



# Chatsworth, California 1888 - 1988

Smoke Signal

January, 1988

Chatsworth Historical Society  
Chatsworth, California  
Virginia Watson, President

Volume 25, No.1  
Sheila Watts, Editor

## NEWS

**JANUARY PROGRAM MEETING!**  
JANUARY 19, 7:30 p.m. in the  
community room of Glendale  
Federal Savings & Loan,  
Devonshire St., Chatsworth

James, an accomplished musician who plays  
the viola with the Oakland Symphony,  
William, a student at UC Berkeley and Katie  
who has a successful Teddy Bear business  
in Calabasas.

Refreshments will be served at 7:30 p.m.,  
and the meeting will get underway at 8 p.m.  
Plan to attend - and bring along a friend.

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## SALE

BOOK SALE \*\*\* January 22,  
23 and 24

Our annual used book sale will be held at  
Topanga Plaza - we'll have two tables  
close to the May Company. Your help is  
needed in several ways - first, we need  
used hard back and paper backed books  
plus magazines; we need workers for the  
three days of the sale and we need lots  
of people to browse and buy books.

Please call Lillian to arrange for book  
pick-ups, to sign up to work and for any  
other assistance you can offer.

All funds raised by this book sale will help  
defray the Society's expenses in running  
the cottage, the museum and the gardens.

Lillian Schepler, chairman  
Telephone 341-2697

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**CENTENNIAL MEMORABILIA ON SALE** at  
Nature's Flower Garden. These lovely  
items include a commemorative plate with  
the Pioneer Church and its history; a belt  
buckle, coins, key chains, Christmas tree  
ornaments, tee-shirts, and sweatshirts.  
All proceeds from sales go to the  
Centennial Committee for the Birthday  
Celebration on March 10, 1988.

The speaker that evening will be  
Catherine Mulholland, member of the  
Historical Society and author of the  
recently published book, "The Owensmouth  
Baby," The Making of a San Fernando Valley  
Town.

The book and its subject will be the basis  
of Catherine's talk and should prove of  
great interest to our members since the  
town of Owensmouth became Canoga Park,  
our closest neighbor town to the south.

The book details the story of land  
developers and early settlers in the San  
Fernando Valley from 1910 to 1922,  
including a clarification of the connection  
between the building of the controversial  
Owens River Aqueduct and the buying of  
Valley land - what has been called the  
San Fernando Valley Land Grab.

A native of the Valley, Catherine's fore-  
bears have lived here since the 1880's and  
she is the granddaughter of William  
Mulholland, engineer of the Owens Valley  
Aqueduct.

Mulholland was graduated from Canoga  
Park High School in 1940, went on to  
receive a Bachelor's degree in English  
literature at the University of California  
at Berkeley then went on to Columbia  
University in New York where she earned a  
Master's degree also in English literature.  
Catherine then returned to Berkeley to  
work towards a PhD and during that time,  
the 1950's, taught English literature and  
also remedial English for engineers.

Catherine Mulholland's three children are

## President's Message!!

Dear Members and Friends: Happy New Year! At last our Centennial Year has arrived and we will be celebrating the 100th anniversary of the filing of the first subdivision map of a town called Chatsworth Park all year long.

The Chatsworth Historical Society is in charge of the big birthday reception-- part of the celebration spearheaded by the Chatsworth Centennial Committee. It will be held on the actual birthdate, March 10, 1988--it is a Thursday and it will take place from 1 to 4 p.m., in the recreation building at Chatsworth Park South.

Ralph's Market will furnish a big three-tiered birthday cake, thanks to Carole and David Randolph. Remember? He was the manager of the Ralph's Market in Chatsworth when it opened. He talked to the right people for us and made the arrangements for the cake. I told him about Minnie always saying that her family used to go into Los Angeles to shop with "old Mr. Ralph" when they first moved out to Chatsworth. Several times in the past Ralph's Market has furnished a cake for Minnie when she was alive as one of their oldest customers and we are grateful for the donation.

There will be a big program on the stage that day with the cake-cutting ceremony, hopefully the mayor as a guest and entertainment. We will display our fabulous Centennial Quilt for the first time then and plan to spend a little money on a frame to display it. I have started making a list of famous former residents to be especially invited to participate and the file box with the names and addresses is at Sheila's flower shop.

It is only three months until the event and the committee will soon be meeting every week in order to get everything done. If you have the names of anyone you think should be invited, please stop by and fill out a card for them.

Bea Berman, chairman of the Chatsworth Centennial Committee, is working along with us on the reception. She has already asked Johnny Mann to be master of ceremonies (he is our honorary mayor) but he has a previous engagement. She has several other people in mind to ask but no confirmation as yet.

More about all that later.

About our Christmas party. It was very nice, although it was a bit chilly. It

turned out to be a bitterly cold night and we had to hold the party in the museum because we have only one small heater and no way to close the bedrooms off in the cottage. We played games and had refreshments, a story about the way Christmas used to be celebrated in early California, written by Leo Politi, and we sang carols. Fern was there to play the organ but since we were in the museum, we sang without accompaniment.

I want to thank all our members who brought the Angel Tree gifts to the party in lieu of exchanging gifts between ourselves. We had more gifts than the 13 names we had asked for and received really really nice presents to be distributed to the needy by FISH. I took the gifts over to the distribution center on the 18th and the people working there were very pleased with them. There was also some food provided by our members and the society donated the live Christmas tree that we used on the float to a family. It helped to make the Christmas season brighter for us and for those who received the donations.

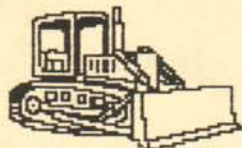
I hope all of you had a happy holiday season. We have a fine program, with our own Catherine Mulholland as the speaker for the January meeting. I hope all of you will come to hear her and to congratulate her on her wonderful new book. Don't forget the book sale-- there's more about it and all other events elsewhere in the Smoke Signal.....Virginia  
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WATTS' WHAT.....You will all be most pleased to hear that Eleanor Schepler has rallied from the serious illness that affected her throughout December. While she must remain on oxygen at all times, she is doing remarkably well. By the time you receive the newsletter, it may well be that she will be in the Chatsworth Convalescent Hospital. She walks twice each day with the aid of a walker. This was not the easiest of holiday seasons for the Schepler family and our prayers are with them all.

Ed Mitchell is being treated for ulcers and not heart trouble as was reported in the December issue. We wish him well.

Louise Robertson is holding her own following surgery for the relief of arthritis. She's not on the recovered list yet but is gradually getting there and Ruth Heumann is coming along nicely following foot surgery.

The wrecking ball and the bulldozers were busy during recent weeks in Chatsworth. One landmark that was razed was the Lombardi building. The structure was located at the South West corner of Devonshire Street and Owensmouth Avenue and in recent years had housed a number of different businesses.



On the corner of the two streets was Chatsworth Auto Parts also U.S. Glass, Georgiana's Animal Grooming clinic and Kahana's Stunt School. A variety of other businesses were located there during the many years that the building was in existence.

When the editor moved to Chatsworth, Kahana's store was occupied by the Bank of America and there was a women's clothing store on the other corner.

Anyway, Bill Schepler and Ramon Avila purchased some of the used bricks after the building was torn down and these will be used for projects at the acre, ensuring continuity of a little bit of recent history.

We need your help as we would like to reconstruct the history of the Lombardi building. According to Betty Summers, she came to Chatsworth with her family on New Year's eve 1934 because a dance was planned to actually inaugurate the new Lombardi building. Fate stepped in with a deluge of rain that has seldom occurred since - approximately twelve inches of rain fell that day and the dance plans were cancelled.



Lila Schepler recalls that the building was the headquarters for the Chatsworth Woman's Club and that it was most tastefully furnished with white wicker sofas, tables and chairs.

It is a matter of record that during the 30's it was the site of many fund raising efforts by the Woman's Club including jitney dinners, dime-a-dip dinners and dances, and funds raised were used to serve dinners to the needy - and many of these were men who dropped off trains that passed through Chatsworth.

**OUT OF  
CLOSED  
BUSINESS**

**CURATOR'S CORNER** The bitter cold weather this year caused me to thin back over other winters and I remember that this is the 23rd year since we moved the church. It was January, 1965 and Lila Schepler was president. The wind was blowing and we had a farewell service for the church and Art Honey read the poem he wrote.

We opened the cornerstone before we moved the church. I had talked to several old timers who remembered that there had been a ceremony in 1903 when the church was built. Richard Williams who was 71 then and in a wheel chair, remembered that he had put his name on Sunday School list for inclusion in the cornerstone. Richard talked to me through Nell, his wife, who could understand him.

Harold Johnson was alive then and he remembered that his father, Charles Johnson, was one of the people who planned the ceremonies. Minnie also talked about the ceremonies and she said, "I didn't go that day," but her brother Lovell Hill's name was on the list. We still have fragments of the list, however the material including a Sunday School paper and a list of the members of the Ladies' Aid Society and evidently people who helped build the church, disintegrated soon after we took it out of the cement block. It had not been in a box nor had any protection except the cement block and it was sealed with a piece of metal and then mortar placed around it. A family Bible was also in the cornerstone. It read "Franki Glascock, Central Park August 14, 19--", and in another handwriting it said, "presented in memory of," and then the inscription, "Died Sept. 1." Beth Loften of San Fernando asked for the Bible back--she remembered it was her brother's and that she had placed the Bible in the cornerstone, and so our board members voted to let her keep the Bible.

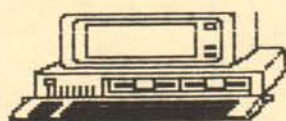
VIRGINIA

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IN MEMORIAM

Lillian Olsen Wangsgard died December 28 and was buried at Oakwood Memorial Park. She was 85 at the time of her death and had been in declining health for about a year.

Mrs Wangsgard had lived in the San Fernando Valley since October 1926 and she moved to Chatsworth in 1928. She was the widow of Irvin Wangsgard and the mother of Val and Louise. The family had a chicken ranch on Lassen Street between Owensmouth and Topanga Canyon on which they raised some 4,000 chickens. They sold eggs and chickens to friends, neighbors and dealers.

In addition to her children she is survived by three grandchildren, Chris & Neil Wangsgard and Charles Conn.



THE NEW LOOK TO the newsletter is the result of my fascination with the personal com-

puter that we acquired to use in the business. I am currently using a program called Newspro that allows for the inclusion of art - but it's not perfect! Prior to using this program I was using a word processor - that still has some advantages over this program.

The new banner shown this month is not permanent and we'll return to the original banner soon. I was just excited at the thought of the birthday year and experimented with the banner as shown.

We are still asking members to help us with stories of yesteryear. We still have all of Bill Schepler's "Window into the Past and we will reprint them when timely. In the meantime, do any of you have special memories of the following structures:

White Oak Hall, Docia Conley Co (Paradise Shop), The American Legion Hall, The Town & Country Cafe, The Village Coffee Shop and The Log Cabin Cafe? Then let's hear from you!

I believe that I've got ESP - no sooner had I decided to mention the above buildings than I received a most welcome phone call from Virginia to inform me that our friend and member, Leonard Chenard had selected the Historical Society to be the recipient of his charitable donation through his place of employment, McCormick & Co., of San Fernando, which with matching funds amounts to \$136.02. Thanks a lot, Leonard - this is really appreciated. Leonard still operates the Docia Conley Co., besides working full time at McCormicks.

## CENTENNIAL PARADE

The 100th birthday of Chatsworth was opened by the December 13th parade saluting the Centennial. Our entry was a surrey with a fringe on top, very well decorated by committee members who used only flora grown at the acre including birds of paradise, pyrracantha berries in large clusters, lemons and lemon leaves, limes and lime leaves, and roses of all colors. Big showy bows decorated the fringe and these were made by Millie Goff. It's title was, "Going Home to Grandma's, 1888." Riding on the float were Marian Hyland, Betty Summers, Millie Goff and Ramon Avila.



February newsletter. ....

The good news is that we won the SECOND PLACE TROPHY for our entry in the civic organization section. Sincere thanks to LOUISE ROBERTSON whose \$200 donation defrayed the cost of renting the surrey and the horses. There'll be a great picture of the entry in the