

# Congratulations to Chatsworth Park Elementary School for achieving State of California Gold Ribbon Status



Recently Chatsworth Park Elementary School celebrated receiving the State of California Gold Ribbon

status as one of 44 in the Los Angeles Unified School District, out of 783 throughout the state with 6000 schools eligible. The Gold Ribbon Awards recognize California schools that have made gains in academic content and performance standards. On June 6<sup>th</sup> an awards ceremony was held at the school. All of the over 300 students wore maroon shirts with the Gold Ribbon emblem and their mascot the Palomino. A few times during the ceremony the children were asked to hold up their "Palomino Ears", a way to get their attention and quiet them down. Quite cute! The ceremony included a song by the kindergarten classes and a performance on recorders of "Chariots of Fire" by the 5<sup>th</sup> grade classes.



the kindergarten classes and a performance on

## The Owensmouth Gazette and Chatsworth Park Elementary School History

We recently "discovered" a 1917 article in the Owensmouth Gazette detailing specifically the history of Chatsworth Park Elementary School, excerpts of which will follow. The article identified some new pioneer names that were involved, and the article was written only 38 years after the founding of the school.

For a brief recap, the School was founded in 1879 as a part of the Santa Susana School District. In 1880, a small one room schoolhouse was built northwest of Chatsworth Street and today's Topanga Canyon. In 1890 the first school was built on the northwest corner of Topanga and Devonshire. In 1917 a second schoolhouse was built at the same location. In 1933, the Long Beach earthquake damaged the 1917 building, and a new building was built in 1935 at the same location, which still stands today.

As an aside, the Owensmouth Gazette was a weekly newspaper published from 1912 to 1931. Unfortunately, all back issues were discarded to make room for more office space. The only known copies in existence were from the Edgar Rice Burroughs estate, which collected them to excise any articles referencing Tarzana. The Burroughs collection (dating from 1916 to 1924) was loaned to the Huntington Library for preservation in the form of microfilm, which was then presented as a gift to California State University Library at Northridge. We have been digitizing these microfilm issues to allow us the ability to review the information, and came across this article, which is a gem. In that same issue is a column on "CHATSWORTH" written by "Cecil E. Graves, Reporter".

We hope to include all of the Owensmouth Gazette publications in our digital Archives posted on [www.chatsworthhistory.com](http://www.chatsworthhistory.com) later this year.



CHATSWORTH GRAMMAR SCHOOL

### HISTORY OF THE CHATSWORTH SCHOOL FROM ITS BEGINNING

Thirty-eight years ago, in this city did not exist this hall, but in 1879, when little was known about anything, more or less of a school was built on the corner of Topanga and Devonshire. This building was the first schoolhouse in the city, and it was built on the northwest corner of Topanga and Devonshire. In 1890 the first school was built on the northwest corner of Topanga and Devonshire. In 1917 a second schoolhouse was built at the same location. In 1933, the Long Beach earthquake damaged the 1917 building, and a new building was built in 1935 at the same location, which still stands today.

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**OWENSMOUTH GAZETTE**  
**Excerpt from 1917 May 4<sup>th</sup> article**  
**The History of the Chatsworth School**  
**from its Beginning**

Thirty-eight years ago, in the year 1879, when little was known of California, and the San Fernando Valley was one carpet of wild flowers, a few pioneers drifted from other parts into the extreme northwest end of the valley. One of these men was Bernardo Don Letchi, his wife and two children. He realized that children should have an education and so he made the suggestion that a school be started. There were only seven pupils, but that was enough to start with, and Chatsworth is honored today to have two of those pupils as residents of the community: Messrs. William and Charles Johnson.

Los Angeles was willing to furnish a teacher, but it was unable to build a school house. It was decided to elect a Board of Trustees, which was done, and the first Board of Trustees for the Chatsworth School was Mrs. Ann Johnson, the mother of Charles and William; Mr. Brown, for whom Brown's Canyon was named, and Mr. Joseph Lowry. The trustees decided to have school at the home of Mrs. Jeremias, in her adobe house. This house stood in the same location that Mr. Fred Graves residence is now.

The following year a little schoolhouse was built on the property of Mrs. Jeremias that held twenty seats. School was held in this building until the year 1890, and some of the residents of Chatsworth remember going to school in this little building, namely, Mr. Lovell Hill and Mrs. Emma Graves.

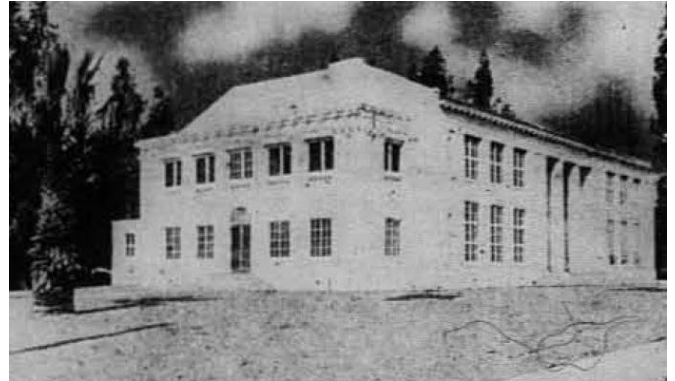
The last teacher to teach in this schoolhouse was Mr. William Sheldon, at present the secretary of the Board of Education.

In 1890 a new schoolhouse was built, the main room holding fifty seats. This building had anterooms and a library room. In the next ten years the school grew very rapidly and in the year 1900 the Board of Trustees found that they needed more room; so it was decided to build an addition; when this was completed it was said that Chatsworth had one of the best buildings in the county.

Mr. N. A. Gray had an active part in the planning and the building of this schoolhouse, as he was a trustee for nine years during this time. This building served the purpose nicely until the time

that the people realized that they needed some place to meet as a community center. It was decided by the trustees to ask the people to vote on a bond of eight thousand dollars to build a hall in connection with the school. As the day of the election drew near the trustees began to realize that the people did not want this hall, but wanted something more up-to-date, -- a new schoolhouse with a large auditorium. On the day of the election the trustees voted against their own proposition as well as did

*1917 Chatsworth Grammar School*



most of the people. The trustees, Mrs. Minnie Gray, Mrs. Emily Johnson and Mr. Fred Tezlaff, met and considered plans for a new building, and it was also decided to vote all the bonds that could be voted for this new building. The result was that the people voted without hardly a dissenting vote to bond themselves for \$34,500 for the cost for this new school.

After all the contracts were let for the construction of the building, Chatsworth was annexed to the Great City of Los Angeles, and the managing of the school affairs went into the hands of the Board of Education. The Board of Education took hold of the matter with an interest, and when the building was completed the people had something to be proud of. The building contains eight classrooms, a large auditorium, a sloyd room, a domestic science room, library room, teachers' rest room, as well as all equipment that goes with an up-to-date school building.

*Editor's Note: A "sloyd" room incorporated the late 19th-century Swedish system of learning woodworking and handicraft-based education. It was intended to develop skilled, industrious and morally upstanding citizens. (The concept of a trade school)*