

# Smoke Signal

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



November 2009, Issue #5

Co-Presidents: André & Linda van der Valk

Editor: Ann Vincent

## Co-Presidents' Message

By Linda & André van der Valk

It is hard to believe that it has already been a month since Pioneer Day, but I want to make sure to thank Bea Berman for another great job. This was one of our most successful Pioneer Days. We estimate that at least 800 people came through the gates. We could not have asked for better weather. It was just a beautiful day in Chatsworth.

The Acre has been busy with school tours and an Eagle Project that is being done at the Acre. We are holding our own even though the Park is still closed. We have heard that there is money for another round of testing in the park but I think it will be a while before there is money for the clean up.

I recently attended a training session along with Jelena and Virginia that was held at the Acre. The training was for State Park volunteers. The SSMPA has organized training sessions in case the Santa Susana Pass State Historical Park is closed due to budget cuts. The State has agreed to work with a group of volunteers who will monitor the park and report graffiti or other suspicious activities. It was great to see how many people are willing to volunteer their time to keep the park open. There were 30+ people at this first training session and there is another one planned for the next SSMPA meeting. We always like to say Chatsworth is just a great community and if there is a need everyone is willing to jump in and help.

Remember to mark your calendars for the Christmas Party December 15th.

We hope everyone has a Happy Thanksgiving and Happy Holidays. Linda and André

## CHRISTMAS PARTY - December 15th

Mark your calendars for our annual Christmas Party at the home of Andre and Linda van der Valk. The party starts at 7:00 PM on Tuesday December 15th. This is the only notice you will have since there will not be another Smoke Signal until January.

Feel free to bring a guest and call the acre and leave a message if you are coming so we have some idea how many people will be coming. A RSVP is not necessary but last year we ran low on food.

Linda and André van der Valk  
10524 Eton Ave. Chatsworth

Chatsworth Historical Society  
Board of Directors 2009-2010

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Programs, Ways & Means.....	Bea Berman
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Recording Secretary.....	Elaine Campbell
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Cottage Curator.....	Betty Summers
Hospitality.....	Jelena Csanyi
Garden Director.....	Jim & Betty Summers
Director-at-Large.....	Beverly King
Director-at-Large.....	Evelyn Hutcheson
Permanent Member.....	Lila Schepler

## Upcoming Events at the HOMESTEAD ACRE

### General Meeting – November 17 7:00 pm

Twenty years ago the Berlin Wall came down ending the Cold War. There will be a discussion on Cold War Veterans, their impact and their important service for our country.

### Christmas Party – December 15 7:00 pm

See Information shown on left.

### Docent Workshops

Workshops meet every Wednesday, 9:00am to noon under the direction of Virginia Watson. Docents are trained to provide tours and assist with projects related to the museum and gardens. Contact Virginia Watson at 818-341-3053 for additional information.

### Museum & Grounds Open House

The Homestead Acre continues to be open to the public the first Sunday of each month from 1 to 4 pm.

### GARDEN FESTIVAL – April 25, 2010

Mark your calendar – we look forward to seeing you there. Invite your neighbors to join us.

## Ways & Means

Bea Berman – Chairman

I know it's a little late but a thank you is always welcome. Our PIONEER DAY was a tremendous success, making about \$4,500.00 and I owe the success to so many people.

First of all, set up went so smoothly with help from all our regulars including Bob Dager, Tom Harrison, the Huffman boys, my son-in-law Gary, and daughters Randi and Jessica.

Then came Sunday. I want to start by thanking Councilman Greig Smith for providing the shuttle bus which was a tremendous help. Hang on for the rest of these, there are lots: Andy Gump for the portable potties; Randy Mineo for bringing plants also helping with setup and takedown; the Elders for bringing us the Doctors buggy; Pat Keene for his gold panning group; Dr. Gary Standke and his wife, Nita, for the blacksmithing and churning butter with fresh baked biscuits; Matt Mitchell for brining his grandfathers wire display; Linda Paduano



Connie Ager, Janine Bergez and Betty Summers at the plant stand

from Market West for bringing plants and working the plant booth along with Janine Bergez doing a great job; Rod and Loretta Sandavol for their great pastry and handling the bake sale; Elaine Campbell and her daughter Janis for the White Elephant booth; Beverly King and Betty Summers for the tours in the house; Ingrid Lindquist and Irene Nalbandian for doing such a great job at the gate; Joey Magic for donating his magic tricks; Trader Joes for donating ten cases of water; Ann and Ray Vincent for doing so much besides manning the Rail Road ties for the kids; Harriet van Tiger for stepping in and handling the children's activities; Ms. Pena from Lawrence Middle School bringing us boys and girls



Nita Standke baking biscuits with fresh churned butter

from the Leadership class to help with Chores of Yore. We also had wonderful helpers from Chatsworth High School. Also thanks go to the Woodcarvers and Rock Chippers who share their hobbies with us, the San Fernando Valley Historical Society for showing how to make adobe bricks, Virginia Watson, Evelyn Kanouse and Karine Panichi, for staffing the museum and it was great to have Virginia's grandson, granddaughter and great-granddaughter helping us. I was proud of my granddaughter, Jessica for showing the kids how to make bracelets with materials donated by her mother, Randi. My friend Michelle DeGaetano also helped Jessica.



Jessica Bercow teaching beaded bracelets

Parking was great with Tom Harrison and Ray Vincent getting things started. I indoctrinated my new son-in-law Rico into working Pioneer Day parking with Tom all day and he did a phenomenal job.

The Chili Cook-off went nicely, although I would have liked to have seen more entries. A special thanks to Buck from the Much Box who sponsors our trophy and for being a judge with his son Andy. The other judges were Kim Huffman and Officer Danny Del Valle, thanks for doing such a great job. Our winners were:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Place – Kiwanis
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Place – Yorks & Lancs (John Thorpe)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Place – Kiwanis second entry

Our information booth was special this year as we were pushing new members and Jelena Csanyi did such a fantastic job besides being all over the place whenever needed. Then there's the quiet one, Jim Summers, who is all over the place helping everyone, we couldn't be without him.

I guess I always leave Linda and Andre for last because they are my sounding board and keep us all going. The hot dog booth was a great success where my son-in-law Gary was cooking and Linda and Andre's kids worked the booth. It really is a family affair. Then of course everyone who worked helped take everything down.

A couple of thanks I forgot, Connie Ager for coming back and helping us and Diana Dixon Davis and Barbara Pampalone for showing the kids how to make flowers and origami. Special thanks to Ann and Ray for getting us the bluegrass band entertainment.

I hope I didn't leave anyone out, if so, please forgive me. So as you can see, it takes a lot of people to make a success. Again, thanks everyone for making me look good.

Bea Berman

## CURATOR'S CORNER

By Virginia Watson

The Chatsworth Historical Society is an all volunteer organization with many people giving supportive services to help us keep up the business and physical care of The Homestead Acre. We especially note this during the times our big Pioneer Day or Garden Festival is being held. But we also have volunteers who help us in our every day duties and among these are our docents. These are volunteers, who give almost every Wednesday morning to helping in the museum and grounds. The docents are the ones who give the tours when we are open. We are open from 1-4 p.m. the first Sunday of every month and provide guides for tours for school children, youth groups, senior groups, Red Hat Groups etc. Some people do not realize that we charge for special events when we open the museum for tours. We ask that the group be at least ten people and we charge \$3 per person except for school children. We do not charge for their tours because we believe that is part of their heritage. Arrangements for tours can be made by calling our museum at 818-882-5614 and leaving a message if we aren't there.

Presently we have about 16 docents and they are trained to know the history of the area and the little tidbits of information that we have collected about the early pioneers and their lives. Betty and Jim Summers contribute many hours of volunteer time. Betty is in charge of the Cottage and she and Jim are in charge of the grounds. That means they do a lot of deciding, planting, weeding, cultivating, special watering and solving many unexpected problems that come up on an historic area such as ours. They are a very good team and have been working together for many years.

Beverly King is another hard-working docent. She is a retired elementary school teacher and she especially enjoys telling the story of our circa 1911 Hill Family Bungalow. Beverly also is a expert gardener and spends many of her Wednesday mornings working in the gardens deadheading the rose bushes, pruning, weeding and cultivating. She also teaches classes for the blind and devotes time to her church gardens.

Evelyn Hutcheson is a local resident, a retired surgical nurse, who keeps a detailed report of the hours that all the other docents complete in addition to welcoming visitors to the museum, keeping up the guest book and making things run smoothly when the museum is open.

Elaine Campbell, is a retired office supervisor (also a local Chatsworth clubwoman) who keeps up the many notebooks filled with the CHS collection of Smoke Signals, special events and newspaper clippings. She is editor of the Chatsworth Women's Club's Newsletter and a popular clubwoman as well as a local library volunteer.

Bea Berman, well-known community leader, is vice president of the Society and gives tours, specializing in the story of the Centennial Quilt and often is asked to speak about the Society's events for community groups. She was chairman of the 1988 Centennial Committee for the community when the 100th Anniversary of the publishing of the first subdivision map of a town called Chatsworth Park was processed.

Jelena Csanyi, named Citizen of the Year at the 2009 Chatsworth Community Coordinating Council Banquet, gives tours of the house and garden and is known for her ability to be able to fix things, find items, and her problem solving skills.

Karine Panichi, doesn't have as much time as she used to spend helping us with filing, keeping track of items, computer and art work, and assisting with tours, especially Pioneer Day and Garden Festival, but she comes to help when she can work it in. She worked Pioneer Day in the museum this year.

Ann Vincent, new editor of our Smoke Signal and our computer expert, is presently copying our slide collection into our computer, and getting our library books in order. Ann also put our slide show into a Power Point program which she and I will give at the December 12, 2009 meeting of the local Chatsworth Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

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Joan Seligman of Long Beach, California, was a recent visitor to the Homestead Acre. Her grandparents came to Chatsworth about 1912 and built a house that is still here. It is an outstanding Craftsman Home and is on private property near Stoney Point. Her grandmother Mrs. A. H. Haworth was president of the Chatsworth Women's Club in 1923-24. Mrs. Seligman also brought donations for our museum among them a replica of the El Camino Real Bell that used to mark the way of the mission fathers. We are in the process of logging the items into our collection and will report on them at a later date.



Display prepared by docents for the Chatsworth Public Library that was available to be seen before Pioneer Day





## In remembrance of Veteran's Day November 11<sup>th</sup>

Did you know?

Reportedly, it all began in 1862 during the Civil War, when Union Army Captain Robert Ellicombe was with his men near Harrison's Landing in Virginia. The Confederate Army was on the other side of the narrow strip of land.

During the night, Captain Ellicombe heard the moans of a soldier who lay severely wounded on the field. Not knowing if it was a Union or Confederate soldier, the Captain decided to risk his life and bring the stricken man back for medical attention. Crawling on his stomach through the gunfire, the Captain reached the stricken soldier and began pulling him toward his encampment.

When the Captain finally reached his own lines, he discovered it was actually a Confederate soldier, but the soldier was dead.

The Captain lit a lantern and suddenly caught his breath and went numb with shock. In the dim light, he saw the face of the soldier. It was his own son. The boy had been studying music in the South when the war broke out. Without telling his father, the boy enlisted in the Confederate Army.



The following morning, heartbroken, the father asked permission of his superiors to give his son a full military burial, despite his enemy status. His request was only partially granted. The Captain had asked if he could have a group of Army band members play a funeral dirge for his son at the funeral. The request was turned down since the soldier was a Confederate. But, out of respect for the father, they did say they could give him only one musician. The Captain chose a bugler. He asked the bugler to play a series of musical notes he had found on a piece of paper in the pocket of the dead youth's uniform. This wish was granted.

The haunting melody, we now know as "Taps" used at military funerals was born.

The words are:

### TAPS

Day is done  
Gone the sun  
From the lakes  
From the hills  
From the sky.  
All is well,  
Safely rest,  
God is nigh.

Fading light  
Dims the sight  
And a star  
Gems the sky  
Gleaming bright.  
From afar,  
Drawing nigh,  
Falls the night.

Thanks and praise  
For our days  
Neath the sun,  
Neath the stars,  
Neath the sky.  
As we go,  
This we know,  
God is nigh.

I too have felt the chills while  
listening to 'Taps' but I have never  
seen all the words to the song until  
now.

Remember Those Lost and  
Harmed While Serving Their  
Country.



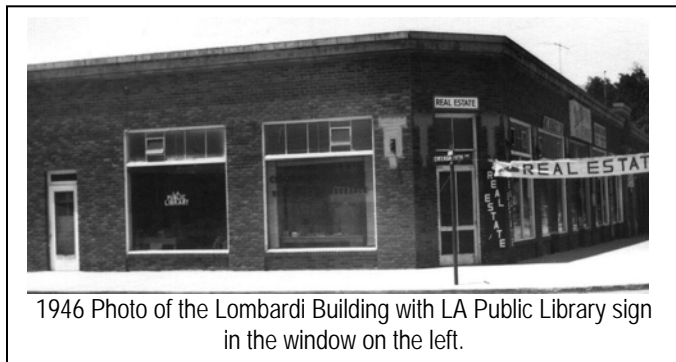
# CHATSWORTH PAST & PRESENT

By Ann Vincent

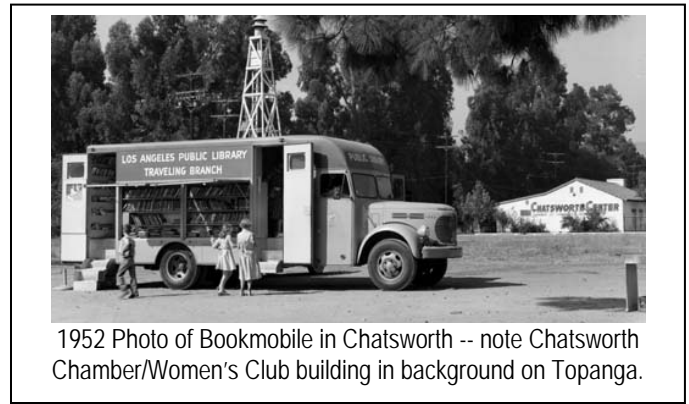
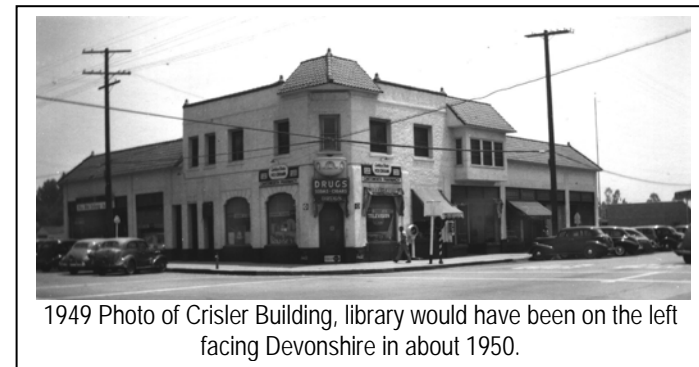
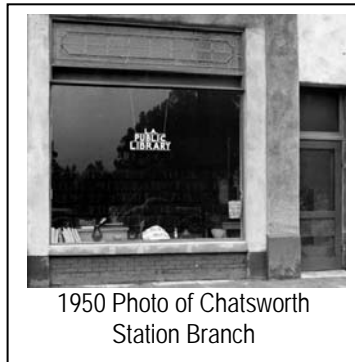
November 2009

One of our newest buildings, the Chatsworth Branch of the Los Angeles Public Library at 21052 Devonshire, has an interesting history.

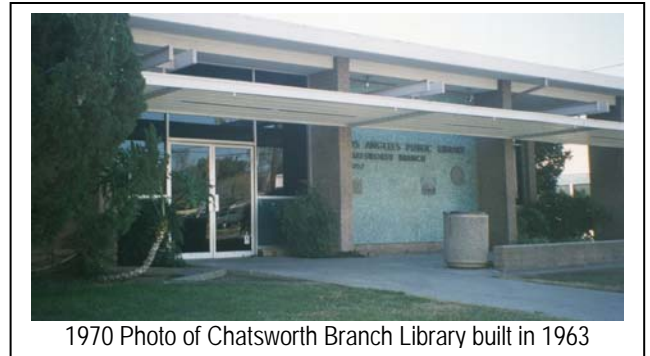
Chatsworth Historical Society founding member, Lila Schepler, recalls the first library in the Wilkins building on the southeast corner of Owensmouth and Devonshire. It later moved across the street, to the Lombardi Building at the southwest corner, on Owensmouth. The Lombardi building was a brick structure that housed a variety of businesses through the years, including an Auto Parts, Feed Store and a 5 & 10 cent store. Both buildings have since been demolished. The photo below shows that this early branch existed in one of the Lombardi storefronts in 1946.



This same LA PUBIC LIBRARY sign is later found in the 1950 photo shown below provided by the LA Public Library archives and listed as the Chatsworth Station Branch. This photo is clearly a different storefront, which is in the Crisler Building, once located on the southeast corner of Devonshire and Topanga. The features above the windows correspond to that building at that time. The location was on Devonshire, before the hardware store moved to that section of the building.

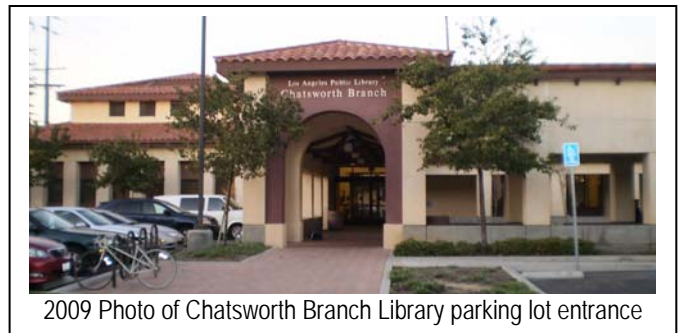


From 1952-1963 the Chatsworth community was serviced by the LA Public Library Bookmobile Program. The bookmobile made scheduled stops throughout the valley, stopping here across the street from the Chatsworth Park Elementary School.



In 1957, land was purchased and a new branch library was built at 21052 Devonshire, opening on May 22, 1963. The Friends of the Library book sales were held regularly on the front lawn of the library, weather permitting.

In 1998 funds were approved for adjacent land and an expanded building on the existing site. In June 2002, ground breaking began for the new building, while a temporary library was opened at the Chatsworth Train Station that housed a small portion of books allowing local patrons easy access to the LA City library system.



On November 15, 2004, a beautiful building designed specifically for Chatsworth was opened with Bruce Seidman continuing as the Head Librarian. Special features at our library include a stained glass window, book art and children's murals. State of the art computer access and a multimedia collection of over 42,000 items are on site. Come on by, it's your library ... check it out!



# GROWING UP ON THE HOMESTEAD ACRE IN THE 1920's and 30's...Continued

An oral history on what it was like living on the "ranch"  
in Chatsworth

*Editor's Note: The information in this oral history was gathered by late CHS members Dean and Candy Craig in five interviews of Minnie Hill Palmer's children - Edith Palmer Butler (b. 1910) and Leroy E. Palmer (b. 1912) and Minnie's niece, Ruth Manny Hill Rider. It was transcribed by Candy Craig and late CHS member Sheila Watts. Keith Watts separated it into "chapters", added titles and other small editorial tasks.*

## Chapter 2 - FAMILY LIVING

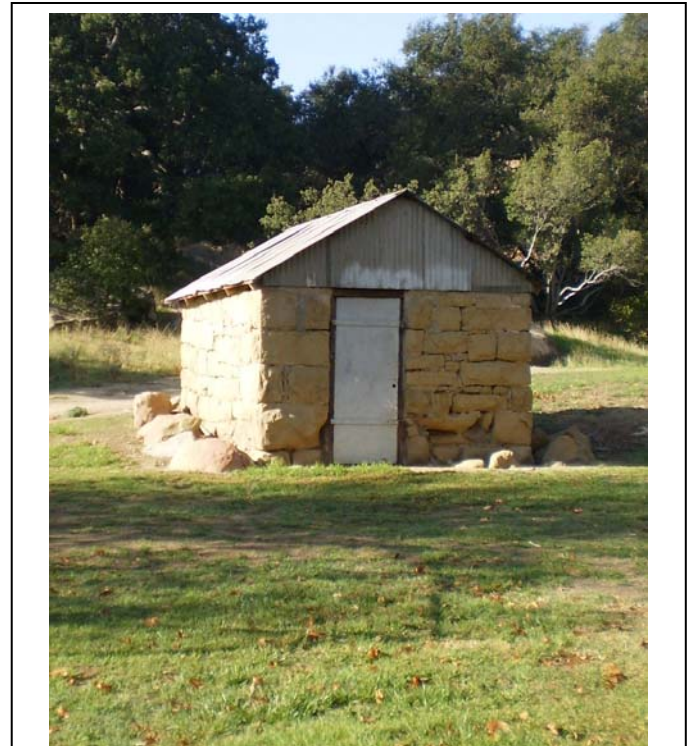
At this time, Lovell Hill was no longer Postmaster in Chatsworth or associated with the Graves-Hill store. The lower 120 acres of the property that had produced grain crops for many years lay fallow much of the time because the water table had dropped and "dry farming" was not productive.

The family's livelihood was now their dynamite and trucking business. They owned two Denby trucks, that besides dynamite, hauled granite (called "bluestone") from the stone quarry. Lovell, Alfred and later, Leroy, drove the trucks back and forth to San Leandro, San Diego and San Bernardino for construction projects and into Nevada to deliver dynamite for mining activities.

The animals kept on the ranch included goats, one bull, two heifers and a milk cow, four to eight horses, pigs, chickens, pigeons, dogs and cats. Edith told us about Towser, Lovell Hill's yellow terrier, who adored his master. Long before any of the family could hear the sound of Lovell's truck, Towser had disappeared, running "lickety-split" to meet the truck, far down the road and ride home with Lovell.

When we asked what their Uncle Lovell's personality was like, Leroy said he was outgoing and managed everything and Edith added that he was the best looking of all the family members. "He was handsomer than any of the women were pretty." Their father, Alfred Palmer, was described

as quiet and easygoing. Edith also remembered lots of wet winters when the ditch would overflow and, combined with the sheet flooding of the area, the water became so high that the house was threatened with high water. Edith said there were many times she took off her shoes and waded home from school.



This original dynamite shed is still located at Chatsworth Park South, just south (a safe distance?) from the cottage.

The family grew all sorts of vegetables for their own use in the area west and south of the house. In the twenties they planted a large asparagus bed with plants obtained from a Chinese-American farmer who grew the asparagus commercially.

The vegetables were irrigated with drainage water, from the train tunnel that flowed through a ditch to the property. It was a regular chore for the children to clean out the ditch to keep the water running. Unfortunately, the drainage water was not potable due to high levels of natural arsenic, so drinking water had to be obtained from the hydrant on Devonshire Street.

*Next issue will continue with Chapter 3  
Everyday Life*

## Happy Birthday Lillian

Cake cutting and the traditional birthday song were included at our last Historical Society program in October as we celebrated Lillian Schepler's birthday. She also stepped forward to cut the cake.



Virginia Watson and Lillian Schepler

## Past & Present Articles

This series of articles is to motivate you to think about what you remember about our community. Sometimes it is just a glimpse of the past that brings back memories of what we have forgotten. Getting some of these memories down on paper is the first step to preserving our history and sharing the stories of our childhood and family history in our community. Have you sat down and looked at some of your old photos to write down what you remember about the people, the background and that time in your life?

## Wondering if your Dues are Due?

There is a code on the last line of your address label (if you are a life member, there is no code).

- The first digit represents membership type, 1 – individual, and 2 – family/organization.
- The next two digits represent the month that you last paid your dues.
- The last two digits represent the year that you last paid your dues.
- If the month and year on your address label is over one year old, then your dues are due!

Please use the form below to renew your Membership. And if your neighbor is not a member yet, pass this newsletter on to them and invite them to join....



## CHATSWORTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

### Membership Form

Your membership helps support our Homestead Acre and the educational and historical programs we provide for our community. Members receive our quarterly newsletters, and receive invitation reminders regarding our monthly programs and annual events -- the Garden Festival, Membership Roundup, and Pioneer Day. Please mail this form with your annual membership dues and/or contribution made payable to:

**Chatsworth Historical Society**, 10385 Shadow Oak Drive, Chatsworth, CA 91311  
818-882-5614    [www.historicalsocieties.net](http://www.historicalsocieties.net)

- |   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Member         | <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal        |   |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$15.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Family \$20.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Organization \$20.00 |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 125.00          |   |   |  |

Yearly:

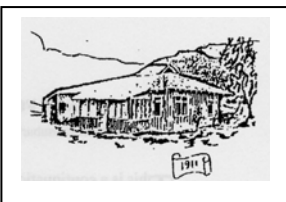
Life Membership:

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

STREET ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY / STATE / ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Special Interest / Expertise: \_\_\_\_\_



**ADVERTISEMENT From 1970's Chatsworth Chamber of Commerce Booklet**



**The  
Taco Bell  
of  
Chatsworth**

This is what our Taco Bell on Devonshire looked like when it first opened shown in this 1970's photo. The entire building was torn down and a new modern Taco Bell restaurant replaced it only a few years ago.

**Chatsworth Historical Society**

10385 Shadow Oak Drive  
Chatsworth, Ca 91311

*Check the code below your mailing label ...is it time to pay your dues? (See page 7)*