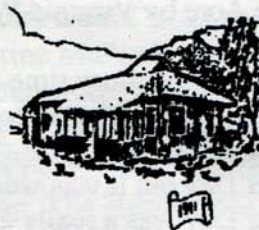


# Smoke Signal



CHATSWORTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
10385 Shadow Oak Drive, Chatsworth CA 91311  
(818)-882-5614

President: John Thorpe

November 1999

Editor: Zena Thorpe

Congratulations and many, many thanks to Bea Berman for organizing a first-class Pioneer Day. I am sure that I speak for the rest of the Chatsworth Historical Society board in thanking her for valiantly volunteering to step into the breach after the sad loss of our Ways and Means chairman. The outcome surely reflected on her hard work and dedication. Her report on the event appears elsewhere in this newsletter.

The Chatsworth Historical Society can now be found on the web, thanks to the work of graduate student Lara Bickell. The web site is:- [//grad.cgu.edu/~bickell/webpage](http://grad.cgu.edu/~bickell/webpage)

John Thorpe

## Chatsworth Historical Society Board 1999-2000

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Gardens Director.....	Dean Craig	341-4461
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## ORAL HISTORY & FAULTY MEMORIES

Our very own **Catherine Mulholland** will be the speaker at the next program meeting of the society, Tuesday, November 16th at 7:30pm in the museum. She will tell us about her experiences in pursuit of history. Copies of her book, "**The Owensmouth Baby**" and LA TIMES MAGAZINE essay, "**Something Lost, Something Gained**", will be available.

**Program: 8pm.** (Refreshments, book-signing & sale **7:30pm** and after program)

## MUSEUM NOTES

### At The Acre by Virginia Watson

It has been a busy time at The Acre these last few weeks. Everybody spent a lot of time up there getting ready for Pioneer Day but it was worth it. Pioneer Day was a really great success! And we finally got almost everything put away thanks to all the workers..

Ramon spent a lot of time earlier this year working on that beautiful gate near the front of the property where we always put up a fence for the Sylmar 4-H Club and their animals for the Petting zoo. This year he is making special pipes to put in the ground that have caps and can be left in the ground all year. When it is time for the fence to be put up again, bigger pipes can be threaded into the ground level ones to make fence posts. We won't have to dig new holes every year and yet the pipes won't be dangerous. Clever isn't it? Thanks a lot, Ramon.

Soon after Pioneer Day on Oct. 9th, we had the planned Siguro-Nelson wedding in the Centennial area. It was lovely. The bride was beautiful and so was the weather. Nina wore a Victorian-styled satin gown and a pretty white garden hat. The bridesmaids were colorful like flowers in the garden. We had a surprise when the minister came - he was well-known to the historical society. It was the Rev. Rupert formerly of Oakwood Memorial Park.

Linda van der Valk, Bea Berman and I worked and we made \$650!  
We have had several tours, The Wedgewood Convalescent Hospital came

with a small, interested group of people (about 10 of them). They enjoyed the morning and went on up to the park for lunch. Betty Summers and I worked and our new Docents-in-training, Connie Aker and Marilyn Frump participated as well as our loyal Pauline Aue who watches out for the gift shop and the telephone etc.

Wednesday, Oct.27, we are having the third grade students at the Santa Susana School nearby. It is our regular Wednesday-at-the-Acre and our docents-in-training will help again as well as Evelyn Kanouse and Pauline.

We are expanding our Wednesdays and you can read more about it elsewhere in the Smoke Signal.

We have two meetings coming up. We are hosting the Public Meetings to get the Interim Management Plan started for our new Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park. They will be Thursday, Nov. 4th at 7 p.m. and Thursday Nov. 18th at 7 p.m. in the Museum.

Dan Preece, former State Park Superintendent, is conducting the meeting to get input from the community regarding the immediate needs for the new park.

The SSMPA and the Foundation for the Preservation of the Santa Susana Mountains are funding the study to be submitted to the State Park officials. CHS is providing the meeting place for both meetings.

Please come and invite your friends to participate. We need hiking trails repaired and maps, we need signs, and historic preservation to name a few of our needs.

The newly formed Chatsworth Chapter of the National Society of Daughters of

the American Revolution has been meeting occasionally in the Chatsworth Museum since we allowed them to have their organizational meetings here. (We didn't charge them then) They are now an official chapter. They met at The Acre in September and October and will meet again on Nov. 6. They meet in the mornings on Saturday. They pay us \$25 a meeting. The regent is Pamela Meyers and several of our CHS members are members of the new group.

As I said we've been busy at The Acre the last few weeks and expect to go on being busy and a vital part of the community.

#### **GROWING UP ON THE HOMESTEAD ACRE IN THE 1920's AND 30's**

*In 1986 Dean & Candy Craig interviewed Minnie Hill Palmer's children, Edith Palmer Butler (b.1910) and Leroy E. Palmer (b.1912) and Minnie's niece, Ruth Manny Hill Rider. Following is the third in a series of a recording of the interview.*

The adults in the family were not churchgoers, but minnie felt Edith and Leroy should attend church to meet other children and be part of the community.

Unfortunately, Edith, who was only ten or eleven, had only one good, yellow dress. The other children made remarks about her always wearing it. She was very unhappy and pleaded not to go, but was sent anyway. A short time later when Minnie, on meeting the minister in town, asked about Edith's progress and was asked in return, "Do you mean the girl

who wears the yellow dress?", Edith was not forced to attend church any longer.

Ruth Manny Hill Rider, Minnie's niece, who often visited the house in the early 1930's, told us that the wide, square opening between the two living rooms was hung with portieres made of knotted heavy brown thread trimmed with eucalyptus buttons (seed pods) and at the bottom, red glass beads. These macrame type curtains were about 20" wide, floor length and were tied back so they formed a narrow drape.

The bedrooms contained; "a bed, dresser and chair and not much else" said Edith. Linoleum rugs covered the bedroom floors and the kitchen had a "Scrubbed wood" floor and a kerosene cooking stove. Kerosene lamps lighted the house and there was a kerosene heating stove in the west living room.

Ruth Rider said she had never eaten in the dining room because meals were taken on the porch, when guests came, and the dining room, although it contained a table, was used as Lovell Hill's bedroom.

Mrs. Rider remembered the dark green exterior color of the house, but said that, from any distance, the house looked dark and unpainted. Only the color on the rear exterior of the house was still in good condition. (Paint scrapings of the house confirm this.) (About 1958, Minnie had her grandson, Ronald Butler, paint the house butter yellow and he stated that the original color had been a very dark green.)

Rhoda Jane Hill, the family matriarch, was still living in 1933 and though very frail and often bedridden was still a force to be reckoned with. Ruth Rider told us that Grandmother Hill would tap on her bedroom floor with her cane to call for attention and that she still indulged in chewing tobacco. She loved showing a collection of brightly colored paper stars that she stored in a box under her bed. These were saved from the tobacco packages.

In 1929, nineteen year old Edith eloped with Laurence Butler. They subsequently had two children, Valerie and Ronald.

In 1935 Minnie's mother, Rhoda Jane Enlow Hill, who with her husband) James David Hill Sr.) had homesteaded the original sixty acres, died at the age of eighty-eight and a half. Very shortly after, her son, Lovell Hill, married for the first time. He was fifty-nine years old. He and his wife, Laura, moved to a house on Hagar St. in San Fernando. (Lovell Hill died in 1952 and, on his death, Minnie inherited a large part of the two hundred and thirty-acre property in Chatsworth. His wife, Laura, also inherited part of the acreage.)

Leroy Palmer married Ann Margaret Swenson in 1937. They had no children.

The 1920's began the Rural American Depression and most farm families did not participate in the prosperous times of the twenties. By the time of the stock market crash in 1929, the

farm depression had lasted for nine years and was to worsen during the 1930's. Only the New Deal farm assistance programs and the beginning of World War II produced better times, but by then the population of American farm families had been cut in half.

Candy Craig, June 1999

### **NOVEMBER GARDEN NOTES**

*from Candy*

#### **Get Ready to Prune & Plant Roses**

Jan. 1- Feb. 15 is the ideal time to prune roses in the San Fernando Valley. Here are a few tips to do the job.

Use *sharp* pruners. *Don't* remove more than 1/3 of the height of last year's normal growth. Take out all non-productive, dead or crossing canes. *Retain* as many healthy canes as possible. Make cuts just *above* an *outward* facing bud. Remove all growth smaller than a pencil diameter. Cut or strip off all leaves. Rake-up and dispose of all leaves and litter to prevent carry-over diseases. If you have had cane borers or wish to protect canes with large cuts, cover the exposed cut with white glue.

### **LEARN TO PRUNE YOUR ROSES**

For hands-on experience: Come to the Acre, Wed. **Jan.12, 10 am. for a Rose Pruning Demonstration.** Bring gloves and pruners. Candy (3414461)

## PIONEER DAY REPORT

To all the workers and volunteers, I sincerely want to thank you for making our Pioneer Day such a success. My job was much easier thanks to all the support and already we are planning for the year 2000.

We made approximately \$2600. Hopefully with some of that money we will be able to start fixing up our museum, like new shades, carpet cleaning, painting etc. It's been a long time and is much needed.

Again, the chili cook-off was a success with everyone selling out their chili. Our winners were: Bob Lowe - 1st place, Gary Berkow - 2nd place and the Kiwanis Club - 3rd place. Everyone raved about the cooks.

Our new added attractions certainly kept the kids busy. Panning for gold and the blacksmith were enjoyed by all. Also the beautiful Model T Ford, it was so shiny, I kept seeing my reflection.

Hope you had as much fun as we did.

Bea Berman, chairman

## CALIFORNIA SESQUICENTENNIAL EVENT

March 10th, 11th & 12th, 2000

Plans for this exciting event are going ahead. We have had confirmation of the speakers' attendance. Charles Bausback,

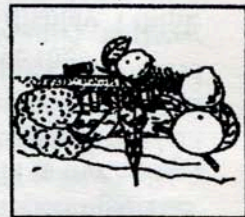
an expert on the Goldrush era, Albert Knight, expert on the Chumash Indians, a professor of history from CSUN and our very own Catherine Mulholland will all enlighten and educate us on the history of this great state. Pio Pico and John Sutter will be here in person!! Well, OK not *actually* in person. The History Alive! Chautauqua Program, a project of the California Council For The Humanities, will be funding the in-person portayals of these fascinating and important figures in California history. The Goodwill Industries, "Fashion Through The Ages" show will illustrate how fashions changed through the 150 years of statehood. This is to be funded by Los Angeles Times. There will be many exhibitions of dancing and music of the various ethnic cultures that make up the state. There will be gold panning, cowboy roping, hikes led by the State Park Rangers, lots of food booths and many other exciting happenings. The history department at CSUN is mounting a digitized historical display via two computers.

And, of course, we will have the Sesquicentennial Quilt for display. I think you will be impressed.

Save the date!

The next planning meeting for this event is scheduled for November 17th, 7pm at the museum. All interested people are welcome to participate.

Zena Thorpe - co-chair



Chatsworth Historical Society  
10386 Shadow Oak Drive

THE HIGHLY ACCLAIMED **VALLEYAIRES** BARBERSHOP CHORUS  
PRESENTS ITS SECOND ANNUAL CONCERT FOR CHARITY  
**SUNDAY-IN-THE-PARK 11**

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and  
AN OUSTANDING SHOW CHOIR  
from one of the  
SAN FERNANDO VALLEY SCHOOLS

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 7TH, 1999  
2:00 P.M. at the beautiful HALL OF LIBERTY  
FOREST LAWN MEMORIAL PARK/ HOLLYWOOD HILLS

REQUESTED DONATION - \$10 EACH

For the Valleyaires principal charities: Handicapped children and school vocal  
music programs and for other participating local charitable organizations

FOR INFORMATION: CALL (818) 994-SING

CHS CALENDAR OF EVENTS \* November/December '99/January '00 \*

Deadline for submission of events, Jan - Mar. is Dec. 5th Candy (341-4461)

**November 2, Tuesday: 7pm.** CHS Board Meeting. Chatsworth Museum.

**November 3, Wednesday: 9-12 pm.** WEDNESDAY-at-the-ACRE. Morning workdays at the Homestead Acre Museum and Gardens. Join Virginia, Betty and docents to help organize and catalog our collections, work on museum displays and the cottage. If it's not "raining, blowing or snowing", join Candy for hands-on trimming, pruning or planting. Bring gloves and pruning shears. Come for an hour or two, or all morning. Enjoy the company of others and The Homestead Acre while helping. info: Virginia (341-3053), Betty (341-2714) or Candy (341-4461)

**November 4, Thursday: 7 pm.** Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park. *Public meeting* to determine immediate needs. Chatsworth Museum. info: Virginia (341-3053)

**November 7, Sunday: 1-4 pm.** OPEN HOUSE. Homestead Acre. info: (882-5614)

**November 16, Tuesday: 7:30-9 pm.** PROGRAM and BOOK SIGNING (info: 341-4461)  
Catherine Mulholland, "**ORAL HISTORY & FAULTY MEMORIES**"

**November 17, Wednesday: 9-12 pm.** WEDNESDAY-at-the-ACRE. (See above.)

**November 17, Wednesday: 7 pm.** Sesquicentennial Committee Meeting. Chatsworth Museum. info: (882-3572)

**\* HAPPY THANKSGIVING \***

~~November 30~~<sup>Dec. 1</sup>, Wednesday: 9-12 pm. WEDNESDAY-at-the-ACRE. Help decorate the cottage for Christmas. info: (341-3053), (341-2714) or (341-3441)

**~ HAPPY HANUKKAH ~**

**December 5, Sunday: 1-4 pm.** OPEN HOUSE. Homestead Acre. info: (882-5614)

**December 7, Tuesday: 7 pm.** CHS Board Meeting. Chatsworth Museum.

**December 8, Wednesday: 9-12 pm.** WEDNESDAY-at-the-ACRE. (See above)

**December 11, Saturday: 2 p.m.** Help Decorate the CHS PARADE FLOAT. Homestead Acre. info: (882-3572)

**December 12, Sunday: 1 pm.** ANNUAL CHATSWORTH PARADE. (Devonshire St.)

**December 15, Wednesday: 9-12 pm.** WEDNESDAY-at-the-ACRE (See above)

**December 15, Wednesday: 7 pm.** Sesquicentennial Committee Meeting, Chatsworth Museum

**MERRY CHRISTMAS and HAPPY NEW YEAR 2000**

**January 2, Sunday: 14 pm.** OPEN HOUSE. The Homestead Acre.

**January 4, Tuesday: 7 pm.** CHS Board Meeting. John Thorpe, Pres. (882-3572)

**January 5, Wednesday: 9-12 pm.** WEDNESDAY-at-the-ACRE. (See above)

**January 12, Wednesday: 9-12 pm.** WEDNESDAY-at-the-ACRE (See above)

• ROSE PRUNING DEMONSTRATION , 10 am.