMzv9UE)

Chatsworth

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dy7QQrheaTk>

### 5 MINUTE VIDEO OF SSPSHP ON YOUTUBE

Click on the link below for an amazing drone flyover of the Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xigLCOXkd-Q>

### MONTERIA ESTATES IS EXPANDING

If you haven't driven up Corbin to Rinaldi, notice on the left the 40 acre parcel that is being developed. That was once a ranch owned by Lorne Greene.

### SPECIAL OLYMPICS PROGRAM

On July 23 we shared the history of Chatsworth with visiting Special Olympics athletes and their staff at the Church of Latter day Saints in Chatsworth on Oakdale. Following an "All American" Luncheon, hosted by the church, complete with fried chicken, potato salad and the works....the athletes were treated to American Rock and Roll music which had them all dancing in the aisles. After the event they had the opportunity to learn the history of the area where Jelena was on hand to meet and greet.

## HONORARY MAYORS OF CHATSWORTH

Past Honorary Mayor

Warren Berlinger (remember Disney's Kilroy?) recently contacted us. He asked if we had a listing of all the Honorary Mayors and Sheriffs, because he served as both. We told him that we did not have a list, so we have embarked on this project.



Warren Berlinger,  
Shown as star of Disney  
series Kilroy in 1965

We challenged the research team on West Valley Then and Now Facebook Team to help with the research, and it continues, and could develop into a future presentation. Some of the individuals identified include Marian (Mae) Marsh 1939, Victor Borge 40's, Lionel Barrymore early 50's, Roy and Dale Rogers 50s to mid 60's. Followed by Dale Robertson, Warren Berlinger and Chatsworth High school principal Dr. Gjerturd Smith. In the 70's retired Police Chief Ed Davis became our Honorary Mayor while Warren Berlinger served as Sheriff. Chad Everett also served as Honorary Sheriff during that time.

Johnny Mann served in the 80's as Mayor and then we need to fill in the blanks to our current Honorary Mayor Chris Burroughs.

Please jump in if you can help us document the participants, send an email to [chatsworthhistory@gmail.com](mailto:chatsworthhistory@gmail.com) with any information you have. Thanks for your help!

### SUMMER ADVENTURES - July 18

We had an unusual request this summer for a tour of 150 men on a 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Humbug Hike through the San Fernando Valley. Their stops included a campout at Sage Ranch, and visits to the Chatsworth Historical Society, Los Encinos State Park, the Andres Pico Adobe, Leonis Adobe, Plummer House, Mission San Fernando and more. Three giant luxury buses pulled up and we gave them an introduction to Chatsworth over a bullhorn. Lots of fun, and everyone enjoyed the outing! Jelena Csanyi and Bob Dager helped with the event and answered many questions....

Ann

**FRED GRAVES – CONSTABLE**  
**(Recollections from the early days in Los Angeles and Ventura Counties)**



Fred and Emma Graves – 50<sup>th</sup>  
Wedding Anniversary

*The following recorded stories by Fred Graves have been passed down by Graves family member Joel Curtis Graves.....please enjoy*

Cap Fredericks, the District Attorney, had told me never to serve anything in a civil case without collecting the money but I knew the judge at Calabasas said he had \$250 up from the man who was suing Mrs. Bowers. “Afore I could get to Calabasas to collect, I ran up a \$200 board bill for the sixty days I had the heifers with George Lewis.

When I went to the judge he didn’t give me any money and the old lady she won the suit and I was out \$200 for my experience in Calabasas serving papers for the constable and his superior and they’ve never found him or his carcass up to this time.

**I. “Never Found Him or His Carcass”**

I was elected constable here in Chatsworth, Los Angeles County in '98, the first year we had a judge and constable out here. I was elected three terms. 1910 was the last time I served. I give up the last part of it on account of my mother. My mother died a few weeks afterwards and I told her that I’d give it up. She was always scared I was going to get shot or something. I give it up and turned it over to a friend of mine, Johnny Pilcher.

Daley Nash was constable at Calabasas and disappeared. Somebody had murdered him so far as we knew. I had to go to serve the papers over there for his district while I was constable here, and I had to serve some papers on Mrs. Bowers on the west side of the Malibu country. I sent my deputy over the day before and she ran him off with a shotgun so I went back the next day. I met her coming down the road with some cattle, her and a Mexican boy, and she wanted to know where I was going. I told her I was going up to Mrs. Bowers. She says, “Are you an officer?” I says, “I might be and I might not be”. She says, “If you are, you turn around and go back.” “No”, I says, “I heard that you was the best cook in these mountains over here and I come over to eat dinner with you.” All this time she had the gun pointed at me. Finally she says, “Go on up to the house. Put your horses in the barn. I’ll be back in about a half hour’.

So I went up and unhitched and fed the horses. I really had a good dinner. The old lady had hot biscuits and gravy and all the fixin’s to go with it. Then I told her I had some papers I wanted to serve, for a couple or three or four hogs and a half a dozen goats and a couple of heifers. “Come out here”, she says, “I’ll show you the goats.....You see the top of that mountain up there about a mile away? You see all them white goats up there?” “Yes”, I answered. “Well”, she says, “Go get ‘em.” And she says, “Here’s about half a dozen hog carcasses layin’ around here in the yard. Them’s the hogs.” She finally told the Mexican boy to go bring in the heifers. We went and brought ‘em in and I boarded ‘em with George Lewis.

**II. “Trouble at Calabasas”**

I know the Leonis people in Calabasas in 1894 when I first come here and I know’d ‘em up to the time of their death and they caused less trouble than anybody in this whole country. They had an adobe and fifty or sixty acres of ground and some cattle and horses and so far as I know, that’s all they ever had and they were very peaceful, caused no trouble to anybody.

There was nobody in particular around here that was a lawbreaker. The S.P. Company took every odd section of ground for twenty miles on each side when they come into Southern California with the railroad. A man would file on a homestead he thought was an even section and he put his house and barn and all improvements on it and farmed the ground. When it was surveyed he found he was on a piece of the S.P. ground. Just by Uncle Sam surveying it in 1896 it made a friction and a bad feeling among all the people. There was very few of them had their buildings on the ground they should have, and it made a kind of community feud the way I could size it up, and there was some people killed over it but there was none of ‘em that was really “outlaws”. There was nobody to blame as I could see.

The S.P. never done nothing, they didn’t. They just sit tight and if you was on their piece of ground, then you gotta pay them so much and if you wasn’t, they never interfered, or seemed to, in any way.

An old soldier come there one time and filed on a homestead. Some of them living around there said, “He has no business here. We’ll get rid of him”. They had a little meeting between a few of them, about a dozen. They went down there and waited on him one morning. When he got up and went down to the spring to get water, they shot him and killed him. There was never nothing done about it. Some of them was arrested but they didn’t get the right guy so it just died a natural death.

**Excerpt from the August 29, 1957 Grapevine regarding Fred Graves:** *In the “old days” when Chatsworth was not a part of L.A., Fred Graves (husband of Emma Johnson Graves) served as Constable and also Deputy Sheriff – this was when Chatsworth also had its own jail, by golly! And he was County Fire Warden in charge of the Lookout on Oat Mountain. He and Lovell Hill were the joint owners of one of the first grocery stores here. He did farming on the side and when the store closed he raised cattle on the Jaughin Ranch north of Chatsworth in Browns Canyon. In the days when we had a little county school-house Fred was on the School Board, and before the streets were dressed up with this top modern look, he was the Road Foreman, looking after the dirt roads.*



ca. 1902 – View of a man leaning against the Jail House. A corner of the Leonis Adobe can be seen between the “hangmans” tree and the jail. The Calabasas jail house was built in 1869 and was moved to Chatsworth in 1902. In 1910 the jail house was torn down in Chatsworth. (Photo courtesy of the Calabasas Historical Society)



The photo on the left is the well known photo of the Graves Hill General Merchandise store. The photo below shows Fred Graves standing on the front steps. Notice the sandstone foundation under the porch.



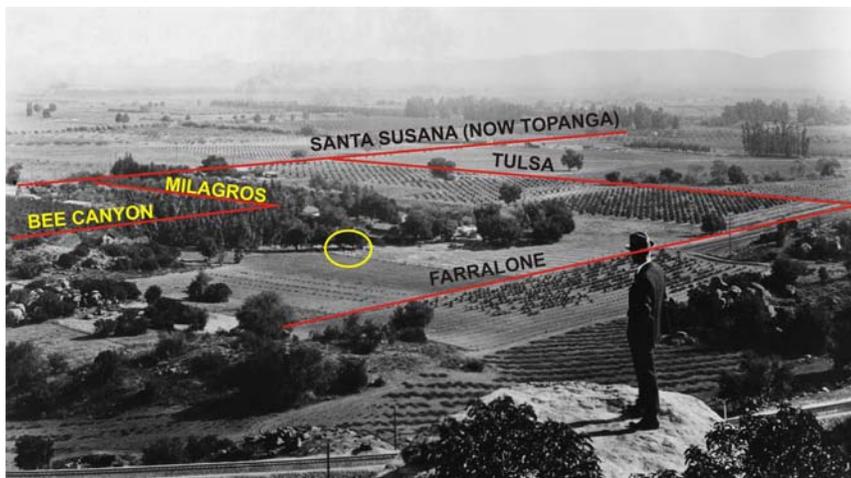
## The History of Bee Canyon

If you haven't noticed, the 15 new homes on the west side of Topanga between Tulsa and Old Santa Susana Pass Road (Stoney Point Estates) are almost complete. That development includes a road that runs west of and parallel to Old Santa Susana Pass Road, **Bee Canyon**. We give credit to whoever recorded that name at City Planning, because there is historical significance to it, dating back to one of the first families of Chatsworth, the Johnsons.

In 1899, Charles Johnson, son of pioneers Ann and Neils Johnson, bought an eight acre ranch on Santa Susana Pass Road for \$25 an acre. In 1907 he incorporated the California Honey Company which he subsequently sold to his sons Harold and Kelly (Keefer-1934). Charles was known as the Honey King, and produced as much as eighty tons of honey in one year. As the family grew, parcels were subdivided in 2 acre lots and sold to family members, and a dirt easement road was created extending the driveway of Charles' main house up the road (today's Bee Canyon Road). His sons Harold and Kelly Johnson continued to run the business through the depression, but at that time it was not as profitable. Katherine Johnson, wife of Kelly Johnson, lived officially on Santa Susana Pass Road, but to get to her house you took the family driveway west towards Charles' home from Santa Susana Pass and then turned north (Bee Canyon Rd) to get to her home to take piano lessons. (As a side-note, the Chatsworth Historical Society was founded at Katherine's house at her kitchen table in 1963).

Below is a story by Lila Schepler about her experiences working with Charles Johnson: *"In 1934 or 35 I worked as extra help for C.W. Johnson who owned the Bee Villa Ranch, in fact he had the largest Bee and Honey business in Los Angeles beginning in the 1880's. He let me drive his Model "T" truck, and I had to learn to drive all over again because it had no gear shift. Well, my job was to "smoke" the bees with a blower while he checked the frames for the amount of honey on them. I was prepared, I wore a bee hat with a wide brim from which wire screening hung—and from which, in turn, thin canvas hung. This canvas was tucked into the neck of my sweater and securely pinned. I wore a sweater over a long sleeved shirt because it made it harder to sting through. The sweater was tucked into slacks and secured with a belt, the cuffs were secured with heavy rubber bands. The slacks were tucked into hiking boots. Well, all that was left to sting were my hands. And they did! I seldom came home with fewer than 13-15 stings. Even so, my hands were not badly swollen. How did "Grandpa" Johnson dress? Very casually, usually a bee hat and if he was stung (which was seldom) he took his finger and carefully pushed the bee's stinger out so it wouldn't lose the stinger and die. That impressed me alright."*

In a letter written by Harold Johnson in October 1940, Harold was still running the bee business but it was not supporting them. The price of honey at the time had dropped and was only selling for 5 cents a pound. At that time they were producing 9 tons of honey per year. Kelly Johnson had taken a job with Vargas. Harold also worked doing paint and repair work to supplement his income. Harold was said to have fields of flowers for the bees to pollinate, that he cut and sold at the local stands for many years.



This iconic photo, taken from Garden of the Gods in the 1920s, shows the northwest corner of Chatsworth

The family and future owners continued to have bees on the property pollinating their orchards until about 1970.



Thanks to digital zoom...we can see the Bee Hive Boxes in the photo on the left.

Chatsworth Historical Society

Virginia Watson Museum & Gift Shop

The following items are available for sale at our Gift Shop. To arrange to purchase items other than the first Sunday of the month, email chatsworthhistory@gmail.com to make arrangements for shipping if necessary.

Table with 2 columns: Item Name and Price. Items include 'CHATSWORTH HISTORY by Virginia Watson' for \$10.00, 'CHATSWORTH PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL The First 100 Years by Ioline Cleveland' for \$10.00, 'WINDOW INTO THE PAST by William Schepler' for \$10.00, 'QUIET ON THE SET by Robert Sherman' for \$25.00, and 'OUR PIONEER MOTHER As told to Lenora Johnson MacDonald' for \$10.00.

Can we Email our newsletter to you?

In an effort to reduce costs, save paper, and provide you with a color copy, we now email newsletters to those of you that have given us an email address. However, we also continue to send you a snail-mail copy until you advise us not to. Please email us at chatsworthhistory@gmail.com to stop future newsletter mailings and save us some money. And also please email us to provide your email address. Thanks!

Please use the form below to renew your Membership. And if your neighbor is not a member yet, pass this newsletter on to them and invite them to join.

Wondering if your Dues are Due?

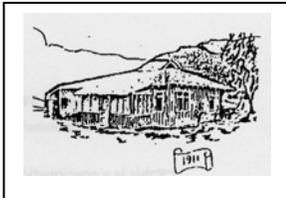
For those receiving email only newsletters, we will advise you by email when your dues are due. With a life membership there is no code on your address label. If there is a code on your address label, then this is what it means:

- The first digit represents membership type, 1 – individual and 2 – family/organization.
• The next two digits represent the month that you last paid your dues.
• The last two digits represent the year that you last paid your dues.
• If the month and year on your address label is over one year old, then your dues are due!



CHATSWORTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Membership Form



Your membership helps support our Homestead Acre and the educational and historical programs we provide for our community. Members receive our quarterly newsletters, and receive invitation reminders regarding our monthly programs and annual events – Rose Pruning, the Garden Festival, Membership Roundup, and Pioneer Day. Please mail this form with your annual membership dues and/or contribution made payable to:

Chatsworth Historical Society, 10385 Shadow Oak Drive, Chatsworth, CA 91311
chatsworthhistory@gmail.com 818-882-5614 www.historicalsocieties.net

- Yearly: [ ] New Member [ ] Individual \$15.00 [ ] Renewal [ ] Family \$20.00 [ ] Organization \$20.00
Life Membership: [ ] \$ 125.00

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

STREET ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY / STATE / ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Special Interest / Expertise: \_\_\_\_\_