



LILA SCHEPLER, founding member of the Chatsworth Historical Society passed away on April 8 at the age of 98.

The following article was written by Virginia Watson following Lila Schepler's 94th birthday.

Mrs. Schepler has been a local leader since she came to the area as a 14-year-old girl and worked in many different fields after graduating from Canoga Park High School at 16 and later USC majoring in recreation and the arts. She came to the Chatsworth area on a Monday in September, 1931, and the next Sunday she and her father began attending services at the local Methodist Church where she has held every office including that of steward and was one of the first women to serve as trustee.

When asked about her personal history, Mrs. Schepler reports that she was born in Bashaw, Alberta, Canada in 1917. She and her family later lived in Venice, Calif., before moving to Chatsworth in 1931. When they first moved here the family lived in a little house on the northwest corner of Devonshire Street at De Soto Avenue. The area was raised in a little hill and she remembers lots of Kadota fig trees in the area. That was not surprising because the Docia Conley Co. was across the street but farther west--nearer Variel Avenue. The front of the property was a gift shop where they served tea and jam to the public and in the rear was a plant where the owners made jams and jellies, pickled watermelon and specialized in candied Kadota figs. The teen-age Lila was artistic and admired the beautiful packages all wrapped in cellophane with the bright ribbons covering the jams and jellies and it wasn't long until she was working in the shop helping to wrap the food and decorate the baskets. She remembers the shop fondly.

The Great Depression was at its worst during 1931 and '32 and Chatsworth was a small agricultural town with very few businesses, in fact there were very few stores in the area at that time. It wasn't long until the ambitious Lila was also working with "Grandpa Johnson" as **C. W. Johnson** the Bee King was known. He had two booths in different parts of the San Fernando Valley and kept them supplied with honey which took a lot of bees. Mr. Johnson taught Lila all about bees and their culture and she learned for herself about being stung. It was her job to "smoke" the bees to keep them calm so that Mr. Johnson could work with them. She remembers the hardest part was wearing a hot sweater with long sleeves in the summer and putting rubber bands on the long sleeves to keep the bees from crawling up her arm.

Lila was also an accomplished babysitter with lots of experience already with her own brothers and sisters. And she often cared for the children of the ministers of the Methodist Church when the going rate for "sitting" was 25 cents for the entire evening. She was often able to provide information about former pastors and their families in Chatsworth for the Historical Society research.

Over the years Lila Schepler has volunteered uncounted hundreds of hours to the local historical society. She initiated the Docent Program and trained the first docents. Most recently she presented her collection of books and pamphlets about California History to the **William "Bill" Schepler** Memorial Library at The Homestead Acre.

But what a life she's had. She is a retired executive in the field of recreation and has been honored many times by the Los Angeles City Department of Recreation and Parks and the California State Park and Recreation as well as her own sorority, Chi Kappa Rho. She was named Woman of the Year by the Chatsworth Chamber of Commerce in 1976 and Outstanding Citizen by the Chatsworth Community Coordinating Council. She originated programs such as the Folklorico in Los Angeles and The Young Historians for the Conference of Historical Societies, and was a founding member of the Arts Council. She is one of the founding members of the Chatsworth Historical Society and has served as president seven times, filling out the founding president's term after he had a heart attack.

She is a Life Member of the PTA, has worked on the executive board for the Girl Scouts and has been honored by them. She worked with the members of the 51st Agricultural Fair and was honored by the 51st Agricultural District. She was a member of the "Destination 90" program that planned for the development of the San Fernando Valley and worked with the Welfare Planning Council. Her work in the field of recreation and the arts is immeasurable and extends beyond her community into the whole San Fernando Valley. She

works with seemingly effortless charm and accomplishes what others say is impossible. Lila opened the playground at Lanark Park when it was Orcutt Park and remembers working with as many as 300 children in Los Angeles for a May Day program.

In her later years her vision failed and now she has to rely on voices to remember acquaintances and friends. She misses reading as she was an avid reader. She spends a lot of time with her four great grandchildren, three girls and a boy who live nearby.

She is still active in the Chatsworth Historical Society, The Chatsworth West Methodist Church and the Chi Kappa Rho when the meetings are nearby.

Lila has had a really active life and when asked about how she managed to do so many things and do them so well she modestly says, "It is just that I've lived here so long!"

VALERIE BUTLER JENKINS Granddaughter of Minnie Hill Palmer

Our condolences to the family on the loss of their mother and grandmother. Valerie's mother was Edith Palmer Butler, the daughter of Minnie Hill Palmer. Valerie Mae Butler Jenkins was born on November 10, 1931 and passed away on Thursday, March 19, 2015.

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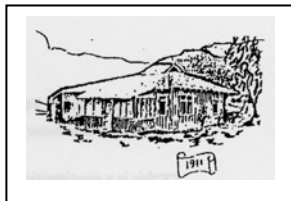
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CHATSWORTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Chatsworth Historical Society, 10385 Shadow Oak Drive, Chatsworth, CA 91311
chatsworthhistory@gmail.com 818-882-5614 www.historicalsocieties.net

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