

# Smoke Signal

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



Co-Presidents: André & Linda van der Valk

September 2011, Issue #4

Editor: Ann Vincent

## Co-Presidents' Message

By Linda & André van der Valk

It doesn't seem possible that we are getting ready for Pioneer Day. It seems like we just had The Garden Festival. I look forward to Pioneer Day because this is the time that we can teach the kids who come what it was like to be part of a Pioneer family.

The kids of today can't imagine a life that would not have included a computer, cell phones, iPad and iPods let alone having to wash their clothes by scrubbing them on a board, churning their own butter rather than going to the market to buy some and taking the rugs outside putting them on a tree and beating them to get the dirt out. Those are some of the things that we show the children at Pioneer Day. When we have school tours at the acre the kids are always fascinated with the chamber pots. They can not imagine not having flushing toilets and either going out to the outhouse or using the chamber pot, however, that is one thing we do leave to their imagination. We all enjoy remembering the simpler times---or were they? It is up to us, the older generation, to reflect, teach and remind those around us of our rich Chatsworth history.

Please join us for Pioneer Day and if you have some time, as always, we can use the volunteers. Set up is at 9:00 am, Saturday Oct. 1<sup>st</sup>.

Linda and André



Beverly King will be on hand to give tours of the Hill-Palmer Cottage at Pioneer Day.

Please Join us!

Chatsworth Historical Society  
Board of Directors 2011-2012

Co-Presidents .....	Linda & André van der Valk
Programs, Ways & Means.....	Bea Berman
Membership.....	Keith Watts
Treasurer.....	Ray Vincent
Recording Secretary.....	Elaine Campbell
Smoke Signal.....	Ann Vincent
Museum Curator.....	Virginia Watson
Cottage Curator.....	Betty Summers
Hospitality.....	Jelena Csanyi
Garden Director.....	Jim & Betty Summers
Director-at-Large.....	Beverly King
Director-at-Large.....	Connie Ager
Permanent Member.....	Lila Schepler

## Upcoming Events

### 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Pioneer Day Sunday, October 2, 2011

Come enjoy the surroundings of the Historic Acre as we provide the opportunity to see Chatsworth as it was in the early days of 1886, when the town was formed. Games and Chores of Yore will be available for the kids to experience. This year the museum display will focus on the construction of the Southern Pacific railroad tunnels built through the hills of Chatsworth. Our Chatsworth Pioneer Family information will also be on display.

### Chatsworth Train Tunnel Construction

October General Meeting

**Tuesday, October 18 7:00 PM**

Now is the time to see and discuss the history of the Chatsworth Tunnels. With our full collection of photos and items on display in the museum, please join us for a presentation of the photos taken during construction in 1890-1904.

November General Meeting

**Tuesday, November 15, 7:00 PM**

Please mark your calendar...the program will be a tribute to Veteran's Day

## Ways and Means

Bea Berman

Summer is almost over and plans are underway for our annual PIONEER DAY, Sunday, October 2, 2011 at the Homestead Acre in Chatsworth Park from 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM.

As usual, we will have our gold panning, blacksmithing, wood carvers, rock shippers, spinning and weaving, veterans quilt display, chores of yore and of course, our mini chili cook-off. We will also have our fabulous bake sale, white elephant booth and plant sale. There will be lots to do for everyone, tours of the museum and cottage with vendors who will be selling their items on display.

Tell your friends and come out and enjoy. Due to the park closure, thanks to our new Councilman Mitch Englander, we will have a shuttle bus from the train depot starting at 11:00 AM every fifteen minutes.

If anyone is interested in baking or donating new or like new items for our white elephant sale, or even competing in our chili cook-off, we would appreciate your help. I can be reached at 818 341-5449 for any questions.

We can also use help for set-up on Saturday morning (Oct. 1 at 9:00 am) the day before the event, and on Sunday afternoon following the event for clean-up.

This is one of our two fundraisers for the year to help defray the cost of upkeep for the Acre. We look forward to seeing all of you on October 2<sup>nd</sup>.

# 21st Annual Pioneer Day

Sunday, Oct. 2, 2011  
11 a.m. to 4 p.m.



### **Old-time fun for everyone!**

- CHILI COOK-OFF
  - Bake sale
- Woodcarvers
- Entertainment
  - Panning for gold
- Spinning and weaving
- Veteran quilt display
- Kids designing quilt squares
- Rock Chippers
- Blacksmith
  - Indian artifacts
- "Chores and Games of yore"  
*and lots more!*

**Chatsworth Museum Exhibits**  
Featuring Train Tunnel Construction  
and Chatsworth Pioneer Families

**Tour Minnie's 1911 Cottage**  
(11- 4 p.m.)

**Location:**  
Homestead Acre, Chatsworth Park South  
(West end of Devonshire St.)  
10385 Shadow Oak Drive, Chatsworth, CA

**Information:** (818) 882-5614  
[www.historicalsocieties.net](http://www.historicalsocieties.net)

**Donation:**  
Adults: \$5, Children: \$1  
(Free for kids under 5)

**Presented by the  
Chatsworth Historical Society**

**Park your car at the Chatsworth Train Depot (10038 Old Depot Plaza Road)  
and use our free shuttle service, every 15 minutes from 11 a.m. To 4 p.m.**

## CHATSWORTH HISTORY TIMELINE:

.... Early Indian tribes that lived in the valley included Tataviam “people facing the sun”, Tongva “people of the earth” and the Chumash “bead makers/seashell people”.

1769 Padre Juan Crespi along with Spanish soldiers entered the San Fernando Valley for the first time.

1797 Mission San Fernando Rey de Espana was founded. Travelers passed through the Santa Susana Pass to Simi House and on to Mission San Buenaventura. Indians who lived at the San Fernando Mission were referred to as Fernandinos while those at the San Gabriel Mission were called Gabrieliños.

1850 California became the 31<sup>st</sup> state in the United States of America.

1859 The State of California contracted work to be done on the Stagecoach Trail to be used for carrying mail. It was completed in 1861, and became known as the “Devils Slide” due to its steep descent.

1862 The Homestead Act encouraged western migration by providing settlers 160 acres of public land. In exchange, homesteaders paid a small filing fee and were required to complete five years of continuous residence before receiving ownership of the land.

1870 The first English-speaking people, Ann Wilden Johnson and her husband, Neils Christian Johnson, settled in the area.



1880 The Santa Susana School was established. It was a county school that existed before Chatsworth became part of LA City.

1886 Rhoda Jane and James David Hill settle on what became a 230-acre ranch. Minnie Hill Palmer is born in November. A portion of this ranch later becomes the Homestead Acre.

1888 Subdivision map for a town called Chatsworth Park was filed with the Los Angeles County Recorder's Office on March 10<sup>th</sup>.

1893 Railroad service begins. Line ends at depot near Marilla Avenue and Topanga Canyon Blvd.

1895 Chatsworth Grade Road is built to carry wagon loads from Chatsworth to Simi Valley through a winding gradual grade. A more direct route, on the north side of

Santa Susana Creek, later became known as the Santa Susana Pass that we have today.

1898 Construction of tunnels through the Chatsworth and Simi mountains begins. Following 6 years of construction, a series of three tunnels connect the railroad line from Simi to Chatsworth.

1898 Gray Family builds home on Lassen Street planting olive tree cuttings presumed to be from the San Fernando Mission. 76 Mature Olive Trees on Lassen between Topanga and Farralone are declared LA Historic-Cultural Monument #49 in 1967.

1903 Pioneer Church built and dedicated at 10051 Topanga Canyon Blvd.



1904 Tunnels completed. Train station later moved to main line between Lassen and Devonshire Streets.

1911 James Hill, Lovell Hill and Willard Johnson build a five-room redwood bungalow on the site of what later becomes the Homestead Acre. This replaced the first house built on the land.

1912 Iverson Ranch becomes the backdrop for early Hollywood movies.

1913 Owens River water comes to the San Fernando Valley.

1915 Residents vote to become part of the City of Los Angeles.

1916 Chatsworth Park Elementary School is dedicated in April 1916.

1917 World War I, Chatsworth citizens organize and take turns watching the sky for enemy planes.

1930 Stoney Point becomes popular with early Sierra Club members. This attention brought early pioneering rock climbers who learned to climb at Stoney Point. Stoney Point Outcroppings declared LA Historic-Cultural Monument #132 in 1974.

1933 Long Beach earthquake damages 1916 Chatsworth Park Elementary School building.

1935 New Chatsworth Park Elementary School building dedicated. Altered building remains.

1939 Native Daughters of the Golden West place a tiled monument marker along the stage coach trail at the portion known as Devils Slide commemorating its use from 1861-1890. The Stagecoach Trail is declared LA Historic-Cultural Monument #92 in 1972.



1941 World War 2 –Soldiers stationed at Chatsworth to guard the train tunnels.

1941 Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz purchase a five acre ranch in Chatsworth on the south west corner of Devonshire and Corbin.

1940's Electricity brought into the Homestead Acre cottage by Minnie's son LeRoy and Mr. Berkemeyer.

1946 LA Public Library located in the Lombardi Building at the corner of Owensmouth and Devonshire. Later closed in 1952 and the area is served by Book Mobiles until 1963.

1951 Roy Rogers and Dale Evans move to Chatsworth and "The Roy Rogers Show" filmed at the Double R Ranch debuted December 30, 1951.

1954 United States Army Nike Site opened on Oat Mountain above De Soto Ave.

1955 Minnie sells off farmland, retains a Life Tenancy on house and 1.3 acres. Kitchen and bath with running water added to the Homestead Acre cottage.

Aqua Sierra Sportsmans Club opens with a gun club and plans for a fishing lake.

1956 Chatsworth Jr. Baseball League is founded with 43 boys fielding 4 teams the first year.

1956 The Munch Box opens. It is declared LA Historic-Cultural Monument #750 in 2003.



1958 Roy Rogers serves as Honorary Mayor of Chatsworth.

1959 Superior Elementary School opens near Oso and Lassen.

1963 Chatsworth Historical Society formed to save Pioneer Church. The Pioneer Church is declared LA Historic-Cultural Monument #14 the same year.

1963 Chatsworth High School opens on a forty-acre campus north of Lassen on Lurline.

1963 LA Public Library- Chatsworth Branch opens at the corner of Devonshire and Variel.

1963 Germain Street Elementary School opens at Germain St. and Lurline Ave.. First LA City school to have air-conditioning.

1965 Pioneer Church moved from Topanga Canyon Boulevard to its present location in Oakwood Memorial Park.

1968 Ernest Lawrence Middle School opens on Variel north of Lassen.

1970 New Post Office building dedicated on Devonshire near Owensmouth.

1975 Chatsworth Reservoir Kiln Site is declared LA Historic-Cultural Monument #141.

1978 Chatsworth Historical Society named as conservator of the Homestead Acre.

1979 118 "Simi" Freeway was completed making the trip from Chatsworth to Simi a 5 minute journey.

1980 Homestead Acre cottage and grounds dedicated, public tours begin.



1981 Minnie Hill-Palmer dies in March at the age of 94.

1996 Chatsworth Transportation Center – Train Depot opens with Roy Rogers and Dale Evans at the dedication ceremony.

1997 Harvester Farms is declared LA Historic-Cultural Monument #645. The barn at the Farms was the birthplace of television's "Mr. Ed" the talking horse..

1998 670 Acre Santa Susana State Historic Park is dedicated preserving the Santa Susana Mountains.

2003 The Munch Box is declared LA Historic Cultural Monument #750.

2004 LA Public Library – Chatsworth Branch building is replaced with larger state of the art facility.

2007 LA purchases equestrian property south of Stoney Point currently known as Stoney Point Ranch.

2008 LA closes Chatsworth Park South due to suspected lead contamination from skeet shooting range in the 1950's.

## 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.

## It's Your Community...

### It's Your History

The Chatsworth Historical Society would like to have you join us in preserving Chatsworth's past. If you have any old Chatsworth publications, like the Grapevine, or have old photos of the area, we would love to have copies of your photos, but we would also like to hear your stories about growing up in Chatsworth or what brought you to Chatsworth and why you stayed here.

Time creeps up on us and anything more than 30 years ago is suddenly history. This is the information we still remember, but our children won't, unless we make the effort to preserve it.

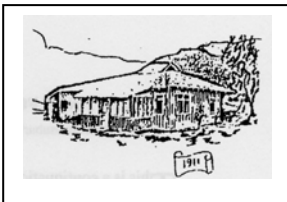
### Additional Activities:

- Sept. 19, 7:15 pm - SSMPA General Meeting features program on the Old Stage Coach Trail at the Rockpointe Clubhouse.
- Sept. 29, 6:30 pm - Chatsworth Library hosts Western Movie Night "True Grit" (2010) With an introduction by Western Movie Historian – Jerry England Chatsworth Branch Library on Devonshire & Variel
- Oct. 17, 7:15 pm - Mitch Englander, Councilman discusses "The Fate of Chatsworth Park South and the Chatsworth Nature Preserve" at the Rockpointe Clubhouse.
- Sept. 12 – Oct. 31 - San Fernando Valley Historical Society Display at the Andres Pico Adobe on the Van Nuys and Lankershim Family Collections.



## 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 – Rose Pruning, 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)

- Yearly:**                       New Member                       Renewal  
**Life Membership:**         Individual \$15.00                 Family \$20.00                 Organization \$20.00  
    \$ 125.00

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

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

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

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

**REMEMBRANCE:**

*Evelyn Hutcheson, docent for the Chatsworth Historical Society lost her battle with lung cancer and passed away in August.*

**Chatsworth Historical Society**

10385 Shadow Oak Drive  
Chatsworth, Ca 91311

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

*Check the code below your mailing label ...is it time to pay your dues? (See page 5 for details)*