

# Smoke Signal

CHATSWORTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
10385 Shadow Oak Drive, Chatsworth, CA 91311  
(818) 882-5614  
www.historicalsocieties.net



Co-Presidents: André & Linda van der Valk

Feb 2011, Issue #1

Editor: Ann Vincent

## Co-Presidents' Message

By Linda & André van der Valk

We have been busy at the Acre. Our last meeting with Jerry England and his presentation on the Iverson Ranch was one of the best attended meetings we have had in quite awhile. Jerry has documented the history of the Iverson Ranch and the movies that were made there. The interest in the Iverson Ranch has been so great that we have decided to leave our tribute to Iverson Ranch in the museum up until it is changed for Pioneer Day.

The Rose Pruning event was a great success. David Basani from the San Fernando Valley Rose Society again gave us some pointers on how to prune the roses and everyone got busy. All the roses are now cut back and that is a lot of roses. Our nine year old granddaughter Bryce put the glue on the bigger canes to prevent the bugs from boring into the plants. She enjoyed doing that and as always loves her time at the Acre. That is what the Acre is all about for us, the younger kids being involved, learning our history and enjoying the acre.

Bea has started her correspondence for the Garden Festival. We are thankful that Bea is well enough to head this project for us again this year after a health scare. As always we need help for set up the day before, help during the festival and help cleaning up afterwards. Please note that the Garden Festival is May 1st this year because the last Sunday of the month is Easter. We are again having our Duchess Tea. Jelena Csanyi is again in charge of the tea and she is taking reservations for groups of 10 or more.

Several community members from different groups are planning a community celebration for September 13, 2011. Why that date you wonder? It works out to be 91311, our zip code. You will start to see little teases that say Think 91311. One of our members Vicki Briskman came up with the idea after Beverly Hills celebrated their 90210 zip code date. There has been discussion of a community photo and a time capsule that would be placed at the Acre. I will let everyone know as the plans become more concrete.

Happy Spring and let's hope for less wind.  
Linda and Andre

Chatsworth Historical Society  
Board of Directors 2010-2011

Co-Presidents .....	Linda & André van der Valk
Programs, Ways & Means.....	Bea Berman
Membership.....	Keith Watts
Treasurer.....	Ray Vincent
Recording Secretary.....	Elaine Campbell
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.....	Evelyn Hutcheson
Permanent Member.....	Lila Schepler

## Upcoming Events

February 15, 2011, Tuesday 7 PM



### MOVIE NIGHT with Popcorn

We will be showing the 1957 TV Episode of **HIGHWAY PATROL** filmed in Chatsworth as: Season 2 Episode 37

1957, "HIRED KILLER" there are several landmarks including scenes in the Chatsworth Cleaners and the old train station. Please join us for this fun event.

March 15, Tuesday - Program – Speaker 7:00 PM

April 19, Tuesday – Program – Speaker 7:00 PM

May 1, Sunday – Garden Festival 11 AM – 4 PM  
Featuring the Duchess Tea and Rose Gardens.

May 17, Tuesday - Program – Speaker 7:00 PM

September 11, Membership Roundup

October 2, Sunday - Pioneer Day 11 AM – 4 PM

Monthly - Museum Open House the first Sunday of each month from 1 to 4 pm.

## Ways and Means

By Bea Berman

### MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

It's that time of year again and plans are underway for our annual GARDEN FESTIVAL at the Homestead Acre, May 1<sup>st</sup> from 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM. As usual, we will have all our wonderful events, garden clubs, our great Duchess High Tea, Polynesian dancers, Veteran's Quilt display, plant sales, white elephant sale, bake sale and of course a selection of vendors selling their wares.

We are still lucky to have the shuttle bus from the train depot to the Acre running every fifteen minutes for your convenience that day.

Put us on your calendar and plan to join us to set up the day before...or clean up afterwards. But most importantly tell your friends about the event so they can join us at the Garden Festival on May 1<sup>st</sup>.

*Note: Information and a printable flyer is available on the Chatsworth Historical Society Website at:*

<http://historicalsocieties.net>

*Select Events or Newsflash to locate the information.*

## ROSE PRUNING EVENT

Feb 29<sup>th</sup> was a big success!

We successfully finished pruning all of our 300 rose bushes on Saturday, January 29 with the expertise of the Rose Society, David Basani, who was on hand to teach pruning methods and provide support for those pruning roses for the first time. The time and effort is appreciated as we prepare our roses to look their best for the upcoming Garden Festival on May 1<sup>st</sup>.

To see a video of the event, check out PATCH.com <http://chatsworth.patch.com/articles/preserving-history-one-rose-at-a-time>



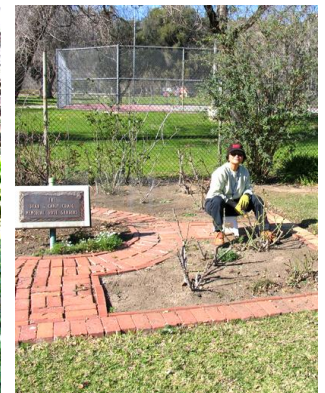
## Oral History Project

By Ann Vincent

We are continuing our quest to learn the history of our community through the oral histories of our residents.

Over the last few years we have recorded video interviews of several of our earliest historical society members. In November, we interviewed Virginia Watson. Did you know that she used to work for Howard Hughes?

This month we brought together Lila Schepler, Louise Mitchell and Charleen Janess Roesch, who along with Betty and Jim Summers discussed some of the activities that they participated in while growing up here in Chatsworth. They recalled their Girl Scout activities and participation in "The Cookie Jar Theater" managed and located in the back yard of actor Milton Parsons' home on Farralone. We discussed the railroad staff homes known as "The Colony" located next to the railroad tracks near the old station. Jim Summers had noticed them in the background when we watched the 1957 episode of Highway Patrol, that we will watch at our Movie night in February. Lila, Louise and Charleen plan to join us once a month on the fourth Wednesday of each month. This activity will be part of our docent meeting to discuss various topics that we will continue to record for our archives.



*Thank you to everyone who participated.*



## Chatsworth Has Had a Post Office Since Mail Arrived by Stagecoach

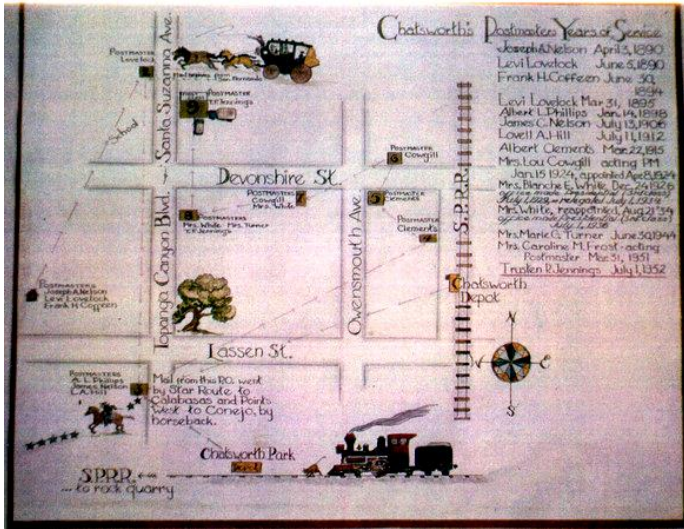
By Virginia Watson, as published on [www.chatsworth.patch.com](http://www.chatsworth.patch.com)

CHATSWORTH THEN AND NOW

Additional photo boxes and comments added by Ann Vincent

Through the years, these are the men and women who made sure the mail got through.

Chatsworth, one of the earliest settlements in the San Fernando Valley, has had a United States Post Office since 1890.



The photograph shown (above) is of a poster of the various locations of the Post Office made by a former Chatsworth woman, Mrs. Elsa Braun.

It was made for the opening of the Post Office when it was located on Topanga Canyon Boulevard just north of Devonshire Street in the 1950s. The poster shows the list of Postmasters and shows where the Post Office was located during their terms of office.



The first post office was halfway up the trail to this marker. There was also a relay station that supported the stagecoach.

The information only goes from the beginning until **Trustin P. Jennings** who began his term on July 1, 1952. The photograph is on loan from the Chatsworth Historical Society for this one article.

A long line of Postmasters and locations has ensued since that first Post Office was started. As you can see from the poster, the first Postmaster was **Joseph A. Nelson** and he served a short time from April 3 until June 5, 1890.

The location of that first post office was on the stage line at the foot of the Santa Susana Mountains on the northern boundary of Oakwood Memorial Park. And it was not far from the stagecoach marker that can be seen from Chatsworth Park South. That area is now a

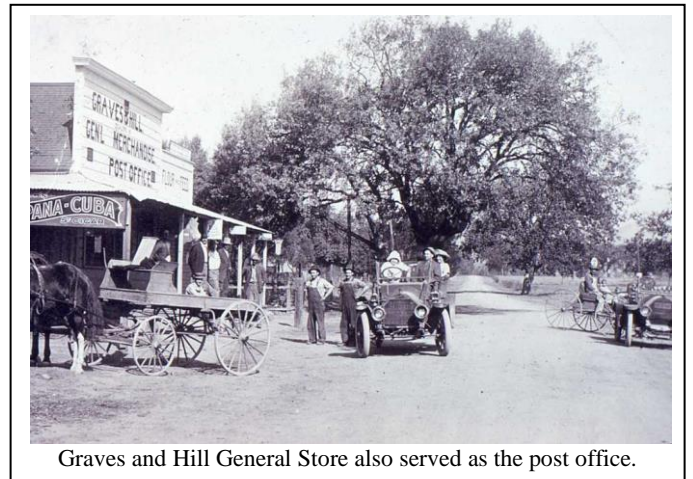
part of the Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park. And the history of the area will be preserved by the State of California.

**Levi Lovelock** was the second Postmaster beginning his term on June 5, 1890 and continuing until **Frank H. Coffeen** began his term of office on June 30, 1894. The Post Office remained in the same location at the foot of the Santa Susanas. But beginning in Lovelock's second term it was moved to its second location on Santa Susana Avenue about 700 feet north of Devonshire Street. Which brings up a point you should know—north of Devonshire Street it was Santa Susana Avenue until it was changed to Topanga Canyon Boulevard in the '50s, I believe.

Levi Lovelock was Postmaster again from the end of Frank H. Coffeen's term of March 31, 1895 until **Albert L. Phillips** took over on Jan. 14, 1898.

Phillips was in charge during the third move of the Post Office. The mail stop was changed to be located on the west side of Topanga Canyon Boulevard about 150 feet south of Lassen Street.

This location is where the Circle-K shopping center is today. It was the center of town about 1900, The Graves and Hill Store owned by **Jess Graves**, one-time sheriff of Chatsworth, and **Lovell Hill, Minnie Hill Palmer's** older brother. He lived with his family on property known to Chatsworth today as The Homestead Acre at 10385 Shadow Oak Drive.



Graves and Hill General Store also served as the post office.

Most everyone in Chatsworth had a charge account at the store. And one of the best selling items was apples. Apple trees were not native to California and many of the people were from the middle west such as Illinois and bought apples. Other big sellers were candy and tobacco. One could also hire a group of workers—a crew to help with planting, harvesting and other farming duties. Also horses and mules could be hired from the store.

**James Nelson** served in that Chatsworth location from July 31, 1906 until Lovell Hill became Postmaster on July 11, 1912 and then **Albert Clements** took over on March, 22, 1915.

The Post Office was moved again to the west of the Southern Pacific Railroad about 300 feet south of Devonshire Street. And it was moved again to the southeast corner of Devonshire Street and Owensmouth Avenue to the Civic Center Building.



The Civic Building was not only the post office but a meeting location for Girl Scouts. Chatsworth resident Charlene Janess is shown next to the truck outside the building.

Four women served as Postmaster for the next few years. And, by the way, it is always proper to say Postmaster, as the title is used for either male or female Postmasters.



The Lombardi Building was a brick building on the south-west corner of Owensmouth and Devonshire.

Chatsworth was growing and **Mrs. Lori Cowgill** was appointed Postmaster on April 8, 1924. The Post Office was moved across the street for a short while and then moved to the newer Lombardi Building, a brick building on the Southwest corner of Devonshire Street and Owensmouth Avenue. The Lombardi building also housed the local library and the Chatsworth Women's Club met there in the '20s.

**Mrs. Blanch White** became Postmaster on Dec. 24, 1926 and the Post Office was moved to the Chrisler Building at the corner of Devonshire Street and Topanga

*Note: If you have any photos of the Post Office located at any of the locations not pictured here, we would love to have a copy or scan your photograph for our digital collection.. Contact [AnnVincent@aol.com](mailto:AnnVincent@aol.com) to share photos with the Chatsworth Historical Society.*



This Post Office was located on the east side of Topanga, south of Devonshire in the Chrisler Building in 1926 through 1959.

Canyon Boulevard. She served until **Mrs. Marie G. Turner** was appointed on June 30, 1945 and **Mrs. Caroline Frost** was appointed Postmaster on March 31, 1951.

**Trusten P. Jennings** was the Postmaster on July 1, 1952. That is the end of the information that is shown in the poster/map.



The Post Office north of Devonshire on Topanga was dedicated on March 14, 1959. It was built and leased to the Post Office by Frank H. Schepler.

The Chatsworth Post Office has moved twice since the poster was made. Once to Topanga Canyon Boulevard just to the north on the east side of the boulevard, and again to its present location at 21606 Devonshire St.



The next move for the Chatsworth Post Office was to its current location at 21606 Devonshire. This building was dedicated in 1970. Temporarily following the 1994 Northridge Earthquake, the Post Office was housed in a trailer west of DeSoto on the south side of Devonshire (where the new water tower/cell phone structure is) until this building was ready to be occupied again.



## Wondering if your Dues are Due?

There is a code on the last line of 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!

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...

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

We are trying to document some of the established businesses that have been part of the community, so if you have photos showing those businesses...or history on them...please share. Time creeps up on us and anything more than 30 years ago is suddenly history. This is the information we still remember, but our children won't, unless we make the effort to preserve it.

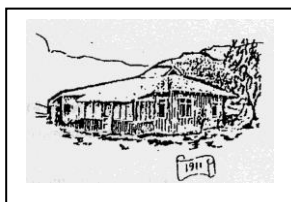
# ChatsworthPatch

[www.patch.com](http://www.patch.com) is now featuring "Chatsworth Then and Now" history articles written by our own Chatsworth Historian, Virginia Watson as seen on page 3.. These articles are listed in The Neighborhood Files Section of the Chatsworth Patch.com website. Please check it out. To find all of them, type in Virginia Watson in the search box.



### 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  
818-882-5614    [www.historicalsocieties.net](http://www.historicalsocieties.net)

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

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

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

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

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

## PLEASE JOIN US FOR MOVIE AND POPCORN

**February 15, 2011 . Tuesday 7 PM**  
At the Historic Acre.

We will be showing the 1957 TV Episode of  
**HIGHWAY PATROL**  
filmed in Chatsworth known as : Season 2 Episode  
37 1957, "HIRED KILLER"

You will enjoy watching for Chatsworth scenes.  
Come help us identify the locations. There are  
several landmarks including scenes in the Chatsworth  
Cleaners and the old train station. Please join us for  
this fun event.



**Monthly - Museum Open House the first Sunday of each month  
from 1 to 4 pm.**

### **Chatsworth Historical Society**

10385 Shadow Oak Drive  
Chatsworth, Ca 91311

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

*Check the code below your mailing label ...is it time to pay your dues? (See page 5 for details)*