

Smoke Signal

CHATSWORTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Co-Presidents: Linda & André van der Valk

February 2025, Issue #1

Editor: Ann Vincent

Co-Presidents' Message

By Linda & André van der Valk

I for one am glad that January is over. There has been so much devastation in January and our thoughts go out to everyone who lost their homes or were impacted in any way by the wildfires. We are prepared at the acre with our new fire hose and other hoses around the property. Gary Standke installed a new water spigot to give us more coverage at the acre.

On January 31, 2025, Brother John Crowe passed away. For decades, Brother John dedicated his life to the mission of Rancho San Antonio, tirelessly advocating for the young men who called Rancho home. Brother John was named Citizen of the Year by the Chatsworth Community Coordinating Council in 1994. He was honored for his work at Rancho San Antonio. I remember that he did not attend because he was on a fishing trip. I believe he enjoyed fishing. When we first moved to Chatsworth, Rancho owned the whole corner of DeSoto and Plummer. The Historical Society just received a postcard that shows the boys on horses with 18 head of livestock. There were 12 acres of alfalfa harvested 6 times yearly by the boys. There will be a Catholic Mass March 1 at St John Eudes at 2:30pm, followed by a reception at the dining hall at Rancho San Antonio.

We are looking forward to our vintage fashion show that Ann and her crew are working hard on, to make it another great event. It will be held on April 27th from 12:30pm to 3:00pm. Ann has been working hard on our hat collection which seems to number close to 100. Who knew we had that many hats? Again, this year we are limiting attendance to 75 people so get those reservations in soon.

Our Open Houses have been very successful. Each month we get more and more people that are interested in Chatsworth History. Please join us on the 1st Sunday of the month from 1 to 4pm.

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	Kathy Perger
Smoke Signal Editor.....	Ann Vincent
Research Director.....	Ray Vincent

Upcoming Events

OPEN HOUSE

1st Sunday of the month from 1 to 4pm

General Meeting

The Johnson Family in Chatsworth

February 18, Tuesday 6:30pm

Join us as we recognize the accomplishments of Ann and Neils Johnson, one of our earliest pioneer families. Books have been written and photos shared documenting what it truly was like to be a Pioneer in the 1870s in Chatsworth. Join us as we appreciate their journey and the amazing family they created building our community.



[Zoom Meeting Link](#)

Or go to: www.Zoom.us/join

or Dial: (669) 900 9128

Meeting ID: 848 4323 4310 Passcode: 100200

March General Meeting

Celebrity Ranches:

John Brandeis & Fred Astaire

March 18, Tuesday 6:30pm

John Brandeis was a millionaire playboy who bought the old Johnson property. Several fun stories to tell about him.

Fred Astaire was one of Hollywood's legends who owned the Blue Valley Ranch.

Rose Pruning

Thank you to all the wonderful volunteers that helped us get our roses pruned for the next season. Kathy Perger, our new Garden Director, encouraged each person that helped to come back next month and see how quickly they grow back and start producing new flowers. She will be fertilizing and starting a project to identify the roses with new markers for each.

New Trees

A big Thank You to Gary Standke who has purchased three new trees for the gardens. The goal has been to make sure that the trees at the Acre reflect the type of fruit that Minnie would have used. An early interview with her mentioned several types of fruit trees. The trees recently added include a peach and plum. In addition, a new avocado tree was added to replace one that has been dying.

Thank you, Gary

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:

- Dorothy Rabe's 100 birthday
- Pioneer church 60 years
- Annual Garden Fashion Show
- Remembering Bill Dushman and Elaine Campbell
- Roy Rogers this is your life Recap
- Historic Land Patents of the Santa Monica Mountains

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.

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, or on the front porch of the cottage. If you have a Chatsworth story to tell, or would like to hear more about our history or recent activities, come join us for these casual discussions.

Happy 100th Birthday Dorothy Rabe

Historical Society Member Dorothy Rabe and her family celebrated with a full house of descendants and friends on Jan 25th. Ray and I were invited to attend.

Dorothy's family has lived on Chatsworth St since the 1950s raising five kids. Her son Mike donated his class photos from Chatsworth Park Elementary School. We also thank Katherine Samuel, who donated to the Historical Society in honor of Dorothy's birthday.

60th Anniversary of the Pioneer Church at

Oakwood I was invited to the church service on Sunday Jan 26th to commemorate this event. The church was moved across open fields with lots of obstacles, but made it safely to Oakwood through the efforts of the Historical Society. It had been named [Historic Cultural Landmark No.14](#), but needed a new home. Ann

See the [Moving the Pioneer Church](#) video

Annual Garden Fashion Show April 27, 2025 12:30-3pm



Pre-Paid Admission/Donation \$35 per person by April 15
Gates open at 12:30 pm to enjoy harp music in the Garden, along with desserts and beverages.

Our Vintage Clothing Fashion Show featuring Hats will begin at 1pm held under our spectacular walnut tree.

Prepaid Tickets are available at: chatsworthhistory.com/Events.html
Seating is limited.

The cottage and museum will be used for staging the Fashion Show and will not be available for tours.
HOMESTEAD ACRE 10385 Shadow Oak Drive, Chatsworth, CA 91311
Located just inside the entrance to Chatsworth Park South.

Parking available at Chatsworth Park South, please carpool as space is limited.
For more information contact: chatsworthhistory@gmail.com
or 818-882-5614 and leave a message.

This will be our third annual Fashion Show Fundraiser to be held at the Acre under the Walnut tree. This year's event will feature our Vintage Clothing and Hats donated early on when our society was first established. We are cleaning out our museum closets for this event, so come enjoy the treasures we have found!

In Remembrance of Bill Dushman:

If you have attended any of our Garden or Pioneer Day events, you have probably met our good friend Bill Dushman. Bill passed away in January at the age of 60. This last year he went to Niagara Falls, Texas to see the solar eclipse, and salmon fishing in Alaska. So maybe he knew something we didn't know, and wanted to do some bucket list items.

Bill, Wendi Gladstone, Tom & Donna Nachtrab, Ann and I were part of a "graffiti assault" team that painted out graffiti in Chatsworth Park North starting in 2014, ending in 2018. We would meet every other week or so with other neighbors, we did it 23 times. Bill was able to climb up those boulders carrying extra paint in his backpack, defying gravity. Bill was a good friend and will be missed.
Ray Vincent





Celebrating the Life of Elaine Campbell

(1922-2025)

Elaine Campbell passed away on January 15th, she was 103 years old.

Elaine enjoyed taking photos of Chatsworth. She always had her camera ready, and when the 1994 Northridge earthquake hit, she took to the streets photographing buildings. She provided a write-up of her experiences that day and created a photo album of the community to document the event.

It wasn't a surprise that after one of her walking and photography adventures she talked to Buck at the Munch Box, who suggested she get involved with the Chatsworth Historical Society. She was welcomed with open arms and found a large box of loose photos that Virginia Watson suggested could be put in notebooks, (which was exactly the type of project that Elaine enjoyed), so her project started. The photos needed to be sorted, people identified and listed in the books and the project has would be mostly completed... until a new stack of photos would be discovered. Over 20 years Elaine created 50 notebooks filled with photos of events and activities, articles, obituaries and more, documenting the Chatsworth Historical Society. Once the Historical Society had a scanner, she volunteered to scan each notebook one by one to make sure all the photos and their history was preserved.

Elaine also shared her Movie Star photo collection with us for our displays. As a teenager, Elaine had filled out the advertisement in the movie fan magazines where you could ask for a photo of the featured star. An autographed copy would be sent to you. They would all be framed and hung on her walls, at least until the 1994 earthquake. She has photographs that say "To Elaine" from stars such as Bette Davis, Bing Crosby, Cary Grant, Humphrey Bogart, Laurel & Hardy, Loretta Young and Tyrone Power...to name a few.

She worked at every Historical Society event, rode in the Chatsworth parades, participated in field trips and served as a docent for many years sharing the history of our community.

After joining the Historical Society in 1999, she joined the Chatsworth Womens Club in 2000 and became actively involved. She first took on Literature Chair and hosted the Meet the Author program with over 80 guests. Money raised from this event was donated to Rancho San Antonio. Elaine chaired the Membership Tea, documented the Womens Club activities for the District annual submissions and also produced the club yearbook.

By 2006, Elaine was selected Citizen of the Year for her work in our community with both the Historical Society and Womens Club.

A brick was placed in the Homestead Acre garden for Elaine by her family a couple years ago, and she had the opportunity to visit the Acre to see it. We had fun discussing all the projects she had worked on over time, and all the events both she and her daughter, Janis, helped with each year.

From those of us who have had the opportunity to work with Elaine and her family...she will be missed.

Ann Vincent



Roy Rogers “This is your Life”

We had fun on January 21st with our presentation featuring Roy Rogers. As time goes by, we realize that our current and future members may not know this history that was such an active part of our lives in Chatsworth. Some things are worth sharing over and over so they are not forgotten.

This Presentation provided a brief history of the Roy Rogers family, focusing on their contributions to Chatsworth. At the end, we concluded with a 26-minute video of the 1953 television episode [“This is Your Life” honoring Roy Rogers](#). It is a touching moment showcasing the sincere and humble Roy Rogers that many of us knew, when he later lived in Chatsworth from 1955 to 1965.



Did you know:



Roy Rogers’ career began in 1934 with a recording contract with the Sons of the Pioneers. Roy soon turned to movies, and was in the top-ten money-making western stars list from 1939 to 1954. He and his wife Dale Evans also appeared on the Roy Rogers Radio Show for nine years, before moving to television from 1951 through 1957. Roy Rogers was inducted into the Hollywood Walk of fame in 1960. He has four stars on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, in recognition of his achievements in radio, music (with the Sons of the Pioneers), film, and television.

In 1955, Roy Rogers purchased the 129-acre Swan Paulson Homestead in Chatsworth on Andora from Max Schonfeld, General Manager of Devonshire Downs, and renamed it the Double R Bar Ranch. The ranch had a small house on it built in 1938, that was expanded to 6,000 square feet and still exists today. In a 1987 quote Dusty Rogers said, "We moved from the Hollywood Hills to Encino, then to a ranch in Chatsworth. We always moved away from the encroaching population because Dad liked his privacy. He wanted his kids raised on a ranch, where they could have horses and pigs and chickens and cows."

Episodes of The Roy Rogers Show on NBC TV featured the Double R Bar Ranch in Chatsworth.

In 1964, they sold most of the ranch to a subdivider, and in 1965, Roy and Dale sold the remainder and moved to Apple Valley, Ca. near Victorville.



When Roy, Dale and family moved to Chatsworth in 1955 they were very active in the community.

They were co-honorary mayors of Chatsworth during that time. And their children went to Chatsworth Park Elementary School.

Dale played the piano for Sunday School at the Pioneer Church and Roy was a member of the Rotary Club.



Roy was also involved in the Aqua Sierra Sportsmans Club, a skeet and trap shooting range on the Hill Homestead property at the end of Devonshire that began in 1949.

In 1956, the Hill homestead was purchased by Henry Berkenkamp of Oroweat Bakeries.

By 1959, there were five skeet and trap stations, a 90 foot hi-tower, one nine-hole golf course, a driving range, and two trout lakes. In 1959 it was advertised as the Roy Rogers Sports Center. Roy did an advertisement for Chevrolet that featured the Sports Center and shooting skeet with his sons. [You can watch it here.](#)

The center was closed in 1968/69 as Rockpointe was

developed.

In 1973 the City of Los Angeles purchased the 75-acre skeet/fishing/golf course site and it became today's Chatsworth Park South.

In April 1964, a promotional photo was taken to announce Roy Rogers Rancho Estates.

In August 1964, their 12-year-old daughter Debbie died in a tragic church bus accident.

In 1965, Roy and Dale moved to Apple Valley.

In 1964, 55 units were approved on 33 acres. The first homes appeared in 1964, and new homes were built over the next 25 years.

In 1969, Eugene Kilmer purchased the undeveloped 96 acres and moved into the Roy Rogers house on Trigger Street. His son Val Kilmer became a well-known movie actor.

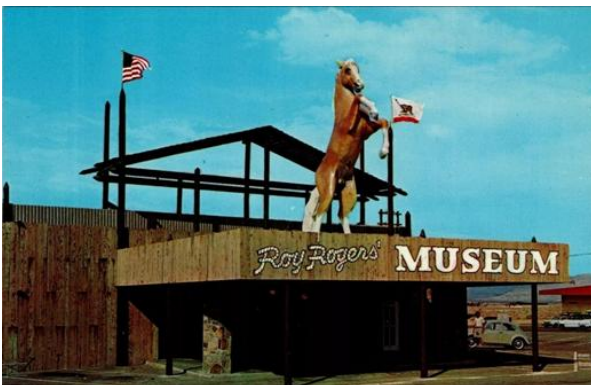
Val Kilmer was a drama student at Chatsworth High School with Kevin Spacey in the late 1970's.

Kevin Spacey's film production company is named "Trigger Street Productions"



TRIGGER STREET
P R O D U C T I O N S

The remaining 91 acres of the ranch is under development in 2025 as Hidden Oaks by Toll Brothers, with 33 additional homes, and 62 acres as an open space conservation easement.



In 1967, The Roy Rogers' Museum opened across the street from Roy Rogers' Apple Valley Inn.

In 1976 it relocated within California to Victorville, where it stayed for 27 years.

After Roy's death in 1998, and Dale's in 2001, in 2003 the museum moved to Branson, Missouri. The museum struggled financially during an economic downturn, and the remaining family decided to close its doors on December 12, 2009.

The majority of the collection was sold at auction in July 2010 for \$2.9 million.

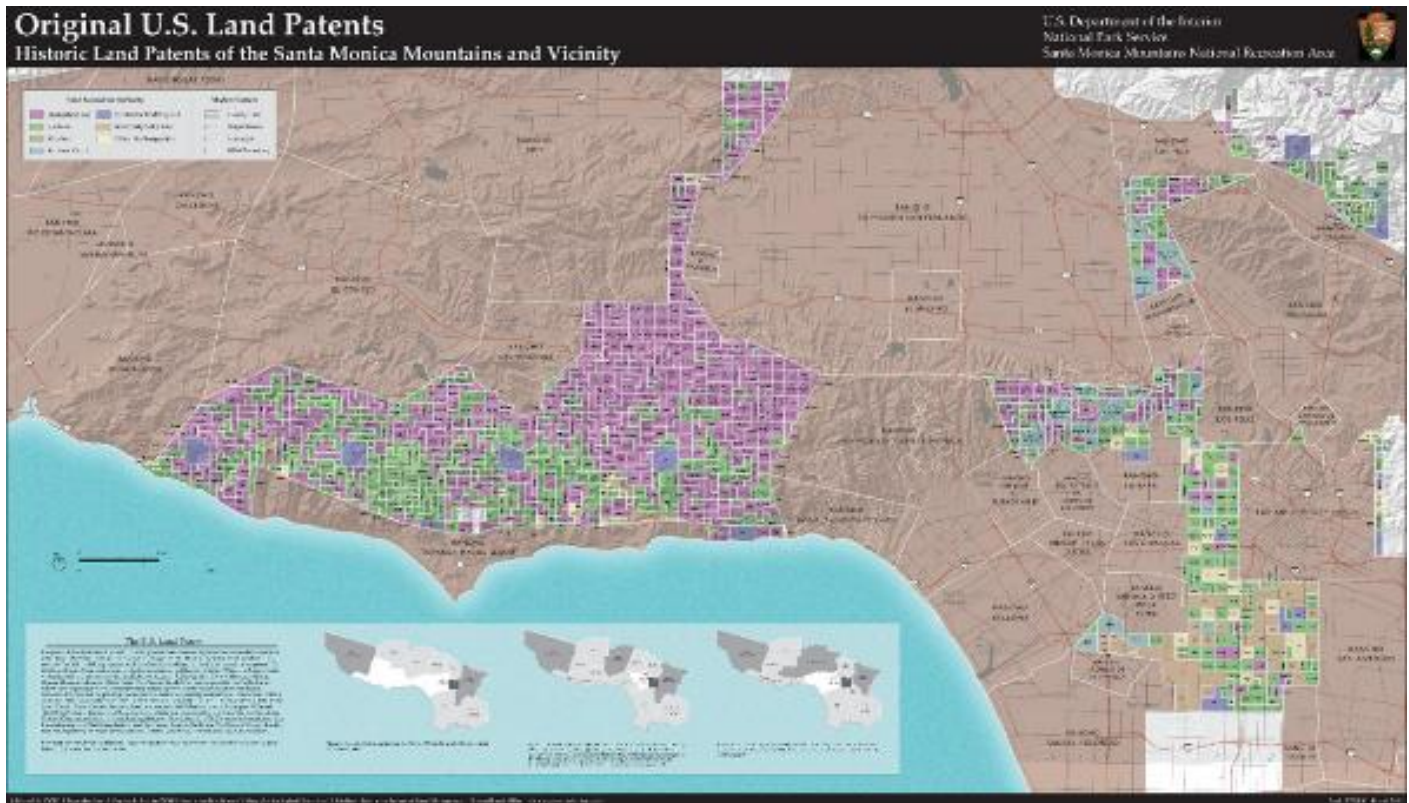
Rogers' 1963 Pontiac Bonneville sold for the price of \$254,500. Artist Nudie Cohn, Rogers' tailor, outfitted the car with silver dollars on the dashboard, chrome-plated pistols, horseshoes, miniature horses and rifles, many of which were functional parts of the car such as door handles, switches and controls.



Historic Land Patents of the Santa Monica Mountains

Gary & Nita Standke recently observed this map at the Adamson House visitors center. It identifies early Spanish and Mexican land grants or “ranchos”, that were respected in the 1848 Mexican-American War treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo. (California became a state in 1850).

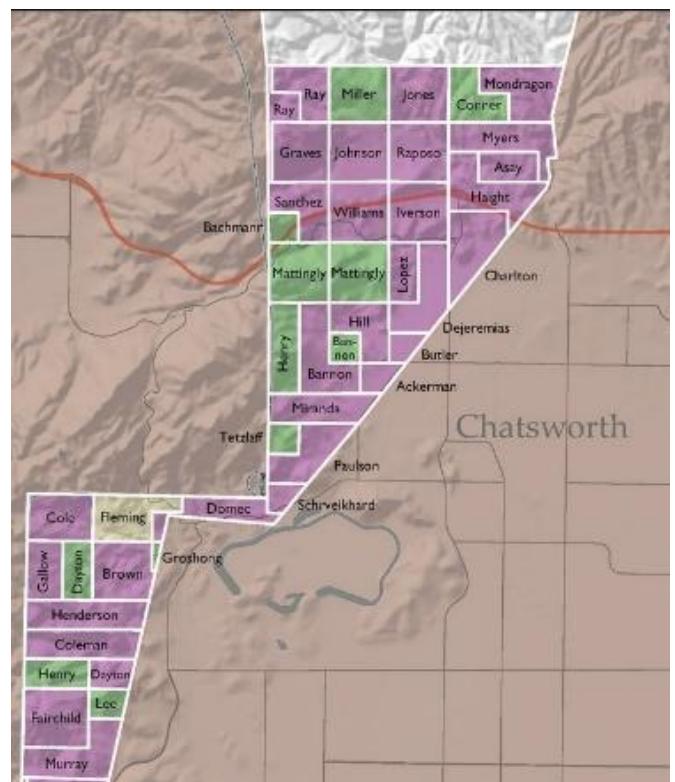
When the ranchos were patented, the land left over became “Public Lands”, available to Homesteaders. We made a few calls, and [the 2010 Original U.S. Land Patents map](#) was shared with us by the National Park Service.



This is an amazing resource tool.

The Homestead Act parcels (shown in purple), enacted during the Civil War in 1862, provided that any adult citizen, or intended citizen, who had never borne arms against the U.S. government could claim 160 acres of surveyed government land. Claimants were required to live on and “improve” their plot by cultivating the land. Property acquired by the Cash Act are shown in green.

The section shown at right represents our Chatsworth Homesteaders. We share those stories on our website at chatsworthhistory.com, Digital Archives, [Presentations](#), Chatsworth Homesteaders Parts 1, 2 & 3.



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
GRANDMA ANN by Mary Huff	\$30.00



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Please use the form below to renew by mail or the link below to renew by **PAYPAL or Credit Card:**

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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

- | | | | |
|------------------|---|---|---|
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| Life Membership: | <input type="checkbox"/> \$ 125.00 | | |

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