

Smoke Signal

CHATSWORTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Co-Presidents: Linda & André van der Valk

February 2020, Issue #1

Editor: Ann Vincent

Co-Presidents' Message

By Linda & André van der Valk

All is well at the Acre. Ann and Donna are starting to get ready for the Garden Festival. Ann is reaching out to vendors and non-profits to have booths at the event and Donna is beginning to take reservations for groups of ten or more for the tea. The Garden Festival is one of our two fundraisers each year to help sustain the Homestead Acre. Again this year we want to thank Councilmember John Lee for providing us two shuttle buses for the event. The buses are important to the event because we do not have enough parking on site to handle the traffic and would not be able to have the event without them. Thank you Councilmember Lee for helping us out again this year.

Annette and Karen have been busy pruning the roses. This is a lot of work considering how many roses there are in the garden. We appreciate the time and caring that this task takes.

Jelena has been working on the display at the library for us. She does a wonderful job and always has great ideas to put in the case that represent old Chatsworth. Jelena and I will be working on changing the display in the museum to Chatsworth movies. Our infamous bear in the case will be a cowboy this time and we will be displaying photos of old movies filmed in Chatsworth. Make sure to come into the museum when you come to the Garden Festival or when you come for Open House and see the display,

We will be having a booth at The Day of The Horse this year. This is a great event sponsored by the Chatsworth Neighborhood Council. It will be held at Stoney Point Ranch and will be from 11 - 3 PM on March 29th. The CNC provides a free lunch and there are horse demonstrations from different Valley groups. The kids can make stick horses and there will be a stick horse race later in the day. We will also have a booth at Earth Day on April 4th. This is the only day of the year that the

Chatsworth Historical Society
Board of Directors 2019-2020

Co-Presidents	Linda & André van der Valk
Treasurer.....	Jim Van Gundy
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Cottage Curator Emeritus.....	Betty Summers
Research Director.....	Ray Vincent
Garden Director.....	Annette Campbell
Director-at-Large.....	Connie Ager
Honorary Member.....	Bea Berman

Chatsworth Nature Preserve is open to the public. There is a guided hike that goes around the pond area. A blessing by the Native Americans is very special and is at the beginning of the event.

Thank you to everyone who volunteers one way or another in making the Chatsworth Historical Society a success in keeping the Homestead Acre going.
Linda and Andre

Upcoming Events

February 18, 2020 Tuesday 7:00 PM General Meeting

Join us as Dennis Liff shares a Movie History breakthrough...the first feature films of 1914 were made in **Chatsworth Lake Manor!**

March 10, 1888-2020 Chatsworth's 132nd Birthday

March 17, 2020 Tuesday 7:00 PM General Meeting The History of Twin Lakes and Deerlake Highlands

April 26, 2020 11:00-3:00 PM Garden Festival & Duchess Tea

Upcoming Open Houses Sundays on March 1, April 5, May 3 & June 7 From 1:00 pm – 4:00 PM

DOCENT DOINGS at the ACRE:

Our docents keep busy with projects throughout the year. We meet every Wednesday morning 9-noon.

OUT IN THE GARDEN:

If you need some outdoor fresh air therapy, come join our gardening team on Wednesday mornings 9-noon.



IN THE MUSEUM: We will be sharing photos and information on the Stagecoach Trail until March. We will continue to schedule open houses for the first Sunday of each month from 1-4pm, except on Holidays.

IN THE COTTAGE: An inventory project is still underway to confirm and learn more about the items on display and their history so we can provide more information on our tours.

DOCENTS ARE NEEDED: Help guide guests through the museum and cottage during our Open Houses, Tours and Special Events. If you would like to learn the history of our community and help share it with others, please contact us for more information at chatsworthhistory@gmail.com.

Memorial Brick Plaza



Click the link below for the Memorial Brick Order Form, \$100 per brick.

<http://www.chatsworthhistory.com/CHS-BrickOrderForm.pdf>

Bricks that are ordered before March 1st will be in place for our April 26 Garden Festival.

For more information, send an email to chatsworthhistory@gmail.com or call 818-882-5614.



GARDEN FESTIVAL

We are looking forward to a wonderful Garden Festival and Duchess Tea in the garden again this year. We always need help with baked goods for our Bake Sale and plants for our Plant Sale. So if you have a green thumb or bakers thumb...keep us in mind.

We will have tea in the garden served at two time slots, 11:30 and 12:30. Tickets will be sold at the Garden festival event for both serving times once the gate opens on Sunday, April 26 at 11:00. Luncheon tickets will be sold until we run out.

OPEN HOUSE – Adventures

We have been continuing our Sunday Open House Events on the first Sunday of each month. Each month we are delighted to meet guests who have a historic tie to Chatsworth.

In January, we had Deborah Jones and Janet Rodrigues. Deborah and Janet are both Gray Family descendants from different branches of the tree. We were able to introduce them to each other, so that was a lot of fun. We are delighted that the family members know that we are a repository for their family history. The Gray Family had nine children, which included two sets of twins. They lived on Lassen Street with the entrance to their home lined with over 76 olive trees, which are still standing and protected as Cultural Landmark #49.



California Dessert Rose Pattern

DONATIONS

This month at our February Open House we received several early California Franciscan ware dishes. Long time docent Connie

Ager brought Tom Senior with her, who was looking for someone who would appreciate these made in California dishes. Thank you Tom for donating them to us.

The production of Franciscan ware pottery with its brilliant glazed colors began in 1934. The beginning of Franciscan ware dishes started at their Glendale factory about 1940. In June of 1953 to July of 1958 these dishes were produced based on the markings on the back of the dishes. The terms Hand Decorated and Oven Safe had been added to the back of the dishes at that time.

“NEW” 1912 Postcard of Santa Susana Pass, “64. Santa Susanna Pass, Chatsworth, Cal.”

Last March we presented a collection of 1912 Chatsworth Postcards stored at the Los Angeles Natural History Museum (LANHM). Postcard Photographer H.F. Rile created a total of 26 postcard scenes during a 1912 visit to Chatsworth, but only 19 postcards are in the LANHM collection. We recently “re-discovered” Postcard 64, Santa Susanna Pass, in our archives, shown here, which brings a total of 3 postcards in our homesteader or private collections, with 4 unknown postcards remaining to be discovered.

The view is looking east on the 1895 Chatsworth Grade Road, before the current Santa Susana Pass Road was completed in 1917. It took some detective work by Dennis Liff to identify the location of the photograph, as described in his picture below. In the background is the Garden of the Gods to the right, and the flat area in the background to the left is the Johnson, Wilson and Iverson homesteads, where the Rocky Peak Church complex (Wilson side) and Cal West Condos (Iverson side) are today.



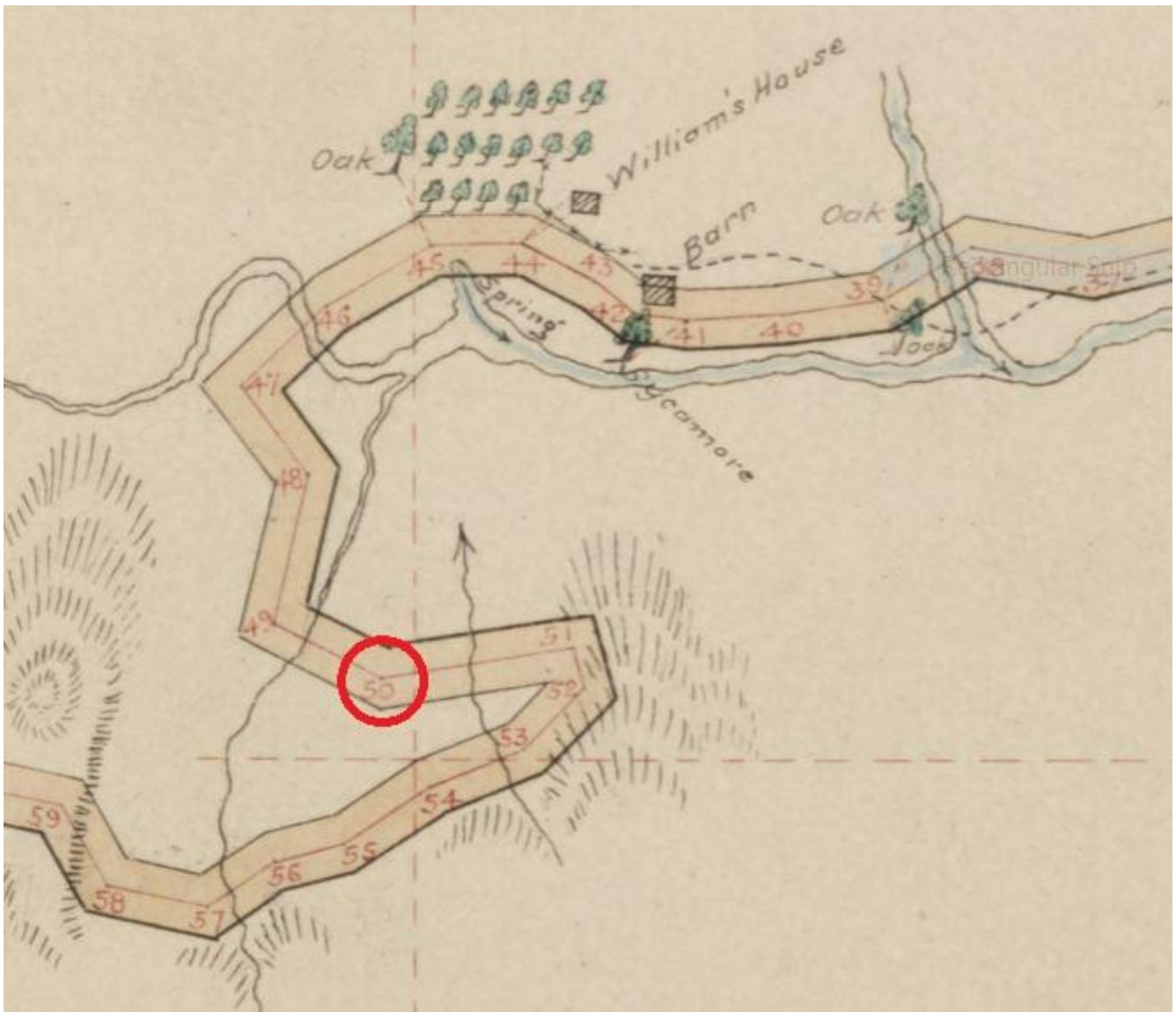
The horse drawn cart and rider in the foreground are the same travelers as in Postcard 65, which can be found in our presentation at chatsworthhistory.com, Digital Archives, Presentations, Chatsworth Postcards 1912. The horse and rider are on a switchback section of the pass road, as it descends into the Santa Susana Creek, and approaches the Williams House. Although they are facing west in the picture, they are traveling east to Chatsworth

The Dennis Liff Google Maps photo below identifies H.F. Rile’s location on the Chatsworth Grade Road, and the path of the Grade Road at that time (the red line).



The location is just south of today's Rocky Peak Church Baseball Field, south of the Santa Susana Pass Road. The wagon is on property that is today's Santa Susana Pass State Historic Park.

The Huntington Library's digital collection of Los Angeles County Assessor's Road Maps provides a similar perspective of the site <https://hdl.huntington.org/digital/collection/p15150coll4/id/7502/rec/2>. Below is a closeup of a portion of the 1893 Survey "Map of the New Santa Susanna Pass Road through William's Canón", commonly called the Chatsworth Grade Road. The red circle identifies the location of the wagon in the 1912 Postcard 64.



The dashed lines identify section boundaries, with homesteader Richard Williams owning the upper right 160 acres. Notice the William's House and Barn identified on the 1893 map. In 2008, we took a tour of the William's house area with Tate McReynolds. There were no William's buildings remaining at that time. Tate told Ann Vincent during the tour that his family lived there in 1947, before it was sold to George Spahn in 1953. That story can be found here [PastPresent Spahn Ranch CHS article.pdf](#). The William's House was located on what is today Church of Rocky Peak property.

The Chatsworth LA88 Nike Missile Base – November 2019 Presentation

Did you know that at the top of Browns Canyon at the end of DeSoto in 1958 there was an Army base with Nike Hercules missiles armed with nuclear warheads?

Our November Presentation discussed the history of the Nike Missile Base, and featured a 1961 Lassie episode that was filmed at the base, where Lassie trains a German Shepard to be a good guard dog.

The presentation was first given in 2011, and included some related videos for history buffs, *The Nike Hercules Story*, and *Duck and Cover*, available on YouTube, search for the title and chatsworthhistory1.



The November presentation is at chatsworthhistory.com, Digital Archives, Presentations, Nike Missile Base History. It includes the newly discovered *Lassie Ep241 The Patriot s7e22*, also available at YouTube as described above.

One of the items discussed was a 1959 Nike Hercules Missile Film made in Chatsworth, *Big Picture, Episode 439, Nike-Hercules – A Reality*. It was filmed at the Chatsworth Nike Missile Base, and also featured scenes with prominent Chatsworth citizens, including Roy Rogers and his two daughters Debbie and Dodie, and Chatsworth Park Elementary School Principal Mrs. LaVerne Lee (with pupils Ray Vincent and Nancy Ferrell), shown below. Other citizens in the film were Al Brain, Ben Boydsten and Rev. Charles Hughes (not pictured here). The video was not available at our November presentation. We had a volunteer that has since obtained the property rights to display it, and it will be shown in a future presentation this year, to be announced, at the Chatsworth Library.



A Brief History

The Nike Missile Base LA88 located in Chatsworth on Oat Mountain was part of the “Ring of Steel” that protected Los Angeles from 1958 to 1974, during the Cold War.

During this time of political, military and economic conflict, various strategies were undertaken by the United States to defend against a nuclear attack by the Soviet Union and its allies. Nike Missile bases provided that defense. They were initially equipped with anti-aircraft missiles (Nike-Ajax in 1953), followed by the Nike-Hercules in 1958, which was armed with nuclear warheads and could intercept ballistic missiles. By 1958, the Army had established over 200 Nike missile bases within the United States (including Alaska and Hawaii).

Los Angeles was defended by a ring of 16 Nike sites, referred to as a “Ring of Steel”. To protect its aerospace industries, Los Angeles received extensive air defenses. Oat Mountain towers over the San Fernando Valley and provides visibility in all four directions and far out into the Pacific Ocean.

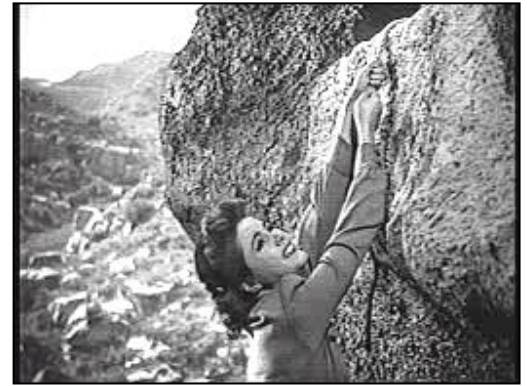
LA-88 was the last of the scheduled 16 Los Angeles Nike sites to be completed due to the rugged terrain and only one usable road through Browns Canyon. Construction difficulties leveling a mountain peak and also digging deep into the ground for the three underground launchers caused delays. The site was completed and operational as of August 26, 1956.

1942 Nyoka Movie Serials and Nyoka Cliff

At our traditional Movie night in January, we enjoyed discussing and watching two chapters of the 1942 cliffhanger movie serial *Perils of Nyoka*, filmed at the Iverson Movie Ranch. Chapter 7, *Monster's Clutch*, and Chapter 8, *Tuareg Vengeance* feature Nyoka hanging from Nyoka Cliff, a rock feature in the Garden of the Gods named after the 1942 movie serial.

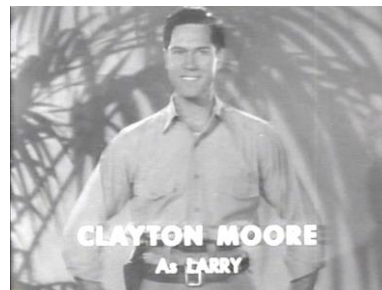


We discussed the location of Nyoka Cliff, which is best viewed from the old camera mount viewpoint at the Garden of Gods on Red Mesa road. It is a short walk from the park entrance up to the viewpoint, and across the road, looking east, is Nyoka Cliff.

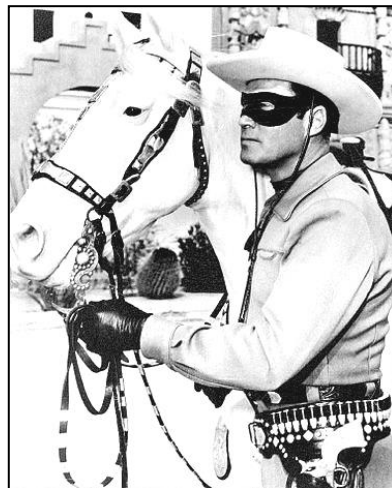


Other movies that feature the Nyoka cliff rock formation include 1923 *Three*

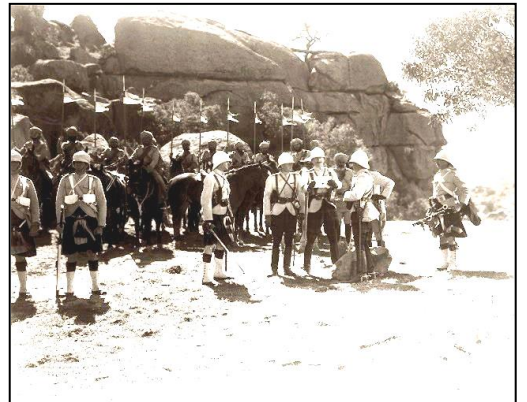
Ages with Buster Keaton, 1937 *Wee Willie Winkie* with Shirley Temple and 1944 *Fighting Seabees* with John Wayne.



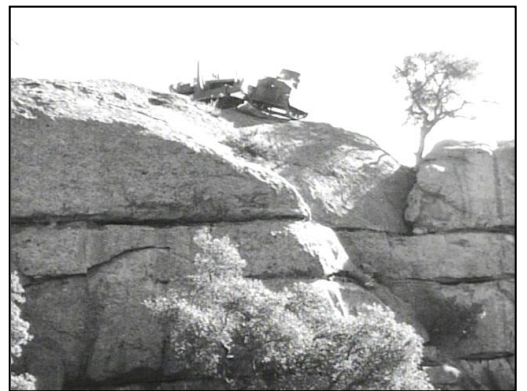
The stars of *Perils of Nyoka* were Kay Aldridge as Nyoka and Clayton Moore as Larry. Seven years later, Clayton Moore would star in the 1949 Lone Ranger Television Series, also filmed at the Iverson Movie Ranch.



You can find our *Perils of Nyoka* presentation at chatsworthhistory.com, Digital Archives, Presentations, [Perils of Nyoka Cliffhangers](#).



All 15 chapters of *Perils of Nyoka* are available on YouTube. Search for "Nyoka and the Tigermen Serial in Color", or click on this link: [Perils of Nyoka in Color all episodes](#). View Chapters 7 & 8 to see Nyoka hanging from Nyoka Cliff.



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



DIGITAL ARCHIVES online at

<http://www.chatsworthhistory.com>

facebook

CHS FACEBOOK PAGE

www.facebook.com/HomesteadAcre

SLIDESHARE.NET

<https://www.slideshare.net/ChatsworthHistory/presentations>

Slideshare has a listing of our CHS presentations that can easily be watched online. We now have a total of 31 PowerPoint presentations posted. Enjoy!

Can we email our newsletter to you?

Please email us to provide your email address. Thanks! chatsworthhistory@gmail.com

Wondering if your Dues are Due?

Your dues are due one year after the last time you paid your dues.

For those receiving email only newsletters, we will advise you by email when your dues are due.

For snail mail, if you have an asterisk at the end of your name on the mailing label, your dues are due.

Please use the form below to renew your Membership. And if your neighbor is not a member yet, pass this newsletter on to them and invite them to join.



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

- Yearly: New Member Renewal
Life Membership: Individual \$15.00 Family \$20.00 Organization \$20.00
 \$ 125.00

NAME _____ Phone: _____

STREET ADDRESS: _____ Email: _____

CITY / STATE / ZIP: _____

Special Interest / Expertise: _____

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

The Chatsworth Historical Society Presents



A GARDEN FESTIVAL

Featuring Roses, Crafts, Plant Sales
and Chatsworth History

Vendors and Garden Clubs
Arts, Crafts, Demonstrations

The Duchess Tea

- \$15 per person
- 11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Served in the Rose Garden

**1911 Homestead
Cottage Tours**
Rose Garden Tours

Museum Exhibits

Featuring Chatsworth Pioneer
Families and Early
Chatsworth Movies

Bake Sale
Hot Dogs and Soda



For information and tea reservations (+10 persons), please email chatsworthhistory@gmail.com

**Note: Parking is
limited at
Chatsworth Park
South**

Park your car at the north
end of the Chatsworth
Train Depot
10038 Old Depot Plaza Road
and use our free shuttle
service, every 15 minutes
from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Sunday, April 26, 2020

11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

\$5 Admission Donation – Children \$1

Kids under 5 Free

THE HOMESTEAD ACRE

At the First Stop Sign in **Chatsworth Park South**

(West End of Devonshire Street)

10385 Shadow Oak Drive, Chatsworth, CA 91311

chatsworthhistory@gmail.com 818-882-5614 www.chatsworthhistory.com

*All Proceeds go to the Chatsworth Historical Society for the preservation of the
Minnie Hill Palmer Homestead Acre and the Virginia Watson Chatsworth Museum*