

Smoke Signal

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

April 2016, Issue #2

Editor: Ann Vincent

Co-Presidents' Message

By Linda & André van der Valk

Our garden is ready for the April 24th Garden Festival. The roses and flowers are all in bloom so be sure you bring your friends to join us for our Duchess Tea in the garden.

February 9 welcomed the latest van der Valk grandchild, Daisy. She also became the youngest member of the Chatsworth Historical Society when her membership was purchased the same week.

On a sadder note, we lost two members Mary Kaufman and Ruth Grant. Both have been valuable members to the community and supporters of our Historical Society.

The Chatsworth Park South renovation has started. Green windscreens have been placed around the current construction section. Our parking lot will remain available for our upcoming events. The contractors have also been very helpful in rerouting our waterlines during the project to allow us to maintain the gardens at the Acre. Our current plans are to continue our monthly meetings and open house events during construction.

Linda and André

SPRING IS HERE..... Plan to come to our Garden Festival! Who knows what wonderful plants and items for sale you may find.



Chatsworth Historical Society
Board of Directors 2015-2016

Co-Presidents	Linda & André van der Valk
Membership.....	Keith Watts
Hospitality.....	Jelena Csanyi
Treasurer.....	Jim Van Gundy
Secretary.....	Donna Nachtrab
Smoke Signal Editor.....	Ann Vincent
Museum Curator.....	Virginia Watson
Cottage Curator.....	Betty Summers
Research Director.....	Ray Vincent
Garden Director.....	Annette Campbell
Director-at-Large.....	Connie Ager
Director-at-Large.....	Linda Dunham
Honorary Member.....	Bea Berman
Honorary Member.....	Elaine Campbell

Upcoming Events

April General Meeting

Tuesday, April 19, 2016
7 pm



MOVING the PIONEER CHURCH

The Chatsworth Historical Society was founded in April 1963, with the purpose of saving the Chatsworth Community Church built in 1903 by the community membership from demolition. The primary goal of the society was to secure a permanent home for the historical church. Join us as we revisit that adventure and see movie footage of the church in motion on its way to its Oakwood Memorial Park home.

Sunday, April 24, 11-3 pm
GARDEN FESTIVAL and Duchess Tea

Tuesday, May 17 - May General Meeting 7 pm
Program: Devils Slide – The Stagecoach Trail

OPEN HOUSE

The Homestead Acre is open to the public the first Sunday of each month from 1 to 4 pm.
Sunday, May 1 & June 5



Over 300 Rose Bushes in Bloom

The Chatsworth Historical Society Presents

A GARDEN FESTIVAL

Featuring Roses and Crafts

The Duchess Tea

- \$10 per person
- 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.



Museum Exhibits Featuring
Chatsworth Pioneer Families and our
Equestrian Heritage

Tour the Rose Gardens

Vendors and Garden Clubs

Live Plant Sale

White Elephant Sale

Quilt Display & Art Displays

Tours of 1911 Homestead
Cottage



Bake Sale

Arts & Crafts

Hot Dogs and Soda

For information and tea reservations (+10 persons), please email chatsworthhistory@gmail.com

Note: Parking is limited at Chatsworth Park South

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 3 p.m.

**Sunday, April 24, 2016
11 a.m. to 3 p.m.**

\$5 Admission Donation – Children \$1
Kids under 5 Free

THE HOMESTEAD ACRE

At the First Stop Sign in **Chatsworth Park South**
(West End of Devonshire Street)

10385 Shadow Oak Drive, Chatsworth, CA 91311
chatsworthhistory@gmail.com 818-882-5614 www.historicalsocieties.net

All Proceeds go to the Chatsworth Historical Society for the preservation of the Minnie Hill Palmer Homestead Acre and the Virginia Watson Chatsworth Museum

Chatsworth Park South History

By Ann & Ray Vincent

Today in April of 2016, our Chatsworth Park South, located at the west end of Devonshire, is going through a renovation to remove lead shot and clay pigeon debris present since the Aqua Sierra Sportsmans Club first skeet and trap stations were built in 1952.



Ken Ullis and Bill Sesnon were world record holders at the two man team event in Dallas Texas in 1964. Bill Sesnon is related to the Porter family of Porter Ranch.

We need to travel back to the early 1880's to follow the history of the property and the families involved to get the big picture.

James Hill and family set up squatters rights on their homestead in 1886. Their 120 acre homestead eventually grew to 229 acres.

In 1952, their daughter, Minnie Hill Palmer, a widow aged 66 years and living at the Homestead Cottage, leased part of her land to the Aqua Sierra Sportsmans Club.

The Cottage remained her home until her 90th year, 1976. Minnie worked closely with the Chatsworth Historical Society and the City of LA to maintain the legacy of the Hill Homestead.

Ken's wife Beverly donated a shotgun pouch which has a "100 straight" pin attached to the Aqua Sierra Sportsmans club pin.



Beverly explained that the Aqua Sierra Gun Club was



not a public course. It was an exclusive shooting club, and members were invited to join.

The most important attribute was that you had to be able to shoot well. The group included quite a few Hollywood celebrities, including Clark Gable, Roy Rogers, Robert Taylor, Robert Stack, Robert Sterling, John Wayne, Charlton Heston and Walter Brennan. In 1958 there were over 200 paying members at the Club.



The Chatsworth Historical Society has posted three related videos that can be downloaded for viewing, found at chatsworthhistory.com, under Presentations.

1. 1961 The Andy Griffith Show, Season 2, Episode 8, "The Perfect Female" (Skeet shooting at Aqua Sierra)
2. 1959 Chevrolet Commercial - Trap Shooting at the Roy Rogers Sports Center
3. In 1958 Roy Rogers buys Clark Gable's pump shotgun for \$600 at Aqua Sierra. An interview with Dusty Rogers.

Now let's talk about the Golf Courses and Trout Lakes.

Aqua Sierra Sportsman Club

Two homestead parcels were combined in the 1950's and 60's to create a 123 acre sports center at the west end of Devonshire, on what is today's Chatsworth Park South and part of Rockpointe.

There are multiple stories involved:

- The founding of the Aqua Sierra Sportsmans Club in 1949, and the building of two skeet and trap stations by 1951/52, before Minnie Hill Palmer sold the Hill homestead.
- The expansion of Aqua Sierra after the 1956 purchase of the Hill homestead by Henry Berkenkamp of Oroweat Bakeries. By 1959, there were five skeet and trap stations, a 90 foot hi-tower, one nine-hole golf course, a driving range, and two trout lakes. In 1959 it is advertised as the **Roy Rogers Sports Center**.



Roy was an accomplished sportsman and a big game hunter. Roy was also a crack shot at trap and skeet. In 1961 Roy competed at the Trap and Skeet championships in Gardena. Charlotte Berkenkamp, Henry's wife also competed at that same event.

Expansion of the Golf Courses

The first nine hole course completed in 1959 was known as the “white” course. In 1961, three additional nine-hole golf courses were added on the adjacent 48 acre Butler homestead parcel. This parcel was leased from the Scheplers.

In June 1959 Ashley Loafea is named the Pro of the Devonshire Golf Course.

In Nov 1960 the Devonshire Women’s Golf Club compiled a handbook on rules and etiquette on the greens, and announced that they would schedule tournaments every Wednesday from 8:30 to 10 am.

Construction of the red, yellow and orange courses began in Aug 1960 and was finished by June 1961.

In June 1961 there was a pro-amateur celebrity golf tournament featuring James Garner and other celebrities.

There was a Chatsworth Youth Golf Club formed in the early ‘60’s. It was sponsored by the Chatsworth Rotary Club and George Lorbeer was the advisor.



Ken Ditto shared some fun stories about how to play the courses. First, you were always polite to Minnie because you never knew when a ball was going to land in her yard. And there were unique hazards to watch for such as rattlesnakes. Also, lots of errant golf balls bouncing around from other golfers, since the fairways were very close together. Ken found the Out of Bounds marker above during the tear-down of the golf club, and donated it to the Chatsworth Museum. It had been located just outside Minnie’s vegetable garden.



The Palmer Trout Lakes

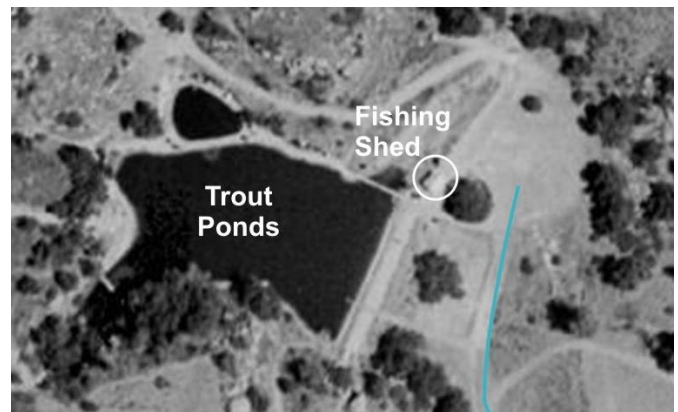
Mike Fender’s wife’s grandparents are Alice and Albert Biddison. Alice and Albert were caretakers of the Trout Lake, short 9-hole golf course, and the gun range during the 50’s and early 60’s. His wife spent a lot of time at the “Lake” and remembers her grandfather conversing with Roy Rogers on several occasions. Mike’s mother-in-law knew Minnie Palmer. Mike forwarded us pictures of the scale (seen at right) used to weigh the fish at the Trout Lakes. One paid by the pound for the fish caught.



Mike said that when the lakes were drained there were several very large catfish in the larger lake, one being close to 3 feet long.

There was a Fishing Shed where they would rent poles, and they would clean your fish for you.

There was a small pond for the kids, and a larger pond for the adults.



The decline of the sports center began in 1968, when Rockpointe began development on the 48 acre Butler parcel. In 1973 the City of Los Angeles purchased the 75 acre skeet/fishing/golf course site and it became today’s Chatsworth Park South.

What remains of the Sports complex today in 2016

- The Golf Pro Shop was moved onto the Homestead Acre and is currently the Virginia Watson Chatsworth Museum, home of the Chatsworth Historical Society.
- The Concrete Path behind the shotgun range stations, and a flagpole at a clearing behind the center station (also seen in 1959 Chevy commercial)
- The concrete foundation of the Fishing Shed at the Trout Lakes.

For more pictures, maps, and stories, view the presentation at chatsworthhistory.com, Presentations, Aqua Sierra and the Roy Rogers Sports Center.

Chatsworth Historical Society 2016

JOHNSON FAMILY MEMBERS

...this is for you!

We were fortunate to get in touch with Dorothy Liss, a descendant of the Johnson-Pogue family branch. She has shared some wonderful photos and will be getting in touch with us in the next few months when she is in town to share more photos.

Since I love finding out more about the Bee Business in early Chatsworth, here is one of my favorite new photos Dorothy shared for our Johnson Collection.



My great uncle Harold Johnson selling honey on Victory Blvd in Burbank.

The words on the box say:
HONEY 5 lbs 39 cents and up

Harold has driven a large roadside portable storefront full of glass honey jars down to this location to sell. Date unknown, the truck might give us a better clue, but we can not see much of it. My guess is 1930's, since the price of honey dropped to 5 cents per lb in 1940.

UPCOMING PROGRAM

May 17, 2016

THE STAGECOACH TRAIL

Join us to learn more about the Stagecoach Trail, known as the Devil's Slide, at the Homestead Acre on May 17, 2016 at 7:00 PM.

Find out what it was like to travel during the 1800's before our train tunnels were built.

See film footage of the Native Daughters of the Golden West celebrating the Plaque placed in 1939.



APRIL 24 – SUNDAY GARDEN FESTIVAL 2016:

Our next major community event will be “A Garden Festival” on Sunday, April 24, 2016. It will feature our Duchess Tea in the Garden along with a large selection of vendors, Garden clubs and experts. In addition there will be arts and crafts for the children and adults too! We will also include our Bake Sale and White Elephant Sale. This is one of our two annual Fundraisers to maintain our Acre.

Plan to join us for the Duchess Tea in the Garden! The cost is \$10 for a selection of sandwiches, fruit and desserts. Reservations for 10 or more are required...however everyone is welcome to drop by between 11:30 to 1:30 or as long our supplies last. Come enjoy the Tea.

Docent Doings at the ACRE:

Our docents keep busy with projects throughout the year, we meet every Wednesday morning 9-noon.

OUT IN THE GARDEN: Annette and Karyne can be found dead-heading roses and hand watering plants as needed every Wednesday morning. If you need some outdoor fresh air therapy, come join them.

IN THE MUSEUM: Linda van der Valk is continuously working with the items donated to the museum by our members.

IN THE COTTAGE: An inventory project is underway to confirm and learn more about the items on display and their history so we can provide more information on our tours.

DOCENTS ARE NEEDED: Help guide guests through the museum and cottage. If you would like to learn the history of our community and help share it with others, then contact us for more information at chatsworthhistory@gmail.com.

Mary Kaufman 1948- 2016

Mary Kaufman, Chatsworth Equestrian Leader, passed away unexpectedly March 24th on the second anniversary of the death of her favorite horse, Ace. Following a months-long battle with a troublesome hip replacement, Kaufman, 68, suffered infections and blood clots. She was recovering from additional surgery when she died.

She was a longtime president of ETI Corral 54, an equestrian organization devoted to trail rides and horsemanship. She also served on the board of the Chatsworth Neighborhood Council and was chair of the Equestrian Committee and chief organizer of the Council's annual Day Of The Horse festival.

Kaufman was appointed by Councilman Mitch Englander to the city's Equestrian Advisory Committee and was active with the West Valley Volunteer Mounted Patrol. She hosted Mayors Eric Garcetti and Antonio Villaraigosa, and Council Members Greig Smith and Mitch Englander and other dignitaries on horseback tours of Chatsworth's hills and trails, promoting the need to preserve the rural environment.

A native of Oakland, and formerly a resident of Calabasas, Kaufman moved to Chatsworth. She bought and remodeled a ranch on Chatsworth Street where she kept her horses -- Oscar, a Palomino Quarter Horse; DeOsa, a bay Peruvian Paso; and Raven, a black Tennessee Walker. Her dogs were Winston and Merlin.

After all the remodeling was done on her ranch in 2012, Kaufman said she loved being able to stand on the rear deck and look out on the back yard with her horses and dogs. "This is all I need. It's all here in front of me. I never have to leave." Among her survivors are her daughter, a granddaughter, grandson and sister.

Ruth Grant 1930-2016

Historical Society member Ruth Grant peacefully passed away Feb 18th at the age of 85, due to a heart attack following a long period of hospice care at her home. Born July 31, 1930, she was 85 years old. Chatsworth history was instilled early as Ruth's mother taught at the Chatsworth Park Elementary School in 1922. Ruth, a long time and dedicated member of the Chatsworth Historical Society is remembered for her outstanding contribution organizing the project to (as she called it) thread 100 years of history into the Chatsworth Centennial Quilt. This masterpiece is proudly on display in our museum. The history of the quilt as written by Ruth has been included in this newsletter in her memory.

THE CHATSWORTH CENTENNIAL QUILT

As presented by Ruth Grant and Zena Thorpe at the March 20, 2012 CHS General Meeting

This is Our History Book in Fabric and we wanted everything on the quilt to represent Chatsworth. The quilt squares are done in pictorial appliqué and are renditions of pictures that are in our museum collection.

The large square in the center is a picture of the Hill-Palmer cottage which was our major inspiration. It is surrounded by roses because the cottage garden is a showcase of beautiful trees, plants, and especially roses. It is the only remaining homestead cottage in the San Fernando Valley that has a garden. At the top is a stage coach traveling on the Santa Susana Pass through the Santa Susana Mountains. Below the stage coach there is a square of the unique rock formation of Stoney Point which is rich in archeological information and is a city park. The first square to be finished was done by Zena Thorpe and is of the Pioneer Church which was built in 1903 and was moved to Oakwood Cemetery and restored by our Historical Society in 1963 to save it from being demolished.

Below the Acre square is the first school in Chatsworth. I made this square in honor of my mother who taught in the Chatsworth Elementary School in 1922 and 1923.

Another square with the Santa Susana Mountains is a movie scene with the Lone Ranger.

At the bottom of the quilt is our 100th Birthday Cake. It is on a tablecloth knitted for the quilt by Roberta Weinstein. She was a tireless volunteer worker who was famous for the tablecloths that she knitted for raffles to benefit local causes.

The four comers are a botanical profile of the area---walnuts, olives, oranges and acorns.

The bottom border features a ballet dancer, Heather Watts, who was born in Chatsworth and was a Prima Ballerina with the New York City Ballet. During the time we were working on the quilt I was visiting Denmark and was very impressed when I saw her dance in Tivoli Gardens. Her parents, Keith and Sheila Watts were very active members of the Historical Society, and Keith still is. We decided to include this now famous dancer in our design. On the other side of the bottom border there are horses. If the quilt was to be all about Chatsworth, it had to include horses.

The sunbonnets in the top border are in honor of the dedicated docents who wear pioneer costumes and give tours of the cottage, the museum and the gardens when we have our First Sunday of the Month Open House and also when we

schedule special tours. The poppies are also in the border because they are the State Flower of California.

Zena Thorpe completed the first square to be included in the quilt and she also made the final square. In the center of the bottom border is the coat of arms of the Duke of Devonshire. The Chamber of Commerce of our town was given permission to use it by the 10th Duke of Devonshire because our town was named for his home, Chatsworth House, in Derbyshire, England. Zena is from that part of England so she was happy to volunteer to make that square.

The outside border of the quilt is designed to represent a film strip. Film strips are no longer used but they were used for the huge number of old time movies that brought fame to our community.

The back of the quilt is also important. The signatures in the muslin backing were collected at community events during the year that we worked on the quilt for a one dollar donation each to help pay for the fabrics and the quilting supplies that we used. The names in the hearts are the names of the women who worked on the quilt and they were not added until the rest of the quilt was finished.

The Historical Society chose to make a quilt to celebrate Chatsworth's 100th birthday so we should look at some of the quilting.

In addition to all of the traditional quilting there are crosses quilted in the sky above the Pioneer Church, stars quilted in the film strip border and abc's above the Chatsworth Elementary School. The quilt squares that surround the Hill Palmer cottage are the North Wind pattern (an obvious choice for Chatsworth) and the pattern of the squares that cross the four corners is called the Road to California.

The night before the quilt was to be presented at the community birthday party I mentioned to Zena that we should have quilted the familiar wind symbol, a blowing cloud face in the sky, above the Hill Palmer cottage because of the North Wind quilt squares. Nothing more was said but the next day when I arrived at the party guess what was in the sky above the cottage? A special memory I have is of Zena who because of her involvement in this community project was launched on a path to become one of the most famous pictorial appliqué quilters in the world today.

I want to say that it was a joy to work on this quilt with so many talented and helpful ladies and it will always be a time I visit frequently in my memories.

Written by Ruth Grant---March 20th, 2012



Chatsworth Historical Society Virginia Watson Museum & Gift Shop

The following items are available for sale during Open Houses on the first Sunday of the month. To arrange to purchase items at other times, email chatsworthhistory@gmail.com to make arrangements for payment and shipping, if necessary.

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

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 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?

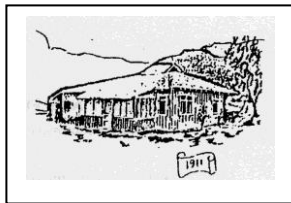
For those receiving email only newsletters, we will advise you by email when your dues are due. For snail mail, if there is a code on your address label, this is what it means (life memberships do not have a code):

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!

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:	<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
Life Membership:	<input type="checkbox"/> \$ 125.00		

NAME _____ **Phone:** _____

STREET ADDRESS: _____ **Email:** _____

CITY / STATE / ZIP: _____

Special Interest / Expertise: _____