

The Chatsworth Hotel from 1901 to 1904

The Chatsworth Hotel started in 1890, and went through various owners up to 1958. The Hotel has lots of fascinating stories, but this one was new to us. It was researched by William Flower at the West San Fernando Valley Then and Now Facebook site, with contributions from Keith Hart and Rich Krugel.

The story provides a view of Chatsworth during the railroad boomtown years, when hundreds of men were working on the railroad tunnels from Chatsworth to Simi, and the Chatsworth Park Quarry was supplying up to 50 railroad flatcars of sandstone a day to form the core of the San Pedro Breakwater.

The Chatsworth Hotel was located at the site of today's Staybridge Suites, off of Lassen just north of the 1894 Railroad Depot.

Darius Mead owned the Hotel with his wife Kate in 1895. Darius was the younger brother of Nelson Gray's mother. And Nelson Gray was one of the prominent leaders of Chatsworth during that time. Darius died in Dec 1901 at the age of 78.

Within 3 three months of Darius' death, his widow Kate had rented the Chatsworth Hotel to Peter Lopez, who was the constable of San Fernando Township, of which Chatsworth was a part of. Lopez's plan was to establish a social drinking club furnishing hard drinks.

Per the LATimes March 14, 1902, *"The citizens of Chatsworth have headed off a saloon license a half dozen times, with their protests, but will find it difficult to thwart these new tactics to establish a drinking resort in the community."*

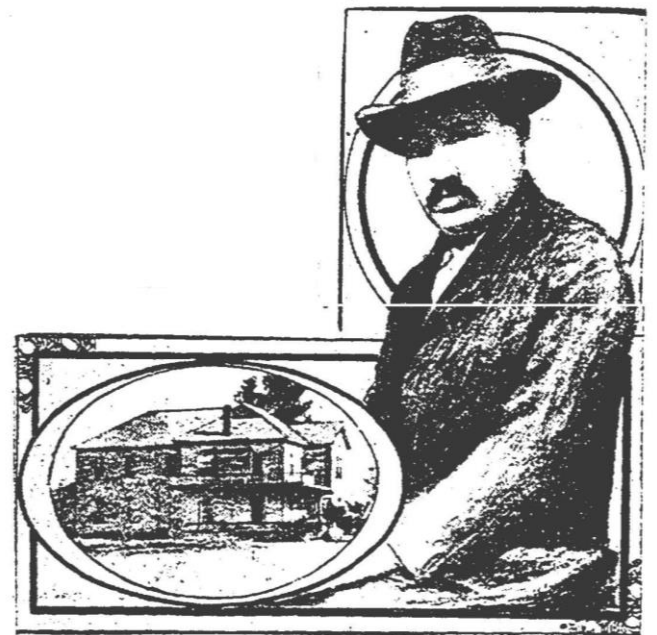
On November 29th 1902 the "social club" at the Hotel is raided, and Robert Daniels, Constable of Chatsworth, served a search warrant and loaded the beer and other liquors into a wagon and hauled it away.

On Dec 11th Pete Lopez is sued for misconduct in office, claiming he was running illegal stud poker gambling and was selling liquor illegally. His term of office expires Jan. 1, 1903.

On Dec 21, 1902 The LATimes states *"Booze was the paramount issue of last week here. "Social Club" liquor occupied so many of the workmen after pay day last Monday that operations at the quarries were almost suspended until the men went broke and sobered up. Pete Lopez has tendered his resignation as constable of San Fernando Township."*

A little over a year later, in January of 1904, the battle continues. The town had voted in a recent election 33 to 11 against having a saloon in town. But the Board of Supervisors on June 8th, 1903 granted a hotel liquor license to Mrs. C. H. Beckel, who happens to be Pete's mother-in-law. Supervisor Patterson states that on that date no one was on hand to oppose the granting of the liquor license, and the application was granted.

A final article on this matter was written in February 26, 1904, which reports that Mrs. Beckel has been arrested for serving drinks without a meal. The reporter described the situation as *"...many of her patrons were not able to get away with a meal every time they took a drink, and that rather than disoblige good friends the hostess cut short on the meals and long on the drink"*



PETE LOPEZ AND HIS RESORT.