

Smoke Signal

CHATSWORTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Co-Presidents: Linda & André van der Valk

October 2021, Issue #4

Editor: Ann Vincent

Co-Presidents' Message

By Linda & André van der Valk

We just had our first Open House since the pandemic shut us down and it was nice to see everyone who came to visit us. One of our visitors were the Jenkins Family, the great grandson of Minnie, who donated Minnie and Alfred Palmer's marriage license. The license is framed and ready to go up in the cottage next to a picture of Minnie and Alfred on their wedding day. Thank you for the wonderful donation!

A couple of weeks ago we had a brush fire that was a little too close for comfort at the Acre. It was burning south of the Acre in the hills. I want to thank the quick response of the L.A. City, L.A. County and Ventura County fire departments. The helicopter response was amazing; like a perfectly choreographed dance. One would fly over the Acre as another would be doing a water drop. Andre and I went to the Acre as soon as Dan Huffman called and said the fire was in Chatsworth Park South. Andre preceded to water down the cottage to make sure that there were no embers. He discovered we needed a new fire hose when he became soaking wet with all the leaks in the hose. It was breezy, but luckily not enough to kick it back to the Acre.

The same day of the fire we had Trees 'N Things in to trim trees at the Acre. They did a wonderful job on our large Walnut tree. They took a lot of weight off the branches, and it was explained to us that it would be like putting your arm out and having 80 pounds of weight hanging off your arm. They scooted up the two Palm trees trimming them and some other trees, and removed one that was not in very good shape. It was part of our regular maintenance that we do to keep the Acre looking good.

Finally, I want to thank everyone who came to the Ice Cream Social. We had a great time and everyone seemed to like having ice cream outside on a warm summer night.

Linda and Andre

Chatsworth Historical Society Board of Directors 2020-2021

Co-Presidents	Linda & André van der Valk
Treasurer.....	Jim Van Gundy
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Smoke Signal Editor.....	Ann Vincent
Cottage Curator Emeritus.....	Betty Summers
Research Director.....	Ray Vincent
Garden Director.....	Annette Campbell
Director-at-Large.....	Connie Ager

Upcoming Events

Open House

November 7th, Sunday 1-4pm

December 5th, Sunday 1-4pm

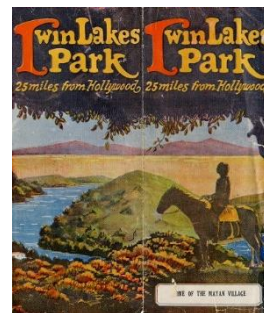
Subject to LA City Covid Rules and Regulations

General Meeting

NEW TIME 6:30pm

**“The History of Twin Lakes
and Deer Lake Highlands”**

October 19th, Tuesday



Our first in person meeting from the museum since COVID will be a hybrid ZOOM Meeting.

Limited seating with masks inside, and overflow seating outside.

The ZOOM link is

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82561903344?pwd=eGNFSWZFTGtJQm9XY3djOE45R2hkUT09>

Meeting ID: 825 6190 3344

Passcode: 298186

Dial In: (669) 900 9128

DOCENT DOINGS at the ACRE:

Our docents keep busy with projects throughout the year.

OUT IN THE GARDEN:

If you need some outdoor fresh air therapy, come join our gardening team.



IN THE MUSEUM: Our docents are reorganizing and cataloging some of our early photograph collections. We have new displays set up that are available to share; come check them out.

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 history of the items on display 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.

Memorial Brick Plaza



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

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

Our next brick order will be March 15, 2022

For more information, send an email to chatsworthhistory@gmail.com or call 818-882-5614.

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING

On September 8th, we had a very successful joint program with the Canoga Owensmouth Historical Society on the Knapp Family – Early History of Owensmouth and the West Valley. We were delighted to have many Knapp descendants present to see and contribute to the program on Zoom. The program is available on our chatsworthhistory.com website or [slideshare.net](https://www.slideshare.net) to enjoy. (See page 6 to access those sites). The recorded presentation is available at the [COHS Facebook site](#) for your viewing pleasure.

Included in this newsletter:

NOTE: Watch for links in our articles that allow easy access to more information.

- **Chatsworth Reservoir construction**
- **Rob's Roast Beef – Wooden Nickel**
- **Slides by Bruce Edwards**
- **1979 Cottage Renovations**
- **Jeffrey Fire near Homestead Acre**

Donation of Wedding Certificate – Minnie Hill and Alfred Palmer

Our open house events often bring us surprise stories or artifacts, but the October Open House brought a real treasure for us.

Darrell Jenkins, the great-grandson of Minnie Hill Palmer, and his wife Carol found the Marriage Certificate of Minnie Hill and Alfred Palmer amongst documents passed down to them. Folded up was the original 1909 oversized marriage certificate that they framed and donated to the Acre for safe-keeping and display.



How the Chatsworth Reservoir Dam was built

By Ann Vincent

Owensmouth Gazette March 14, 1919

The article on the right tells the beginning story of the Chatsworth Reservoir.

"Nearly 100 men, with teams and wagons, scrapers, a steam shovel and a train of dump cars run by a locomotive, are putting the finishing work on the great dam to be known as No 2 Chatsworth Reservoir. This work will bring the dam proper to a height of thirty-five feet, and it is about 3200 feet in length. Eventually the dam will reach a height of eighty-five feet."

While researching the Knapp family, the Canoga Owensmouth Historical Society shared a 1996 letter from Walter Knapp that included his memories of opening day at the Chatsworth Reservoir.

He wrote:

"I was there with my Dad when the first water flowed into Chatsworth Reservoir.

They had a big celebration, Barbecue, Music and Speeches by Mulholland, Whitsett and other big shots. I was just a little kid, but I can still remember the shouting and yelling, even guns firing when the water came gushing out of the pipe. Of course, that was what made the Valley grow. Of course, the guys on the inside, Whitsett, Mulholland, Workman, Lankershim had bought up a lot of land because they knew water would raise the prices of land right away. They were right.

It was fun to watch them build the dam. Small trains carried the dirt from the basin of the dam and dumped it on the dam site. As the dam built up the train tracks were moved to a higher level. The work never stopped till the dam was completed. When the dam was filled with water, the water seeped out so badly a dam was built below it to catch the seepage. The rest, I'm sure you know."

*Sincerely,
Walter*

For more information on the History of the Chatsworth Reservoir, go to chatsworthhistory.com, Digital Archives, Publications, Articles, or click on the link below

[Chatsworth Nature Preserve Reservoir Timeline.pdf](#)



A BIG JOB OF ENGINEERING

Mighty Lake Will Be Made this Summer

Twenty-eight billion gallons of water impounded at a slight elevation to the northwest of Owensmouth and hid behind rolling hills and rocky promontories, is what will constitute an artificial lake of pure, crystallized mountain water before the summer is over. Water enough to supply Los Angeles city for 400 days, or many years of irrigation for San Fernando valley.

This mighty volume of delicious spring water is not only a blessing to thirsty humanity, but it is creating a dream center for writers of romance and fiction because of the scenic beauty developed at the hand of skillful engineers. All around the margin of the lake are collections of shrubbery, trees and hill sides carpented with verdures of green, making a panoramic scene very bewitching to the eye.

Great Work Going On

Nearly 100 men, with teams and wagons, scrapers, a steam shovel and a train of dump cars run by a locomotive, are putting the finishing work on the great dam to be known as No 2. Chatsworth Reservoir. This work will bring the dam proper to a height of thirty-five feet, and it is about 3200 feet in length. Eventually the dam will reach a height of eighty-five feet.

The present work will be completed, probably within the present months, and immediately thereafter will begin the inpour of Los Angeles aqueduct waters, to be impounded for use during the coming irrigation season. No further work on the raising of the dam will be undertaken until the close of the irrigation season.

Second Largest Dam

Chatsworth Reservoir, when completed, will be the second largest water storage on the Los Angeles Aqueduct system, being exceeded only by the great Haiwee Reservoir. The Chatsworth Reservoir will have a total capacity of 41,000 acre feet, while the Haiwee Reservoir has a capacity of 65,000 acre feet. The San Fernando Reservoir has 27,000 acre feet of water.

ROB'S Roast Beef – Wooden Nickel



Linda van der Valk is always on the lookout for Chatsworth memorabilia. This was her latest find and it is worth more than 5 cents to all of us! Ray did some additional sleuthing to find the Rob's Roast Beef advertisement in 1969 including a 1973 want ad below:

COUNTER Girl 12 noon-8 p m. Rob's Roast Beef, 10220 Topanga Cyn., Chats.



This was in the same building currently occupied by Rosie's BBQ Kitchen...who also serves a great tri-tip sandwich!

The city of Los Angeles created a [Historic Resources Inventory](#) where this building is listed; the Primary name as Rob's Roast Beef and the Alternative name as Rosie's BBQ Kitchen. The building was built in 1964. It is listed as an "Excellent example of Googie commercial architecture in Chatsworth. Due to alterations, including replacement of cladding on the parapet, the resource does not retain sufficient integrity for listing in the National Register."



Googie architecture (/ˈguːgi/ GOO-ghee) is a type of futurist architecture influenced by car culture, jets, the Space Age, and the Atomic Age. It originated in Southern California with the Streamline Moderne architecture of the 1930s, and was popular nationwide from roughly 1945 to the early 1970s.

Photographs donated by Bruce Edwards

We have been going through our archives and rediscovered 20 slides donated by Bruce Edwards taken in 1983; a few of them below.

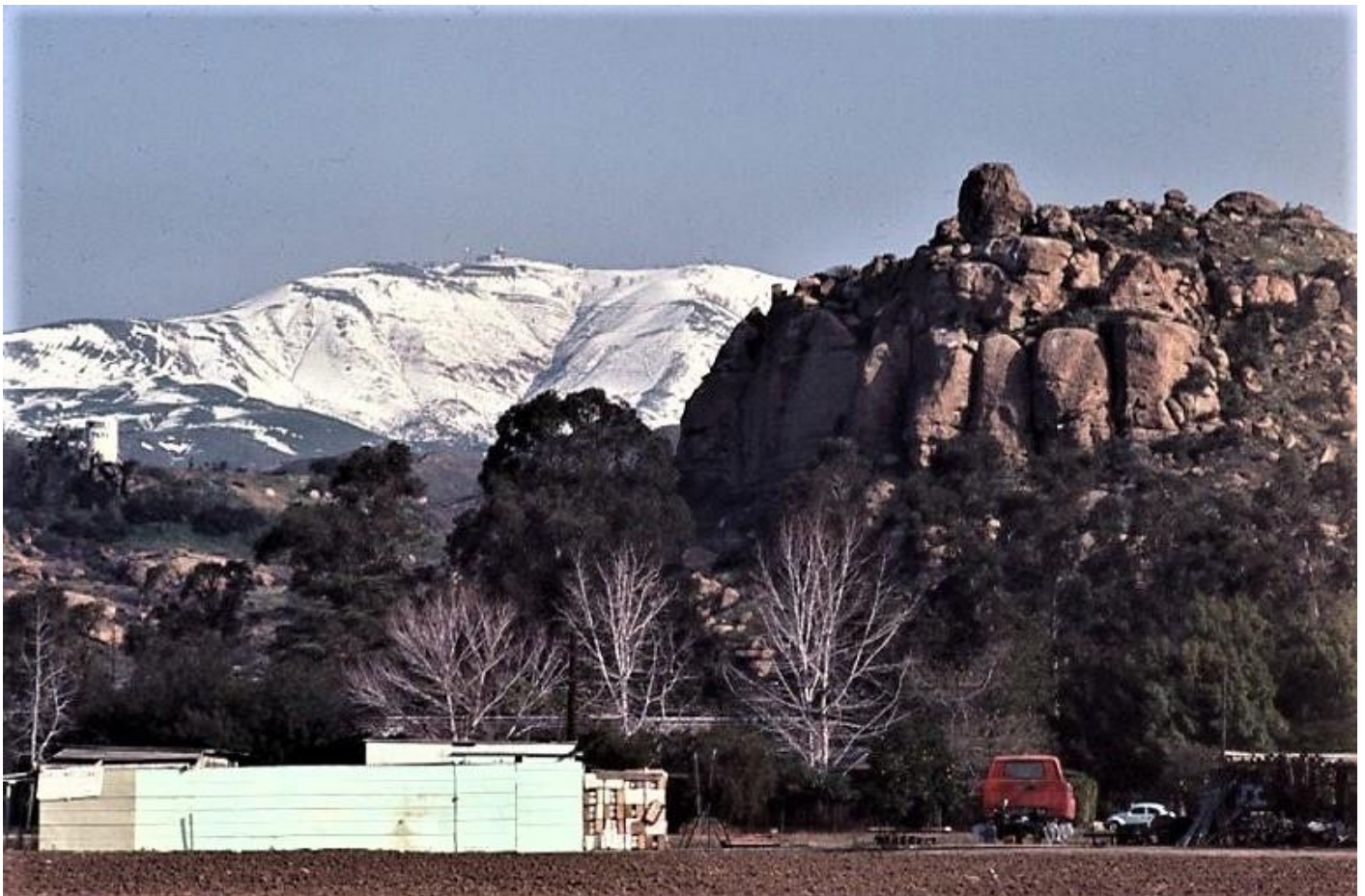


As the rainy season approaches, keep an eye out for the amazing waterfall that occurs in our Santa Susana State Historic Park. On a clear day, following many consecutive days of rain, you can see the waterfall from Devonshire as you drive west towards the Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park.



The slides above were described by Bruce as taken *“during the 1982-1983 El Nino rains”*.

Bruce described the photo below *“Stoney Point and snow on Oat Mountain from Chatsworth St. during 1983 El Nino rains.”* Notice the Vellone produce stand at bottom left.



Original Hill Palmer Cottage Renovations took place in 1979

We recently re-discovered a five-page 1979 Homestead Acre progress report. In July of that year Chatsworth Historical Society members restored Minnie Hill Palmer's cottage and prepared it for future tours. Members mentioned are: Chuck Janess, Tom Woodard, Jane Matthews, Ramon Avila, Lillian Schepler, Bob Swartz, Virginia Watson, Marlys Stuckenbruck, Lila Schepler, Betty and Jim Summers, Fern Jack, Bob Hayes, Jeff Ziemski, Larry Hoffman, Burrell Plucknett, Wynn Holliday, Larry McCoy, Marion Magee, Everett Cleveland. Organizations that volunteered their time included the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps.), Boy Scout Troop 266 and Troop 522.



They started in July 1979 and worked through January 1980 before the house was re-furnished with period items. The cottage now gives a look into the past to tell the story of the Hill family.

What I enjoyed in the report were references to the items selected to refurbish and decorate using early period materials, when possible.

The cottage has no screens. Prior to screens being available to use on windows, lace curtains provided air flow while restricting large insects and birds from flying through open windows. *"In August Fern Jack made curtains for the house. Jane Matthews found appropriate lace at Home Silk for the living room curtains. It is a glass cloth which will not fade or rot."* Forty years later, the curtains are in perfect condition!!

Another item purchased for the restoration was Congoleum for the front porch floor covering. It still exists today and has held up pretty well. The Congoleum floor brand was founded in 1886 and it is a much stronger, longer lasting product than linoleum. Other interesting comments from the progress report:

July 16, *"Much consultation this week about problems of family of five skunks living under the house. Suggested remedies – traps, moth balls, De-con covered with hamburger. SKUNKS ARE SMART."*

July 26, *"CCC finished floor scraping. Cleaned house. Weeded and tilled soil around bushes and trees. Collected rocks for foundation. Jane Matthews brought in cat trap for skunks from Animal Control."*

August 2, *"CCC came for a day to do further work on the house foundation. Enough holes have been blocked so that the skunks have moved on."*

1st Event Since COVID -- September 21st 2021 Ice Cream Social at the Acre



Fire Too Close to the Acre

Photographs by Linda and André van der Valk

On Sept 22nd at 4pm a fire started near Jeffrey Mark Court south of Chatsworth Park South. The fire was stopped at nine acres.

As you can see in the photo below, it burned the ridge just south of the Acre.

It's always a good sign when the Fire Department sets up defensively between you and the fire, in this case at the parking lot just south of the Acre. Linda and Andre were on hand to keep an eye on the Museum and Cottage. (See Linda's comments in the President's message on page 1.)



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

CHS YOUTUBE Channel
youtube.com/chatsworthhistory1/videos

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

Slideshare has a listing of our CHS presentations that can easily be watched online. We now have a total of 33 PowerPoint presentations posted. 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.

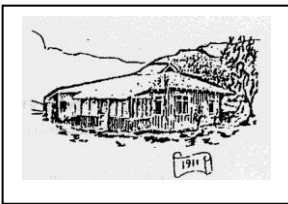
Please use the form below to renew your Membership. And if your neighbor is not a member yet, pass this newsletter on to them and invite them to join.

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



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| Yearly: | <input type="checkbox"/> New Member | <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal | |
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Reminder: If you got this mailed to you, an asterisk on your label means your dues are due!