

Smoke Signal

CHATSWORTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Co-Presidents: Linda & André van der Valk

April 2022, Issue #2

Editor: Ann Vincent

Co-Presidents' Message

By Linda & André van der Valk

It is hard to believe that we are already in the month of April. Time is going by so fast. April in the past has been our Garden Festival month and it is unfortunate that we could not have it this year due to Covid restrictions.

We are now looking forward to Pioneer Day as our coming back fundraiser event. Ann Vincent is already starting to get things going by contacting our blacksmith, gold panning, bee keepers, leather workers and other educational groups. We are happy to say they are all saving the date for us. Please put October 2nd on your calendar and plan to join us for an exceptional Chatsworth Day.

The Chatsworth Neighborhood Council just had Day of the Horse with Councilmember John Lee co-hosting. It was a great success, and it was fun to see the children participating by making stick horses and then running around the arena on them. There were exhibits of different horses, but I think the showstopper was when the horses with their riders did a line dance to the song Achy Breaky Heart.

We are looking forward to Earth Day on April 23rd. This is the once-a-year day that the public is allowed in the Chatsworth Nature Preserve. There are hikes around a loop inside the reservoir and community organizations will be on hand to share their information. There is an opening ceremony by Native Americans that should not be missed. This year at the event, the Chatsworth Community Coordinating Council will be presenting the Outstanding Citizens of the Year for 2019-2020 to Tom and Donna Nachtrab and 2021-2022 to Jill Mather and Don Larson. They are extremely active members of the community and also members of our Historical Society. (2020-2021 was skipped due to the pandemic.)

We would like to thank Councilmember John Lee for funding the trimming and thinning of our Los Angeles Cultural Landmark Olive Trees on Lassen. The work will be done on April 23rd and April 24th.

Happy Spring, Linda and Andre

Chatsworth Historical Society Board of Directors 2021-2022

Co-Presidents	Linda & André van der Valk
Treasurer.....	Jim Van Gundy
Secretary.....	Donna Nachtrab
Hospitality.....	Jelena Csanyi
Smoke Signal Editor.....	Ann Vincent
Research Director.....	Ray Vincent
Garden Director.....	Annette Campbell
Director-at-Large.....	Connie Ager

Upcoming Events

Open House

May 1, 2022 1-4 pm

June 5, 2022 1-4 pm

General Meeting

April 19th, Tuesday 6:30pm

Chatsworth Women's Club 100 Years of Community Service



Join us to hear about the people who made a difference in Chatsworth starting in 1921. The Women's Club, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Civic Centers they created.

Program will be available in person at the Homestead ACRE and on Zoom

Go to: www.Zoom.us or Dial In: (669) 900 9128
Meeting ID: 848 4323 4310 Passcode: 100200

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. Roses need their winter pruning to keep them at their best.



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

OPEN HOUSE is scheduled for the first Sunday of each month from 1-4pm. Our volunteers enjoy greeting guests and have fun sharing the history of the Homestead Acre with new visitors.

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 organize, research or 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 August 1, 2022

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

Included in this newsletter:

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

- **Chatsworth 134 Year Timeline March 10, 1888 - 2022**
- **Chatsworth Post Office History**
How our center of town evolved
- **Cottage Corner – Hoosier Cabinet**

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING

OPEN HOUSE

We have enjoyed the opportunity to have our OPEN HOUSE events on the 1st Sunday of each month, and have been fortunate to have good weather for each. We changed our format just a bit to welcome guests just inside the gate as they arrive. We count each of those attending to be able to report the participation level and have generally had about 40 people, but this month in April had 54. Many of our guests are first timers who have found the ACRE by using the park, many are Rockpointe neighbors and there are always our return visitors who tell us they have enjoyed our big events in the past and are delighted that we are open now. It is a lot of fun to share the history...so come join us.

Donations – Roy Rogers items

Thank you to Dianne Kartiala for the historical Roy Rogers donations for the Chatsworth Historical Society. The collection includes some tracing pages of Roy done at the museum, a record album, photos and newspapers. The donated package was nicely delivered in an original bag from the Roy Rogers gift shop!



134 Years of Chatsworth History

We had a very successful February program featuring the Chatsworth Timeline as we celebrated 134 years since Chatsworth Park was officially put on the map. Over 60 participants were on hand between online and in-person at the museum. Zoom has turned out to be a good medium for these programs and we are glad to have everyone have the opportunity to join us. As usual, we do post the PDF version on our website [Chatsworth Timeline.pdf](#)

Chatsworth Timeline

Celebrating Chatsworth's 134th Birthday, March 10, 1888 to March 10, 2022....

Sign at the northwest corner of Devonshire and Topanga, in front of Chatsworth Park Elementary – circa 1940s-50s

Note that the Duke of Devonshire Shield is shown on the sign, representing Chatsworth England



Devil's Slide Stagecoach Road

Used from 1861 – 1895...followed by the 1895 Chatsworth Grade Road... and the 1917 Santa Susana Pass Road

Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument #92 in 1972

Presentation: [Chatsworth Stagecoach Trail](#)



This program actually contained more than 134 years since we started out talking about our own sandstone boulders that are officially identified as the Chatsworth Formation by geologists. Native American history included our most recent Historic-Cultural Monument, the Apeta Momonga Mission Trail. After the Mission period our pioneer families arrived to homestead and begin our community before it was founded on March 10, 1888.

Stagecoaches, Train Stations, Trains, Tunnels, Bannon Quarry, Chatsworth Park Elementary School, Pioneer Church and Downtown Chatsworth with our general store were all just part of the beginning of our town. The movie industry found Chatsworth with Iverson Movie Ranch and continues to film in our community today. The newly updated Chatsworth Timeline program provides direct links to presentations covering each of the historical events we have captured over the years. Enjoy!



Iverson Movie Ranch – Garden of the Gods

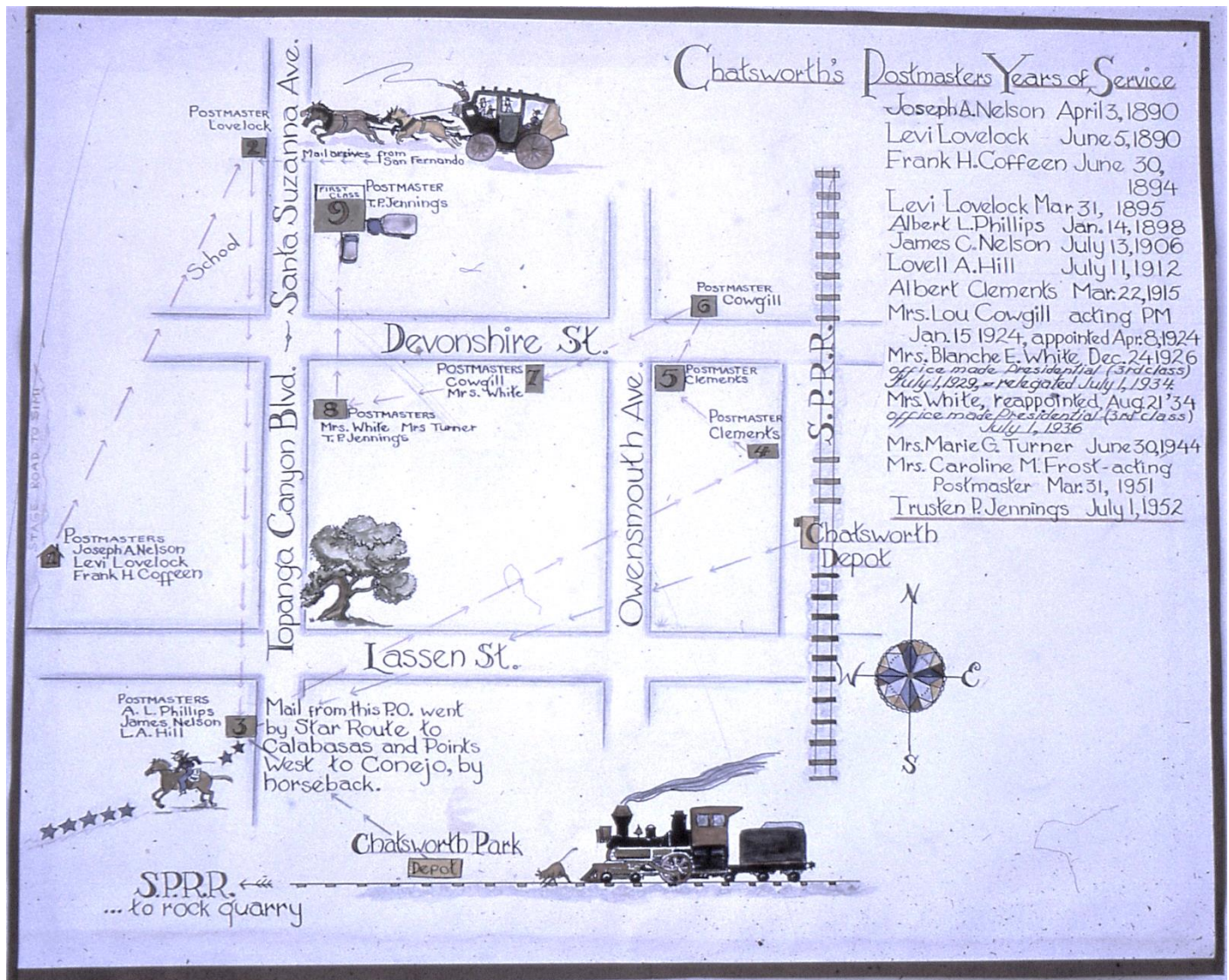
An estimated 2,000 films, dating back to the silent era, along with thousands of television episodes, were shot at Iverson.

Stoney Point in the background of the 1940 movie, *The Grapes of Wrath*

Chatsworth has had a Post Office since Mail Arrived by Stagecoach (republished/revised article from Virginia Watson, published in Patch Jan 11, 2011)

Chatsworth, one of the of the earliest settlements in the San Fernando Valley, has had a United States Post Office since 1890.

The photograph shown is of a poster of the various locations of the Post Office made by a former Chatsworth woman, Mrs. Elsa Braun. It was made for the opening of the Post Office when it was located on Topanga Canyon Boulevard just north of Devonshire Street in 1959. The poster shows the list of Postmasters and shows where the Post Office was located during their terms of office. Today's Post Office is at 21606 Devonshire St., and was opened in 1970 (and is just east of the 1915 post office location at Clements Grocery).



In 1890, the location of the first post office was on the Stagecoach Trail at the **De la Ossa Stagecoach Swing Station**, in today's Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park. The postmasters were Joseph Nelson, Levi Lovelock and Frank H. Coffeen. In 1890, mail was supplied from San Fernando, which was the only existing town in the valley at that time. Prior to 1890, mail would have been carried on the Stagecoach Trail from Encino or Simi to Chatsworth.

In 1895, the Post Office moved for the **2nd time** to a location on Topanga/Santa Susana Avenue about 700 feet north of Devonshire Street (*near today's Hiawatha St., just north of the Elementary School*).

In **1898**, Albert L. Phillips (*listed in the 1897 directory as Phillips A. L. & Co., dry goods and groceries*) was in charge when the Post Office moved for the **3rd time**. It was on the southwest corner of Topanga and Lassen, at what became the Graves Hill General Store, seen below in a 1912 postcard. The postmasters were Phillips (1898), James C. Nelson (1906), and Lovell A. Hill (1912). It was the center of town around 1900.

The **Graves and Hill Store** was owned by Fred Graves, one-time sheriff of Chatsworth, and Lovell Hill, Minnie Hill Palmer's older brother. He lived with his family on property known to Chatsworth today as The Homestead Acre at 10385 Shadow Oak Drive. Most everyone in Chatsworth had a charge account at the store. And one of the best-selling items was apples. Apple trees were not native to California and many of the people were from the mid-west such as Illinois and bought apples. Other big sellers were candy and tobacco. One could also hire a group of workers—a crew to help with planting, harvesting and other farming duties. Also, horses and mules could be hired from the store.



In **1915** Albert Clements took over as the Post Office moved for the **4th time**, just north of the 1910 Chatsworth Train Depot, west of the Southern Pacific Railroad about 300 feet south of Devonshire Street.

By **1921** (per the 1921 Owensmouth/Chatsworth Directory) it was moved for the **5th time** to the southeast corner of Devonshire Street and Owensmouth Avenue to the **Albert Clements Grocery** (and postmaster) on Devonshire. The 1922 photo (*at right*) reads “Post Office Clements’ Grocery”, featuring General Merchandise and Crescent Ice Cream.

Four women served as Postmaster for the next few years. And, by the way, it is always proper to say Postmaster, as the title is used for either male or female Postmasters. Chatsworth was growing and Mrs. Lori Cowgill was appointed Postmaster on April 8, **1924**.



The Post Office was moved across the street for the **6th time** for a short while, and then moved the **7th time** to the new 1922 Chatsworth Community building (*seen at right*), a brick building on the southwest corner of Devonshire Street and Owensmouth Avenue, co-owned by the Chatsworth Chamber of Commerce and the Chatsworth Women's Club. In 1925, a branch of the Los Angeles Public Library opened next to the Post Office in the Community building, and Mary Cowgill was the librarian as well as the Postmaster. This building was known after 1938 as the Lombardi Building.



Mrs. Blanch White became Postmaster in 1926 and the Post Office was moved in late **1927** for the **8th time** to the new Crisler Building at the southeast corner of Devonshire Street and Topanga Canyon Boulevard (*seen at right, joined photo below of Post Office window*). She served until Mrs. Marie G. Turner was appointed on June 30, 1945 and Mrs. Caroline Frost was appointed Postmaster on March 31, 1951.



Trusten P. Jennings was the Postmaster on July 1, 1952.

In **1959** the Post office was moved for the **9th time** to 10316 Santa Susana/Topanga Ave (*seen at right*).

It was a 4,000 sq ft facility reflecting the rapid growth of Chatsworth. In 1948 there were 400 delivery points in town, in 1959 there were 1,666.

A program for the March 14, 1959 dedication included [“Highlights of Chatsworth Post Office History”](#)



That is the end of the information that is shown in the 1959 poster/map on page 4.

The Post Office moved once again after the 1959 poster was made for the **10th time**, in **1970**, to its current location at 21606 Devonshire St., (*seen below*). It is a 16,000 sq ft facility. In 1970 there were 47 employees, compared to 13 in 1960.

Names of Postmasters since 1952

Trusten P. Jennings	July 1, 1952
William A. France	Nov. 28, 1970
Robert J. DeMaio	July 29, 1978
Raymond N Marcouiller	April 5, 1980
Carl N. Gaspari	May 29, 1982
Barbara A. Bell	Oct. 19, 1991
Ramona Franco-Mendnhal	Sept. 9, 2000
Joseph M. Knowles	Oct. 1, 2005
Clarissa B. Bognot	Nov. 10, 2018
Aline F. Conrad	Dec 18, 2021

As of 2022, this location serves 36,557 Chatsworth residents.





1895 issue
Benjamin
Franklin Stamp

Chatsworth Early Mail Delivery

We thought we would follow-up on our Post Office History article with some comments on early mail delivery in Chatsworth.

In 1888, Chatsworth was founded as a city of 10-acre parcels. And prior to that, beginning in the 1860's, homesteaders lived in the foothills surrounding Chatsworth. Most of those homesteaders lived on 160-acre parcels. Chatsworth was spread out with not many citizens; it was very rural.

In the 1860 and 1870 censuses, there was no column on the census for street or house numbers. In the 1880 and 1900 census, the census had columns for street and house numbers, but in Chatsworth, the streets and house numbers were not filled in. (The 1890 census was lost due to a fire in 1921 in Washington D.C., and is not available). The 1910 Chatsworth census had street names filled in, but no house numbers. The 1920 Chatsworth census had street names filled in, and "FM", for Farm in the house number column, still no house numbers. The 1930 Chatsworth census finally had house numbers and streets for most residents (sometimes the street number was "no number" or "hillside", or "farm").

Mail delivery during the early days was done by rural carrier (identified with Rural Routes, and Boxes, such as Route 1, Box A15). **Before Rural Free Delivery (RFD), citizens were required to go to the post office to get their mail.** At the 1959 Post Office Dedication, R.L. (Kelly) Johnson, the first and only regular Chatsworth rural carrier who served for 32 years, from 1922 through 1953, was at the ceremonies as a representative of retired postal employees.

An example of Chatsworth's rural growth and development is seen on the mailbox of Harry Graves, brother of Fred Graves. The picture to the right is the 1952 ranch mailbox, showing three addresses – • Route 1, Box A15 • 10755 Santa Susana • 22101 Tulsa



Another way to receive mail was to address it as "General Delivery". This was useful if you had not yet established a permanent address. It would be held at the Post Office until you arrived to pick it up.

The example to the right is a 1908 postcard written to Owensmouth pioneer Frank Knapp Sr., as he made his way to across the United States from Pittsburg to Long Beach and then Owensmouth by 1911. He would have gone to the Los Angeles Post Office to pick up this postcard from his family living in Austria.



COTTAGE CORNER

The Hoosier Cabinet

The Historical Society purchased this one on the right in 1979 to recreate the cottage kitchen for the time period of 1911-1920.

The Hoosier cabinet got its name from the state of Indiana because that's where they were made. Hoosier cabinets first appeared on the market in 1898, created by the Hoosier Manufacturing Company, which was popularly known for making furniture. Their popularity grew until the 1940s, when they declined, and the company was sold out and liquidated. They weren't just basic cabinets, which made them quite unique in every way. When they first hit the market, they offered the right solution to many households back then since the idea of kitchen cabinetry hadn't been implemented in most houses.

To confirm a classic Hoosier Cabinet:

Look for the hallmark three-compartment design: a deep lower cabinet, a porcelain workspace in the middle that can be pulled out, and a shallow upper cabinet. The workspace usually has a flour sifter, a bin for sugar and glass canisters for spices, tea and coffee.

Check the drawers immediately above or below the workspace (usually on either end of the cabinet) to see if they are lined with tin. These drawers are intended for bread.

Look for a manufacturer's stamp on the back or underside of the cabinet. Many companies manufactured cabinets of this style during the depression, but some of the most common were Sellers, Hoosier, Boone, Wilson, Kitchen Maid, Napanee and McDougall. If the stamp contains a date, look for a year in the early part of the twentieth century when classic Hoosiers were being made.



A vintage advertisement for the Hoosier cabinet. The central image shows the cabinet with its workspace pulled out, displaying various kitchen items like a flour sifter, sugar bin, and glass canisters. To the left, there is a framed illustration of a woman in a kitchen with the text "You and Your Kitchen". The advertisement includes several text blocks: "Places for 400 Articles" describing the cabinet's storage capacity; "Legless Sanitary Base" highlighting its design; a price range of "\$12.75 to \$50.50" depending on design and location; and a "Free Book" offer for a booklet titled "You and Your Kitchen" by Mrs. Christine Frederick. The manufacturer is identified as "THE HOOSIER MFG. CO." located in New Castle, Ind. A small note at the bottom mentions the cabinet's Gold Medal award at the Panama-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco.

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 39 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.

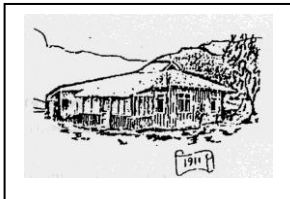
For those receiving email only newsletters, we will advise you by email when your dues are due.

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

- | | | | |
|-------------------------|---|---|---|
| | <input type="checkbox"/> New Member | <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal | |
| Yearly: | <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$15.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Family \$20.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Organization \$20.00 |
| Life Membership: | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 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!