

Chatsworth Hills Homesteaders Part 1

- This will be a three part presentation, as we share the history of some of the 45 Chatsworth Homesteading Families. Topics we will cover tonight:
 - Homesteading Overview
 - Research Tools supporting this presentation
 - Homesteading History in California
 - Homesteading Requirements
 - Overview of Chatsworth Hills Homesteaders
 - Part 1 Homesteader Families in the Santa Susana Mountains, north of Chatsworth Street and west of Andora.

Online Research Tools used in this Presentation

- Online Census Data, and supplemental Genealogical Websites, i.e. Ancestry.com
- Online Township Master Title Plats from California Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- Online US Dept. of Interior BLM, listing Names and Doc numbers of Homesteaders, and any other transfer/sale of public lands to private lands
- Google Earth, allowing us to plot Homesteader parcels as an overlay
- Earth Point, allowing an overlay of the Federal townships and sections on Google Earth.
- As a background, a township is 36 square miles (6 miles to each side). A township
 is divided into 36 sections of one square mile each (1 mile to each side). Each
 section is 640 acres, a quarter section is 160 acres.
- A special thanks to Rich Krugel and Ken Ditto, who helped us compile the Homestead Data

Example of 1880 Census

 This page shows Rita De la Ossa (Stagecoach Way Station), Francisco Miranda (Oakwood Cemetery), and Peter (Pierre) Domec, Chatsworth Lake Manor

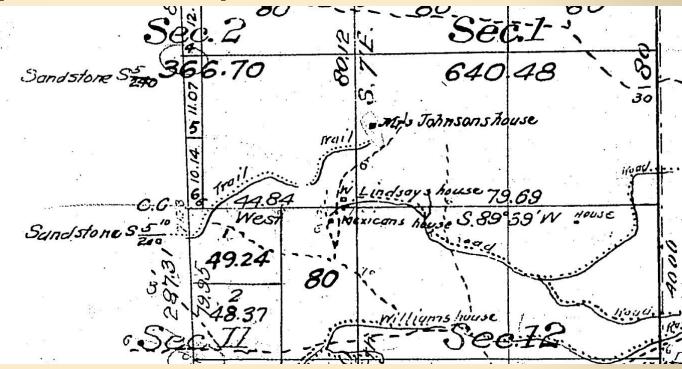
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Example of Township Master Title Plat

Township 2North, Range 17West, showing portions of Sections 1, 2, 11 and 12. Representing surveys from 1853-1895.

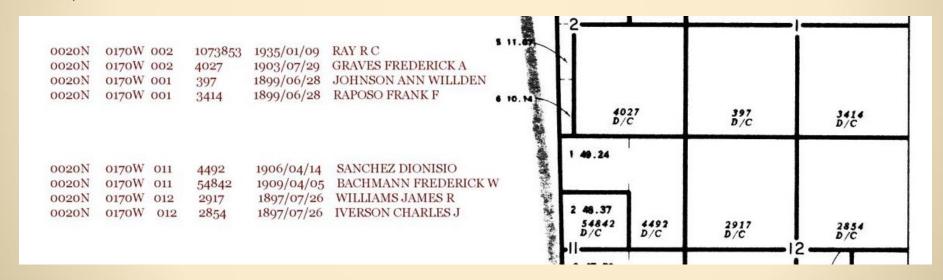
Each of the grids represents 160 acres.

Notice the map shows Mrs. Johnsons house, and Williams house.



Example of US Dept. of Interior Names and Doc #s of Homesteaders

This information was compiled by Rich Krugel from the US Dept. of Interior Bureau of Land Management website. Notice Ann Johnson, 1899, Doc# 397, and Charles Iverson, 1897, Doc #2854.



Example of Google Earth with Homesteader Overlay



Research Tools and Homesteader Overlay

For those of you who are interested in the sources we used for this presentation, email us at chatsworthhistory@gmail.com

We will email you the online links, plus a Chatsworth Hills Homesteader file that you can open up as an overlay on Google Earth.

Homesteading History in California

Spanish Rule

- 1542 Cabrillo anchors his ships off the shore of Santa Monica.
- 1769 Spanish Colonization and the Mission Period begins.
- 1773 Spanish Viceroy Felipe de Barri grants authority for the issuance of land grants in California
- 1781 Pueblo de Los Angeles is founded. Grants for lots at the Pueblo for twelve Spanish
 pioneer colonists and their families were conditional for a period of five years, at the end of
 which time they received confirmation of possession.
- 1795 Rancho Simi Francisco, Patricio and Miguel Pico are given a 113,009 acre land grant of Simi Valley and other Ventura lands.
- 1795 Rancho Encino The first land grant in the San Fernando Valley. Cattle raising was popular in the Valley at this time.
- 1797 The San Fernando Mission is established, and Rancho Encino gives up much of its land for the use of the Mission.
- 1819 The Mission has 21,745 cattle, sheep, horses, mules, goats and pigs.

Homesteading History in California

Mexican Rule

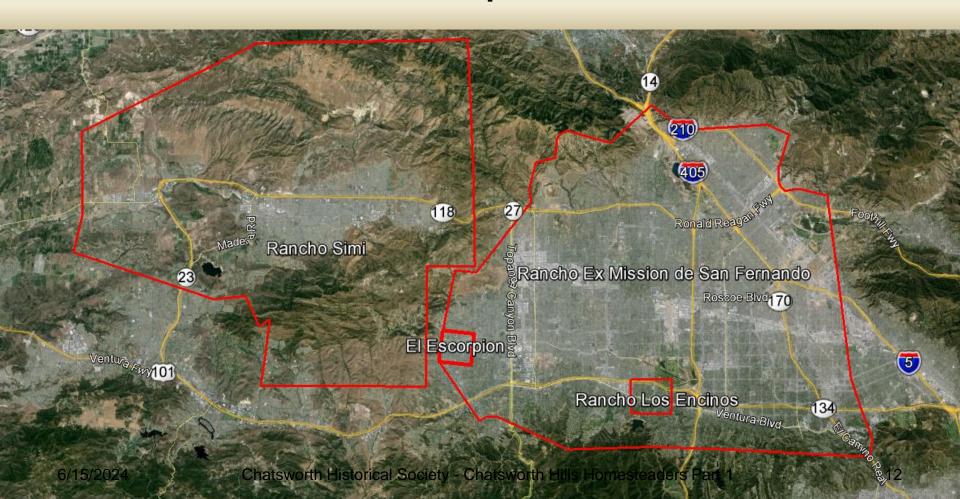
- 1821 Mexico declares independence from Spain
- 1834 The Mission is secularized, allowing Mission lands to be granted to individuals. The Mission is at its peak, with 26,000 cattle, sheep, horses, mules, goats and pigs.
- 1845 Rancho Encino Governor Pio Pico regrants Rancho Encino to three Tongva Native Americans, Ramon, Francisco, and Roque.
- 1845 El Escorpion Governor Pio Pico grants 1,110 acres to three Chumash Native Americans, Odon, Urbano and Manuel. Their grant petition was for two square leagues, or 9,000 acres, reaching north to Chatsworth Lake and east to Topanga Canyon.
- 1846 Rancho Ex-Mission San Fernando To raise funds for the Mexican-American war, Governor Pio Pico sells most of the valley floor, 116,858 acres, to Eulogio De Celis for \$14,000.
- 1848 the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ends the Mexican-American war, and provides that land grants will be honored.

Homesteading History in California

American Rule

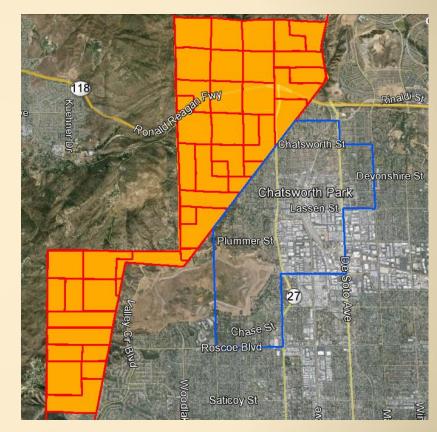
- 1820 The 1820 Land Act or "Cash Act" allowed the purchase of 160 acres of federal land at a cost of \$2.00 an acre. The 1821 Relief Act reduced the minimum acres to 80, and reduced the price to \$1.25 per acre.
- 1841 The Preemption Act permitted "squatters" who were living on federal land to purchase up to 160 acres at a very low price before the land was to be offered for sale to the general public.
 - Requirements included living on the land, and working to improve it for five years.
- 1850 California becomes the 31st state in the United States
- 1862 The Homestead Act gave an applicant ownership of government land of up to 160 acres.
 Requirements were that the homesteader needed to live on the land for five years, and improve it by building a 12' x 14' dwelling and growing crops.

Homesteaders Overview – Spanish Land Grants in 1848



45 Homesteaders pioneer the Santa Susana and Simi Hills

- The orange section is the area between Rancho Simi and Rancho Ex-Mission de San Fernando, that became federal land after the Mexican American war in 1848.
- Some Homesteaders arrived as early as the 1860's and 1870's, although most did not file for their homesteads until the mid 1890's
- Chatsworth Park (in blue) was originally a part of Rancho Ex-Mission de San Fernando. It was founded in 1888, about the same time as many homesteaders settled in the area. The railroad came in 1893.
- Notice that Chatsworth Park was bordered by Andora, the Mission Road (Rinaldi), Mason and DeSoto, Roscoe, and Fallbrook.

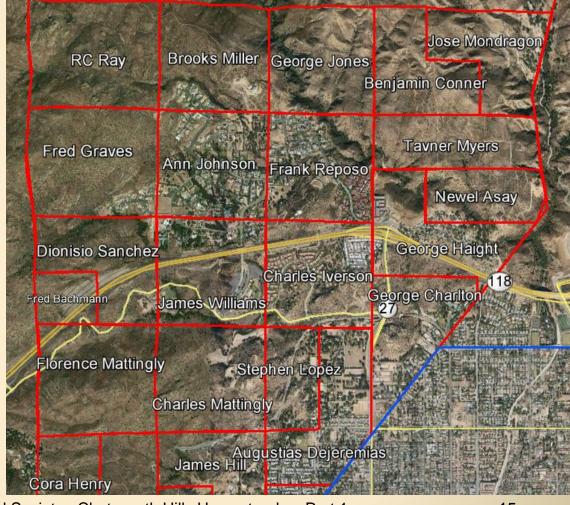


Overview of Chatsworth Hills Homesteaders

- 32 homesteaders qualified under the Homestead Act, and 13 purchased their land for cash.
- A few homesteaders continued to live on their land long after they earned their property, while most eventually sold their interests or moved out of the hills to the main part of town.
- We have broken the Homesteaders into 3 major groups:
 - North Chatsworth north of Chatsworth Street and west of Andora.
 - West Chatsworth between Chatsworth St. and Plummer west of Andora.
 - South Chatsworth north of Roscoe and south of Plummer including Lake Manor.

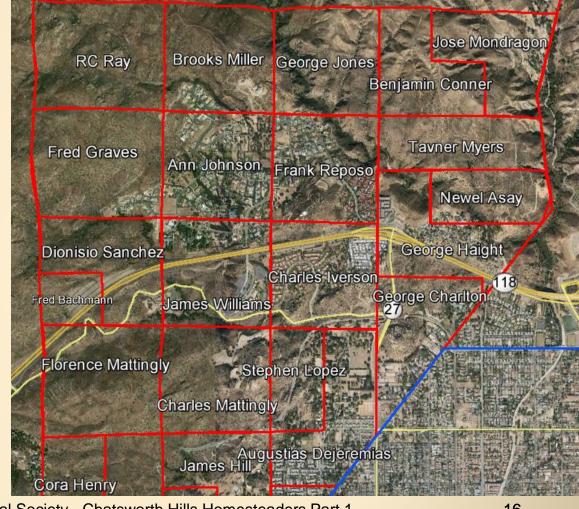
Homesteaders of the Northern Hills of Chatsworth

 Although the hills had been occupied by Indian and Spanish families for many years, those that actually set down roots and officially homesteaded, left a paperwork trail that we have been able to follow.



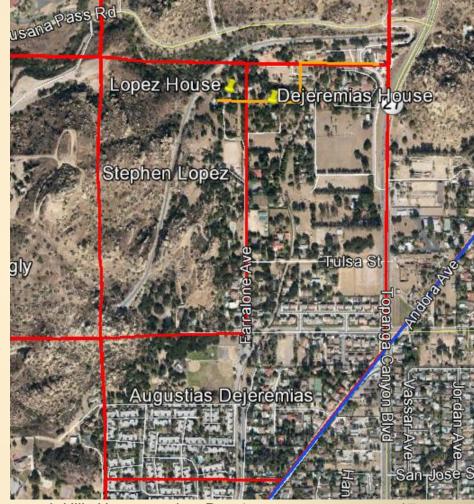
Homesteaders of the Northern Hills of Chatsworth, names and dates of arrival:

- 1865 Ramon and Augustias Dejeremias
- 1874 Neils and Ann Johnson
- 1881 James and Carrie Williams
- 1884 Augusta and Carl Iverson
- 1885 Dionisio Sanchez
- 1894 George Charlton
- 1894 Frank Raposa
- 1895 Stephen Lopez
- 1896 Fred Graves
- 1896 Jose Mondragon
- 1904 Frederick Bachmann
- 1909 Florence Mattingly
- 1910 Benjamin Conner
- 1912 Charles Mattingly
- 1912 Tavner Myers
- 1913 George Haight
- 1914 George Jones
- 1921 Brooks Miller
- 1930 R C Ray



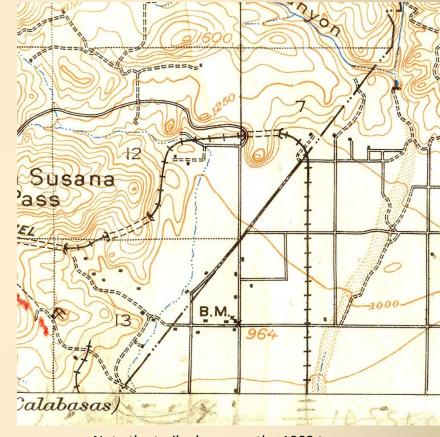
Ramon and Augustias Dejeremias

- 1865 One of the earliest Homesteaders in the north were Ramon and Augustias Dejeremias, both of Spanish descent married in 1865.
- Ramon is listed as a rancher in San Fernando at the age of 25. In 1870 they have two children.
- The residents of our Chatsworth area were included in the San Fernando records until Chatsworth Park was put on the map in 1888.
- Notice that his land followed the Santa Susana Creek, and was also relatively flat.



Ramon and Augustias Dejeremias

- Quote: "Ramon Jeremiah was another Chatsworth Pioneer who first demonstrated the highly productive quality of the soil in that most scenic and picturesque part of the valley. His garden provided many choice vegetables for the sheep herders, who pastured their flocks in the nearby hills."
- As a side note, the 1880 Census listed Bernadeno Don Aleke as a French Basque Sheepherder living near the Jeremiah family through at least the 1880's.
 - Living with Bernadeno was his stepson Martin Biscaluz, who became an attorney.
 - Martin's son Eugene Biscaluz became the sheriff of Los Angeles in 1932.

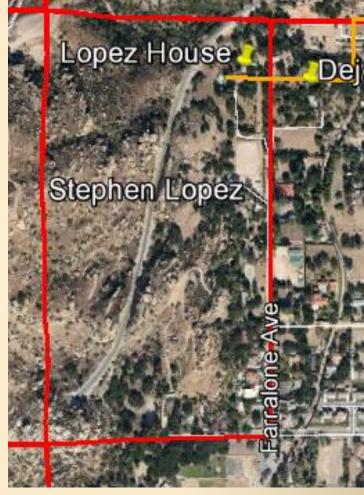


Note the trails shown on the 1903 topo map to homesteads in the area

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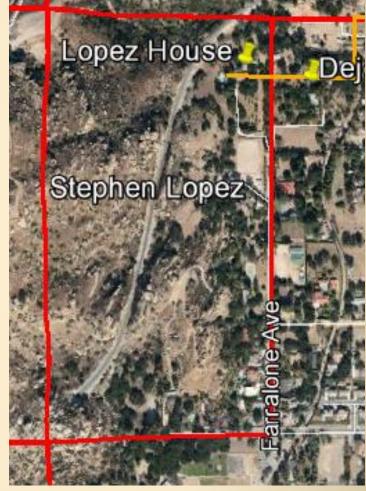
Stephen Lopez

- Stephen Lopez was born in 1871. His parents were Catalina and Geronimo Lopez who ran the Lopez Stagecoach Station in San Fernando.
- His mother Catalina, born in 1832, grew up in the romantic and colorful Mission period while her father Pedro Lopez handled the affairs of the Mission.
 - "She (Catalina) first saw the San Fernando Mission in all its glory, with beautiful orchards and gardens surrounding it and the wide plains in front covered with cattle and sheep."
- He is listed in the 1892 voter registration at the age of 21 as a butcher, lame in one foot.



Stephen Lopez

- The property he homesteaded had the railroad tracks and one of the tunnels running through it. Construction was in progress during the time he was homesteading.
- In 1900, his Chatsworth neighbor Augustias Dejeremias is listed as a widow residing as a boarder with the Geronimo Lopez family (Stephen's father) in San Fernando.
- In 1920, Stephen Lopez is caring for his father Geronimo Lopez in San Fernando. Stephen Lopez's occupation at this time is Real Estate.



Stephen Lopez Land Grant

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1868 - The Neils and Ann Johnson family arrive in California and build a shake house in 1871 in what eventually became known as Brown's Canyon

- Confrontations over cattle grazing and water access rights developed with Milton Brown, who arrived shortly after they did with a herd of cattle from the Sonoma area. The Brown family remained and by 1900 at the age of 71, Milton Brown retired to Whittier. He never filed for homesteading.
- Neils and Ann moved on to the property they homesteaded in 1874. Homesteading documents were issued in 1899.
- The Johnsons were known as the first American family to arrive in the San Fernando Valley.

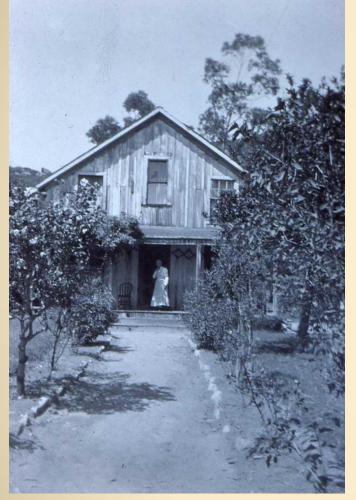
Neils and Ann Johnson



- Ann & Neils had 10 children, and number 8 was Emma Johnson, born in 1873.
- Ann Johnson worked to start the first school in 1880, and organized services under the oaks before the Pioneer church was built in 1903.
- 1913 Ann moves down from the hills to the town onto Old Santa Susana Pass near her son Charles's property. She dies in 1920.
- 1929 The Johnson Family sell their homestead property to John Brandeis, preserving 20 acres as a family retreat. Movies were made at the Brandeis Ranch until 1949.
- 1963 Katharine Johnson, wife of grandson Kelly Johnson, is a founding member of the Chatsworth Historical Society
- 2000 Indian Springs Estates custom homes surround the remaining acres of Fern Ann.

Neils and Ann Johnson





Neils and Ann Johnson

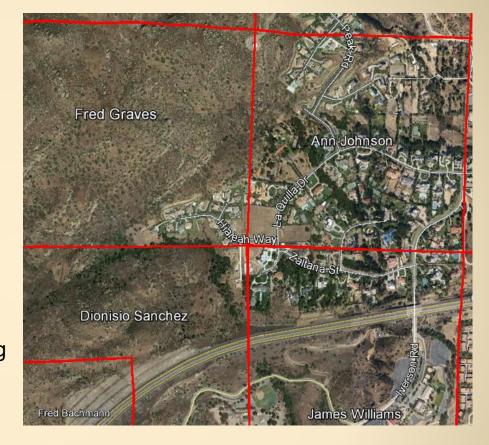
"The friendship, cooperation and mutual spirit of enthusiasm that developed between the Jeremiah family and the family of N.C. Johnson, who came to be neighbors in those early days, laid the groundwork for that deeply seated pride of possession that still maintains among the citizens of the Chatsworth area of the valley."

History of San Fernando Valley, by Frank Keefer, 1934

The Johnson Homestead House at Fern Ann Falls

Fred Graves

- Fred Graves was the first member of the Graves family to arrive in Chatsworth in 1896.
- Emma Johnson, the 8th child of Neils and Ann, married Fred Graves, and they homesteaded an additional 160 acres adjacent to the Johnson property, receiving homestead documents in 1903.
- The Graves homestead property becomes part of the Johnson's land holdings, bringing it up to 320 acres.



Fred Graves

Fred Graves becomes Constable of Chatsworth from 1903-1910, and also goes into partnership with Lovell Hill, another homesteading family, to run the Graves & Hill General Merchandise.



Fred Graves

- 1908-1913 Fred purchases land west of Andora and north of Chatsworth Street. His father Eli and brother Harry soon purchase additional adjacent land north of Chatsworth street.
- 1932 Fred Graves sells most land holdings, and moves his house from 10637 Andora to the present location 22200 Chatsworth Street (known today as the Big Oak Theatre).
- The house is thought to have been built in 1913 (maybe as early as 1908) from interviews with Emma Graves.

Fred and Emma Graves 60th Wedding Anniversary, 1956







Graves Family – Harry Graves

- 1945 15 acres in the northwest corner of the Harry Graves ranch is deeded to Bill/Bonnie Graves Lakey and Hubert/Virginia Graves Ditto
 - 1947 Lakey House is built, 1949 Ditto House is built
- In 1969, Harry Graves ranch house on Tulsa is sold
- 1972-1975 Lakey house and remaining property is sold
- 1986 to 1995 Virginia Graves Ditto thought to be the oldest person born and still living in Chatsworth
- 2013 Ditto property is still owned by the family, it is last of the Graves ranch remaining

1926 Bonnie and Virginia Graves in a wheelbarrow on the Harry Graves Ranch. Today it is at the Acre.



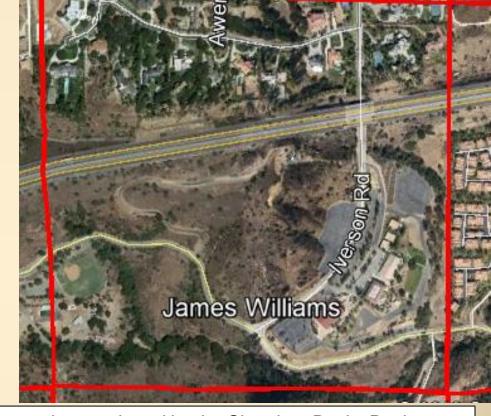
1952 Mailbox at Graves Ranch, showing three addresses –

- Route 1, Box A15
- 10755 Santa Susana
- 22101 Tulsa



J. R. Williams

- 1881 The James Richard and Caroline Williams family arrived from Kansas. They had 5 children.
- Twenty acres of cultivated land was used to raise hay and grow potatoes, with the remainder set aside for grazing cattle and apiaries (bee hives).
- J.R. and his wife Carrie, along with their children, lived in a 4-room 24' x 24' "woodboard house," with a 12' x 16' barn, honey house, a small orchard, and a half-mile of fencing nearby.



The Williams property is now shared by the Church at Rocky Peak, Indian Springs Estates, & the Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park. The lower section was once a part of the Spahn Ranch.

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J. R. Williams

- The Williams family lived on their homestead at least into the 1920s.
- They later moved to "Chatsworth Proper" with a home on Devonshire and Farralone where they retired and remained active in the community.

Caroline Williams at her Homestead House, on the north side of the Santa Susana Creek. The house is no longer there.



J. R. Williams

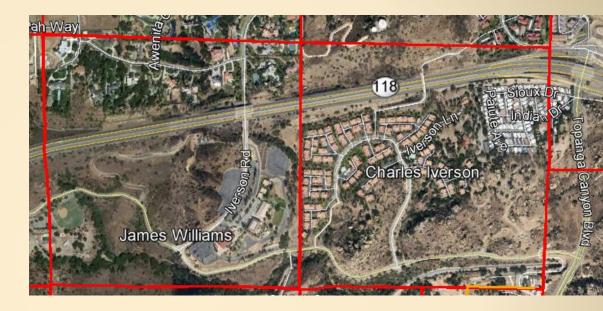
- During the moving of the Pioneer Church in 1965, a ceremony was held to open the cornerstone that was sealed in 1903.
- At that ceremony were three generations of J.R. Williams.

J.R. I is Rick, J.R. II is Jim, J.R. III is Dick



Carl Iverson

- In 1884 Caroline Williams invited her sister Augusta to visit and stay with her while she was expecting another child. James and Caroline Williams convince Augusta to stay and homestead 160 acres next them.
- James and Caroline built
 Augusta a small lean-to shack
 with the promise of a house
 later on. They gave her a cow
 and chickens, and Mr. Johnson
 from up the road built her a fine
 chicken coop.



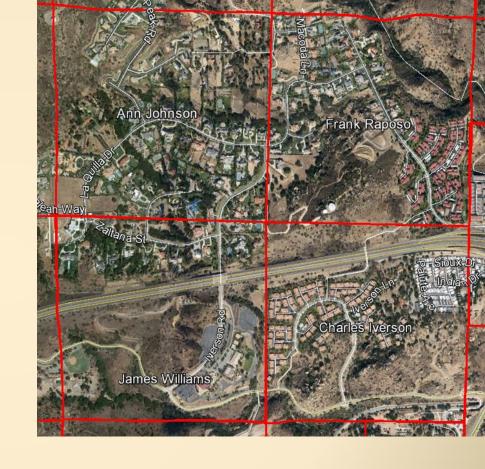
- 1887, Carl Iverson is working on a dam in Devil's Canyon on the Charlton Ranch. One day while hiking he knocks on Augusta's door.
- In 1888, Carl Iverson (from Norway) and Augusta Wagman (from Sweden) are married.

Carl Iverson

The rock-strewn property with rugged outcroppings proved to be invaluable later when it was adapted to the changing scenery for the movie industry which came along about 1912.

The Frank Raposo parcel and a portion of the Williams parcel was acquired by the Iversons, and the Iverson Ranch was run by Carl, Augusta and sons Joe and Aaron.

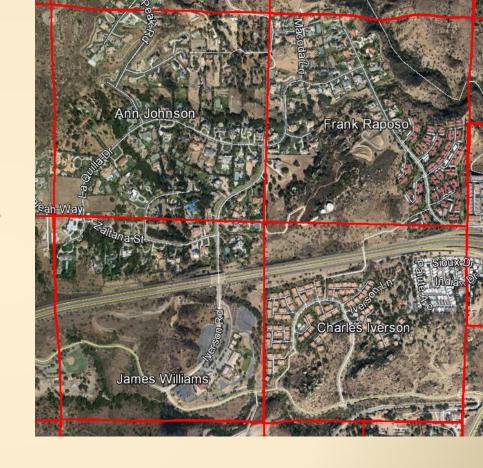
As many as 2,000 motion picture and television shows are reported to have used Iverson Ranch to shoot some or all of their outdoor scenes.



Carl Iverson

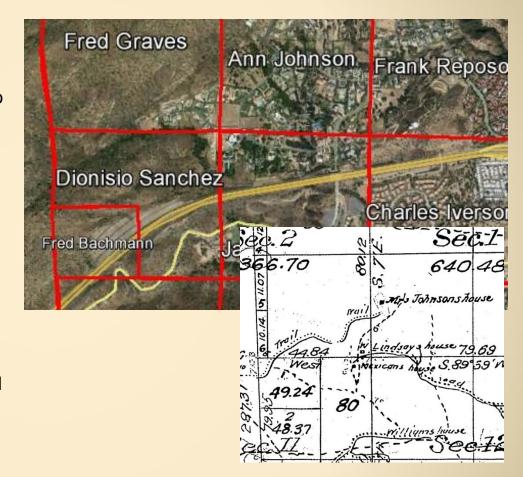
In 1966-68, the construction of the Simi Valley Freeway cut the Iverson Ranch in half, and the freeway noise kept the ranch from being a viable movie location.

The Upper Iverson ranch is now developed as large estate-size homes in a gate guarded community. The Lower Iverson includes the old Joseph Iverson residence, Indian Hills Mobile Home Village, the Cal-West Townhomes, the Rocky Peak Church, and the Garden of the Gods.



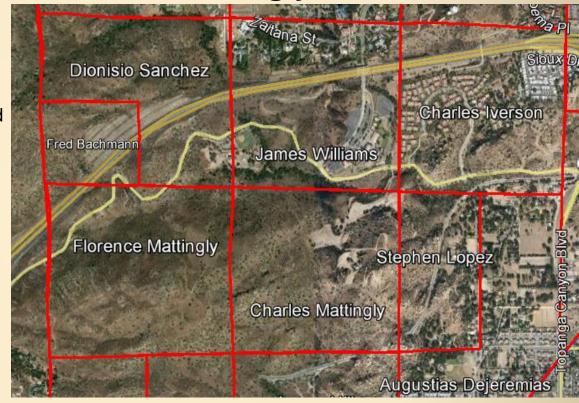
Dionisio Sanchez

- Dionisio Sanchez was a recently naturalized American citizen. Sanchez had immigrated to the United States from his native Mexico in 1882.
- He and his California-born wife María, along with their six children, had settled in the Santa Susana Pass area around 1885. On December 14, 1901, he received a patent for 129 acres of "hilly and rough mountain land".
- Sanchez farmed about 50 acres, with 10 or 12 acres cleared for grape vines and fruit trees, with the remainder was used for pasture. He and his family lived in an approximately 15' x 16' "rough 2-3 room lumber house." Other improvements included a shed, corral, wire fencing, and water well.



Florence and Charles Mattingly

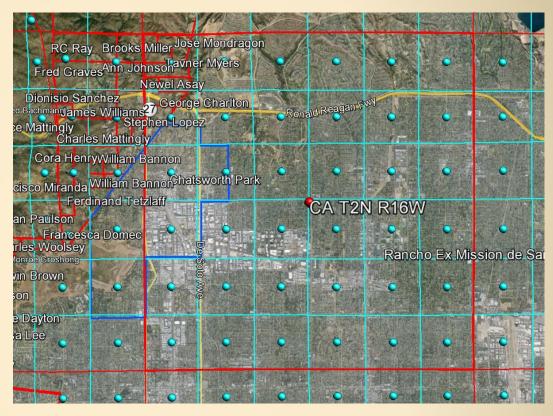
- Florence and Charles Mattingly, lived in Los Angeles where Charles was a prominent attorney. They purchased two 160 acre properties in 1909 and 1912. There is no evidence that they ever lived in Chatsworth.
- During the 1930's, there was an "indigent camp" that the Los Angeles County Department of the Forester and Fire Warden, in cooperation with the State of California, erected and administered. The location of the camp is uncertain, although it was most likely at the southeast corner of Sanchez's homestead.
- Both properties are now a part of the Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park and Rocky Peak Church.



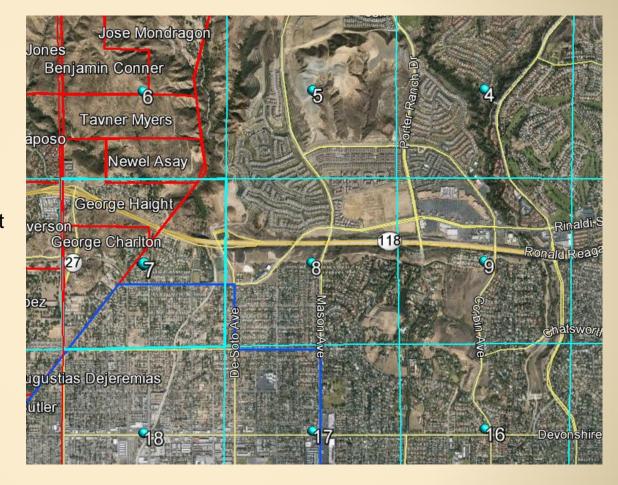
- The Charlton family owned what is now known as Stoney Point.
- George Gray Charlton was born in 1835 in New York and of English decent. George and his wife, Mary, had 3 sons, Oliver, Frederick, Robert and one daughter Annie.
- 1894 Directory Book in the Chatsworth Section, he is listed as an apiarist.
- 1896 Voter Registration records
- 1899 Homestead is recorded
- In 1906-1915, his son Oliver operates the Charlton quarry on his homestead. Oliver hires William Bannon, who had moved to Texas, to work his quarry.



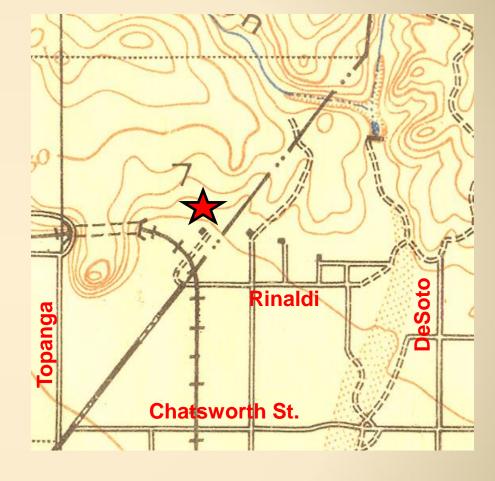
- A website "Stone Quarries and Beyond" has compiled locations of "Mines and Mineral Deposits of Los Angeles County". They identified a Charlton Quarry in 1906.
- The SSPSHP documentation also references the Charlton Quarry.
- Researching where the stone quarry was on a map required us identifying the location of Township 2 North, Range 16 West.
- Using Earth Point's overlay on Google Earth, Here is that township, six miles square, identifying 36 sections.



- Section 7 is where the quarry was located. It includes George Carlton's parcel, plus most of the parcel of Twin Lakes.
- The research points to a rock quarry at or near Stoney Point operating in 1906 - 1915.



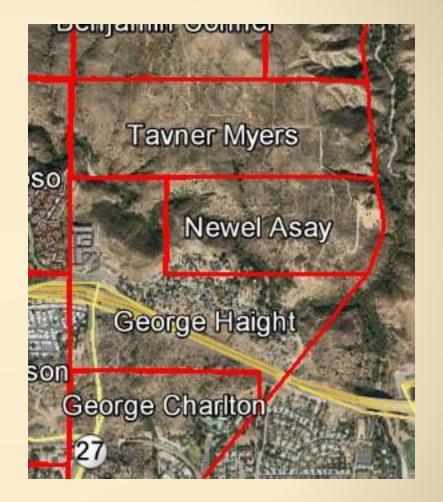
- This is section 7 in a 1903 topo map. Charlton's house is identified with a red star. He lived off of Rinaldi (the old Mission Road) where Chatsworth Hills Academy is today.
- Section 7 is bounded by Topanga, Chatsworth St., and DeSoto.
- The Quarry activity was on the east side of Stoney Point.



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George Haight

- George Haight came to Los Angeles in 1904, built a house on West Adams in 1908, then homesteaded land in Chatsworth. The homestead certificate was issued in 1918.
- Newel Asay's marriage in San Francisco was witnessed by George Haight's wife.
 Newel homesteaded his land in 1923.
 - LeRoy Newell Asay can be found in the 1920 Owensmouth annual as a student.
- By 1927 Twin Lakes was established and eventually marketed as a rural resort, and promoted as a retreat for the weekend, season, or holiday.



Mentions of Other Homesteaders



Mentions of Other Homesteaders

- Frank Raposa (above Iverson) Homestead 1899, from Portugal
 - Frank became a citizen in 1899. His sponsors on his citizenship papers were Frank Ackerman and Lovell Hill, both Chatsworth homesteaders.
- Tavner Myers Homestead 1917 from Missouri
 - In 1918 The local draft board representative that signed Myers' WW1 registration was Carl Iverson.
 - In 1920 he is a farmer/owner on Lurline in Chatsworth.
 - In 1930 he is 50 years old living on Santa Susana, with wife, Martha, and children Hazel, Lora and Tavner. His occupation is real estate salesman.

- **Jose Mondragon** Homestead 1901 From Arizona, he registered to vote in 1896
- Frederick Bachmann Homestead 1909 from Germany
- Benjamin Conner Homestead 1915 from Nevada
- George Jones Homestead 1919
- Brooks Miller Homestead 1925
- R C Ray Homestead 1935

Sources/Acknowledgments

- "Our Pioneer Mother", As told to Lenora Johnson MacDonald, 1920, Chatsworth Historical Society
- "Grandma Ann", Mary Huff, 2001, Chatsworth Historical Society
- "The Story of San Fernando Valley", Title Insurance and Trust Company, 1962
- "El Escorpion", Chester G. Cohen, 1989, Leonis Adobe Museum
- "The Boom of the Eighties in Southern California", Glenn S. Dumke, 1991, Huntington Library
- "The Cattle on a Thousand Hills, Southern California, 1850-80", Robert Glass Cleland, 1957, Huntington Library

- "History of San Fernando Valley", Frank Keefer, 1934
- "Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park Cultural Resources Inventory Historic Overview", Alexander Bevil, 2007
- Prepared by Ann and Ray Vincent, Chatsworth Historical Society, October 2013, revised Jan 2021, Mar 2022, Jun 2024

 For our list of online resources, please send an email to:

chatsworthhistory@gmail.com