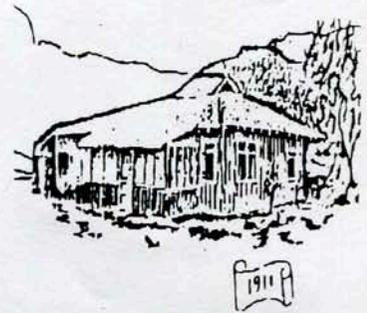


# Smoke Signal



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

Co-Presidents: Andre & Linda van der Valk

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Editor: Zena Thorpe

Today was Pioneer Day. We had a wonderful day and everything worked out fine. We have a new appreciation of all the hard work Bea puts into Pioneer Day. Bea went out of town for a family affair and if she does it again when we have a major event she will be in big trouble!!

We would like to thank all of the families and friends who helped out on Pioneer Day. It means a lot to all of us at The Acre to have the help. We want especially to acknowledge the help from Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Dept., through the offices of Councilman Hal Bernson, with funding for the musical entertainment this day.

We hope to see everyone at the next meeting and we will have details on the success of Pioneer Day.

Linda & Andre van der Valk

## EDITOR'S NOTES

This is an abbreviated edition of the Smoke Signal because of the recent flurry of activity with Pioneer Day but don't forget our next program meeting on **October 15th at 7pm when Howard Dunbar will present a fascinating program featuring his collection of antique telephones and the story of the history of the telephone.**

## VALLEY VIGNETTE

By Virginia Watson

Nelson A. Gray and his wife, Minerva, were two of the early pioneers who settled in the young agricultural town of Chatsworth Park in about 1890.

They came to the area from Pasadena and bought acreage for farming. They owned the land from about Lassen Street north to a little past Devonshire Street and from Topanga Canyon Boulevard west to about the county line.

They were a very influential family in the community. They were devout Christians who attended the non-denominational services held in people's homes or under the big old oak trees. They had 13 children (two sets of twins) and all the children attended Sunday School and church with the family.

Gray served as president of the Chatsworth Park Chamber of Commerce and gave the land for the church, the school and the fire station at Marilla Street.

Gray family descendants tell of church members holding a meeting to decide exactly where to place the building they were planning. The discussion became heated with many suggestions and much discussion about the location and the price. Gray is said to have been quiet throughout most of the meeting but finally, tiring of the discussion, announced that he had donated the land for the school and that if the church members would agree to place the building halfway between his property at Lassen Street and Topanga and the schoolhouse at Devonshire Street and Topanga, (then called Santa Susana Avenue), he would donate the land.

The group promptly accepted his offer and in 1903 the building was completed at 10051 Topanga Canyon Boulevard and became a landmark in the community.

In 1962 the Methodist congregation moved out of the white frame building into larger quarters farther north with more parking at 10824 Topanga Canyon Boulevard and the little building was deserted and headed for destruction by its new owner.

Named Los Angeles Cultural Historical Monument Number 14 by the Cultural Heritage Board, the newly formed Chatsworth Historical Society was given the building and in January 1965 they moved it into the northwest corner of Oakwood Memorial Park, 22601 Lassen Street.

Today the building is occupied by the congregation of St. Mary the Virgin Anglican Rite Catholic Church and services are held at 10 a.m. every Sunday. Also the building is open for tours from 1-4 p.m. on the first Sunday of every month.