

Smoke Signal

CHATSWORTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

10385 Shadow Oak Drive, Chatsworth, CA 91311

(818) 882-5614

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www.chatsworthhistory.com



Co-Presidents: Linda & André van der Valk

September 2024, Issue #4

Editor: Ann Vincent

Co-Presidents' Message

By Linda & André van der Valk

It has been a busy summer at the acre. Thank you to Gary Standke -- a lot of repairs that needed to be done on the cottage, storage shed, and museum have been done. We are grateful that Gary decided to help out at the acre after he retired. Ann, Gary and Ray have been busy on a bee problem that we had in the cottage making sure that they can not get into the cottage anymore. They sealed up all the openings that the bees managed to get in and out of.

We have had help in the gardens with two new energetic docents. Kathy Perger and Wendy Say have been coming on Wednesdays and helping with dead heading the roses and cleaning up the garden beds. We thank them for caring about our gardens.

Pioneer Day is right around the corner. Ann and Donna have been busy getting the Chores of Yore ready for the kids. We are hoping for a great attendance as this is our biggest fundraiser of the year. We are also hoping for a little cooler weather than we are having this week as I am writing this, Chatsworth at 114 degrees is not fun.

We look forward to seeing everyone who will be enjoying ice cream under our spectacular walnut tree at our Ice Cream Social on September 17th, 6:00pm.

Linda and Andre

Chatsworth Historical Society Board of Directors 2024-2025

Co-Presidents	Linda & André van der Valk
Treasurer.....	Jim Van Gundy
Secretary.....	Donna Nachtrab
Hospitality.....	Jelena Csanyi
Gardens	
Smoke Signal Editor.....	Ann Vincent
Research Director.....	Ray Vincent

Upcoming Events

OPEN HOUSE

Continues each 1st Sunday of the month from 1 to 4pm.

Welcome Back Membership Roundup ICE CREAM SOCIAL

September 17, Tuesday 6:00pm



Join us outside under the walnut tree on Tuesday evening for a fun Ice Cream Social with a variety of toppings. Get a chance to say hello to other members and hear about our plans for the upcoming year.

PIONEER DAY

October 6, Sunday

11am -3pm



FAMILY FUN for everyone!

Flyers available online

chatsworthhistory.com/Events

General Meeting Wheat Farming in Chatsworth & the JR Williams Family Homestead

October 15, Tuesday 6:30pm

Program will be available in person and Zoom

DOCENT DOINGS at the ACRE:

Our docents keep busy with projects throughout the year.

OUT IN THE GARDEN:



If you need some outdoor fresh air therapy, come join our gardening team. Roses always need pruning to keep them at their best. Everything is growing now and the garden is beautiful!

We look forward to having new members to join us each Wednesday morning to help prune roses and keep our garden blooming.

IN THE MUSEUM: Our docents continue to reorganize and catalog our early photograph collections. We have displays set up that we look forward to sharing with you, come check them out.

IN THE COTTAGE: An inventory project is ongoing, as we confirm and learn more about the history of the items on display so we can provide more information on our tours.

IMPROVEMENTS: We have been working on special projects to improve our Museum Storage as we continue to organize our Clothing and supplies used for the fashion shows. It seems as if there is always something that needs to be updated or improved and it is fun to figure out just what to do next.

Memorial Brick Plaza



Click the link below for the Memorial Brick Order Form, \$100 per brick.

[Brick Order Form.pdf](#)

Our next brick order will be March 1, 2025

For more information, send an email to chatsworthhistory@gmail.com or call 818-882-5614.

Included in this newsletter:

NOTE: Watch for links in our articles that allow easy access to more information. Right click with your mouse to open the link in a new window, so you can easily get back to the original newsletter.

- **1924 Book, "The Valley of San Fernando"**
- **Ancestry of Maclay and the Porter Cousins**

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING

Drop by to say hello at our Sunday Open House... even if you have seen the museum and cottage, we have a group of members who enjoy sitting out in the shade just inside the gate where we welcome everyone. If you have a Chatsworth story to tell, or would like to hear more about our history or recent activities, come join us for this casual discussion.



OPEN HOUSE - This month at Open House we welcomed docent Nita Standke who brought her hand-crank sewing machine and gave a demonstration. Nita also provided tours of the cottage with Dottie Acker. Bonnie Cross was also on hand to escort visitors to the cottage for tours.

Our museum docents included Linda van der Valk, Jelena Csanyi, and Anne Hughes sharing the history of Chatsworth.

At our welcome table outside in the shade, with a slight breeze, Wendi Gladstone, Bob Dager, Ray Vincent, Gloria DeMuri and Ann Vincent greeted our guests and gave tours of the garden along with fun history discussions with our guests.

NEW GARDEN DOCENT

Welcome to our new volunteer Wendy Say, she is working on Wednesday mornings 9-11:30am with Kathy Perger, Gary Standke and Ray Vincent to keep our facility looking good! A great team! If you're interested, please join us.

Please put Oct 6th on your calendar, tell all of your friends and plan to join us for Pioneer Day!

**32nd Annual
Chatsworth Historical Society**

Pioneer Day

Sunday, Oct. 6, 2024

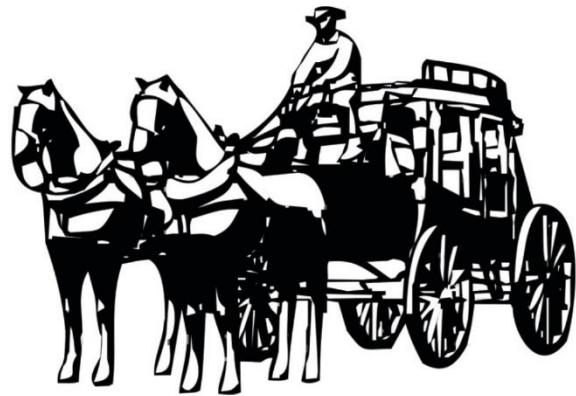
11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Bring your children
& grandchildren

Take the
Pioneer
Challenge

Old-time fun for everyone!

- Panning for Gold
- Blacksmith
- Leather Crafts
- Chores and
Games of Yore
- Bake Sale
- Woodcarvers
- Spinning Wheel Demo
- Design a Quilt Craft
- Rock Chippers
- Bee Keeping
- Telegraph Station
- Butter Churning
and more!



Chatsworth Museum Exhibits

Featuring
Chatsworth Early Businesses
and the history of
Chatsworth

Tour the 1911 Homestead Cottage

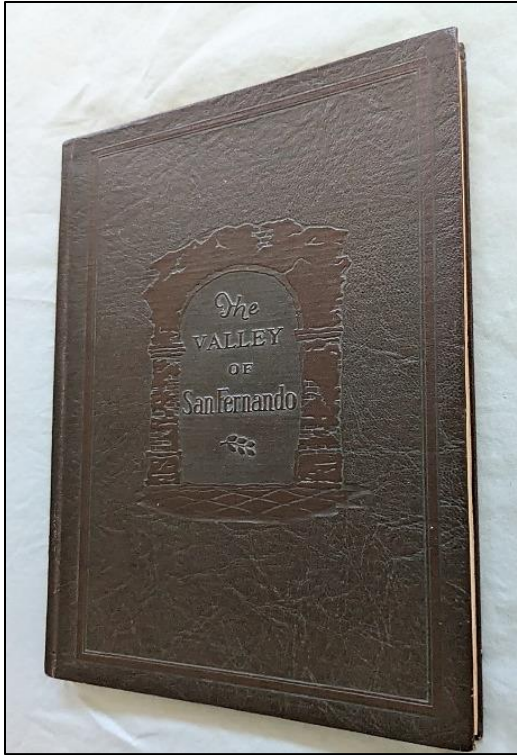
Location: Homestead Acre,
Chatsworth Park South
(West end of Devonshire St.)
10385 Shadow Oak Drive, Chatsworth, CA

Information: (818) 882-5614
chatsworthhistory@gmail.com
www.chatsworthhistory.com

Admission Adults: \$5,
Donation: Children: \$1
(Free for kids under 5)

**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.**

The Valley of San Fernando written one-hundred years ago in 1924 by the San Fernando Valley Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR)



In preparing for our program on Wheat Farming and the Williams Homestead family, this book turned out to be an amazing resource. We are fortunate to have an original leatherbound copy in our library, however thanks to today's technology the full text including some great photos can be read, downloaded, and searched on [Google Books](#).

This history was written by members of the DAR, who were also members of the San Fernando Womens Club and were the direct descendants of the founding families of the north half of the San Fernando Valley, the Maclay and Porter families.

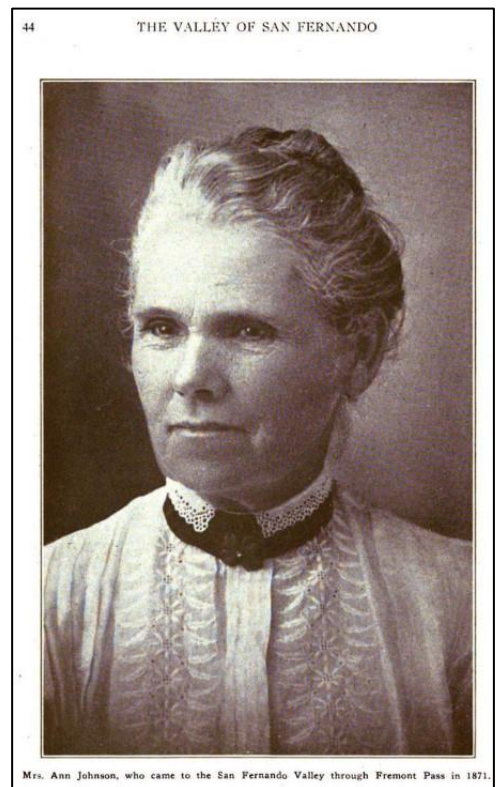
The stories in this book are fascinating as they include first hand memories of what life was like 150 years ago, as the San Fernando Valley was purchased and populated by early pioneers, settling first in the townsite of San Fernando in 1874.

As a recap, in 1869 the south half of the San Fernando Valley was sold to Lankershim and Van

Nuys for grazing lands; dry wheat harvesting began in 1874. The sale of the north half of the Valley was sold to Charles Maclay and cousins Ben F. Porter and George K. Porter in 1873/74. Chatsworth was founded 14 years later in 1888 on Ben Porter's land.

The introduction of the book begins in 1872, with Leland Stanford, Governor of California, and Charles Maclay, State Senator for the Santa Clara district. Both men were interested in the development of Southern California; Senator Maclay was interested in a ranch to purchase and develop a town. Stanford told Maclay that if he picked either the Chino or San Fernando Rancho, he would build a railroad to it.

Page 41 tells the story of homesteader Ramon Jeremiah in today's Chatsworth, and his wife Augustias' friendship with Ann Johnson, whose picture is on page 44. The story of the Johnson family is told on page 48, including this excerpt:



“Little twelve-year-old Hannah rode fearlessly a dozen miles through wild sheep and cattle ranges with saddlebags filled with butter to exchange for groceries at Lopez Station. She was a source of unflinching delight to the little Lopez girls as she dismounted, booted and spurred like a trooper, and while the pony rested there was time for childish play. Mary and Hannah often wandered for miles on foot, through canyons and up rugged hills watching and counting the cattle... These wanderings were often filled with odd adventures. They sometimes stopped to play in the old brick kiln where less than a century before Mission Indians had made the bricks for the Mission floors. They used to gaze with childish wonder at the Indian hieroglyphics painted on the rocks by a long vanished race. Though often overtaken by darkness they were guided safely home by the light placed in the window by their anxious mother.”

Page 51 tells the story of Benjamin Porter as one of the first passengers on the train from Los Angeles to San Fernando in 1874, spending the night unknowingly sleeping in the same room as Tiburcio Vasquez. General Pico's picture is on page 24:

"He stayed all night as the guest of General Andreas Pico, who was living at the Mission. Next morning he drove with the General and young Charles Maclay to the Encino Rancho for breakfast, only a distance of 15 miles. This was another large ranch on the west side of the Valley and owned by the Garnier Brothers, two Frenchmen. The food at this ranch was famous, so the General always made it a part of his entertainment to drive his guests there for a meal, using his two sorrel horses, Bernando and Berranda. After driving a few miles, Mr. Porter, a cautious man, took the reins from young Charles Maclay, saying he was too young to drive, although General Pico had invited the lad.

A striking instance of General Pico's hospitality is shown at this time. His home was headquarters for everyone. No person was ever turned away; there was always a bed, whether for rich man or thief. One night about nine o'clock, after all had retired, there was a knock at the door. The General arose and investigated. There was a soft murmur. A man was brought in and put to bed in the same room with Porter, Holmes and Charles Maclay. The next morning, after the stranger had departed, Senator Maclay asked: "General, do you know who slept here last night?" "Who?" inquired the

THE VALLEY OF SAN FERNANDO

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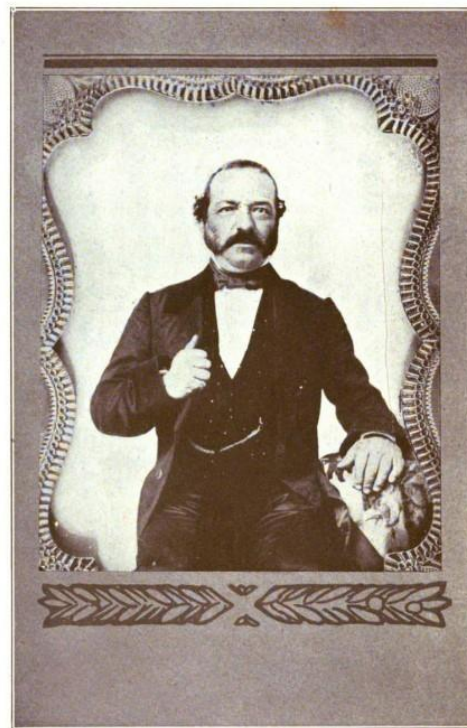
General. "Vasquez, the bandit." "Yes," replied the General, "it was Vasquez, but I have his promise never to touch or harm anyone in the new town of San Fernando," and though it was several months before this romantic outlaw was captured by Sheriff Rowland of Los Angeles, never did he go back on his word. He was captured in May, 1874, and hanged in 1875.

A story about taming the antelope that once lived in today's Antelope Valley, page 53:

General Pico's favorite expression was: "I is always a gentleman," and such the large number of friends from the City found him. He held hunting expeditions for them up to Elizabeth Lake after deer and antelope, which ran in herds of 500 to 1,000. Eulogio de Celis, Tom Temple and Juan Bandini were prominent members of these gayeties. They often returned with antelope captured alive, which were soon tamed. In the evenings, Dona Catalina Pico would call these animals, and so gentle were they that one could hear the bells with which they were tagged tinkling as they came for whatever the Dona had hidden in her hand for them. But in a few years the antelope and deer were a thing of the past. Hunters by the score would kill them, make jerky of the meat and sell it.

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THE VALLEY OF SAN FERNANDO



Andres Pico. Son of José María Pico and Brother of Pio Pico.



Palm Trees Planted by the Padres about 1797—Mission in the Background.

A story about Hubbard & Wright wheat farmers and fast friends pg65

H. C. Hubbard, brother-in-law of B. F. Porter, came to the Valley in March of 1875, and F. M. Wright, his partner, came in October of the same year. Their first ranch was called the Home Stake, situated one and one-half miles south of the Mission....

In 1880 Hubbard and Wright leased the Paxton Ranch from Maclay, where they remained until 1887, when they purchased the Hawk Ranch, consisting of 1,100 acres. This they owned until 1910, when it was sold to be divided into the town of Zelzah (today's Northridge). F. M. Wright married Emily Vose on May 4, 1880, and H. C. Hubbard married Kate Paxton Maclay, daughter of Senator and Mrs. Charles Maclay, on November 27, 1884. These two men were partners over forty-six years. During this time they held a common purse. Their checks were all issued in the name of Hubbard & Wright, and never did they have any partnership papers drawn up between them; their unbounded friendship and faith in each other was sufficient.

A story about coming to California crossing the Isthmus of Panama before the railroad, page 47:

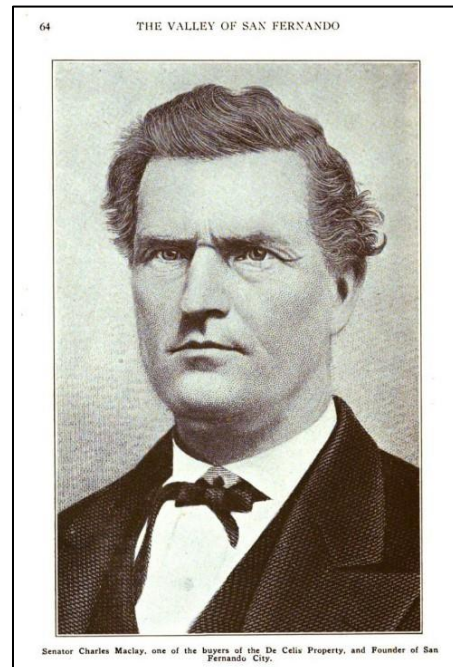
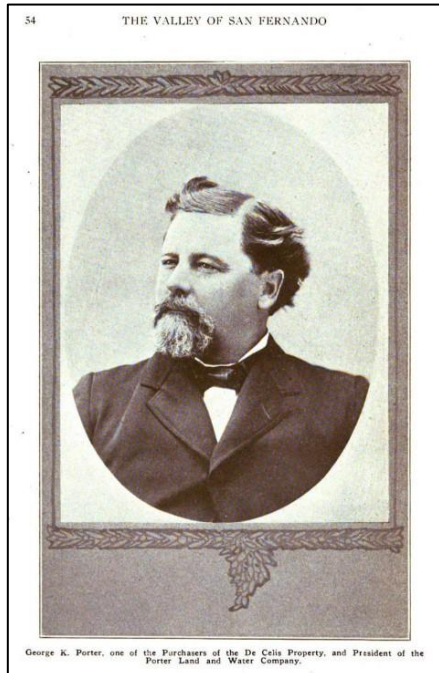
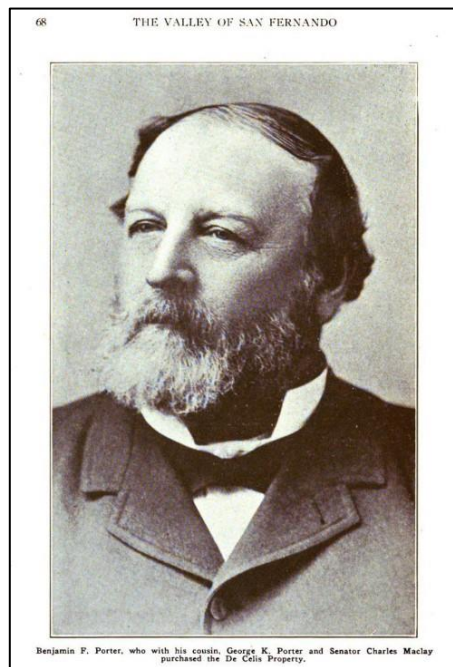
Mr. and Mrs. Bland were an interesting pioneer family. He was an eloquent, moving speaker, very highly thought of by the Methodist conference at Los Angeles. Mrs. Bland showed unusual force of character at an early age. Reared in luxury on a large plantation in Alabama, though but sixteen she freed her slaves and devoted the proceeds of land sales to sending them to Liberia. Then, penniless, she assumed the hardships of a home missionary's wife.

They came to California by water and crossed the Isthmus of Panama. This was before the railroad crossing the Isthmus was built, so they had to make the journey on burros. The heat of the long journey over the public road would have been too great for the three-months-old baby, so the young mother was obliged to hand it over to a strange Indian, who, with the baby securely strapped to his back, took a steep short cut, rested in the shade during the heat of the day and met the party at nightfall with a happy cooing baby.

They reached Los Angeles in 1852 and took up their abode in a rough little shack near the present site of the University of Southern California. This being far out in the country they had no neighbors and Mrs. Bland, alone with her babies, was often troubled by drunken Indians.

Purchasers of the north half of the San Fernando Valley

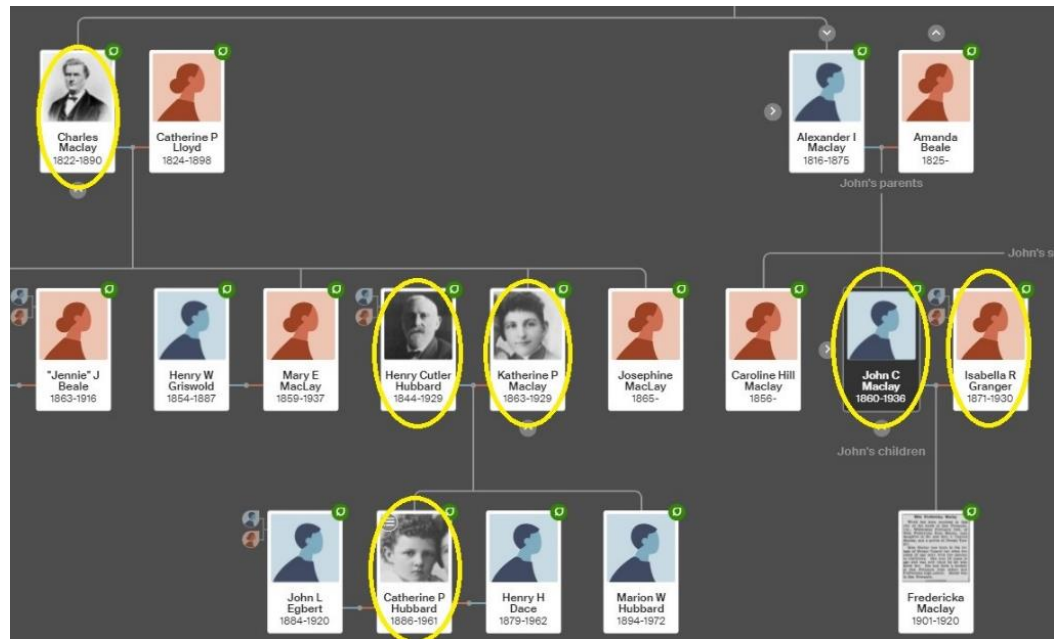
Ben F. Porter (western portion), George K. Porter (middle portion) and Charles Maclay (east of the railroad).



Ancestry of Maclay and the Porter Cousins

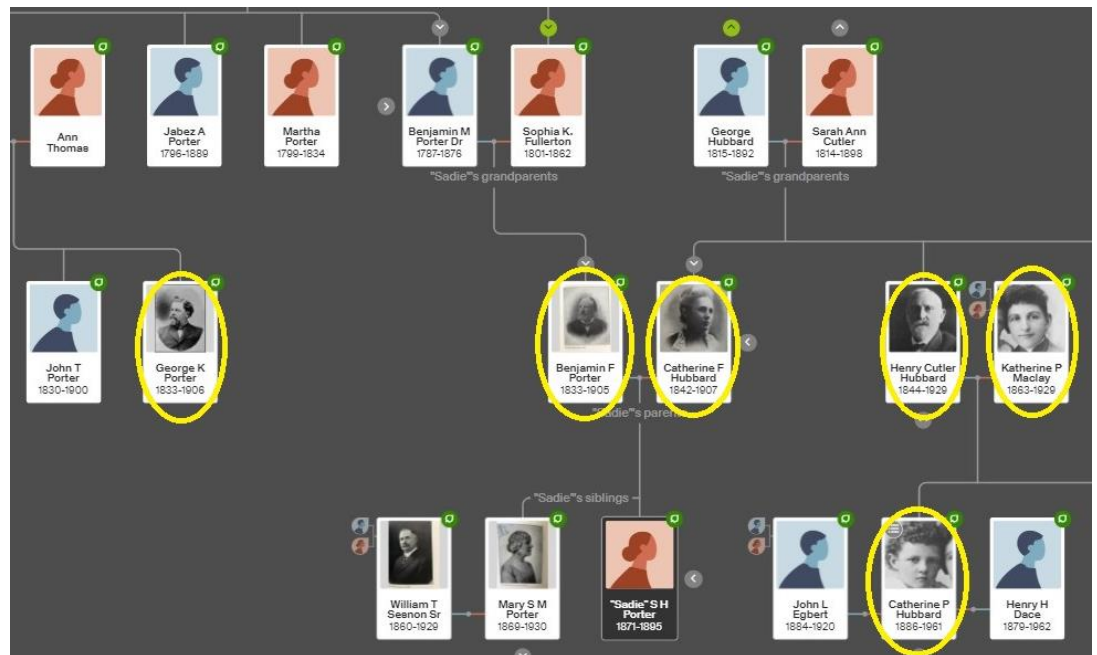
Key Players of the **Maclay family** circled in yellow...

- 1874 - Charles Maclay, George & Ben Porter purchase the northern half of the valley. They founded the townsite of San Fernando in the same year.
- 1885 - Henry Hubbard of "Hubbard & Wright" wheat harvesting marries one of Maclay's daughters.
- 1960 - Henry's daughter Catherine Porter Hubbard Dace provides an audio interview of her memories.
- 1900 - John Maclay marries Isabella Granger, daughter of W.P. Granger, the Civil Engineer/surveyor who laid out the city of San Fernando for Senator Charles Maclay in 1887.
- 1911 - John Maclay, nephew of Charles Maclay, becomes first mayor of San Fernando when it is incorporated.



Key Players of the **Porter family** circled in yellow...

- George and Ben Porter are cousins; George is a State Senator along with Charles Maclay, and Ben is in banking and real estate.
- 1867 - Ben Porter travels to New Hampshire to marry Kate Hubbard, but she would not come back to California unless her beloved sickly brother Henry came too. They lived near Santa Cruz on a ranch.
- Ben Porter had a man working for him on his ranch named FM Wright; Hubbard and Wright became best friends, and they headed "Hubbard & Wright" wheat harvesting.
- 1874 - Charles Maclay and cousins George & Ben Porter purchase the northern half of the San Fernando valley.



The stories above are from Catherine Porter Hubbard Dace's 1960 memoirs. (Ben Porter was Catherine's uncle)

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



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Please email us to provide your email address.
Thanks! chatsworthhistory@gmail.com

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Your dues are due one year after the last time you paid your dues.

For those receiving email only newsletters, we will advise you by email when your dues are due.

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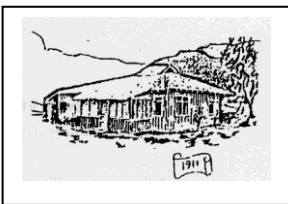


CHATSWORTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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.chatsworthhistory.com



- | | | |
|-------------------------|---|---|
| Yearly: | <input type="checkbox"/> New Member | <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal |
| Life Membership: | <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$15.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Family \$20.00 <input type="checkbox"/> Organization \$20.00 |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 125.00 | |

NAME _____ Phone: _____

STREET ADDRESS: _____ Email: _____

CITY / STATE / ZIP: _____

Special Interest / Expertise: _____

Reminder: If you got this mailed to you, an asterisk on your label means your dues are due!