

Smoke Signal

CHATSWORTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

10385 Shadow Oak Drive, Chatsworth, CA 91311

(818) 882-5614

chatsworthhistory@gmail.com

www.chatsworthhistory.com



Co-Presidents: Linda & André van der Valk

February 2019, Issue #1

Editor: Ann Vincent

Co-Presidents' Message

By Linda & André van der Valk

As I write this it is raining again. I know we all say we need the rain but I am ready for some sunshine. The gardens are looking beautiful with all the rain though. The Daffodils, which are one of my favorites, are coming out and the surrounding hills are looking green. Our Eagle Scout project in the front is looking good also with all the rain.

The San Fernando Valley Rose Society helped Annette cut back the roses in January. We would like to extend a big Thank You for their help.

We are undertaking a project of adding a Display Shed on the grounds. This shed would look like a livery stable and we have many farming and other tools that could be displayed in the shed. We are working with Rec and Parks to see what we need to do to be able to add the shed. We are excited to be able to share more of our collection with the public.

We are still taking orders for the Brick Memorial and we are getting ready to send in another order soon so it can be in place for the Garden Festival.

Ann Vincent and Donna Nachtrab are working on the details of the Garden Festival and the Tea. We are hoping for great weather, which I think Ann has already ordered. As always, it should be a great day and we look forward to everyone joining us on April 28th. If you would like to volunteer or bake please contact us.

We are excited in participating in the 80th anniversary of the Old Santa Susana Stage Road Plaque Dedication. It will be held on March 17, 2019 at the Chatsworth Park South Rec Center. The plaque was originally placed there by the Native Daughters of the Golden West, of which Minnie Hill Palmer was a member. She attended that dedication with other members of Parlor 269 and the community. This will be a fun day to see the exhibits and learn about the history of the Old Santa Susana Stage Road.

Looking forward to Spring
Linda and André

Chatsworth Historical Society
Board of Directors 2018-2019

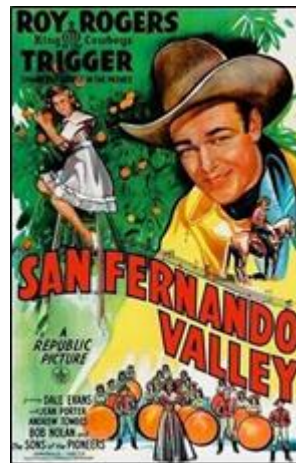
Co-Presidents	Linda & André van der Valk
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Secretary.....	Donna Nachtrab
Hospitality.....	Jelena Csanyi
Smoke Signal Editor.....	Ann Vincent
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Garden Director.....	Annette Campbell
Director-at-Large.....	Connie Ager
Honorary Member.....	Bea Berman
Honorary Member.....	Elaine Campbell

Upcoming Events

February 19, 2019 Tuesday 7:00 PM

General Meeting

Roy Rogers Movie Night



The feature presentation will be:

SAN FERNANDO VALLEY

Starring Roy Rogers & Dale Evans

with Bob Nolan and the Sons of the Pioneers

Join us for our annual movie night complete with popcorn. The movie will start promptly at 7:00

after a short introduction and will last 1 hour 14 minutes. This event was rained out in January but rescheduled due to popular demand.

March 19, 2019 Tuesday 7:00 PM

General Meeting

1912 Chatsworth Postcards -- we discovered a collection of photographs of Chatsworth at the LA Natural History Museum. They were made into postcards and sold at the Graves-Hill General Store in the beginning years of Chatsworth.

And yes...there were only dirt roads at that time.

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 will be changing out some of our photos to display our Railroad Tunnel History for Garden Festival in April. We will continue to have open house scheduled for the first Sunday of each month from 1-4pm except on Holidays.

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.

ACTIVITIES

Re-Dedication of the Chatsworth Stagecoach Trail Scheduled for Sunday, March 17, 2019

On March 17, 1939, 80 years ago, our Chatsworth Stagecoach Trail was dedicated by the California Native Daughters of the Golden West.



During the day, at the Chatsworth Park South Recreation Center, we will be showing the Chatsworth Stagecoach Trail Presentation, which includes actual film footage of a portion of the 1939 dedication. (See the attached event flyer)

Memorial Brick Plaza



Click the link below for the Memorial Brick Order Form \$100 per brick.

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

Bricks ordered before March 1st will be in place for the 2019 Garden Festival. For more information, send an email to chatsworthhistory@gmail.com or call 818-882-5614.

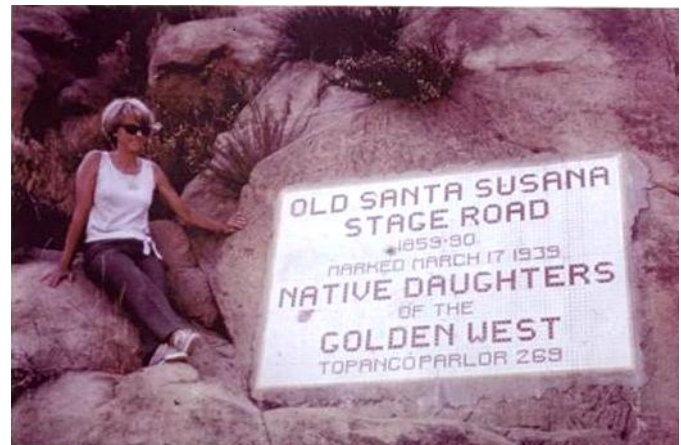
Garden Festival

SAVE THE DATE

April 28, 2019 Sunday 11-3 pm

Plan to join us!

The Re-Dedication event this March will be sponsored by the SSMPA, the FPSSM, the Chatsworth Historical Society, and the California Native Daughters of the Golden West.





Old Santa Susana Stage Road

Plaque Dedication 80th Anniversary

March 17, 2019 - EVENT SCHEDULE

Held at Chatsworth Park South Recreation Center

10 am - 2pm EXHIBITS - Recreation Center

Old Santa Susana Stage Road History

Stagecoach Instructional Exhibit

Community Groups

11 am OPENING CEREMONY - Recreation Center

12 pm - STAGECOACH TRAIL HIKES

- From Lilac Lane down to Plaque -- Moderate*
- From Chatsworth Park South to Plaque – Difficult*

Hike Sign-up Table at entrance to Rec.Center

2 pm Event Ends



The Chatsworth Historical Society Presents



A GARDEN FESTIVAL

Featuring Roses, Crafts, Plant Sales
and Chatsworth History

Vendors and Garden Clubs
Arts, Crafts, Demonstrations

The Duchess Tea

- \$12 per person
- 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Served in the Rose Garden

**1911 Homestead
Cottage Tours**
Rose Garden Tours

Museum Exhibits

Featuring Chatsworth Pioneer
Families and 1904
Railroad Tunnel History

Bake Sale
Hot Dogs and Soda



For information and tea reservations (+10 persons), please email chatsworthhistory@gmail.com

**Note: Parking is
limited at
Chatsworth Park
South**

Park your car at the north
end of 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.

Sunday, April 28, 2019

11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

\$5 Admission Donation – Children \$1

Kids under 5 Free

THE HOMESTEAD ACRE

At the First Stop Sign in **Chatsworth Park South**

(West End of Devonshire Street)

10385 Shadow Oak Drive, Chatsworth, CA 91311

chatsworthhistory@gmail.com 818-882-5614 www.chatsworthhistory.com

*All Proceeds go to the Chatsworth Historical Society for the preservation of the
Minnie Hill Palmer Homestead Acre and the Virginia Watson Chatsworth Museum*

RECENT MUSEUM DONATIONS

We were fortunate to have this Birge, Peck & Co. Eight-Day Column and Cornice Weight Clock donated in November 2018. Birge, Peck & Co. were in business from 1849-1859 in Connecticut. The clock was donated



by Albert Knight, one of our CHS life members. Al explained that it belonged to his grandparents, who settled NW Iowa back when (grand-dad was born in 1853). It has been in the family since at least the 1880s.

John Birge began his clock making business starting in 1831 and continued with several different partners through 1859. This clock is a triple-decker shelf clock with three compartments, and includes an 8-day and 30-hour brass movement. The Birge and Peck versions have a movement more interesting than most clocks, having a "strap brass" movement, ie, it is made of pieces of brass riveted together. It runs for 8 days on a full wind.

Al mentioned that his mother painted the wood columns on each side with gold leaf. We have the clock displayed in the Hill-Palmer Cottage.



In addition to the clock, Al Knight also donated a 1904-1910 #4 Eastman Kodak Screen Focus Camera and Camera bag. This telescoping camera has the ability to use either a



film roll holder, or become a plate camera by removing the roll holder and adjusting the plate holder back containing a ground glass and focusing screen. It has been added to our camera collection on display in the museum.

The third item donated was a wooden silverware chest filled with a variety of silver and silverplate utensils collected over the years by the Knight family. They were donated to provide an opportunity for our young students to learn hands on as an activity. We hope to incorporate this type of activity in our school tours or upcoming Garden Festival.



Chatsworth Celebrities Lionel Barrymore



Our November 2018 program featured Chatsworth Celebrity Lionel Barrymore and his home in Chatsworth. Lionel Barrymore (1878-1954) was a member of the theater's "royal family" of Barrymores – Lionel, Ethel and John.

His parents were Maurice Barrymore and Georgiana Drew, reigning stage stars of their day that came to America in the 1870's and performed Hamlet in New York, also performing in London often.

While Lionel's parents traveled to their performances, the three children lived with their grandmother in various great houses in Philadelphia. All of the children were well educated in the arts and theatre.

In 1938, at the age of 60, Lionel purchased 22 acres in Browns Canyon at 11050 Independence Ave, Chatsworth. Lionel was Honorary Mayor of Chatsworth in 1952, and died of a heart attack in 1954 at the age of 76. Lionel is the great-uncle of Drew Barrymore, who had a breakout role as a child actress in E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial (1982), which had scenes filmed in nearby Porter Ranch.

Lionel made his debut on the New York Stage at 15, and had a very successful stage career, with 40 different stage appearances, from

1893 to 1925. Most of the performances were on Broadway in New York, many of them running for over 100 performances over multiple years. During his stage career, he began working at Biograph Studios in New York with D. W. Griffith.

One of his first silent movies was "The New York Hat (1912)", with Mary Pickford and Lillian Gish. He also was in "Judith and Bethulia (1914)" that was filmed in Chatsworth.



Jackie Cooper and Lionel Barrymore as Billy Bones in "Treasure Island (1934)"



Mickey Rooney, Lionel Barrymore (as the captain) Spencer Tracy, and Freddie Bartholomew in "Captains Courageous (1937)"

In 1925, he left the theatre, signing a contract with Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, and became good friends with Louis B. Mayer. He made an easy transition to talking movies in 1929 because of his stage training. He appeared in a total of 131 silent movies, and 82 talking movies, for a total of 213. He is given credit for inventing the boom microphone, saying "why don't you put it on the end of a fishing pole?"

"Captains Courageous" would be the last picture with Barrymore standing. In 1936, at the age of 58, Lionel broke his hip as he tripped and fell. After a slow recovery, in 1937 he tripped again and snapped his hip. As he said in his autobiography, "this time I did not come out on my feet".

Walking was difficult and dangerous for him, and he chose to confine himself to a wheelchair for the rest of his life. Louis B. Mayer instructed his MGM writers to invent scenes for Lionel where he did not have to walk; he could sit behind desks, he could act in beds, he could be in a wheelchair.

He ended up making over forty movies after the second accident, and became best known as a grumpy and irritable character actor. He also performed on CBS radio as Ebenezer Scrooge from 1934 to 1953, broadcast annually on Christmas Day.

Lionel Barrymore's Personal Life

In 1904 at the age of 26, Lionel married Doris Rankin, went to Paris and studied art for two years. They had two daughters, neither of which survived infancy.

In 1923 Lionel married his second wife Irene Fenwick, and built a 10 room house on Roxbury Drive in Beverly Hills. Irene died on Christmas Eve in 1936 at the age of 49. During Irene's illness they became close friends with Mrs. Mary Ellen Wheeler and her three daughters, Violet, Florence and Murdie (Florence and Murdie were registered nurses). As Irene's illness became worse, the Wheelers were often at the Beverly Hills home.

When Irene died, so did Lionel Barrymore. Unable to stay at the Roxbury Drive house, the Wheeler's moved him in with them. Lionel retained caretakers, and turned the Beverly Hills home into a shrine to Irene. Keeping the Roxbury Drive Memorial drained his wallet and in 1949, thirteen years after his wife's death, he was forced to sell the house and all of Irene's treasures to pay back taxes.

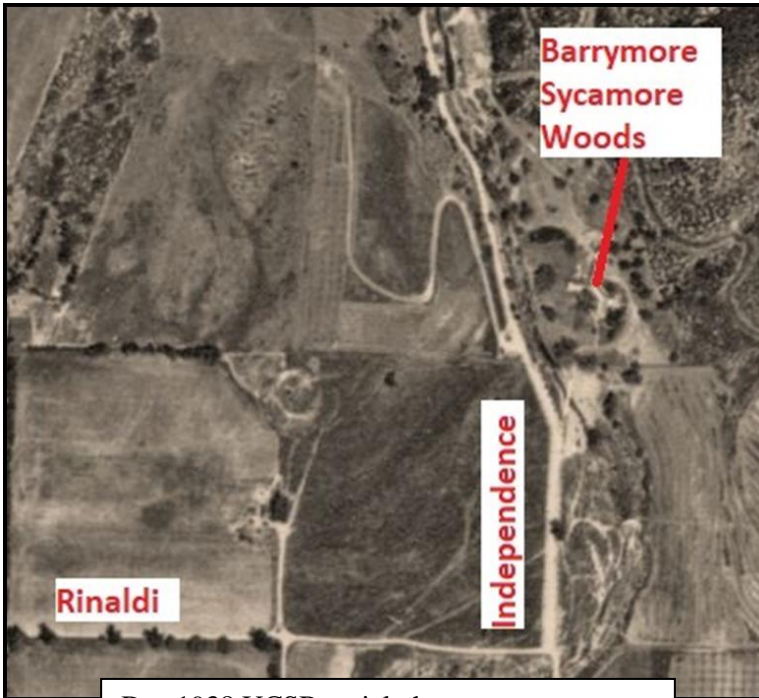


Lionel Barrymore (as Henry F. Potter in a wheelchair) and James Stewart in "It's a Wonderful Life (1946)"

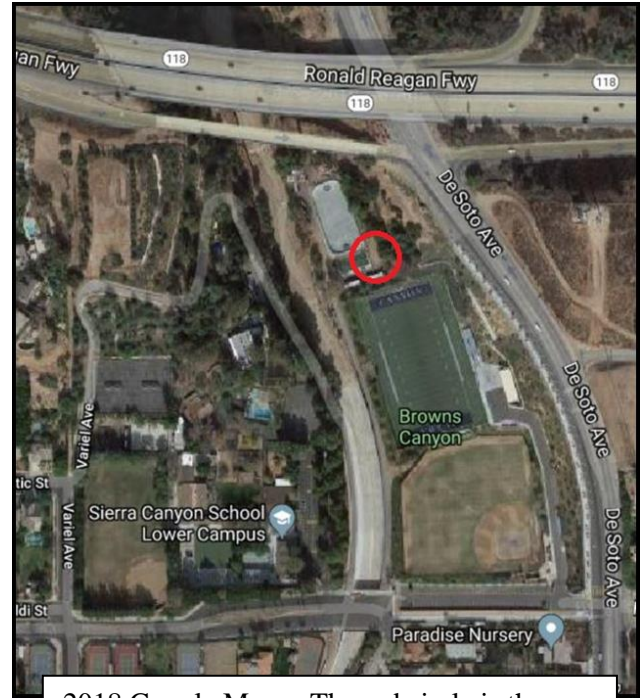


In April 1939, Lionel announced his purchase of 22 acres in Chatsworth. The Barrymore estate was described as a rambling ranch house. The house surrounded a huge sycamore on three sides, with the tree shading the westerly porch/patio.

Sierra Canyon School provided us with title search documents from their lower campus, which included a 1938 easement to Lionel Barrymore. It was 30 ft wide, along the eastern line of their property. So initially, Barrymore crossed Brown's creek to get to his estate. Soon thereafter, he would add another driveway at the top of De Soto.



Dec 1938 UCSB aerial photo



2018 Google Maps. The red circle is the approx. location of the Barrymore house site

The Wheelers lived with Lionel during his Chatsworth years, and after his death in 1954 the estate was willed to the Wheelers, and became known as the Wheeler estate. The house burnt down in 1970. The Wheeler's neighbors to the south were the Cooley family, living on a ten-acre lemon ranch. Cindy Cooley, the daughter, would marry Orrin Sage Jr., of Sage Ranch at the top of Woolsey Canyon.



Cindy shared some memories of the Wheeler estate and her family's friendship with the Wheelers.
"Their home was rambling and full of treasures (artwork, paintings, silver tea sets, elaborate china, linens, beautiful furniture and all the trimmings of a luxurious '40s-50's lifestyle). The home was shaped in sort of a crescent and many rooms opened out into some part or other of the gardens and sycamores. Each had a patio surrounded by a low rock wall, making it completely charming. On hot Chatsworth summer days, it was cooler and shaded."

For the full story on the Lionel Barrymore Estate in Chatsworth, please visit <https://www.slideshare.net/ChatsworthHistory>, or <http://chatsworthhistory.com/>, Digital Archives, Presentations.

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 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 ARCHIVES online at

<http://www.chatsworthhistory.com>

facebook

CHS FACEBOOK PAGE

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

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.

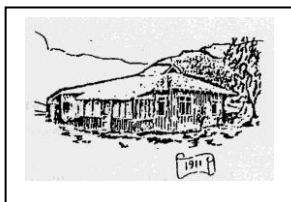
For snail mail, if you have an asterisk at the end of your name on the mailing label, your dues are due.

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 818-882-5614 www.chatsworthhistory.com

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