

Smoke Signal



CHATSWORTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

10385 Shadow Oak Drive, Chatsworth CA 91311

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President: Zena Thorpe

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From the president:

If you have been coming to the regular bi-monthly programs you will know that we have had some great presentations. Last month's was no exception. Mr. Glazner was just bursting with fascinating facts about the early mountain men, frontiersmen and plainsmen. Our next program meeting will be March 16. Watch for details in future Smoke Signals.

Your board of directors is very busy right now with arrangements for the California Conference of Historical Societies spring symposium to be held February 19, 20 and 21 right here in the valley. We also have a special lecture series coming up in March and then the garden festival in May.

John and I, along with Sheila and Keith, managed to squeeze in a visit to the Winston Churchill exhibit at the Ronald Reagan Library. Sheila and I decided that "Winnie" merits the title "Man of the Century." He really was a dynamic influence on the world of his time. (Okay, so maybe we are a little bit biased!) If you hurry you might just make the exhibit (it closes February 21.) It's well worth it!

Chatsworth to Celebrate It's 105th Birthday!

The Society will host a lecture series on the history of the area in celebration of the town's 105th birthday. We have received a grant from Councilman Hal Bernson's office that will fund the event. We are grateful for this assistance from the councilman and two of his deputies, Nanci Oliva Bond and Greg Smith.

Titled "Lectures at the Homestead," they will be held three Saturday mornings in March starting at 9:30 a.m., and at 10:30 we'll take a coffee/pastry break as well as conversations with the speakers. The second lecture of the day will be held from 11 a.m. to noon and all lectures will include time for questions and answers. An exciting series is planned:

March 13. Virginia Watson, "Why we celebrate our 105th birthday."

The lecture will be a comprehensive overview of the history of the Chatsworth community, replete with many vignettes.

Catherine Mullholland, "The Problem of Water!"

The lecture will give us a history of water problems and fights as well as the story of the speaker's grandfather bringing water from the High Sierras.

March 20. Bobette Fleschler, "Our Valley at the Crossroads of California,"

This will provide us with a condensed history of the Indian and Rancho days, the Mexican and Pioneer periods.

William "Bill" Schepler, "The Light at the End of the Tunnel,"

Life in Chatsworth emerging from the Great Depression. The interesting story of how a small town and farming community survived the difficult decade of history.

March 27. Tour of the historic sites in Chatsworth.

Those taking the tour will view the ecology ponds at Chatsworth Lake, the oldest adobe built at the turn of the century, the remains of the first dam and more. At the conclusion we shall return to the Acre for a tour of the Homestead.

Please join us and enrich your lives by a new look at what has gone before. All lecturers are well qualified and will share fun vignettes that will make history seem real and personal.

Lila Schepler, chairperson
Birthday Lecture Series.

Society Boasts Two Winners In Memory Series!

Last year the CHS received notice of a contest where senior citizens were asked to write up their memories of Los Angeles. Flyers went to historical societies and senior citizen centers and our society received several. Both Bill Schepler and Virginia Watson submitted articles and both stories were published

in the anthology entitled "Time Was."

The two authors have been feted with an autograph party and other honors. Most recently they were invited to read their stories at special events. Bill Schepler's memories of Chatsworth were well received at the Sherman Oaks Senior Center and Virginia Watson read at the Angelus Plaza Library in downtown Los Angeles. At the event she was interviewed by Beverly Beyette and quoted in the Los Angeles Times.

The book is available at local libraries and school libraries. A few are being sold by the editor, Noelle Sickels.

Balloons & Birthday Cake for our 105th!

"The History of the Huntington Library" is the subject of the Tuesday, March 16 meeting at the Acre at 7:30 p.m.

Mr. Charles Bausback will speak and present a slide collection regarding the mansion built by the Huntington family in San Marino. The speaker has many humorous moments to recount of the actual building of the mansion and subsequent residents.

Bausback is a Gold Rush docent at the Huntington and is also a research historian for the PBS series, "California Gold," featuring Huell Houser.

Please plan to attend and enjoy the program and refreshments.

Donna Afflerbach,
Program Director

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Please welcome new Member:

Bette Ann Williams
21615 Tribune Street
Chatsworth, CA 91311

The Society appreciates the \$5.00 donations of many Life Members that we requested to help defray costs of publishing and mailing Smoke Signals, program flyers, etc. Thanks for your support!

Memorials:

Violet Bell Wilson, mother of Virginia Watson and a long-time member and supporter of the Chatsworth Historical Society, passed away on November 18, 1992, just one day past her 92nd birthday. She was living at the Chatsworth Park Convalescent Hospital on Owensmouth Avenue.

Memorial services were held in the Pioneer Church and interment was near the entrance of the little community church which we all worked so hard to save and restore.

Memorial donations made in her name will go toward renovating the curator's office at the Homestead Acre.

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Henry M. (Hank) Watson, one of the original supporters of the idea of a Chatsworth Historical Society and the husband of Virginia Watson, passed

away on December 6, 1992, after a week at Kaiser Hospital. He suffered a stroke following cataract surgery and died of pneumonia. He was 76 years old.

A pioneer in the computer field, Mr. Watson opened the data processing department at Rocketdyne and was one of the first people to receive a Data Processing Certificate at New York University in 1962.

A resident of Chatsworth for 40 years, Mr. Watson loved Thoroughbred horses and held a valid California Horse Racing Trainer's License. For more than a decade the Watson's owned Equine Emporium and were the originators of the gift shops at the California race tracks. An avid golfer, Mr. Watson was a member of the P.G.A. and enjoyed all golfing activities.

Memorial gifts made in his name are also being used to refurbish the curator's office at the Homestead Acre.

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Ella Woodhead, mother of Sheila Watts, died peacefully in her sleep on December 31st, 1992. She was 89 years of age.

Ella was a frequent visitor to Chatsworth during the years that her four grandchildren were growing up - she usually spent 3 months here and three months in Virginia visiting her other daughter, Joy Broyles, her husband and family of three children.

Donations to the Society in her memory will be used to support Society projects.

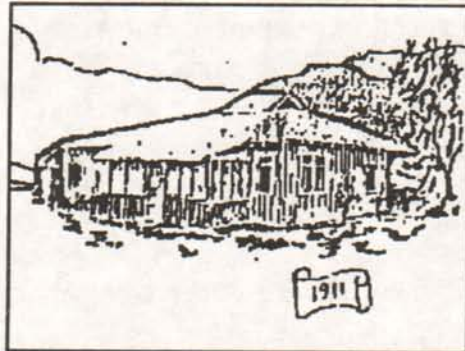
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Donations totalling \$155 have already been received in memory of the above people from:

Virginia Watson
Ralph & Marian Hyland
Jim & Betty Summers
Lillian Schepler
Donna Afflerbach
Bea Berman
Sheila Watts

Museum News:

Bea & Marshall Berman purchased carpet for the new curator's office in the museum and Keith Watts installed it. Many thanks for all the help!



Thanks to Candy Craig for sending in the following poem. It first appeared in the newsletter of the Monrovia Historical Society and was reproduced in the Huntington Museum's volunteer newsletter, "The Tattler."

Heavenly Reward

Many will be shocked to find,
When the day of judgment nears
There's a special place in Heaven
Set aside for volunteers:
Furnished with big recliners,
Satin couches and footstools,
But no committee chairman,
No group leader, no car pools.

No eager team that needs a coach
No bazaar and no bake sale.
There will be nothing to staple,
Not one thing to fold or mail.
Telephone lists will be outlawed,
But a finger snap will bring
Cool drinks, gourmet dinners
And rare treats fit for a king.

Who'll serve those privileged few
And work for all they're worth
Why, all who reaped the benefits
And did not volunteer on earth.

CHATSWORTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY LAUNCHES DRIVE FOR

"MUSEUM COUNCIL" MEMBERS

A Museum Council is now being formed for the purpose of updating the museum, purchasing new display cases, building areas of storage that are acid free for photographs, newspapers, memorabilia, artifacts and areas for the costume collection.

Those joining the Museum Council will receive a bronze-look medallion which hangs on a lovely multi colored ribbon with the engraving, "Chatsworth Historical Society Museum Council Member." It is most suitable for being displayed against black velvet to hang on an office wall at work or a den wall at home. As a conversation piece it will give the owner an opportunity to tell about the work the Society does to preserve the history of the 105 year old town.

Membership cost is \$100 and Museum Council members will be honored each year at the annual meeting.

We hope that many of you receiving the Smoke Signal will want to support this worthy project. Funds received from dues and ways and means projects support the ongoing expenses of the Society: insurance, utilities, part time gardner, Acre upkeep, painting, etc., as needed. These funds do not allow for any type of capital improvements. The Museum Council would make it possible to expand service to the community, to the hundreds of school children who tour the facilities on an annual basis, for the organizations and individuals who tour the Acre as well as those doing research for articles or books on local and west valley history. The preservation of a fine costume collection is another item of need.

Please consider this project and join with us. We shall be waiting to hear from you.

Yes, I would like to join in the effort to enlarge the service of the Chatsworth Museum.

NAME _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____ CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

CHECK ECLOSED _____ \$100.00

I AM NOT ABLE TO JOIN AT THIS TIME BUT I WOULD LIKE TO
CONTRIBUTE TOWARD THIS CAUSE \$ _____ ENCLOSED.

Make checks payable to the Chatsworth Historical Society
Please mail to the Society at 10385 Shadow Oak Drive
Chatsworth, CA 91311