

# Smoke Signal

**CHATSWORTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

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Co-Presidents: Linda & André van der Valk

June 2018, Issue #3

Editor: Ann Vincent

## Co-Presidents' Message

By Linda & André van der Valk

I would like to start off by thanking everyone who made our Garden Festival one of our most successful events. Ann Vincent, our Event Coordinator, worked very hard to bring this event together and with the help of her husband Ray Vincent everything went well without a hitch. The weather was perfect that day too, not too warm or cold.

Martina Turner coordinated a great team for the tea which was such a huge success that it sold out in an hour. I would like to also thank everyone who attended and supported the Chatsworth Historical Society in our one of two fundraisers that enables us to keep the Acre going. Last year we were not able to have the Garden Festival because of the park construction so it was nice to know that people did not forget us and attended this year.

Our thanks to Councilmember Englander who donates the shuttle bus to us every year. Without this bus we would not have enough parking and our attendance would not be the approximately 800 people that attended. Councilmember Englander has always been a big supporter of us and we do appreciate it.

In the garden we now have a butterfly garden that was planted and tended by Nadia Harding. It is fascinating to watch the caterpillars go through the process of becoming a Monarch butterfly. There was a tour of third graders from Chatsworth Park Elementary last month and they were fascinated after Nadia explained the metamorphosis process to them. Nadia even has Andre and I checking on the butterfly garden when we are there to see what is happening. Thank you Nadia for sharing your love of the Monarch butterfly with the Historical Society.

Carla Iverson has just donated some more wonderful pictures of Iverson Ranch. We appreciate that Carla has entrusted us with her photos of the ranch and family photos. I am in the process of cataloging the photos and the other wonderful artifacts that have been donated by Carla.

I hope everyone has a great summer. The docents will be meeting on Wednesdays through the summer but there will not be an Open House in July. If you are interested in being a docent or just want to help out please contact the acre or stop by on Wednesdays between 9 AM and noon. Linda and Andre

Chatsworth Historical Society  
Board of Directors 2017-2018

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

## Upcoming Events

### Summer Schedule

No general meetings until September, enjoy the summer

### Summer Open House Schedule

Sunday, July 1 Closed

Sunday, August 5 1-4 pm

Sunday, September 2 Closed

### September 18, 2018 Tuesday 7:00 PM General Meeting

Join us to hear about our latest discoveries in our archives and projects we are working on here at the Acre to preserve our Chatsworth History.

### October 7, 2018 Sunday 11-3 Pioneer Day

Mark your calendar and plan to be there. This event is scheduled annually to help teach our children the ways of the Pioneer. It includes blacksmithing, gold panning, leather crafts, butter churning, games and crafts for kids of all ages. Vendors with handmade crafts are included.

## DOCENT DOINGS at the ACRE:

Our docents keep busy with projects throughout the year. We meet every Wednesday morning 9-noon.

### OUT IN THE GARDEN:

If you need some outdoor fresh air therapy, come join our gardening team on Wednesday mornings 9-noon.



**IN THE MUSEUM:** We have prepared a new display of photos and information to represent Chatsworth's 130<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Be sure to check it out at one of our Open House events during the summer. We will continue to have open house scheduled for the first Sunday of each month from 1-4pm.

**IN THE COTTAGE:** An inventory project is still underway to confirm and learn more about the items on display and their history so we can provide more information on our tours.

**DOCENTS ARE NEEDED:** Help guide guests through the museum and cottage during our Open Houses, Tours and Special Events. If you would like to learn the history of our community and help share it with others, please contact us for more information at [chatsworthhistory@gmail.com](mailto:chatsworthhistory@gmail.com).

## GENERAL PROGRAM RECAPS

Ann Vincent

Since we only publish 5 newsletters a year...I want to keep you up to date on what we have been doing.

Our March 20<sup>th</sup> general meeting featured a presentation titled "The Minnie Hill Palmer Story." *The Minnie Hill Palmer Story* is at [chatsworthhistory.com](http://chatsworthhistory.com) under Presentations. Select [The Minnie Hill Palmer Story](#). Or go to [slideshare.net/chatsworthhistory, the Minnie Hill Palmer Story](http://slideshare.net/chatsworthhistory,theMinnieHillPalmerStory)

Since that research sparked an interest in the business enterprises of Lovell Hill and Alfred Palmer, we have new information to share with you about the Dynamite Shed on page 6.

Our April 17<sup>th</sup> general meeting featured Nadia Harding, who created an amazing Butterfly Garden at the Acre. We enjoyed learning about our Butterfly Garden from Nadia, who taught us what to look for in our garden and explained the life cycle of the Monarch Butterfly.

On May 17, our General Meeting focused on the 130 Years of Chatsworth History that our Museum is now displaying. That program can be found at [chatsworthhistory.com](http://chatsworthhistory.com) under Presentation. Select [Chatsworth Timeline](#). Or go to [slideshare.net/chatsworthhistory, Chatsworth Timeline](http://slideshare.net/chatsworthhistory,ChatsworthTimeline).

## Chatsworth Historical Society - Memorial Brick Project

At the request of members of the Chatsworth



Historical Society, we have decided to establish a Memorial Brick plaza adjacent to the Time Capsule at the

Homestead Acre. It will be an ongoing project to honor family and friends. Bricks are laser engraved up to 3 lines of 18 characters per line, and are available for a donation of \$100.

Click the link below for the Memorial Brick Order Form

<http://www.chatsworthhistory.com/CHS-BrickOrderForm.pdf>

or print the form on the last page of this newsletter.

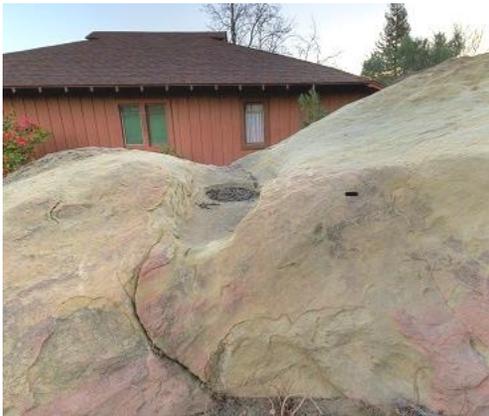
### FIRST ORDER SCHEDULED FOR JULY 15

Please order before that date to have your brick installed by Pioneer Day in October.

For more information send an email to [chatsworthhistory@gmail.com](mailto:chatsworthhistory@gmail.com) or call 818-882-5614.

## TOURS AND OTHER EVENTS

On May 16, Wednesday morning Chatsworth Park Elementary School brought their three 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classes to the Acre. We created three tours for the classrooms to rotate through.



1. The Garden hosted by Nadia Harding and Linda van der Valk. They had fun focusing on the Butterfly Garden, the Time Capsule, and the Leaching Basin in our Chatsworth Rock formation that was used by the Native Americans. They also discussed Minnie's Acre as it might have been 100 years ago with fruit trees and vegetables grown just outside the back door of the cottage.

2. The Cottage tour was hosted by Donna Nachtrab and Jelena Csanyi, who introduced the lifestyle of the early pioneer families 100 years ago and what it was like for the Hill family to homestead here to earn their land. There are so many things to discuss, like making your own blankets (quilts) and rugs from every scrap of fabric you could save from old clothes. And of course they always notice the chamber pots and then a discussion of the out-house comes up.



3. Marcia Chopp and Ann Vincent explained Chatsworth History in the Museum. How Chatsworth got its name, Native American Artifacts and Homesteading Families. We also included a discussion of our Chatsworth Landmarks that are protected to be enjoyed for future generations. We also have a tool display, where we talk about the Pioneers and how important it was for them to be able to use tools like these to build their homes.

On May 23, Secure Horizons brought 6 people and two staff members to enjoy a short tour of the Museum and cottage. It was a small group so only one tour leader was needed. Ann Vincent gave the tour answering questions from the group. They were very interested in the tools and in the kitchen, they loved seeing a 1900's version of a washing machine (two tubs and the ringer) and we also pulled out the dryer (the clothes line and clothes pins) and discussed where to hang it.

Having the opportunity to provide tours to the community is a fun way to share our history.

We had a nice turnout at our Sunday June 3<sup>rd</sup> Open House and received donations of maps from Mike Mancini and an antique chair from Fred and Liz Samuel. We appreciate the donations. Thank you!



**Our next tour will be August 5<sup>th</sup>, Sunday, from 1-4 pm.** It is open to the public. Come join us.

Closed July 1 Sunday Holiday Weekend

Open August 5 Sunday

Closed September 2 Sunday Holiday Weekend

## HILL HOMESTEAD DYNAMITE SHED by Ray Vincent



You may have noticed the stone shed at the entrance to Chatsworth Park South...did you know that it once was a dynamite shed, technically known as a powder magazine? It was a part of the distribution system of the Trojan Powder Company, and was run by Lovell Hill and Alfred Palmer, Minnie's husband.

In 2007 the dynamite shed was added to the Minnie Hill Palmer Cottage Historic-Cultural Monument. Local stories have been told that the shed was used to store dynamite either for blasting at the 1898-1904 tunnels or the 1901 quarry, but interviews with Minnie about her childhood at the acre never discussed the shed or its use at that early time. We did some research, and with the help of Keith Hart, discovered the true history of the dynamite shed.

Keith found an April 1, 1921 article from the Corona Daily Independent announcing that A.S. St John was now handling the product of the Trojan Powder Company, and "a powder magazine is being built near Chatsworth which will be the distribution center for his territory."

APRIL 14, 1922

### Trojan Explosives

The Most Powerful Made—Safe and Economical

Manufactured on a solid base and do not contain any liquid explosive ingredient.

Will not freeze.	Will not give off noxious gases.	Will not exude.
No thawing.	No headaches.	No leaking.

**TROJAN POWDER COMPANY, Crocker Bldg., San Francisco**

A. S. ST. JOHN, Dealer,  
406 H. W. Hellman Bldg., Los Angeles. Tel. 144-22

MAGAZINE AT  
Chatsworth, Calif.

And the April 14, 1922 advertisement from the Southwest Builder publication (*shown at left*) identifies the Chatsworth magazine. Oral interviews, and documents from the Palmer family, confirm that Lovell and Alfred ran the Chatsworth magazine. From 1921 to 1952, Lovell and Alfred Palmer owned two Denby trucks parked in the garage shed that used to exist behind the cottage, as seen in family photos. They

delivered dynamite to San Diego, San Bernardino and Oakland. Following Alfred's death in 1946, Minnie and Alfred's son Leroy continued the business until Lovell's death in 1952, when the Chatsworth magazine was closed down.

As a side note to our research we also discovered that dynamite from the Chatsworth magazine was a part of the 1947 murder of Walter and Buella Overell, who were blown up in Newport Harbor on their yacht by their daughter and her boyfriend. At that time it was then the longest criminal trial in the nation – 19 months. Lovell Hill testified at the trial that he sold the 70 sticks of dynamite to the young couple that blew up the yacht. A receipt from the Trojan Powder company was found in their car, along with dynamite in their trunk. Both suspects were acquitted, as they were tried together and the jury could not decide which of the two defendants committed the murders. A related 1947 article also confirms that Lovell Hill was caretaker of the Chatsworth magazine since 1921.



The 2007 description of the Dynamite Shed, included in the application to add it to the Hill Palmer Cottage Landmark, states that it was used to store dynamite for the building of the tunnels. Not knowing when the shed was built no doubt led to speculation of how it was used. With this new research, we are in the process of notifying the Cultural Heritage Commission to rephrase the language for this Monument.

Thank you Keith for your help.

# HOMESTEADER CLYDE DAYTON UPDATE

By Ray Vincent

We last discussed homesteader Clyde Dayton (of Dayton Canyon and Dayton Creek) in the June 2014 Smoke Signal. Much of our information was from the well researched book “The History and Mystery of Dayton Canyon,” by distant relative Robbie Wilson (Clyde Dayton was the husband of Robbie’s 2<sup>nd</sup> great-aunt).

In that article, we supposed that the 1922 death of Clyde and Lulu Dayton was perhaps a family tragedy, as their dentist said that Lulu was a sufferer from heart trouble and was not expected to live many weeks. Although many thought it was a double murder, it is also possible that Lulu died and Clyde was so distraught that he committed suicide. The mystery of their death to this day is unsolved.

Robbie contacted me last month with some more background information about Clyde Dayton that has been made available from the “magic” of our digital age.

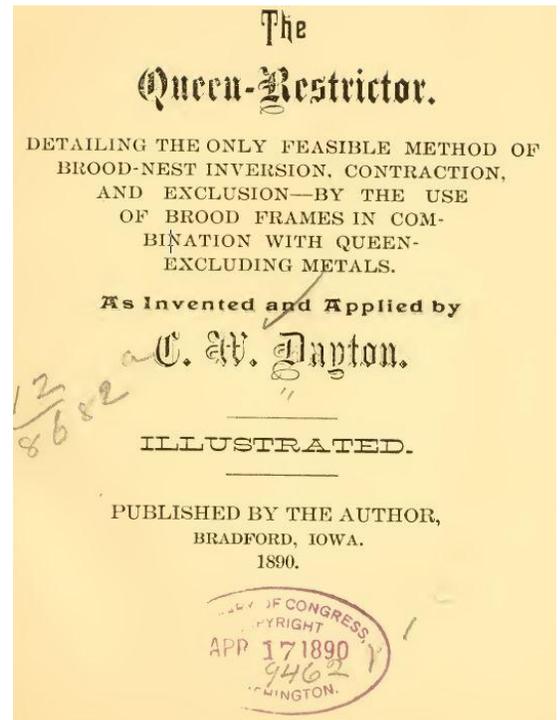
Clyde was born in New York in 1861, and moved to Iowa in his teens with the family to help his father, who was a wheat farmer. At the age of 19 he became interested in honeybees, and by the age of 21 he had purchased 11 hives. In 1890, at the age of 29, he published and copyrighted the book and invention “The Queen Restrictor,” recently digitized by the Library of Congress.

Clyde proved himself at a young age to be an innovator of honeybee raising and honey harvesting techniques, as evidenced in his 1890 book and numerous later articles in the Beekeepers Review, The Progressive Beekeeper, and The American Beekeeper, written from 1890 to 1917. By 1904 he had moved from Iowa to Florence, CA to the “Chatsworth Mountains” (today’s Dayton Canyon). In the 1910 US Census he was in the Chatsworth Park Precinct. The city of Owensmouth was founded in 1912, and at that time he changed his address from Chatsworth to Owensmouth. The photo below is from the April 1907 American Beekeeper.



(11)

ONE OF C. W. DAYTON'S APIARIES.



## PICTURE No. II.

Chatsworth, Cal., Feb 16, 1907.

Dear Editor:—The picture is of my extractor-house and apiary cook-house. The shop is beyond the hill. These hives are of overflow swarms. The tank among the hives is like I use to store honey in. I have 50 of them, 40 of which are at present filled with honey. They hold 600 pounds each and are constructed of a single sheet of 30x96 galvanized iron, waxed inside and painted outside. I usually keep that amount of honey for off years and to always have the cup right side up rain or no rain.

C. W. Dayton.

Clyde was a very successful apiarist, selling honey by mail order, no doubt from the Post Office at the Hill & Graves General Store at Lassen and Topanga. However, in his later years at Dayton Canyon, he lived his life as a miser and a hermit, living with his wife in a 10 by 12 foot corrugated metal shack for 13 years. Rumors were that he had buried cash on his property in mason jars.

A 1915 article from a naysayer of Dayton, published in the Western Honeybee, suggested that Clyde's storing of honey in wax lined galvanized 30 gallon tanks, which had been in the California sun soaking up zinc for 12 years, had driven him to be a hermit, hostile to neighbors, and insane.

The photo below is a 1917 view of Dayton's apiary from The Beekeepers Review.

The advertisement below is from the 1913 The American Bee Journal.



Apiary of C. W. Dayton, Owensmouth, California

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**FOR SALE – Ten tons of sage honey nearly as red as blood. Produced by correct absorption of infra-red and ultra-violet rays of sunlight. No substance on the globe equals solar carbonized honey as a disease prevention and health builder. Send for circular entitled, "Harnessed Sunbeams."**  
**C. W. Dayton, Owensmouth, Calif.**

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A quote from Catherine Mullholland's "Owensmouth Baby" includes "A familiar site in the early days was the Red Ripe Honey Man trundling his wheelbarrow through the town as he sold his honey and doubtless advised the residents on the proper foods to eat."

Clyde also wrote a weekly column in the [Owensmouth Gazette](#), which are available at [chatsworthhistory.com](#). We are grateful to these recently digitized publications that allow us to share his accomplishments and operation in photographs.

## GARDEN FESTIVAL 2018 THANK YOU



We would like to extend a big thank you to all who made this year's Garden Festival so successful. It takes so many to make it all come together smoothly and every job is important and appreciated. Behind the scenes we had some great help.

This year we were fortunate to have the help of both El Camino Real High School NJROTC and Reseda NJROTC working with us to set up and tear down. Bill Dushman worked together with Ray Vincent overseeing the setup and teardown activities.

On Sunday morning, the Reseda NJROTC worked with Ray and Tom Nachtrab to coordinate parking and our shuttle bus. They also assisted the vendors with unloading and transporting their wares. Tom coordinated the buses from the Depot parking. Once again, a special thanks for the shuttle bus provided by Councilman Englander's office, which allows for offsite parking at the Train Depot. We appreciate their participation and support to help our event run smoothly. The parking is always one of the most challenging aspects of events like this and Bill, Tom and Ray make a good team. Thanks!



As the event got started Sunday morning, Donna Nachtrab and Wendi Gladstone assisted our vendors and non-profit groups in checking in and locating their booths.



Each of our Historical Society venues (Bake Sale, Plant Sale, Information, Museum, Cottage and Food Booth) were staffed by volunteers throughout the day. The Cottage was also staffed by docents Gloria DeMuri, Barbara Pampalone and Nadia Harding sharing the Hill Palmer story with our guests. In the museum assisting our guests were Jelena Csanyi, Carol Lucas and Bea Berman. Marsha Chopp was our roving volunteer helping to give people breaks and looking for ways to help out. Our members volunteering at the front gate were Donna Boswell, Donna Nachtrab and Wendi. In addition to helping in the Cottage, Nadia also shared

information on the butterflies in the garden.

The Food Booth involved Linda and Andre van der Valk with their family and grandchildren. We appreciate the time and supplies donated to our fundraising.

Our Bake Sale was a big success with delicious donations. Thank you to all of the bakers that help continue this traditional bake sale. Jamie De Rosa and her daughter enjoyed helping at the sale. Thank you to everyone who brought baked goods; they were tasty and we sold out.



Our garden was in full bloom with Annette Campbell and Karyne Ventris selling the plants propagated at the acre, and Nadia donated some milkweed for butterfly gardens. The garden docents, who include the above plus Terry Valdez, did an extraordinary job getting the garden in first class shape for our event.



Our information booth welcomed our visitors with a display of Chatsworth History books for sale. We were fortunate to have Irene Nalbandian and Bea Berman who know our history and were able to assist with information.

The Iris Society was on hand with plenty of plants to purchase. We were fortunate to have Midge Gisel of the San Fernando Valley Historical Society to share history of the valley. We also enjoyed the participation of the Santa Susana Mountains Park Association (SSMPA) and the Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park volunteers (SSPSHP) providing more history to our guests about our state park. This year we had representatives from three organizations: The Chatsworth Branch Daughters of the American Revolution DAR, The Daughters of Union Veterans DUV along with the Native Daughters of the Golden West. They were all on hand to represent the history of our community and country, and to help guests learn their history and how to trace their ancestry.

Our Tea crew headed by Martina Turner started early this year dreaming up ways to delight those that



attend the tea. They came up with a variety of ideas to make the event special. This year over 160 hand-made sachets were included when guests received their tea as a special thank you for coming. In addition Harpist Alexis Aria brought her concert harp and played in the garden adjacent to the tea. This year the serving crew including Key Club members who helped serve the tea along with Kiwani Marina Mackie who led the Key Club members by example. The hard working team that plated all the food is always behind closed doors, but they make it happen, as over 160 plates were prepared and served. Thank you to all of you who signed up with Martina to make this happen.

We want to thank the bakers and sandwich makers: Martina Turner for making the chicken salad sandwiches, Ann Vincent for her egg salad and the tuna salad sandwiches, Donna Nachtrab for the cucumber cream cheese sandwiches, and Jelena Csanyi for making the scones. Linda van der Valk donated all

the fresh fruit. The dessert bakers included Valarie Barsky with amazing cakes, I know there were more, but don't have those names at this point. Thanks also to Zena Thorpe who was our cashier for the tea tickets; since she was born in England and has had tea with the Duke of Devonshire, she is our perfect choice to welcome our guests to tea. And Cheryl and Al Pinnaro were amazing helping us with logistics to set up a few more tables for the tea at the last minute, and helped with problem solving throughout the day. Tea guests included several Red Hat Chapters and Womens Clubs, so our presales were successful.

Our vendors this year were excellent and displayed a variety of quality hand crafted goods for sale, making the entire event a success. There was a little bit of everything. Our guests coming in at the gate had a wonderful time exploring the event and enjoying our Garden Festival.

My sincere apologies to everyone I did not mention. I have a list of over 90 volunteers who signed in at the gate to help make this event happen. You know who you are...Thank you!

Ann Vincent



Oh my goodness....it is almost time to start planning for Pioneer Day on October 7. See you then.

## Chatsworth Historical Society

### Virginia Watson Museum & Gift Shop

The following items are available for sale during Open Houses on the first Sunday of the month. To arrange to purchase items at other times, email [chatsworthhistory@gmail.com](mailto:chatsworthhistory@gmail.com) to make arrangements for payment and shipping, if necessary.

CHATSWORTH HISTORY by Virginia Watson	\$10.00
CHATSWORTH PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL The First 100 Years by Ioline Cleveland	\$10.00
WINDOW INTO THE PAST by William Schepler	\$10.00
QUIET ON THE SET by Robert Sherman	\$25.00
OUR PIONEER MOTHER As told to Lenora Johnson MacDonald	\$10.00



**DIGITAL RECORDS online at**  
<http://www.chatsworthhistory.com>

**facebook CHS FACEBOOK PAGE**  
[www.facebook.com/HomesteadAcre](http://www.facebook.com/HomesteadAcre)

### SLIDESHARE.NET

<https://www.slideshare.net/ChatsworthHistory/presentations>

Slideshare has a listing of our CHS presentations that can easily be watched online. Enjoy!

### Can we email our newsletter to you?

Please email us to provide your email address.  
Thanks! [chatsworthhistory@gmail.com](mailto:chatsworthhistory@gmail.com)

### Wondering if your Dues are Due?

Your dues are due one year after the last time you paid your dues.

For those receiving email only newsletters, we will advise you by email when your dues are due.

For snail mail, if you have an asterisk at the end of your name on the mailing label, your dues are due.

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.

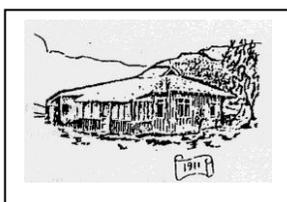


## CHATSWORTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

### 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](mailto:chatsworthhistory@gmail.com) 818-882-5614 [www.chatsworthhistory.com](http://www.chatsworthhistory.com)



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

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

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

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

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

**Reminder: If you got this mailed to you, an asterisk on your label means your dues are due!**



## Chatsworth Historical Society Memorial Brick Order Form

At the request of members of the Chatsworth Historical Society, we have decided to establish a Memorial Brick plaza adjacent to the Time Capsule at the acre.

It will be an ongoing project to honor family and friends. Bricks are laser engraved up to 3 lines of 18 characters, and are available for a donation of \$100.

For more information send an email to [chatsworthhistory@gmail.com](mailto:chatsworthhistory@gmail.com) or call 818-882-5614.

IN MEMORY OF  
MINNIE HILL PALMER

THE HILL PALMER  
FAMILY

JAMES & RHODA HILL  
HOMESTEADERS

### Chatsworth Historical Society Memorial Brick Order Form

Please engrave my brick as follows (up to 3 lines, 18 characters per line including spaces)

Line 1																	
Line 2																	
Line 3																	

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Please enclose this form with your \$100 check made payable to "Chatsworth Historical Society"

Mail to:  
Chatsworth Historical Society  
10385 Shadow Oak Drive  
Chatsworth, CA 91311

For more information call 818-882-5614  
or email us at [chatsworthhistory.com](http://chatsworthhistory.com)

Please copy this form for additional orders