

CHATSWORTH PAST & PRESENT

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Twin Lakes is an unincorporated community of homes northeast of the 118 and Topanga Canyon Blvd. The community was created in the 1920's as a rural resort, and promoted as a retreat for the weekend, season or holiday. Similar developments, which were in vogue during the roaring 20's, were Gerard at Ventura Blvd and Topanga (middle-eastern theme), and Rustic Canyon in Santa Monica (Will Rogers and Polo fields). Twin Lakes had an Aztec-Mayan theme.

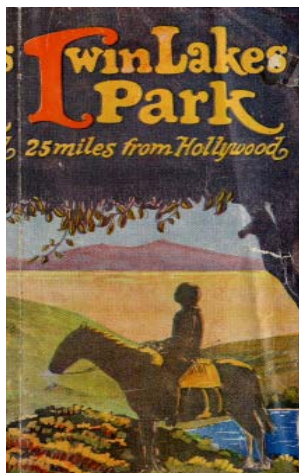


Photo taken in 1935 showing the main entrance at Mayan Road and Santa Susana Pass Road. Although the arch was removed at some point in time, the entrance road existed until Topanga Canyon was extended to the 118 Freeway in 1975. The remains of Mayan Road can still be seen on the east side of Topanga. Today you reach Mayan Road by turning right on Poema just past the Freeway entrance from Topanga.

In 1927, 750 lots were subdivided on over 300 acres of property from the George W. Haight ranch, and over the next few years 400 to 500 parcels were sold as lots for homes or campsites. A colorful sales brochure described the facilities with all the amenities. The area boasted an Observation Building, Boating, Swimming, Tennis, Archery, Quoits, Hunting and membership in the Twin Lakes Park Country Club.

The two lakes that gave the area its name were created from dams at Browns Canyon and Devil Canyon. Sales of rural resort homes skidded to a stop during the depression of the 30's, and Twin Lakes evolved over the years to the current community of homeowners.

The Devil Canyon lake (known



1927 Sales Brochure
The brochure can be seen at www.twinlakespoa.com at their history link

as Raymond Lake) has been dry since 1948. The lake at Browns Canyon dam was silted over in the 40's, but can still be seen today if you drive to the end of DeSoto just north of the freeway, and look up the canyon. Raymond Lake was the centerpiece of the community with the adjacent boat landing, swimming house and Mayan Observation Building. Local Chatsworth residents are known to have been baptized at Raymond Lake.



Twin Lake residents boating on Raymond Lake. The Dam shown on the left is still in place and serves as an access bridge to homes north of Devil Canyon. The dam gate was opened in April of 1948 after much discussion of required maintenance and with some hesitation, not knowing if it would refill with the next rain season.

Their newsletter account of the situation says "the canyon foamed water for 40 minutes....then a million gallons of H2O disappeared" The gate is still open today.

In the 1950's, the community had their challenges as well water ended up spurting out mostly mud and air from the faucets. In the 1960's the Las Virgenes Water District expanded their facilities to serve the Twin Lake residents and continues to provide water for the community today.

In 1975, there was a proposal for a 440 acre dumpsite at the end of Canoga in Browns Canyon just north of Twin Lakes. There would have been 1,000 dump trucks a day for 45 years. The community rallied and created a committee called "Dump-the-Dump", and after 3,000+ petition signatures, the proposal was rejected by the City Council in an 11-0 vote in 1977.

In 1970 fire destroyed about half of the 60 homes at that time but later they were rebuilt. Over time, rebuilding homes on the small lots has resulted with every conceivable type of home, from simple, A-frame homes to multi-story, luxurious residences. A few of the original Mayan architecture designed homes are still in existence if you know where to look amongst the 100+ homes today.

In 1989, the community was identified as the first LA County Community Standards District, establishing operating rules unique for Twin Lakes.

Stories and legends abound in the community. The Captain and Tennille resided in Twin Lakes on Chee Trail in the early 1970's. Rumor has it that Rudolph Valentino also had a home here located in this entirely different world, one of nature and beauty, privacy and solitude.

Chatsworth Historical Society 2012