

Chatsworth Has Had a Post Office Since Mail Arrived by Stagecoach

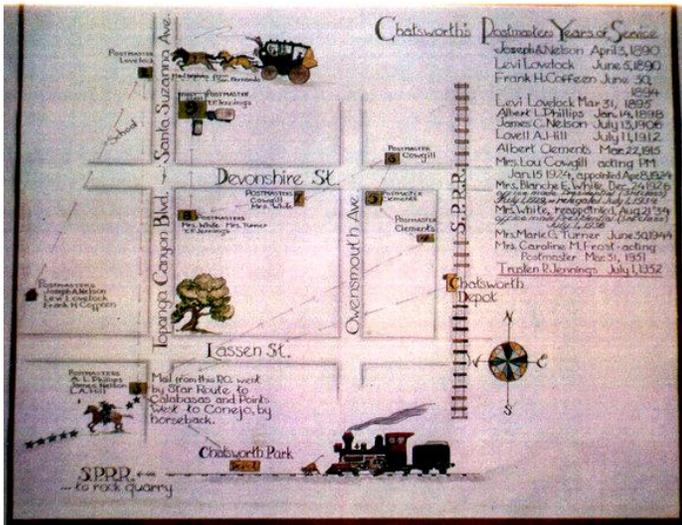
By Virginia Watson, as published on www.chatsworth.patch.com

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

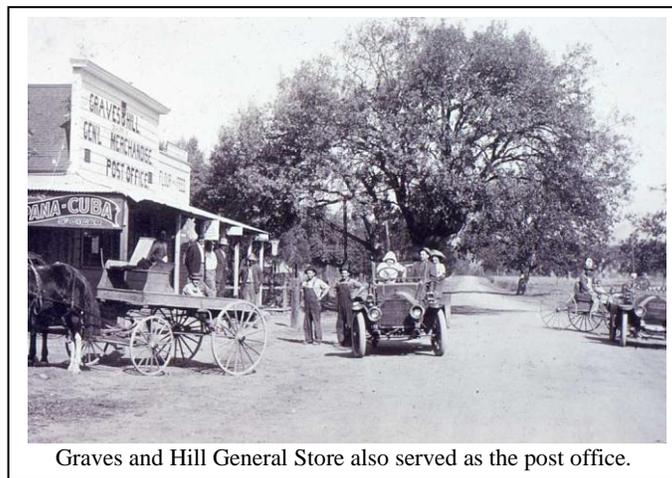
part of the Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park. And the history of the area will be preserved by the State of California.

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, 1895. 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 June 30, 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 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.