

# 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 2024, Issue #1

Editor: Ann Vincent

### Co-Presidents' Message

By Linda & André van der Valk

We hope that everyone has managed to stay dry and did not have any rain issues. Since the new roof was installed on the museum, we have not had any problems. The cottage is also doing well in the rain.

We have finally gotten our new ride-on lawn mower and Trini, our gardener, is very happy. It is a bright yellow Cub Cadet and hopefully it will last as long as the old one did. The Chatsworth Neighborhood Council had contributed \$2000.00 to the cost of the mower. Thank you CNC.

The plans are on for the Garden Party and Vintage Wedding Dress Fashion Show. Ann, Jennifer Romero and Donna Nachtrab are getting the dresses ready. When Ann went through all of the costumes in our collection for the fashion show last year, she discovered many vintage wedding dresses. Tickets will be \$35.00, pre-paid, for desserts and tea. Tickets are on sale now on our website. It is one of two of our annual fundraisers. We have had some maintenance expenses this year so this will help.

We would also like to thank Ann and Ray for the great research that they do about the history of our community. Our programs have become an enormous success with a mix of in person and zoom attendance. I know that they spend many hours on the research for every program. If you haven't joined us for the programs, please do.

Happy Spring to everyone. Our daffodils and poppies are starting to bloom and after all the rain I am sure the gardens will be beautiful.

Linda and André

### Chatsworth Historical Society Board of Directors 2023-2024

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

## Upcoming Events



Rain Cancels

### General Meeting

**February 20, Tuesday 6:30pm**

### Skeet Shooting in Chatsworth Park South



Join us for a 1961 Andy Griffith Episode with Gail Davis at the Roy Rogers Sports Center.

We will also recap the 1951 to 1969 Sports Center. Program will be available at the Homestead ACRE

and on Zoom; [Zoom Meeting Link](#)

Or go to: [www.Zoom.us/join](http://www.Zoom.us/join)

or Dial: (669) 900 9128

Meeting ID: 848 4323 4310 Passcode: 100200

### OPEN HOUSE

**March 3, 2024 1-4pm**

**April 7, 2024 1-4pm**

### General Meeting

**March 19, Tuesday 6:30pm**

Fountain of the World

Come learn about Krishna Venta and the 1950's Box Canyon Cult.

## 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 always need pruning to keep them at their best. Everything is growing now and the garden is beautiful!



**IN THE MUSEUM:** Our docents continue to reorganize and catalog our early photograph collections. We have displays set up that we look forward to sharing with you, 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 visitors. Come join us!

**IN THE COTTAGE:** An inventory project is ongoing, as we confirm and learn more about the history of the items on display so we can provide more information on our tours.

## Memorial Brick Plaza



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

[Brick Order Form.pdf](#)

Our next brick order will be March 1, 2024

For more information, send an email to [chatsworthhistory@gmail.com](mailto: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. Right click with your mouse to open the link in a new window, so you can easily get back to the original newsletter.

- **Fashion Show**
- **Rose Pruning**
- **Cottage Repairs**
- **Dolls and More in the Cottage**
- **Standing on the Corner**
- **How Chatsworth Got its Name**

## WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING OPEN HOUSE

Our Open House events on the first Sunday of each month continue to bring new people to the Acre. The museum displays were updated to include early Chatsworth Business photos. The weather was perfect.

In January, we welcomed Mary Hoff and her son Steve who had never been to our Acre before. Mary is the granddaughter of Willard Johnson. Willard is the son of Ann and Niels Johnson one of our original homestead families. Apparently, Willard and Lovell Hill knew each other well since our records mention that Willard and Lovell built our 1911 Hill family cottage.

It turns out that our historical society had not had any contact with Willard's branch of the Johnson family before, so we are delighted to be able to share the history we have with them.



Steve Hoff and his mother Mary Hoff descendants of the Johnson homestead family.

Come join us for our next event!



**Garden Party & Fashion Show  
Sunday April 28, 2024  
12:30 to 3:00 pm**

Pre-Paid Admission/Donation \$35 per person by April 16  
Gates open at 12:30 pm to enjoy harp music in the Garden, come smell the Roses.

A vintage Fashion Show with desserts & tea  
will begin at 1pm. held under our spectacular walnut tree.

Prepaid Tickets are available at <https://www.chatsworthhistory.com/Events.html>  
Seating is limited.

The cottage and museum will be used for staging the Fashion Show  
and will not be available for tours.

HOMESTEAD ACRE 10385 Shadow Oak Drive, Chatsworth, CA 91311  
Located just inside the entrance to Chatsworth Park South.

Parking available at Chatsworth Park South,  
please carpool as space is limited.  
For more information contact: [chatsworthhistory@gmail.com](mailto:chatsworthhistory@gmail.com)  
818-882-5614



## ROSE PRUNING at the Acre

The San Fernando Valley Rose Society showed up in force on Saturday Jan 27 to help prune our 175 rosebushes at the Acre. We had new volunteers along with the old, and the Rose Society members taught us everything we needed to know to help prune the bushes. We managed to fill an entire dumpster with trimmings that day.



## Cottage Repairs - Wednesday Morning Work Days at the ACRE

Special thanks to those who helped us with maintenance projects at the Acre this last month or two.

Gary Standke removed a large broken branch in a tree and helped clear the thicket of bushes and trees that had become overgrown in our fence line. Gary is a great addition to our maintenance team! He looks at everything: identifying additional restoration projects to take on, reglazing and painting some cottage windows needing attention, repairing and securing the stove pipe over the porch kitchen, and aligning some of our doors that had sagged and were no longer easy to open & close. Gary also repaired portions of our cottage porch. As a restoration specialist, he likes to take on the challenging projects and make sure they are done right. When Minnie lived there, the stove pipe on the porch had been topped with an old coffee can to keep rain from coming down once it was no longer in use (An old stove or heater had been there before she had her all-electric kitchen installed in the 50's). The rusted coffee can still has can opener marks on it from its original use, but just enough rain had come down through it over time to damage the ceiling, so we took a closer look. After Gary sealed the coffee can to eliminate future leaks...the "historic" coffee can was kept in place.





## COTTAGE CORNER

By Ann Vincent

My research for this morning started when I was having fun cleaning up the children's room and examining the doll in the baby carriage.

Her name is Sugar Britches, the name given to her style by the original manufacturer Boots Tyner. This doll at the cottage is listed in our cottage



collection as a Porcelain Baby Doll, dressed in white, made by Louise Mitchell. It was donated in 1993, at the same time the carriage circa 1910 was donated that was purchased from Agoura Antique Store for \$97.00.

Apparently, you would order the porcelain head and arms (\$25), then paint them according to instructions. As a doll collector, you would make the doll yourself and dress it appropriately. This doll has a wig that is referred to as "Fool Hair" since it seems so real. 1986 was a very popular year for porcelain doll collectors.



To the right is another porcelain doll in a cradle in the children's room. The doll was donated by Rick & Jerry from Chatsworth Florist. The cradle was purchased in 1920 by Candy Craig's family making it over 104 years old.



### Other Cottage Activities:

Inside the cottage, Jennifer Romero and I continue to clean and identify items that need repair. The hand-made braided rug in the main living room had become damaged over the years, so Margorie Melendez, Rockpointe resident and Chatsworth Womens Club member (who has spent her life doing hand sewing and repair) was called to help. We had fun trying to figure out how to work within the existing braids to reweave a section of the rug with new fabric.



### Braided rugs:

These rugs became a staple accessory in the homes of early Americans. Not only were they being used in homes, but braided rugs were also found in churches, city halls, markets and other places. The most common of braided rugs is the oval shaped one. Strips of wool, cotton, burlap or clothing rags were often the fabrics incorporated into a rug design.

Our pioneer families were great at recycling! We have several braided rugs. In the kitchen is a 5-foot diameter round rug made of rags. In Minnie's bedroom there is a small round rug made of stockings donated by the Berkemeyer family. In the children's room a braided rug from rags was made and donated in 1980 by the San Fernando Valley Highlanders 4-H Club.

In November 2022 Kathy Chavez donated supplies that her grandfather had used to make braided rugs along with some of his tools. This included precut wool rolls, threads and some of the nylon string to sew it together.

## Chatsworth Street Corner Presentation

Our November 21<sup>st</sup> presentation was inspired by some longtime residents of Chatsworth, the Janess Family, who took pictures of street corners in Chatsworth in 1949 and 1963. We have added additional photos from our historical archives, so you can see how Chatsworth has changed over the years.

To see our full presentation go to [Chatsworth Street Corner History](#). Below are a few fun highlights.

Links to articles/presentations published by the Chatsworth Historical Society are in blue.

**Southeast Corner of Topanga and Devonshire** originally had the Crisler building, seen at right. It was later remodeled. Today it is the 76 gas station.



**Northwest Corner of Topanga and Devonshire....**

The Chatsworth Park Elementary School has been on this corner since 1890. In 1917 a new school was built, and the 1890 school was moved across the street to the southwest corner of Topanga and Devonshire (photo below, looking west). Later, the 1890 school bell tower was removed, it was given a second floor and otherwise enlarged to become a rooming house and restaurant. It was known in 1926 as the Maxwell House. The 1917 school building was replaced in 1935, built after the 1933 Long Beach earthquake.



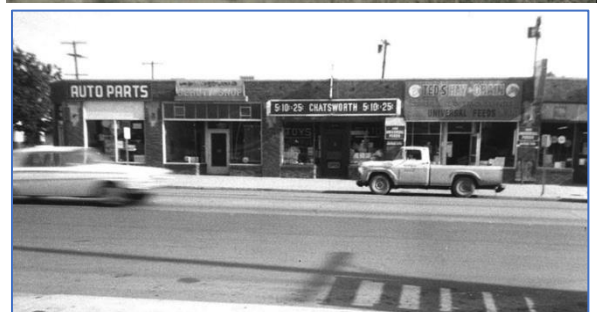
**Southwest corner Owensmouth & Devonshire 1922**

The Chatsworth Community Building was co-owned by the Chamber of Commerce and the Chatsworth Women's Club. Space was also provided for Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, and the Red Cross.

The Post Office was at this building in 1926.

During 1949 (known as the Lombardi Building) it served as a community center, library and Real Estate Office.

In 1963, looking south (at right), the Lombardi Building includes the Auto Parts store on the corner, the Beauty Shop, the 5 & 10¢ Store, and Ted's Hay and Grain







Across the street:

**Northwest corner Owensmouth & Devonshire 1950**

Loman Real Estate and Pony Rides as discussed in our [July 2022 Smoke Signal](#)

Today this is Country Squire Liquor.

The "old-time" façade is still on the top of the building.

The Pony Rides were west of this building



**On the Northeast Corner** currently stands the Cowboy Palace Saloon.

This location was formerly the Blacksmith shop, and in 1909 it was Douglas Products and C&R Garage (photo at right). Over the years it had many tenants including the Alamo Garage in 1927.

In 1955 it housed the Chatsworth Inn, Chatsworth Cleaners, House of Hanlon Glass, Chicken Pie Shop & Blue Hills Liquor; 1964 Morigi's Pizza; 1971 it was Giovanni's Rodeo Room.

At some point it became Wild Bill's, Ryan's, then Ryan's Roundup, to JR's, then JR's Cowboy Palace.

Since 2006 it has been The Cowboy Palace Saloon. Toby Keith sang ["I Love This Bar"](#) in 2003 at the Cowboy Palace Saloon.



**Between Owensmouth and Canoga, just west of the railroad track, south of Devonshire**

The Munch Box Opened in 1956, it is Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument # 750

[History of The Munch Box](#)

[2003 Huell Howser Visits the Munch Box](#)



**Southeast corner Mason and Devonshire**

1966 Chatsworth Cinema opening day (black and white photo far right)

1975 color photo near right





# How Chatsworth Got Its Name

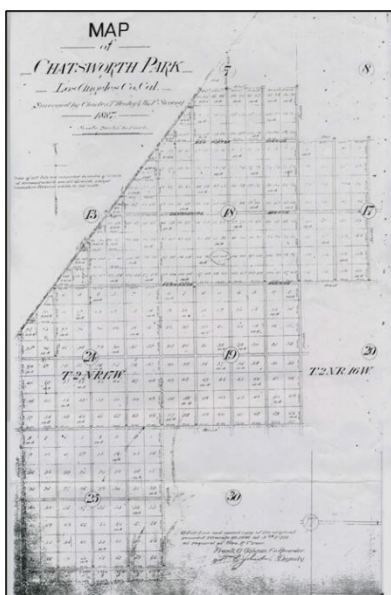
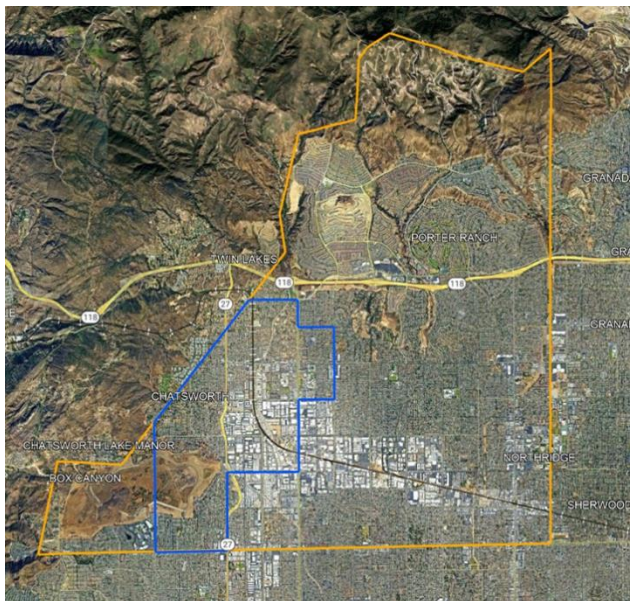
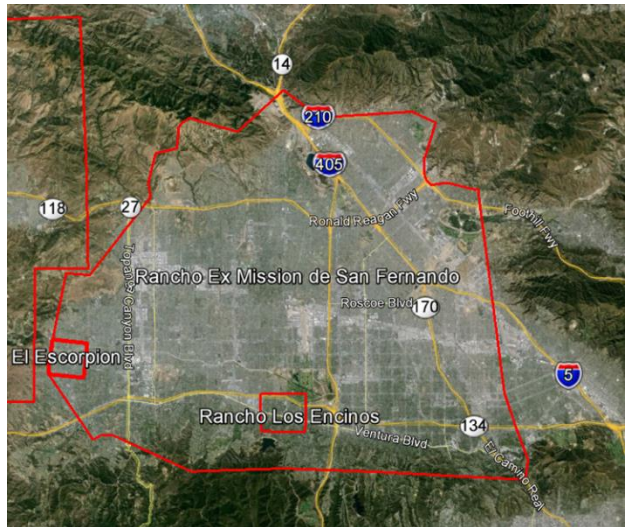
On January 16th we presented a program on [How Chatsworth Got its Name](#) for our general meeting. It was well attended both in person and on zoom and we had fun sharing this information. The full presentation includes a video of the current Duke of Devonshire and the story of Chatsworth House in England.

Chatsworth Park was founded in 1888 by the San Fernando Valley Improvement Company. The president was William Booth Barber, who grew up in Eckington, Derbyshire, which is 17 miles from Chatsworth House in Derbyshire, England. William immigrated to New York in 1841 with his wife at the age of 22.

Our story of Chatsworth begins in 1797 when Mission San Fernando is founded. In 1821 Mexico declares independence from Spain. To raise funds for the Mexican-American War in 1846, San Fernando Mission lands were sold to Eulogio de Celis, managed by Andres Pico (photo at right). The 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ended the Mexican-American war, and provided that land grants would be honored. Andres Pico had his headquarters at the San Fernando Mission.

In 1854 Andres Pico purchased the southern half of the Rancho from Eulogio de Celis and then sold the southern half of Rancho Ex- Mission de San Fernando to Lankershim and Van Nuys in 1869. In 1874 the de Celis family sold the northern half to Charles Maclay, George Porter, and Benjamin F. Porter. In May 1887, Benjamin F. Porter contracts to sell all of his interest in Rancho Ex-Mission of San Fernando lands (19,417 acres) to F.C. Howes, William Booth Barber, W.F. Barber and George R. Crow for \$485,439, or \$25/acre. Payments were to be made over 4 years. In July 1887, the new purchasers conveyed their interest to the San Fernando Valley Improvement Company.

On the right: Boundaries of 1887 B.F. Porter 19,417 acres in Orange, 1888 Chatsworth Park 3,364 acres in blue.



On March 10, 1888 George R. Crow filed this map of a subdivision called Chatsworth Park with the LA County Recorder's office.

Chatsworth Park was named after the Duke of Devonshire's estate "Chatsworth House" in England.

Chatsworth was originally planned as a farming community with the land divided into ten-acre family plots.

Only three roads were identified: Ben Porter Avenue (Chatsworth St.), Devonshire Avenue and Fernando Avenue (Lassen).

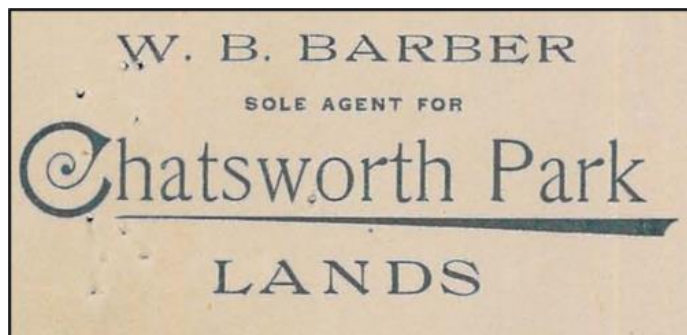
An 1898-06-08 Newspaper article in the Los Angeles Times titled "Large Land Deal" confirmed that by 1898, the real estate boom had burst and payments dwindled, with a balance due of \$257,613. As a result, over 12,000 of the almost 20,000 acres reverted back to B.F. Porter.



## WILIAM BOOTH BARBER

William Booth Barber (1819-1901) was the President of the San Fernando Valley Improvement Company; in 1888 he was 69 years old. His son-in-law Charles T. Robedeau (married to Lucy Barber) was Vice President, and his son William F. Barber was Secretary. The family Real Estate office was located in Los Angeles. They did not reside in Chatsworth.

William died in 1901 at the age of 82 and is buried at Angeles-Rosedale Cemetery .



## RECENT CHATSWORTH CONNECTIONS

In 1944 the Chamber of Commerce sent a letter to the Duke requesting the use of his family crest while promoting Chatsworth California.

In 1987, in preparation for the 1988 Chatsworth Centennial, it was suggested that we invite the Duke to come and visit for the celebration. Zena Thorpe was planning a visit to England later that year, and was seeking an introduction with the Duke to give him a personal invitation to the event. John Kelly, president of the Chatsworth Chamber of Commerce, sent a letter to the Duke of Devonshire advising him of our 100<sup>th</sup> year Anniversary and asked if a representative could meet with him. When a positive reply was received, Zena requested a formal Letter of Introduction from Mayor Bradley for her visit since she would be providing more information regarding the event.

She met him in his study and shared a glass of champagne. At that point she invited him to the Centennial celebration the following year and was delighted to hear he might consider the trip if he could consolidate it with a UK-LA 88" Arts Festival. This was great news, but did not work out through the British Consulate. Zena continued her correspondence with the Duke and requested a letter for our Time Capsule which he was delighted to respond with.

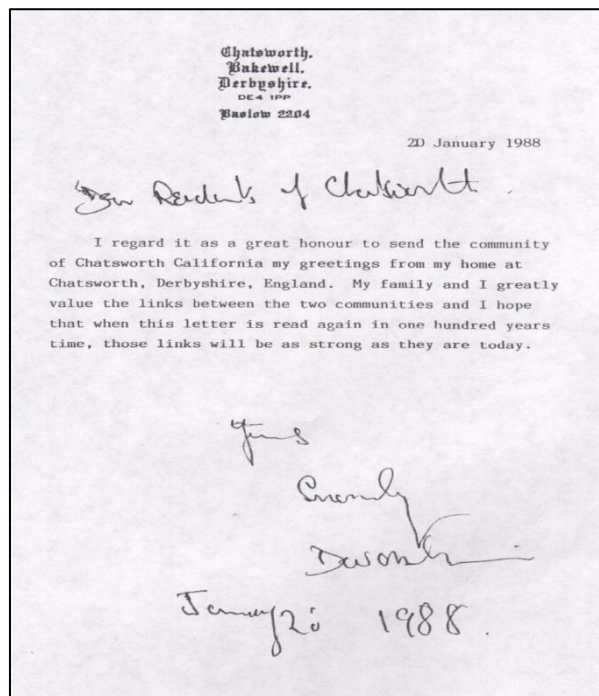
So, in 2088 if you happen to be around for the opening of our 100-year time capsule created in 1988, this letter will be available...still confirming our continuing connection to England and The Duke of Devonshire's Chatsworth House.

*"Dear Residents of Chatsworth*

*I regard it as a great honour to send the community of Chatsworth California my greetings from my home at Chatsworth, Derbyshire, England. My family and I greatly value the links between the two communities and I hope that when this letter is read again in one hundred years time, those links will be as strong as they are today.*

*Yours Sincerely (signed as) Devonshire  
Jan 20, 1988"*

Following her visit with the Duke, Zena later visited with the Duchess and became the sole distributor of the Duchess of Devonshire foods in the United States. This included items such as chutney, condiments, teas and biscuits. This continued for about 5 years until the business grew too big to handle from their garage, so she chose to focus on her quilting, as a world class contributor to the art.



For more information and correspondence to and from the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire [see our full presentation.](#)

# 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 ARCHIVES online at**  
<http://www.chatsworthhistory.com>

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

**CHS YOUTUBE Channel**  
[youtube.com/chatsworthhistory1/videos](http://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 45 PowerPoint presentations posted. 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 by mail or the link below to renew by **PAYPAL or Credit Card:**  
<https://www.chatsworthhistory.com/membership.html>

And if your neighbor is not a member yet, pass this newsletter on to them and invite them to join.

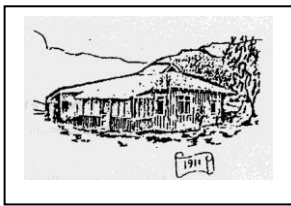


## CHATSWORTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

### 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!**