

# Smoke Signal

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

February 2014, Issue #1

Editor: Ann Vincent

## Co-Presidents' Message

By Linda & André van der Valk

It has been busy days at the Acre. We had our rose pruning in January and we received help from the San Fernando Valley Rose Society. Annette Campbell, Karyne Ventris and Beverly King have been working on the roses too. They are now all cut back and ready to produce the beautiful and old line roses that we are known for.

Bea Berman has resigned as chairman of the Garden Festival. Bea felt after 23 years of chairing this event it was time to hand it over to others. Bea did such a great job for all of these years that it is taking a committee to try and do what she did as one person in the organizing of the event. We want to thank Bea for all that she has done and hopefully will continue doing for the Society.

Your next visit to Chatsworth Park South will be shocking to you. The City has started the remediation process of the park. The first step was to chop down all the trees other than the heritage trees that are protected. This was done now so that it would happen before nesting season. They have left the stumps and will remove them when they start the rest of the remediation. It is sad to see and something that will have a great impact on the looks and feel of the park. We have been told that new trees will be planted and grass will be laid down. There will be three detention basins to catch contamination. The City is looking for input on improvements to the park using Prop K funding, and a local volunteer neighborhood oversight committee has been formed. Three public meetings have been scheduled on Jan. 22<sup>nd</sup>, Feb 12<sup>th</sup> and Feb 26<sup>th</sup>. The overall plan is to have a general use park with no sport fields, surrounding the existing recreation center, basketball courts and tennis courts.

I guess when the City turned over the soil from the skeet shooting range at the time it sounded like a good idea and now it has turned into a seven million dollar decision.

I hope every one comes and joins us at our next general meeting at the Valley Relics Museum. It should be a fun evening going down memory lane.

Linda and André

Chatsworth Historical Society  
Board of Directors 2013-2014

Co-Presidents .....	Linda & André van der Valk
Programs .....	Ann Vincent
Ways & Means.....	Bea Berman
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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 Schebler

## Upcoming Events

### February 18, 7:00 PM – Special Event Valley Relics Museum

This month we are meeting at the new Valley Relics Museum here in Chatsworth to meet Tommy Gelinias, curator and founder. This museum features memorabilia from the San Fernando Valley where Tommy has filled a warehouse with items from neon signs to automobiles, plus special collections. We hope you can join us there for this tour.

**LOCATION:** 21630 Marilla St., Chatsworth 91311, at the southeast corner of Marilla and Owensmouth. Plenty of parking in the front, back and on the street.

Valley Relics Phone: 818-678-4934

### March 18, 7:00 PM – General Meeting Chatsworth Hills Homesteaders III

Back by popular demand....this is the last chapter of the Homesteader series; hear the stories that shaped Chatsworth. Come see who owned your neighborhood! This section will include the families that staked out land south of Plummer, north of Roscoe, and west of Valley Circle, including the Lake Manor area.

### March 2 & April 6<sup>th</sup> OPEN HOUSE

Homestead Acre tours from 1-4 pm

### April 27, 11-4 pm GARDEN FESTIVAL

Save the date, plan to be there...

## Tribute to Historical Society Members:

### Lillian Schepler

Written by Saul Daniels, posted on "My Chatsworth"  
Facebook page on Tuesday Dec 31, 2013

Long-time Chatsworth resident and community volunteer Lillian Schepler passed away Dec. 28 at 97. Mrs. Schepler began a term as president of the Chatsworth Historical Society in June 1968, according to local historian Virginia Watson, writing in the old Valley News.



"Mrs. Schepler was born in South Wales but came to the United States at an early age," Watson wrote. "Her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Edward Roach, settled in Pennsylvania and later moved to California in 1931. They lived in Culver City where her father worked for MGM. Lillian had an interesting childhood in the heart of the movie capital and later with her father sang in the MGM chorus. She was graduated from Alexander Hamilton High School in that area and met her husband during the war years when they were both employed at Douglas Aircraft."

With her husband, the late Frank Schepler Jr., "they moved to Chatsworth in 1944 and have lived here ever since," Watson wrote. "It is Frank's home town; he grew up in the area and the Schepler children went to the same schools their father did."

"Lillian [was] an enthusiastic community worker who started with the PTA circuit when her children entered kindergarten and went all the way through to high school where she was an active member of the Parent Round Table. She held many PTA jobs, including that of president of the Chatsworth Park Elementary School PTA in 1958-59. She was active in PTA at Christopher Columbus Junior High School also."

She was awarded a Life Membership for her service to children and youth by the Chatsworth Park PTA. Her youth activities included working with the Northridge-Chatsworth 4-H Club.

She operated the Chatsworth Patio, a drive-in at Devonshire Street and Vassar Avenue, for several years and with her mother, was owner of the Royal Crown Men's Shop from 1963..."

In 2007 when she was treasurer of the Chatsworth Historical Society, she told the Daily News, "There are still a bunch of us old-timers here who work and care for Chatsworth. We've had a wonderful life here."

"Chatsworth has been so good to us."

### Fern Jack

Virginia Watson provided this information to include:

Fern Jack died September 20, 2013 and was 100 years old. She and her son Neil were active early members of our Society.

Fern lived next to Leuise Schepler Mitchell for a long time and we had a wonderful meeting at their house that I remember. Neil took a lot of pictures of the church, one in particular that we used a lot. We have a picture in our collection of her at the organ in the cottage. She used to play it for us when we sang Christmas Carols or when Jane Matthews sang for us. Mrs. Jack had played the organ and was a hostess for weddings when the Lankershim Reading Room

Building, that is now restored at the Andres Pico Museum, was located on Topanga Canyon. It was part of the Chapel In The Canyon property where they had so many weddings.

Neil was in my daughter's class at Chatsworth Park Elementary in the early 1950's.

Virginia Watson



Fern Jack seated at the organ in the Hill Palmer cottage with Jane Matthews standing

Note: Neil and his wife, Janet, are current members of the Chatsworth Historical Society.



2003 Huell Howser visit: Lillian is second from the left in front

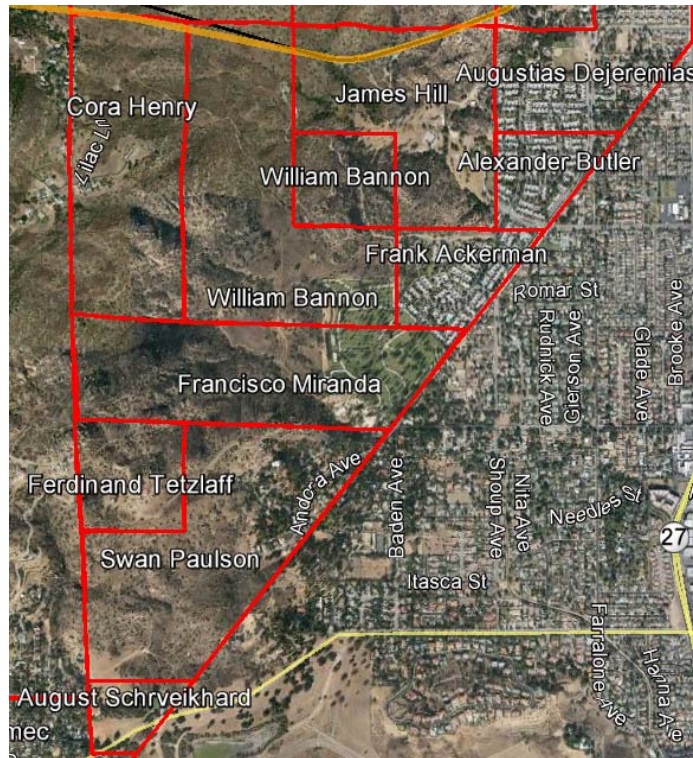
## HOMESTEADING In the Chatsworth Hills Part 2

Ann & Ray Vincent

November 2013

Our November program (part 2) of the series once again covered the rules of Homesteading and defined the Spanish Land Grant areas of Rancho Simi and Rancho Ex Mission de San Fernando. This time we focused on the land in between that was government land available for homesteading south of Chatsworth Street and north of Plummer.

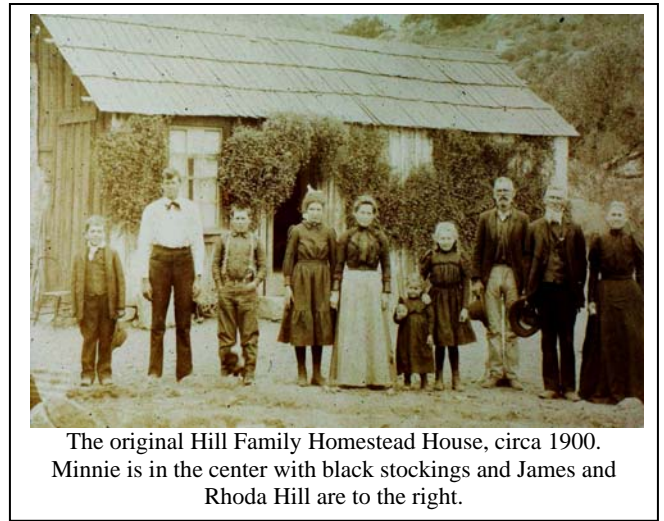
Once again, for our presentation, we overlaid the sections of land, 160 acres for most, on a Google map that shows what is there today to easily see where each homesteader lived.



Augustias Dejeremias was covered in Part 1, She and her husband were the first to settle in about 1860.

**Francisco Miranda and his wife Maria Antonia Salas** arrived 1880 or earlier. Their family of 14 children were neighbors to Rita de la Ossa to the north (Stagecoach Swing Station), and Pierre Domec to the south (Chatsworth Lake Manor), long before other settlers arrived. Their homestead was 133 acres, issued in 1903. What is left of their original adobe home is on their property currently owned by Oakwood Cemetery since 1923. In 1979, the western portion of their land became a part of the Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park.

**James and Rhoda Hill** arrived in Chatsworth in 1886 - with their 4 children Ruth (18), Lovell (10), Mary (4) and Minnie (born that year), to take up squatter's rights on their homestead. They built a wood-frame house, an adjacent barn, well and fencing, and cultivated 10-12 acres. In 1888, oldest daughter Ruth married Frank Ackerman, who homesteaded an adjacent 42



The original Hill Family Homestead House, circa 1900. Minnie is in the center with black stockings and James and Rhoda Hill are to the right.

acres. The Hill family homestead of 120 acres was recorded in 1901.

Son Lovell Hill co-owned the Graves & Hill General Store from 1906 to 1915, and also served as postmaster. A "new" home was built in 1911 and still stands today as the Historical Cottage. In 1920, daughter Minnie and husband Alfred Palmer moved back to the cottage to care for her mother Rhoda Hill, and remained living at the cottage until the age of 90 in 1976.

In 1955 Minnie sold the homestead to the Aqua Sierra Sportsman's Club, keeping a life tenancy on the house and 1.3 acres. In 1957-58 the Sportsman's Club opened with a gun club, fishing lake and a nine-hole golf course. In 1961 the Club leased the 33 acre Butler homestead parcel and added the 'red', 'yellow' and 'orange' golf courses. Trap, skeet and high tower clay pigeon shooting were offered on 5 shooting ranges. Clark Gable, Roy Rogers, Bing Crosby, John Wayne and other Hollywood celebrities used the center.

In 1972 the City of Los Angeles acquired the eastern 55 acres, which included the Homestead Acre and Chatsworth Park South. In 1976 Minnie moved to a retirement home and in 1978, the Chatsworth Historical Society was named conservator of the Homestead Acre. In 1979, the State of California purchased the eastern portion of the Hill Homestead and it became part of the Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park.

**Frank Ackerman and Ruth Hill** were married in 1888, and homesteaded 42 acres. Shortly after the homestead was recorded the ranch was sold and then



became known as the Rim Rock Ranch. Cattle were raised there until 1965 when the property was sold to the Rockpointe Townhome project.

**Alexander Butler** was born in California and in 1896 or earlier he was in Chatsworth homesteading his 33 acres. His homestead was recorded in 1901, but by the 1910 census he had moved to Downey. It is not known who owned that property until 1961, when it was leased by the Devonshire Golf Club. In 1965, the land that the golf course was leasing was sold to the Rockpointe Townhome project. Townhomes were sold by 1969.

**William Bannon** documented his homestead of 160 acres in 1901, and purchased an additional 40 acres that same year. These 200 acres have three stories to tell:

- The **1861 Stagecoach Trail Swing Station, La Cuesta**, run by the De la Ossas from Encino (before Bannon owned the property)

- William Bannon's contributions to Chatsworth and Southern California via **Chatsworth Park Quarry dimension stone and road building projects**

- The Chatsworth Park Quarry supplying millions of tons of rip rap sandstone to form the core of the **San Pedro Breakwater** (after Bannon sells his ranch and quarry in 1901 to the California Construction Company).

**Ferdinand and Ida Tetzlaff** were living in Chatsworth in 1893 homesteading 42 acres, issued in 1906. The Tetzlaff family consisted of 8 children and Ferdinand was the local Justice of the Peace. Today, a 7,000 sq.ft. home known as Eagles Nest, built in 1975, is on the remaining 38 acre parcel. There had been a rumor that the Captain and Tennille had lived at Eagle's Nest, but in an interview they clarified that they had heard that untrue rumor too. In the 1970's they lived in the Twin Lakes area of Chatsworth and wrote their first hit songs in that home.

**Swan Paulson** homesteaded 129 acres in Chatsworth in 1895 as a widower with 4 daughters. The daughters lived with relatives while he homesteaded. By the 1910 census his 4 girls were living with him at the homestead, as well as a Carl and Anna Paulson and their two children. He was no longer in Chatsworth by the 1920 census.



In 1955 Roy Rogers and Dale Evans purchased the 129 acres and named it the Double R Bar Ranch. The ranch had a small house on it built in 1938, that was expanded to 6,000 square feet and still exists today.

In 1964, they sold most of the ranch to a subdivider, and in 1965, Roy and Dale sold the remainder and moved to Apple Valley, Ca. near Victorville. The 1964 subdivision resulted in 55 units on 33 acres over the next 25 years, with 96 acres undeveloped.



Eugene Kilmer purchased the undeveloped 96 acres in 1969, and moved into the Roy Rogers house on Trigger Street. His son Val was a drama student at Chatsworth High School with Kevin Spacey in the late 1970's. Both Val and Kevin have become well know actors, and Kevin Spacey's film production company is named "Trigger Street Productions".

87 acres of the original Paulson homestead is still undeveloped, although a development company currently owns the property.

**Cora Henry** purchased 135 acres at the top of the Stagecoach Trail at Lilac Lane in 1914 at the age of 34. Cora was born in 1880 in White Pine, Nevada, an only child, and her father Jacob was a German immigrant. In 1917 she married Charles James, a 76 year old physician in San Diego County. By 1930 and 40, she was managing an apartment building in Los Angeles. She died in 1974 and is buried with her parents in Piru, CA.

Today, the center section of her parcel includes two homes on Lilac Lane. The remainder is a part of the Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park. And yes, the 1939 Stagecoach Trail Monument is on her parcel.

**The sharing of a behind the scenes research puzzle:** The 1910 census has Cora's profession as a "Draughts Lady" and General Nature of Industry as "Building Company". The handwritten words "Draughts Lady" were difficult to read, so Ken Ditto asked Ray his opinion of what the profession was (he had already formed his own conclusion, but wanted an independent response).

By comparing similar cursive words written by the census taker, Ray concluded that the profession was "Draughts lady". But that made no sense. So he searched "Draughts lady" on Google, it is a German term, still used today in South Africa, for a Receptionist. So our combined conclusion (Ken agreed) was that Cora was a Receptionist in a Building Company in 1910. We still don't know where she worked, but WHAT FUN!

## DID YOU KNOW?

Have you ever noticed the large power towers heading north from Larwin up to Rocketdyne? In 1958, Rocketdyne needed power, and a series of power towers were assembled. There are 23 photos from the Huntington Library digital archives showing how they were built. They include great background pictures of the Homestead Acre and Oakwood Cemetery.

Per the photo on the right, the power towers were assembled on the south side of the Homestead Acre, where Chatsworth Park South is today. Other photos show Sikorsky Helicopters pouring concrete tower footings up the mountain. Were the power towers then lifted (perhaps also by helicopter) to the footings?

Please let us know if you know anyone involved in this project that can tell us the story behind the photos.



Link to all 23 photos:

<http://hdl.huntington.org/cdm/ref/collection/p16003coll2/id/64369>

## It's Your Community...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 now email newsletters to those of you that have given us an email address. However, we also continue to send you a snail-mail copy until you advise us not to. Please email us at [chatsworthhistory@gmail.com](mailto: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).

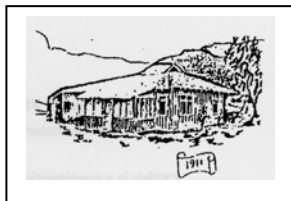
- The first digit represents membership type, 1 – individual and 2 – family/organization.
- The next two digits represent the month that you last paid your dues.
- The last two digits represent the year that you last paid your dues.
- If the month and year on your address label is over one year old,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

For those receiving email only newsletters, we will advise you by email when your dues are due.....



## 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](mailto:chatsworthhistory@gmail.com) 818-882-5614 [www.historicalsocieties.net](http://www.historicalsocieties.net)

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

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

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

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

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

**Chatsworth Historical Society**  
**Virginia Watson Museum & Gift Shop**

The following items are available for sale at our Gift Shop for you history buffs that would like to share some Chatsworth History with others.

The Museum will be open for tours at Open Houses on March 2<sup>nd</sup> and April 6<sup>th</sup> from 1-4 pm. Items can be purchased at that time. To arrange to purchase items other than the first Sunday of the month, email [chatsworthhistory@gmail.com](mailto:chatsworthhistory@gmail.com) or call the museum at 818-882-5614 to make arrangements for shipping if necessary.

**Booklets and Books**

CHATSWORTH HISTORY by Virginia Watson \$10.00

CHATSWORTH PARK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL The First 100 Years  
by Ioline Cleveland \$10.00

WINDOW INTO THE PAST by William Schepler \$10.00

QUIET ON THE SET by Robert Sherman \$25.00

OUR PIONEER MOTHER As told to Lenora Johnson MacDonald \$10.00

**Chatsworth Historical Society**

10385 Shadow Oak Drive  
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**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

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