

Smoke Signal

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

June 2014, Issue #3

Editor: Ann Vincent

Co-Presidents' Message

By Linda & André van der Valk

I wanted to start off and thank everyone who helped with the Garden Festival. We had some big shoes to fill with Bea stepping down from chairing the event. I guess after 23 years of doing a wonderful job she was allowed to come and just have fun on that day. Special thanks to Ann and Ray Vincent for getting this year's Garden Festival off the ground. Ann and Ray supervised the set-up, tear down, parking and making sure that everyone had a job to do. We were successful making about \$4,400.00.

We have been having groups come in to enjoy the Gardens and the Acres. We opened the acre for a barbeque for the Chatsworth Chamber to celebrate their 100th anniversary. We will be doing the same for ETI Corral 54 a local Equestrian group. It is a great way to introduce the Homestead Acre to other groups.

We will not be having an Open House in July but we will have one August 3rd. I think summertime is a great time for a little down time. Our docents are truly dedicated to make sure that we are open for our Open Houses. We had about 30 people come to our June Open House. That may not sound like a lot, but for the three or four docents that handle the tours it is a lot.

I hope that everyone has a wonderful summer and try to stay cool.

Linda and André



ACRE Leaching Basin surrounded by flowers
Photo Courtesy of Linda Dunham

Chatsworth Historical Society
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Upcoming Events

OPEN HOUSE

Homestead Acre tours from 1-4 pm
July open house cancelled due to Holiday weekend
Next OPEN HOUSE August 3rd 1-4pm

General Meetings

There are no General Meetings scheduled for June, July and August.

Wednesday Morning Docent Program

Throughout the summer our docents continue to work on the garden and other museum projects. Interested? Let us know chatsworthhistory@gmail.com

September 14, 4:00 PM - Sunday

Membership Roundup

This annual event held at the Homestead Acre is a potluck dinner to meet and greet new and old members as we kick off our new year of activity. If you are a prospective member and have not joined yet, plan to join. (The cost of the membership is worth it for this dinner!)

October 5, 2014 – Sunday 11-3 pm

PIONEER DAY

This is our big fundraiser, and we need your support to help our volunteers maintain the Acre and museum for the future! Mark your calendar and plan to be there.

GARDEN FESTIVAL 2014 THANK YOU

We would like to extend a big thank you to all who made this year's Garden Festival so successful. It takes so many to make it all come together smoothly and every job is important and appreciated. Behind the scenes we had some great help.

This year we were fortunate to have the ROTC unit at El Camino High School help both Saturday and Sunday for set-up and tear down. This opportunity to have these young future military students do the heavy lifting of tables, tents and more makes a big difference. Eric Pampalone and Randy Mineo were on hand along with John and Kenny Huffman to help guide the students through the large tent set-ups.

Lawrence Middle School Leadership Class provided our core group of volunteers that helped throughout the day under the supervision of Ms. Pena. One of the most challenging parts of the morning is when all the vendors arrive to bring in their wares...but John Luker, Bob Dager and Ray Vincent coordinated the student volunteers to help the vendors and keep everything moving smoothly. Will MacIntyre and sons, Jordan and Gavin, supervised the student volunteers at our parking lot. And a special thanks for the shuttle bus provided by the Councilman's Office, which allowed for offsite parking at the Train Depot. Mr. Van Dam, from Lawrence, led the charge with his students at closing when we needed to take down the tents, tables and chairs and repack everything into storage. All the students formed a line to help load and unload the plants donated by Randy Mineo to add to this year's plant sale.



Red shirts are Lawrence...Yellow ROTC

Our Lawrence students set the tables for our tea and helped our vendors unload their wares...and worked wherever needed as usual. They prove we have good leaders in the making.

Bea Berman served as our advisor this year, after having hosted the Garden Festival and Pioneer Day events for the past 23 years. We did our best to follow her traditions, and had a good turnout with 29 vendors and organizations represented. Each of our Historical Society venues (Bake Sale, Plant Sale, Information, White Elephant,



Museum, Cottage and Food Booth) were staffed by volunteers throughout the day. Our members at the front gate were Irene Nalbandian and Janis Heiden, with

Janis decked out in her Garden Festival hat above.

Jelena Csanyi coordinated the Museum and Cottage tours rounding up a collection of excellent guides to work with her. They included Beverly King, Zena Thorpe, Dottie Acker, Gloria Benedetti, Jan Gruenwald, Elaine Campbell, Karine Panichi along with Jim and Betty Summers.

Our White Elephant booth was staffed with Connie Ager, Addie Betita and Kathy Lettieri and her son selling our donated items.

The Food Booth involved the usual suspects: Andre van der Valk with granddaughters Brooke and Hunter, the assistance of Rod Sandoval chopping fresh onions (*and not crying about it*) and of course Gary Bercow at the grill.



Our Bake Sale was a big success with delicious donations and sales by Loretta Sandoval, Kathy Underwood, Bea Berman, Pam Perram and more... Thank you to all of the bakers that help continue this traditional bake sale.



Our Plant Sale was double the fun with Annette Campbell selling the plants propagated at the acre along with color bowls created for the event. Randy and Becky Mineo (Chatsworth Landscape) brought a truckload of plants to sell and donated all the proceeds to the Historical Society. Following the theme of Garden Festival, we also had Theodore Payne Foundation selling natives with a percentage going to the ACRE. The Rose Society and Cherry Blossom Society were on hand.



Our information booth welcomed our visitors with a display of Chatsworth History books for sale, Tea from Chatsworth House in England (donated by Zena) and a variety of friendly faces throughout the day. Thank you Dianne Kartiala, Barbara Pampalone, John Thorpe, Lori Lawrence and more for sharing our history with the community.



Our Duchess Tea was chaired this year by Linda Dunham and Linda van der Valk with the assistance of Girl Scout Cadette Troop # 6322. The troop leader is Linda van der Valk's daughter Linda Petretti. The girls that helped were Hunter Petretti, Kayla Arquilevich, Sarah Chevlier, Anne Wilken, Giana Sawaya, Samantha Hartung and Tiffany Lewallyn. The Troop Moms that helped were Linda Petretti, Sue Wilkin, Patty Hartung and Liz Lewallyn.

The girls did a great job of serving the tea and the moms put out the plates in record speed. We want to thank everyone that helped to make the tea go as smoothly as it did. Extra thanks go to Linda Dunham who helped making sure that the tables were perfect, food and tea got out when it should and then did the worst job of all...washing dishes. Mary Kaufman was also part of the team behind the scenes, she was critical to the water boiling process. Thanks to Jelena for guiding us with her expertise from the past years that she had done the tea. She also is getting the reputation of making the best lemonade ever for the snack bar.



We want to thank the bakers and sandwich makers, for without them there would not be a tea. Thanks to Vicki Briskman for baking banana bread, lemon cake and making tuna sandwiches, Elaine Campbell for making the cucumber sandwiches, Ann Vincent for her egg salad sandwiches, Loretta Sandoval for making the lemon tea cookies and Jelena Csanyi for making the scones. Thanks also to Randi Bercow who was our cashier and as every year she did a great job.

Docent Doings:
ELAINE CAMPBELL

In 1999, when Elaine Campbell first joined our docent group, she was looking for a project to work on and came across a large box of loose photos. Virginia Watson suggested that they should all eventually be put in notebooks (the type of project that Elaine enjoys) so the project was on. The photos needed to be sorted, people identified and the photos placed in the books. This backlog of photos has been mostly completed ... until a new stack of photos is discovered or donated.



Over the last 15 years Elaine has created 50 notebooks filled with photos sorted by events and activities, articles, obituaries, newspaper clippings and more, all documenting the Historical Society and Chatsworth. She continues to add photos to the books each year following our events.

This year, Elaine volunteered to help preserve all of these books by learning to use our scanning equipment and scanning each page of each completed book. These 50 books are now saved as PDF files to make sure that her efforts will never be lost. Elaine shows up every Wednesday looking forward to the next set of photos or something good to scan. Currently her scanning project includes the early Grapevine Newspapers. Of course the originals are being preserved in more notebooks.

Thanks a million, Elaine!

WINDOW INTO THE PAST
Book by William Schepler

For those of you who appreciate fun short stories about our favorite subject "Chatsworth", here is a book by Bill Schepler, one of our Chatsworth Historical Society's founding members. (*The book is only \$10 at the museum.*)

In this book, Bill writes on a variety of subjects based on growing up in Chatsworth. It includes articles about Stoney Point, Olive Trees on Lassen, Agriculture, Moving the Pioneer Church, Railroad Ramblings, World War II and its affects on Chatsworth and more. What I also enjoyed were his sections on holidays like "A Red Hot Fourth" celebrated in his childhood and how holiday celebrations have changed over time.

Bill started out writing these stories as early Smoke Signal articles, but having completed quite a collection was encouraged to publish them as a book. We appreciate that effort and know that you will enjoy his stories.

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 our next Open House on August 3rd 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 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

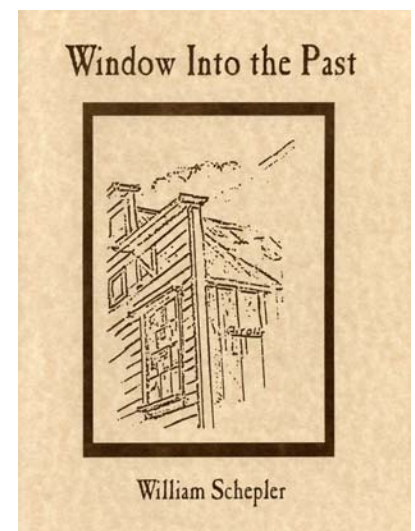
by Robert Sherman \$25.00

OUR PIONEER MOTHER

As told to Lenora Johnson MacDonald \$10.00

EI ESCORPION

By Chester Cohen \$10.00



HOMESTEADERS PART 3 - Continued

Continued from the March 2014 Issue of the Smoke Signal Information from our HOMESTEADERS Part 3 Program.

Charles and Cora Woolsey recorded their homestead in 1904, but were not on the 1900 census. They were 35 and 34 years old in 1904, and never had children. Their house was north of the Woolsey Canyon creek near today's Rocky Mesa Place Road, just east of Mountain View Estates Mobile Home Park. In the 1910 Chatsworth census Charles is listed as a farmer and their neighbor is Henry Egliston. By 1920, they have moved to La Crescenta. The 1930 census has them still in La Crescenta as chicken ranchers with partner Henry Egliston.



Woolsey Canyon is the gateway to Burro Flats, significant for prehistoric Chumash Rock Art, 1937-54 movie sets, and the mid-1950's where Rocketdyne tested rocket engines and power systems. In the 1930's, Beula and Henry Silvernales, a dentist practicing in Santa Monica, purchased Burro Flats. He and his family camped at the flats until he retired around 1940 and they built their ranch house, raised cattle, and made the site available for filming by studios. In 1954 they sold the property to Rocketdyne, a division of North American Aviation.

In 1903 **Clyde Dayton** recorded his homestead of 59 acres on the south edge of Dayton Canyon. He had 350 hives of bees, a bee house & apiary.

In 1905 his wife Katie died of tuberculosis. In 1908, Clyde Dayton is granted his patent on 59 acres, and in that same year he purchased 80 acres "mostly valuable for stone building purposes" north near Woolsey Canyon.

In 1909 Clyde married Lulu Adkisson, also a Seventh Day Adventist. Clyde wrote a weekly paper on health, and ads for his "red ripe" honey. In an excerpt from Catherine Mulholland's *The Owensmouth Baby*, "A familiar site in the early days was the Red Ripe Honey



Man trundling his wheelbarrow through the town as he sold his honey and doubtless advised the residents on the proper foods to eat. Dayton lived reclusively with his wife in the hills west of town, was regarded dubiously by some of the settlers, and came to a violent end."

On April 17th, 1922, *Los Angeles Times* - "**Charred Bodies of Two Found** - Double Murder or Murder and Suicide in Grim Cabin Ruins? - Visitors to Secluded Spot Stumble on Remains of Man and Wife. " Clyde was 60 and Lulu was 52 at the time of their deaths on April 12th. It was reported that Clyde was a miser and an eccentric, worth \$50,000, and had a large sum of money in his possession. A thick blanket of white ashes six inches deep over a square 10 by 12 feet, and a few bones and ribs were the only thing that remained from the inside of the corrugated tin shack. Persons who visited the place say that it was full of magazines and literature printed by the old hermit on a printing press operated by him in another building.

Was it a Murder and Suicide? A Mrs. Thompson gave deputies a letter received from Lulu where she expressed fears for her life. Another witness said that Lulu had told him that Clyde was talking to himself, declaring: "I don't know what I am going to do with that woman unless I kill her."

Deputy Sheriffs said that Dayton was evidently insane, his actions were unusual, and he lived mainly on red honey, cactus and green vegetables. Witnesses said that the disagreement between Clyde and Lulu was a difference of opinion as to the division of property and the need for a new and more comfortable home. They had lived in a 10 by 12 foot corrugated metal shack for 13 years.

Or was it a Double Murder? Evidence indicates that gasoline or coal oil must have been spread about the cabin because of the intense heat. A blood bespattered trail, an empty five-gallon oil can, the remains of several pieces of firearms, and failure to find all valuables were additional clues. Half the community speculated that Dayton's neighbor, rancher Lon Gates, the son of Calabasas Constable William Gates, might have killed the couple for money or even revenge. Eight days after the deaths, the Ventura Daily Post reported: "The investigating officers concluded that Dayton killed his wife and then committed suicide, a comfortable theory always for the investigators in as much as it does away with the necessity for looking for the slayer."



However, another option is... another article quoted Dayton's neighbor as saying that Lulu was a sufferer from heart trouble and was not expected to live many weeks...so it is also possible that Lulu died and Dayton was so distraught that he committed suicide.

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.

Recently, at our May General Meeting, we asked our members to share stories and we were fortunate to have Life Member Phyllis Owens on hand to tell about growing up here in Chatsworth. I had spoken to her in advance and asked if she could write a short article for us, so she provided this "homework assignment" reprinted below.

Thank you, Phyllis, for your contribution.

Big Red and the Last Cattle Round-up in Chatsworth

by Phyllis Owens



My father, Joe Fladwed, born in 1911, grew up in Red Wing, Minnesota watching Tom Mix in silent western movies and dreamed of himself as a cowboy. Barely 20, he hitch-hiked to Yellowstone Park as America plunged into the Great Depression and learned to be a horse wrangler for the resorts. He also became a "singing waiter" at the Old Faithful Inn, and later formed a cowboy trio that headed for Hollywood; brief opportunities to perform in the movies and on the radio followed.

Marriage to my mother, Helen, in 1935 meant settling down to a behind-the-scenes job at Warner Bros. studios and family life in a tiny (still there) house on Lincoln Ave. in Burbank. But cowboy dreams would not die and he wanted me (born 1938) and my brother Henry (born 1941) to grow up with horses. So in 1945 our family moved onto a two-and-a-half acre "ranch" at 9035 Topanga Canyon Blvd., on the southwest corner at Nordhoff. We would raise chickens (didn't everyone?) and Dad would sell eggs to studio co-workers. AND we would get horses.

The first was an ex-army mare roan that stood 18 hands high. I was fascinated that USA was branded on her neck and there was a near-perfect white star just above her eyes; of course her name was Star. The second horse would be Big Red, Dad somehow "rescued" from rodeo life as a pick-up horse, scooping up fallen bronc or bull riders. Not as tall as Star but massive in shape and dappled red, Dad told us he was a Tennessee Walking Horse who could be coaxed into a very special gait. Big Red's rodeo life had been harsh as shown by the many spur scars on his shoulders and flanks; he rolled his eyes back fearfully when a man approached. But Dad had fallen for this horse and believed a gentle approach would give Big Red back his

dignity. My brother and I were tasked with giving Big Red an apple or handful of chicken feed while Dad stood quietly behind us. Soon the trust granted to us small persons was extended to Dad who then spent several sessions simply grooming and talking to Big Red. When Dad finally saddled and mounted that horse everyone could see they were meant for riding-off-into-the-sunset together.

Somehow my father heard that a group of horsemen were planning something special; a day of rounding-up stray cattle living (owned by whom?) in the rocky Santa Susana Mountains above Chatsworth. This was one last opportunity for real cowboy work for Dad and a day that provided his favorite tale of man-and-horse partnership. It seemed many of the horses and riders that day found it difficult to maneuver effectively the steep, heavily bouldered slopes. In a tale repeated many, many times, Big Red, huge of foot and powerful of heart behaved as nimbly as a mountain goat as man and horse pursued a steer. Dad said Big Red leaned into the task sometimes seeming to pivot on his back feet as he chose just where to put his front feet, propelling them both onward for hour after hour. And so went the Last Cattle Round-up in Chatsworth.

I believe this was sometime in 1946; maybe there is an old Valley News and Greensheet (as I think it was called then) story with some who-what-where-and how many cattle details. I was 8 or 9 then and well on my way to living the childhood Dad wanted for me; my horse, our third, a buckskin gelding trained from a colt just for me that I named Cisco ---after the popular radio cowboy show "The Cisco Kid". Memory lives in emotion and does not always provide the facts history craves. But it is fun trying to piece it all together more than half-a-century later.

Editor's Note: If someone has any more information on this roundup, please share with us.

Chatsworth Lake Manor History Program...planned for next October

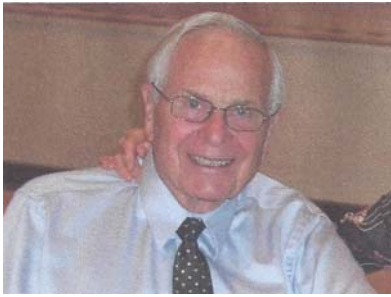
Ray and I are still on a quest to gather more stories and information on the early years of Lake Manor. We have been working with Susie Foreman at the Log Cabin Mercantile to capture her childhood memories. If you have stories to tell or people to recommend, contact us at chatsworthhistory@gmail.com

Santa Susana State Historic Park History

On May 24th, a celebration was held commemorating the dedication of our State Historic Park and all the efforts made by so many members of our community to make that happen. Early videos of the dedication ceremony were shown at the Chatsworth Library and have been donated to the Chatsworth Historical Society for our archives. DVD's of this early video are available.

Passing of Johnson Pioneer Family Member

Harold Edmund (Ed) Johnson 1930-2014



Harold Edmund Johnson, known to family and friends as Ed, was born in Burbank, California on May 31, 1930. He went to Burbank High School before enlisting in the

Air Force in 1950. While stationed in Tucson, Arizona he met and married his first wife, JoAnne, in 1954. They raised four children, Ann, Chip, Jane and Tom, in Chatsworth, California. The family spent wonderful hours camping in the Sierra and picnicking at Ventura Beach. Extended family Sunday dinners at his parent's

house in the Chatsworth hills were an important and weekly event. Ed married Barbara in 1978, becoming step-dad to her two daughters, Cindy and Laura. Ed was employed in the Moving and Storage business, but also developed and managed property in Chatsworth, first with his father, and then with his sons.

Ed's primary focus was family, friends, and church. He loved to sing, and contributed his bass voice to the church choir. Indeed, singing hymns was one of his constant and lasting pleasures. Ed was also an avid dancer, particularly Square Dancing. Ed and Barbara traveled in their motor home to Square Dancing events throughout the country.

Ed will be remembered for his generous and loving nature.

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. With a life membership there is no code on your address label. If there is a code on your address label, then this is what it means:

- 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: 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: _____



This photo was recently donated to our Chatsworth Museum by the Simi Valley Historical Society. Santa Susana School was the first schoolhouse built on the northwest corner of Topanga and Devonshire. In this photo the workers are completing the addition to the first building. Notice the hitching post in the lower right corner. With a magnifying glass...you can read an advertisement on the crossbar that says "Eureka Exterminator Kills Fleas and all Insects." On the left along the fence there is a raised platform for the riders to mount their horses.

Chatsworth Historical Society

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