

Smoke Signal

CHATSWORTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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Co-Presidents: André & Linda van der Valk

July 2013, Issue #3

Editor: Ann Vincent

Co-Presidents' Message

By Linda & André van der Valk

I can't believe we are already in July. The year is already flying by too quickly.

It is a little after the event but we want to thank everyone that made The Garden Festival a great success. This was our most successful fund raiser to date. Thanks again to Bea Berman, our Chair, for making it such a great event. She again made sure the weather was perfect.

Last month Edwin Iverson, from the Iverson Ranch family, passed away. He had been ill for a few years. Edwin's grandmother Augusta had come to the Chatsworth area and homesteaded 160 acres, living next to her sister Caroline, who was also homesteading 160 acres with her husband J.R. Williams. Karl Iverson met and married Augusta during that time, and the two 160 acre parcels later became the Iverson movie ranch, filming the great westerns that are still seen today. There were many other movies and serials that were filmed there but I think the westerns are the ones that we watch and can say I know where that rock is or there are the Santa Susana Mountains.

Edwin's widow, Carla, has been donating many items relevant to the Iverson family and the Ranch. For these items we are greatly appreciative. We are in the process of logging in all the items and will be planning next year to expand our Iverson case that we currently have in the museum.

We hope that everyone enjoys the rest of the summer and try to stay cool.

Linda and André



Edwin Iverson
1937-2013

Chatsworth Historical Society
Board of Directors 2013-2014

Co-Presidents	Linda & André van der Valk
Programs, Ways & Means.....	Bea Berman
Membership.....	Keith Watts
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Recording Secretary.....	Elaine Campbell
Smoke Signal.....	Ann Vincent
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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

Monthly - Museum Open House

The Homestead Acre is open to the public the first Sunday of each month from 1 to 4 pm. The next open house will be Sunday, August 4th.

Wednesday Morning Docent Program

Throughout the summer our docents continue to work on the garden and other museum projects. Interested? Let us know chatsworthhistory@gmail.com

September 8, 7:00 PM - Sunday Membership Roundup

This annual event held at the Homestead Acre is a potluck dinner, to meet and greet new and old members as we kick off our new year of activity. If you are a prospective member and have not joined yet, plan to join. (The cost of the membership is worth it for this dinner!)

October 6, 2013 – Sunday 11-4 pm PIONEER DAY

This is our big fundraiser, and we need your support to help our volunteers maintain the Acre and museum for the future!

October 19, 7:00 PM - Tuesday Program Chatsworth Hills Homesteaders

These are the pioneers that lived on government land to "prove up" earning the right to own the land. Come see who owned your neighborhood!

Garden Festival

By Bea Berman

They say “Better late than never” I didn’t want you to forget how thankful we are for all the people who made the Garden Festival such a success. We made almost \$6,000 and what a wonderful day it was. Everyone really pitched in and made it so easy, and made me look good as the chairman of the event.

We didn’t have the Chatsworth High School volunteers this time (due to a conflict) but the regulars who usually get to help supervise the students got to work and made it happen. Thank you to Dale King, Jim Summers, Jelena Csanyi, Annette Campbell, Mary Kaufman, Connie Ager, Barbara Pampalone, Bob Dager, Gary Bercow and Ann & Ray Vincent.

Sunday was great. We called in a few extra key people (Bob Dager, Peter Ulrich & Tom Nachtrab) to help during the morning set up as the vendors arrived to unload. Jelena and her crew had the tea set up perfectly. She had it down to a science and thanks to Lori Lawrence, Donna Boswell, Carol Lucas and Diane Kartiala, the kitchen was great. A special thanks to all of you who prepared and donated the sandwiches and



The kitchen staff was happy and efficient, Thanks, Donna

desserts for the tea. Zena Thorpe handled the tea tickets for the Red Hats and Randi Bercow sold the tickets for the rest of the tea. The students from Lawrence Middle School served the tea efficiently and did a great job helping throughout

the day as needed including assisting my son-in-law Rico with the parking lot. At the end of

the day they helped with take down, hauling tables and chairs. They were truly appreciated and worked right alongside the adults who also dismantled all the tents.

During the event, Irene Nalbandian and Janis Heiden ran the entry gate, with help from Keith Watts and Ray Vincent as needed, also helping out Ann Vincent at the information booth for visitors purchasing books and discussing the history of the area. Docents Elaine Campbell,

Beverly King, Betty Summers, Linda van der Valk and Ann Vincent all took turns with the cottage and museum as needed. The Garden clubs were there in force and flowers were everywhere with Diana Dixon Davis assisting children in making their own paper flowers.



Annette coordinated the plant sale with Becky and Randi Mineo’s help who donated plants and assisted with the sales.

Annette Campbell along with Randy and Becky Mineo sold plants all day that had been donated or cultivated by our members.

Baked goods were provided by the Sandovals and others. Thank you all for your baking skills!

Gary Bercow worked with the Huffman boys and the van der Valks and their grandchildren at the snackbar doing a great job.



John and Kenny Huffman supervised the cooking done by Gary Bercow while Andre van der Valk handled the money!

One of the highlights of the day was the Chatsworth 125th Year Birthday Celebration led by our own Councilman Mitch Englander.



Mitch led the group singing Happy Birthday to Chatsworth!

Thanks again for everyone’s help. It was a fun day!

Bea Berman

Continuing to Celebrate 125 Years of Chatsworth History

...here are a few more remembrances by one of our founding members, Katharine Johnson. (*These are excerpts from a 5 page article written in 1963.*)

When we think of history in the East it goes back several centuries, but California history is limited in years, so when we talk of one hundred or one hundred and fifty years it is a long time for us.

I want you to think back past the year 1900-1890-1880 to 1867, 96 years ago (article written in 1963...so that would be 146 years ago today), when Ann and Niels Johnson arrived in the San Fernando Valley in a covered wagon with their four children. Because Mrs. Johnson had such a vital part in the establishment of the community here, I am going to give a few highlights from her life, taken from the book "Our Pioneer Mother" written by one of her daughters but told in the first person as though her mother were speaking.

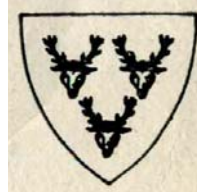
The valley, on their arrival, was a vast stretch of wild oats and hundreds of oak trees, with greasewood, wild lilac, sumac, and chaparral shrubs close to the foothills. Niels Johnson, as one of his resources, took the roots of the brush as he cleared off the place, into Los Angeles to sell it. He also cut down some of the oak trees and sold this wood. They had to go to Los Angeles for supplies and mail for many years, until business and a Post Office was established in San Fernando.

The stage coach from Los Angeles to Santa Barbara and points north started in 1864. It came from Los Angeles over the Cahuenga Pass to Chatsworth. The stables and blacksmith shop, where a stop was made for repairs and to change horses for the steep climb over the rocky hills to the otherside, was in the vicinity of Oakwood Cemetery. Don de la Osa was the proprietor 1867 to 1877. The road went over one rocky stretch so steep that places for the horses to step were carved out of the rocks and the passengers had to get out and walk. Those of you who have hiked over the trail have seen some of the hollows that still remain. The Native Daughters of the Golden West have placed a plaque on the trail to commemorate this historic spot.

There were springs in the area close to the hills, some of them sulfur. The mission fathers used to send their sick Indians and Spaniards over here to use the sulfur water to aid recovering from their illness.

The town charter was taken out in 1887 – 76 years ago (now 125 years ago). It received its name through the Duke of Devonshire, who visited his friend, Mr. Barbour, here in the 1870's. He noted that the terrain was much like that of his domain in Chatsworth

Park, England, and for this reason, the town was named Chatsworth Park, although we have gradually eliminated the Park. Devonshire was named in honor of the Duke.



graciously agreed.

The First Methodist Church of Chatsworth served our community as the only church for 63 years (*now in existence for 133 years*). It was then known as the Chatsworth Community Church, even though it was a mission project of the Methodist Conference. The first pastor was appointed in 1888. Prior to this appointment, Grandma Johnson had gathered interested children and parents in a Union Sunday School about 1880, which met under the oak trees when weather permitted until the school house was built, then they met there. (*The church building was built in 1903.*)

Uncle Fred Graves, Aunt Emma's husband, was the constable here for many years; yes, we had our own police force and jail. Unfortunately, the building is no longer here because a prankish youth set fire to it and burned it down. Fires in the hills, for they happened way back then, although they were seldom man-made, were fought by volunteers, and they really knew how to put them out. The men used shovels and gunny sacks and dirt and hard work.

When Chatsworth became part of Los Angeles in 1915 to get Owens River water, the city provided a small fire truck and Kelly Johnson's oldest brother, Ernest, was captain of the volunteer fire department. Glen Pogue, his brother-in-law, and Tracy Hughes were later in charge of the fire department. It was really not too effective for in case of a house fire, by the time the crew was assembled from the surrounding farms, and the truck started, the house was pretty well gone. A real fire department was stationed in Chatsworth in July of 1962.



Kelly's father, known as the "Honey King" had, at one time more than 2000 hives of bees at strategic places in the valley. They marketed the honey in Los Angeles and Kelly often slept in a hay field on Cahuenga Blvd, when he went in with a load of honey

with the horse and wagon. He could not make the trip there and back in one day.

Aunt Emma's oldest boy, Jessie, and Kelly drove to San Fernando High School in a horse and buggy but when Owensmouth H.S. (now Canoga Park HS) was started in 1915, Kelly went there for two years, and was a charter pupil of the school. In his Senior year, he decided to go back to S.F. to graduate, and stayed there during the week, working his way.

The Johnson "Pacific" Telephone Company was established in 1910, with a line from the ranch in the hills (the original homestead) to Daddy Johnson's (Charles W. Johnson) place down here (located on Bee Canyon). It was so effective that little by little, business houses and individuals wanted to be added to the line, until nearly everyone in town had a phone – the old fashioned wall type, of course. Of course, it was not very private, because anyone could listen in on anyone else's conversation, by lifting down the receiver and sometimes there was a click-click-click down the line, as different ones took their receiver off the hook.

But it was pretty handy at that, and, moreover, when the Pacific Telephone Co, wanted to come in here they had to get permission to take over the franchise and discontinue the local service.

Many other wonderful people have played a part in our history – farmers, citrus growers, artists, musicians, movie stars and just ordinary folks like you and me, and were there time, we would mention them all by name. But to them all we owe a debt of gratitude for the part they played in making our town the wonderful place it is today. Katharine Johnson

Editors Note:

Katharine Johnson (1898-1975), was the wife of Ray Lavalle (aka Kelly) Johnson, the grandson of Ann and Niels Johnson. She was known by many local children as their piano teacher and as the organist at the Chatsworth Methodist Church. The Chatsworth Historical Society was formed at her kitchen table working to relocate the Pioneer Church.

DOCENT ACTIVITIES AT THE ACRE

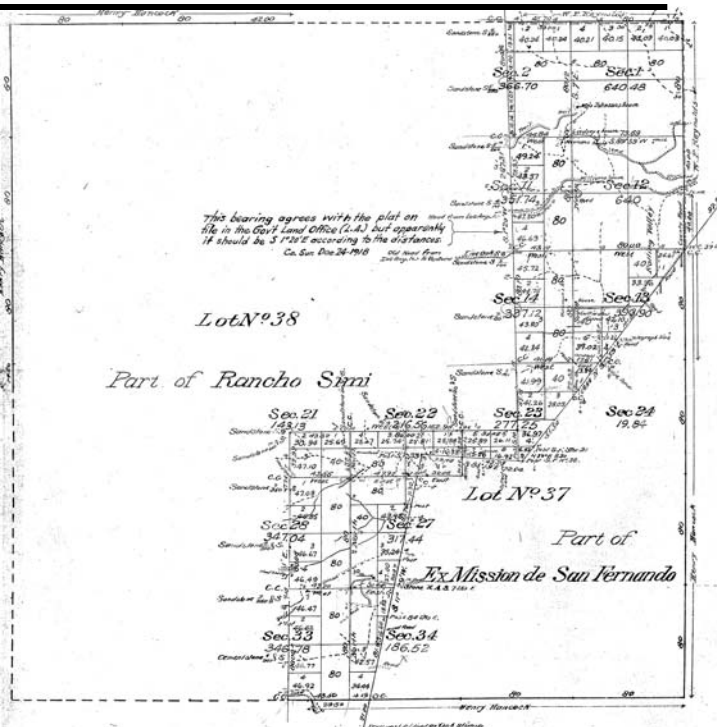
By Ann Vincent

This summer we have focused on scanning documents and photo albums. Several new volunteers are assisting with this tedious process that will continue to provide us with a digital backup of our history.

Research projects for the summer include documenting Lake Manor. Similar to Twin Lakes, it was developed and sold off as small hunting cabins during the roaring 20's. Situated just north of Chatsworth Lake/Reservoir/Nature Preserve, it is another part of our Chatsworth community with great history. We plan to share what we have learned at our November general meeting, after we have had a chance to preview it to Chatsworth Lake Manor residents. We are working with our Lake Manor members and friends to gather the history.



The second ongoing project is to document all of the original Homestead families in our 2N RW16 Township. The San Fernando Mission originally included most of the flat land in our valley. Andora was the boundary line for the Ex-Mission lands, with the portions east of Andora purchased by Ben and George Porter and others, who recorded a portion of their lands as Chatsworth Park in 1886. All of the land between the Ex San Fernando Mission



land grant and Rancho Simi was classified as Government land and could be homesteaded by individuals who could live on the land for 5 years meeting certain requirements, then claiming up to 160 acres. The Homestead Act was set in place in 1862, following the Civil War.

Join us for this "Chatsworth Hills Homesteaders" Program scheduled for October 19 at the Homestead Acre, 7:00 pm.

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, or have old photos of the area, we would love to have copies of them. We would also like to hear your stories about growing up in Chatsworth or what brought you to Chatsworth and why you stayed here.

Can we Email our newsletter to you?

In an effort to reduce costs, save paper, and provide you with a color copy, we will now email newsletters to those of you that have given us an email address. However, we will also continue to send you a snail-mail copy until you advise us not to. So please email us at chatsworthhistory@gmail.com to stop future newsletter mailings and save us some money. And also please email us to provide your email address. Thanks!

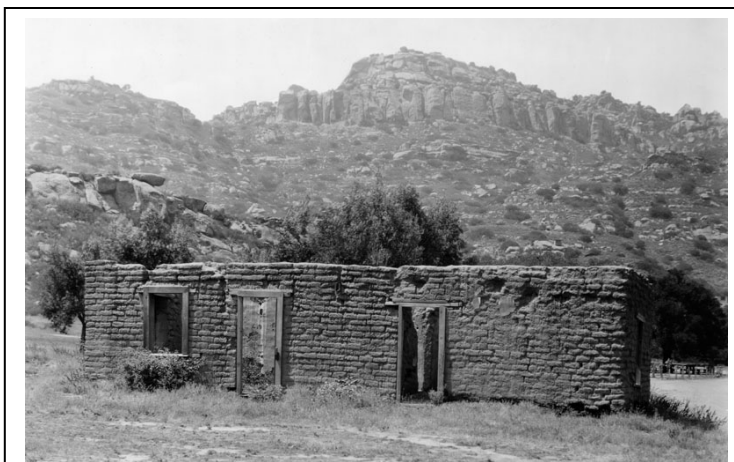
Please use the form below to renew your Membership. And if your neighbor is not a member yet, pass this newsletter on to them and invite them to join.

Wondering if your Dues are Due?

There is a code on 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!

For those receiving email only newsletters, we will advise you in the email if your dues are due.....



Pierre Domec's homestead adobe in Chatsworth Lake Manor
Security Pacific Bank Collection - Los Angeles Public Library -

CHATSWORTH EQUESTRIANS

Please tell us about your experiences riding the trails in Chatsworth over the years. What makes Chatsworth the equestrian community that it is?

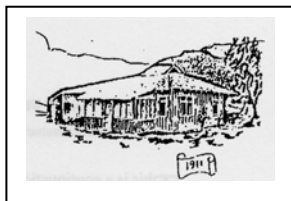
What are your memories growing up as a kid (or adult) with your first horse...how many have you owned?

Send your story to: chatsworthhistory@gmail.com



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
chatsworthhistory@gmail.com 818-882-5614 www.historicalsocieties.net

Yearly:

Life Membership:

New Member

Individual \$15.00

\$ 125.00

Renewal

Family \$20.00

Organization \$20.00

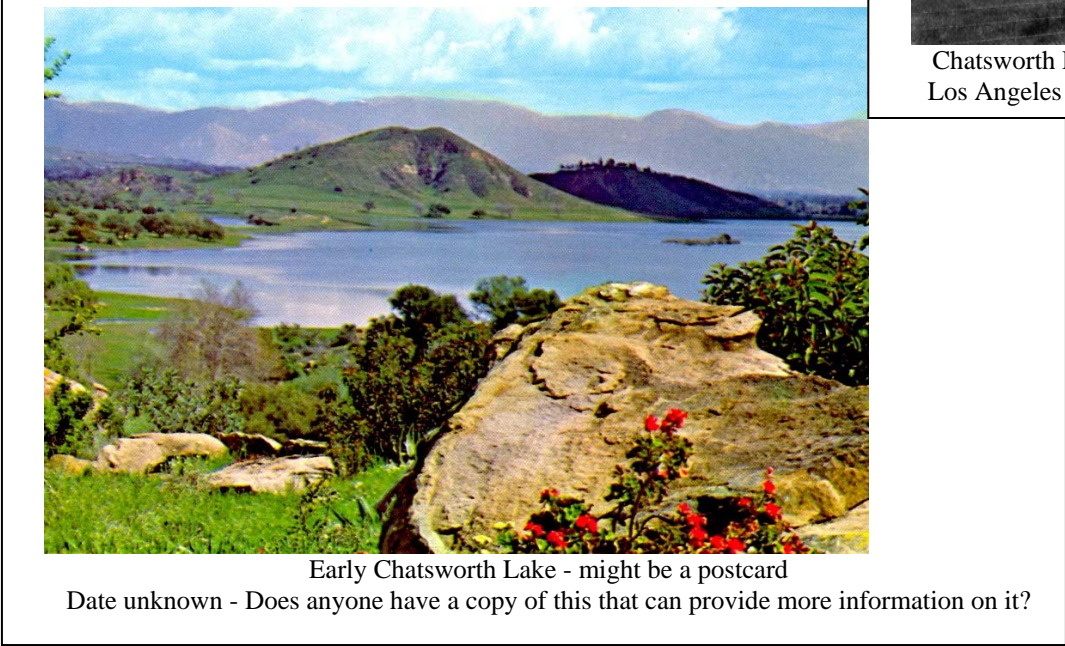
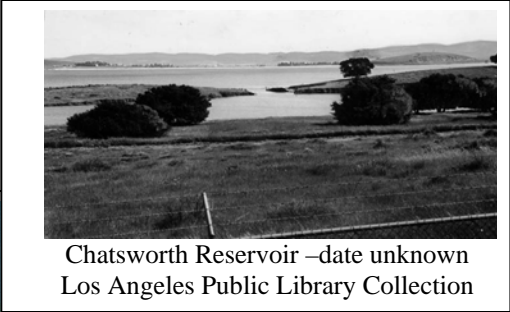
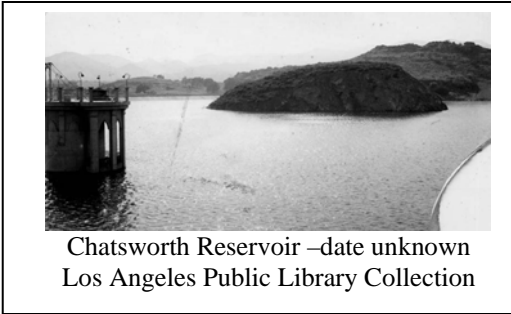
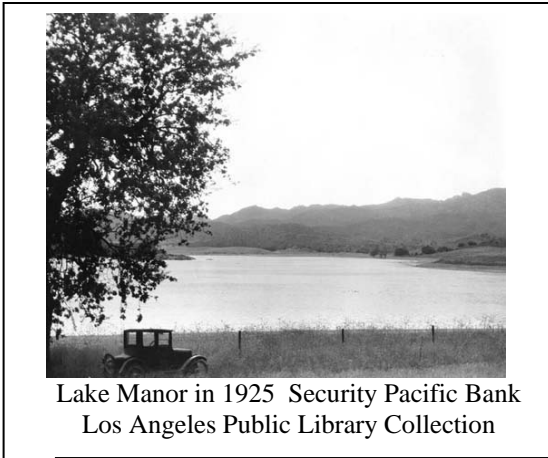
NAME _____ Phone: _____

STREET ADDRESS: _____ Email: _____

CITY / STATE / ZIP: _____

Special Interest / Expertise: _____

Chatsworth Lake Photos:



Chatsworth Historical Society

10385 Shadow Oak Drive
Chatsworth, Ca 91311

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Check the code on your mailing label ...is it time to pay your dues? (See page 7 for details)