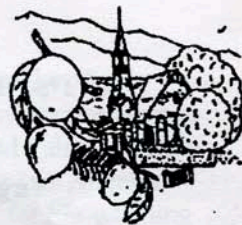


Chatsworth Historical Society
10385 Shadow Oak Dr., Chatsworth CA 91311
(818) 882-5614



Smoke Signal

www.historicalsocieties.net

Co-Presidents: Andre & Linda van der Valk

September 2002

Editor: Zena Thorpe

We hope everyone had a wonderful summer. We are now getting ready for the fall. At The Acre that means Pioneer Day. Bea Berman is extremely busy getting all the details done so that we may have another successful Pioneer Day. That is not an easy task and Bea really deserves all of our thanks for doing this for us.

We just had Membership Round-Up on September 8th. The weather was perfect and the gardens, thanks to Betty, were looking great. Jim Summers and his barbershop quartet, The Sixty Somethings, entertained us. The members of Jim's quartet are Chuck Walton, Bob Platzer and Dave Livingston. They gave us a little background on barbershop quartets, a demonstration of how they harmonize and then they performed. Everyone there enjoyed the performance.

We dedicated the memorial plaque for The Dean and Candy Craig Memorial Garden. With their family in attendance, it reminded all of us how much we miss Dean and Candy.

Thank you to everyone who attended, brought food and just enjoyed the evening with us.

Linda & Andre

Chatsworth Historical Society Board 2002-2003

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PROGRAM MEETING October 15th, 2002, 7pm

Howard K. Dunbar Jr., a telephone enthusiast, will speak about the history of this important development in communication and will show many examples from his unique collection of antique telephone sets.

This promises to be a fascinating presentation. Please join us for our first meeting of the Society year.

Refreshments will be served.

WHAT'S NEW AT THE ACRE

By
Virginia Watson

October 6th is our Pioneer Day. We are going to have an "Old Timer's Reunion" this year at 2 p.m. It will be held under the big black walnut tree where it is shady. There will be prizes for the oldest old timer who attends, for the one who comes the farthest, and for the one who has lived in Chatsworth the longest. If you know anyone who might like to come call me at 818-341-3053 and give me the name so I can have them on the list to be introduced.

A PLANNING DEPARTMENT TOUR will take place at 1pm p.m. on Wednesday, October 23rd here at The Acre.

One Wednesday recently two ladies stopped by and asked about having a tour. Anna M. Vidal and Stacie W. Sanders were from the Planning Department and we are happy to show them our treasure. Their tour is to see the open spaces in the West Valley.

CORRECTION - Last month I wrote about Ramon Avila and his experiences in World War II but I made an error. I said he was wounded in Italy, but he was in North Africa when it happened. Sorry for the error. Ramon is currently taking off the metal caps he designed for the temporary fence at The Acre. It is for the petting zoo so that the 4-H animals will have a nice safe place for Pioneer Day. He also designed and built the beautiful gate for the enclosure. CHS has a little plaque to place on the gate to show our gratitude.

Keith Watts, our vice president in charge of membership, reports that our recent Membership roundup was a big success. At the potluck we received 10 renewals of membership and 9 new members joined. Later another person joined and now we have 20 new memberships 10 renewals and 10 new members.

Also we have a New Life Member. Connie Ager who has been a member for several years paid for a membership in her recently deceased husband, Gerry Ager's name. Connie is one of our younger members who grew up in Chatsworth and is one of our docents.

PIONEER DAY October 6th, 2002

Time is growing near and plans are going ahead for our annual PIONEER DAY, Sunday, October 6th at The Homestead Acre from 11:00am - 4:00pm.

Put that date on your calendar and we hope to see you then. We've planned a fun day for all. Still need entries for our Chili Cook-Off and any items for our White Elephant Sale.. Also, if you would like to bake we'd love to sell it at our Bake Sale. Any information, please call me at (818) 341-5449

Bea Berman, chairman

NOTES FROM THE BOARD MEETING

The program for November 19th will feature the video made by HGTV Simply Quilts documenting the making of the California Sesquicentennial Quilt.

All of the pictures in the museum are being put into new frames. We hope to have this completed in time for Pioneer Day.

MEMBERSHIP ROUNDUP

The entertainment by the barbershop quartet for the Membership Round-Up and also the entertainment by David Arlen for Pioneer Day has been made possible by a grant from Los Angeles City Cultural Affairs Dept. through the office of Councilman Hal Bernson.

VALLEY VIGNETTE

Minnie Hill Palmer
By Virginia Watson

Minnie Alice Hill was born on the property we now call, "The Homestead Acre" on November 30, 1886. That was in the fall of the same year that her parents settled on 110 acres outside the Ex-Mission San Fernando land grant. That was two years before the town of Chatsworth Park was recorded in March 1888. Minnie said that when she wrote to the census bureau for confirmation of her birth they listed it as the end of December, but she said the family always celebrated on November 30. Minnie was the seventh of eight children born to her parents, James David and Rhoda Jane Hill. Most of her brothers and sisters were much older than Minnie. But a younger sister, Calla Lily was born four years later in 1890 on the same property here in Chatsworth. Minnie and "Callie", as she was called, had little time to play, but grew up on the ranch roaming the hills that were covered with blue mountain lilac in the spring and helping with the chores at home. Minnie went to school where the Chatsworth Park Elementary School is today. It was called The Santa Susana School then and we have a picture of it in our collection. Minnie started in the first grade (they didn't have kindergarten then) and went all the way to what she called "high school." There were classes held in the "Pioneer Church" for older students in 1904,

Minnie said in an interview in the 1960's She met her future husband when she went in to Los Angeles to visit. Alfred Palmer lived in the vicinity of 118th Street in Los Angeles. In order to earn extra money for her wedding Minnie worked at "cutting fruit" for the N. A. Gray family who owned an orchard on Lassen Street near Topanga Canyon Boulevard. Her sister-in-law, Eva Hill, made the dress after Minnie's brother, Lovell bought the material. The CHS has a picture of Minnie and Alfred on their wedding day, August 12, 1909 hanging on the wall.

"Cutting fruit" was a step in the process of drying fruit. The Gray family raised apricots. First they were cut and the seeds removed, then the fruit was placed on the roof of the "cutting shed" to dry. Minnie said that many of the early families in Chatsworth worked at cutting and drying fruit locally and also traveled to nearby Simi Valley to help in orchards there.

EDITOR'S NOTES

The September 23rd meeting of the Chatsworth Community Coordinating Council will feature Anna Cox who will speak on the Deerlake Highlands development plans.

The October 28th meeting of the Council will present a panel of speakers from both sides of the Valley Secession issue. Meetings start at 11:30 a.m.

We want to encourage members to support the businesses that support The Acre in many different ways. Even just stopping by and saying thank you would be nice.

Chatsworth Florist - Jerry & Rick

Foto Speed, Owensmith & Devonshire - Cliff

The Munch Box - Claire & Buck