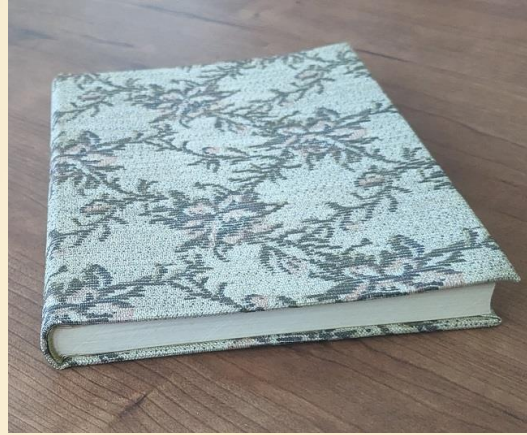


The Gray Family in Chatsworth



Nelson A Gray
1883 University of Illinois



PIGTAILS TO SILVER-GREY

by
Edith Gray McFarland



1962 Pigtales to Silver-Grey
Privately printed in 1962 - 25 copies only

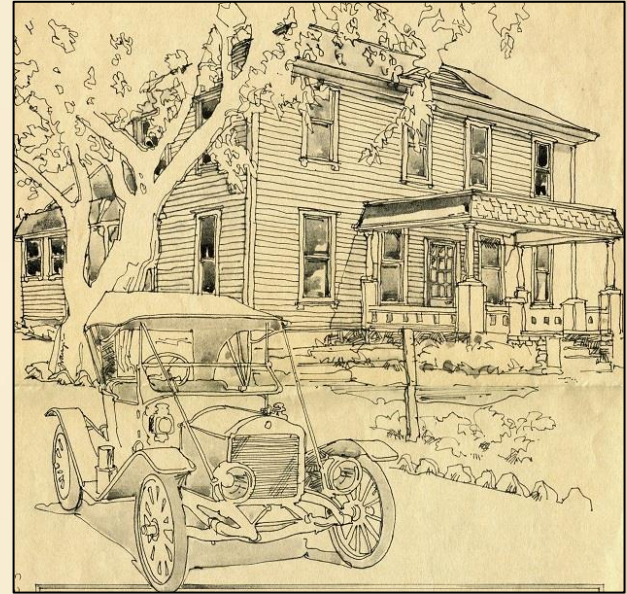


Minerva Collins
In 1885 Nelson Gray (27)
marries Minerva (20)

Introduction

The Gray family moved to Chatsworth in 1893, living on a 80-acre ranch north of Lassen to Devonshire, west of Topanga to Farralone.

- Of their 9 children, the first 4 were born in Illinois, the next 2 in Pasadena, two in Chatsworth, and the last one in Pasadena.
- The Gray's were a prosperous and influential family in the early development of Chatsworth.
- Chatsworth was founded in 1888; in 1890 the first elementary school at Topanga and Devonshire was built, as was the Chatsworth Hotel; in 1893 the first railroad station was at Marilla and Topanga.
- 1895-1901 Nelson's uncle Darius Mead and wife Kate ran the Chatsworth Hotel.
- In 1898 they built a second home at 22165 Lassen.
- In 1903 the Pioneer Church was built on their 80 acres, on land donated by them.
- In 1906 they moved back to Pasadena, then returned to Chatsworth by 1911.
- They sold their property in 1927 to the Spinks estate.



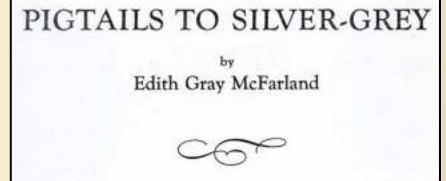
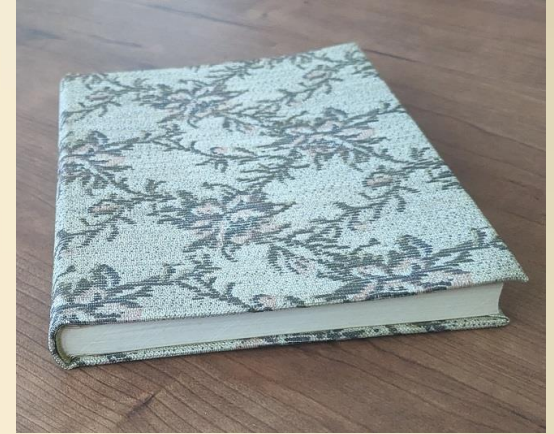
Rancho de Los Robles

Their 1898 home with its 14 rooms cost \$1,200; the 24'x24' central "court" living room had an 18' ceiling.

Introduction

- This presentation will cover the family from their start in Rantoul, Illinois, to their contributions in Chatsworth.
- We are fortunate that their fourth child, Edith Gray, shared her experiences in Chatsworth in the book, *Pigtails to Silver-Grey*.
- The family has shared many pictures with us, and much has been written and remembered in our Chatsworth Historical Society archives.

This presentation will be posted at our website, chatsworthhistory.com, Digital Archives, Presentations.



1962 Pigtails to Silver-Grey
Privately printed in 1962 -
25 copies only

Introduction of the family members in 1909

- With birth year included.....
- Back Row: Edith-1889, George-1887, Ida-1889, Clarence-1891
- Front Row: Stanley-1901, Sadie-1885, Gladys-1903, Nelson-1857, Minerva-1864 (Helen-1908 on her lap), Myrtle-1891

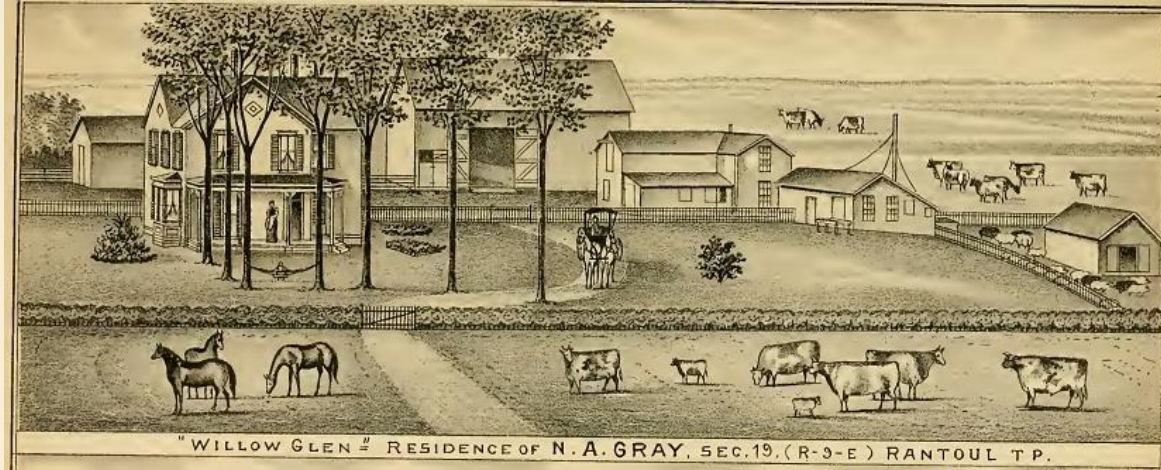
Ida and Edith were twins born in 1889, followed in 1891 by twins Myrtle and Clarence.

In 1891 they had a household of six children all under six years of age



Rantoul, Champaign County, Illinois

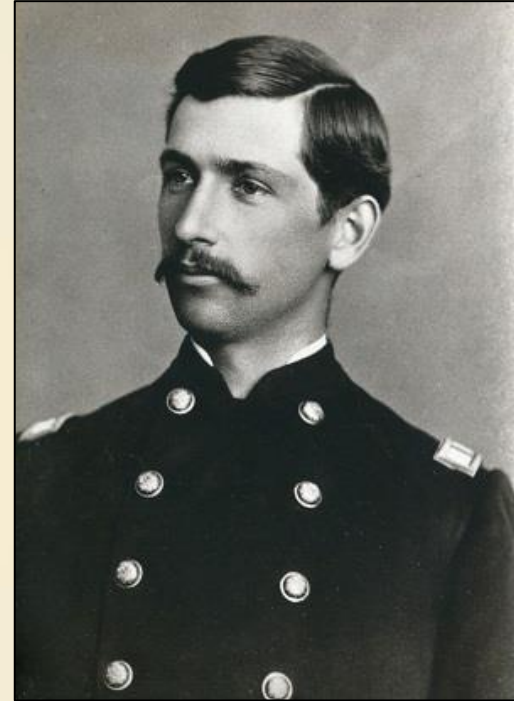
- A biography of Nelson Allison Gray was published in 1887 (when he was 30), which included the sketch at right of "Willow Glen", his parents 485 acre ranch in Rantoul, Illinois.
- Nelson was born in Wayne, Pennsylvania in 1857; his father William A. Gray was also born in Wayne in 1821. His grandfather Mathew A. Gray (1796-1877) secured a tract of timber in Wayne Township, cut down trees and established a home, married Esther Smith and had eleven children.
- Nelson's father William married Sarah Mead in 1845, continued clearing land and farming 260 acres. In 1859 (when Nelson was 2) he sold out and bought a half-interest in a flouring and woolen mill in Kentucky. Two years later he traded the property for 80 acres in Kansas and 320 acres of wild prairie in Rantoul, Illinois. By the 1870 census William, Sarah, and Nelson (age 13) were living on a \$14,000 estate with a servant.



Willow Glen above is from the 1887 Portrait and Biographical album Champaign County Ill., pg. 727 - Available in the appendix

Rantoul, Champaign County, Illinois

- Nelson's father died in August 1880, so it was just his mother and him (aged 21) on the farm.
- In June 1883, Nelson graduated from Illinois Industrial University (in 1885 it was renamed the University of Illinois). Nelson is a Captain of the University Battalion in the yearbook (photo at right)
- In the April 1880 census, just up the road was the Collins family, with parents Charles and Mary, and children "Minnie" Minerva (age 15), Anna, Eugene and Bessie.
- Nelson and Minerva "Minnie" are married on Feb 11, 1885. Minerva moves onto the Gray farm with Nelson's mother Sarah. Nelson and Minerva are members in good standing of the Methodist Episcopal Church at Gray's School-house. (per his 1887 biography)
- They have four children in Rantoul -- Sadie, George, and twins Ida and Edith.



1890 off to Pasadena, California

- Edith discusses in her book the harsh winters and hot summers in Illinois, and Nelson developed a lung condition which made it necessary to seek a milder climate.
- In March 1889, Nelson buys 8 acres in Pasadena for \$1,002.50

1889-03-22 LA Times

J H Painter to N A Gray : 8.02 acres on west side Los Robles avenue, 2970 feet north of southeast corner block L, Painter & Ball's addition, Pasadena, \$1002.50.

- March 1890 - Edith tells the story in *Pigtails to Silver-Grey* of the 5 day trip to California on the train, when Ida and Edith were only 8 months old. Minnie's sister Anna traveled with them, helping to care for the babies and children.
- When they arrived, they lived in a little house on Morton Street while they built a new house at the corner of Woodbury and North Los Robles (the oaks), in the middle of a large vineyard.
- Fourteen months after their trip to Pasadena another pair of twins arrived, Myrtle Minerva and Clarence Nelson, to make a household of six children all under six years of age. Minnie's sister Anna ended up staying with them and helping out for two years.

1891 Gray meets Barber - Pasadena, California

- Seven months after moving to Pasadena, and active in Real Estate, Nelson Gray buys 24.5 acres in Pasadena for \$5,000 on San Pasqual St. in November 1890.

DAILY REAL ESTATE RECORD.
WEDNESDAY, Nov. 26, 1890.
TRANSFERS.
Thomas R Hayes to Nelson A Gray--24.52
acres in Ro San Pasqual; \$5000,

1890-11-28 LA Herald

- Five months later in 1891, Nelson Gray sells the same property (less 4 acres) to W.B. Barber for \$5,000.

Nelson A Gray to W B Barber--20.52
acres in Rancho San Pasqual, \$5000.

1891-04-04 LATimes

- William B. Barber was president of the San Fernando Valley Improvement Company. No doubt W.B. Barber told rancher Nelson Gray about property in his new development in Chatsworth.

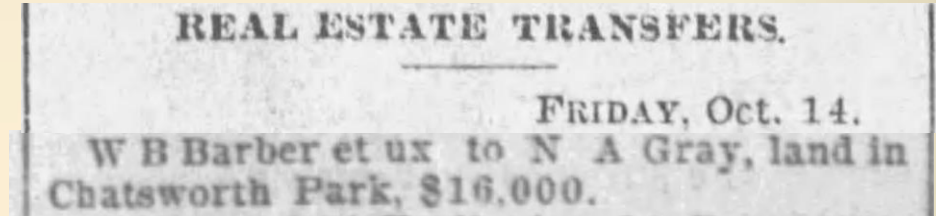
W. B Barber letterhead from an 1895 court case regarding the 3rd failure of the Chatsworth Park Dam (Huntington Library)

W. B. BARBER
SOLE AGENT FOR
Chatsworth Park
LANDS

1893 move to Chatsworth, California

- In October 1892, Nelson Gray buys land in Chatsworth Park for \$16,000. A 1956 Chatsworth Grapevine article says that he purchased approximately 200 acres.

1892-10-15 LA Times



- Edith remembers the 1893 carriage ride to Chatsworth when she was 4 years old, and almost losing their dog "Fleas" when they were fording the Tujunga river.
- Edith mentions that their belongings, a team of horses and a cow were shipped by freight on a sideline railroad into the valley (that would be the 1893 Chatsworth Depot)

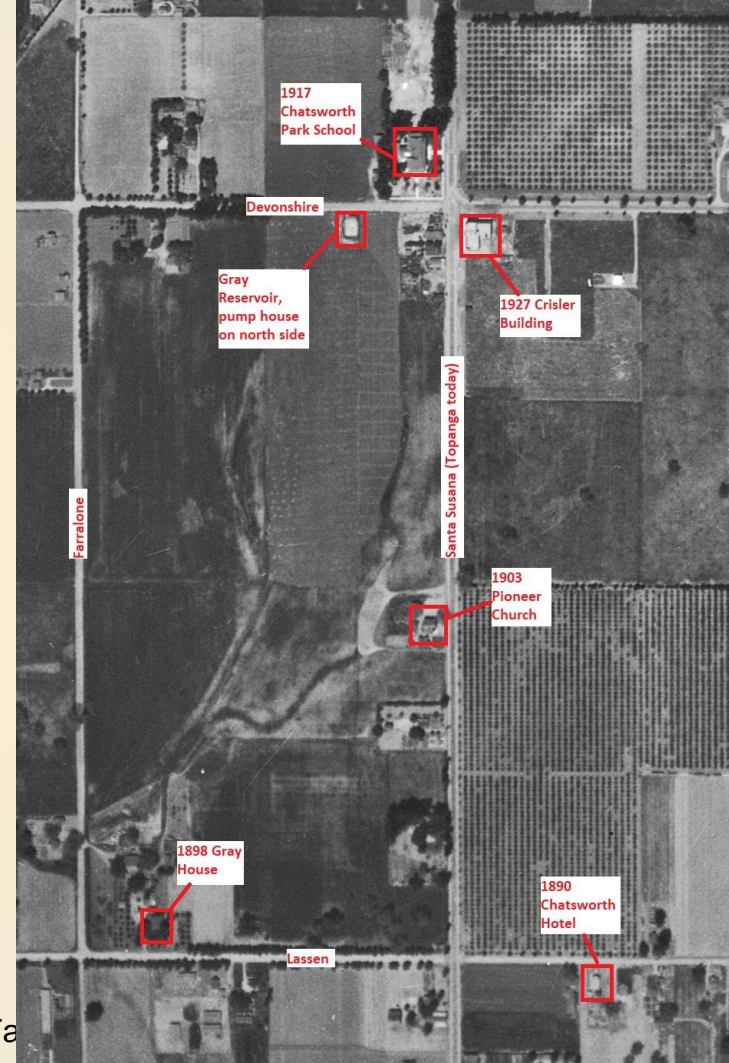
1893-09-15 LA Times

The Southern Pacific's new line through San Fernando Valley to Chatsworth Park will be opened for passenger and freight business on October 1.

- She describes the little old rambling house on the southwest corner of Papa's newly purchased 80-acre tract, sheltered under a large spreading oak.

1893 80-acre ranch north of Lassen to Devonshire, west of Topanga to Farralome.

- The 1928 aerial photograph at right shows the 80-acre ranch.
- There was an artesian well at the top of the parcel. Nelson built a reservoir next to it, and irrigation channels would irrigate the fields south, which were all downhill.
- The Gray House was at the lower left corner of the parcel.
- "Papa had large apricot and peach orchards, we all helped cut and dry the fruit for market. Our season for cutting apricots extended over a period of about four or five weeks. A few weeks later the peaches came in and would run for another three weeks. On the last day there was little cutting -- just finishing up in the morning. After lunch we all piled into the lumber wagon and were off for a swim in Papa's reservoir." *Pg 29, 1962 Pigtails to Silver-Grey*



About 1899 - The Lumber Wagon

"As for our vacations, which came after the fruit season, we went to the beaches. We traveled by way of the old lumber wagon, as we had so much to take along for a month's outing. Our hired man would take the wagon back home and return whenever we were ready to leave." *Pg16, 1962 Pigtales to Silver-Grey*

Posing for a picture in the lumber wagon

Gray Family off to Lime Kiln Canyon at
Chatsworth



Swimming in the Gray Reservoir Devonshire west of Topanga



10/17/2023

Chatsworth Historical Society - The Gray Family in Chatworth

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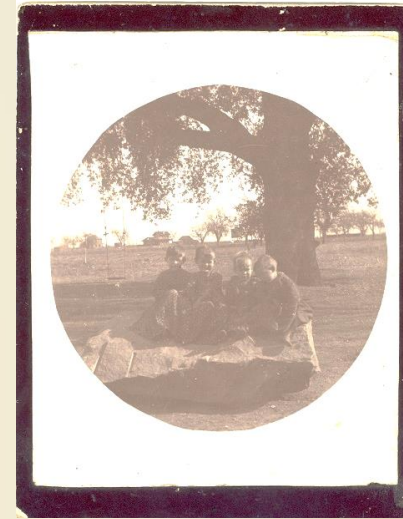
1894 Chatsworth Neighbors camped at Redondo Beach



1894 The Gray Twins in Chatsworth

The four children are twin girls on the left, Ida and Edith, along with girl-boy twins Myrtle and Clarence on the right.

Photo courtesy of Polly Pastre



The swing on the left indicates that this was a play area for the kids near their home on Lassen.

The sandstone boulder has drill marks in the front left, where it was split from a much larger stone. Stone from the Bannon Quarry was used to build their milk house, which kept it cool in summer months.

Background buildings: On the left is the 1890 Chatsworth Hotel (left side of swing ropes); the 1893 Train Depot on the right side of the swing; the 1893 water tower just left of the tree trunk. To the right of the tree trunk there is a train on the tracks.

1895 Gray Children at the Milk House

"The milk house was built of rocks which had been hauled down from Mr. Bannon's old stone quarry in the hills to the west by horse and wagon, making the walls about twelve inches thick.

I remember seeing shelves and tables within those four walls filled with rich milk from our cows, canned fruits, tomatoes, olives, mincemeat, pickles, crocks full of fried sausage and sealed in with rendered lard, and the old churn full of sour cream ready to be churned.

One year we helped put up close to 500 quarts of fruits and other foods -- all in two-quart jars! (The fruits were all peeled too!)"

Pg6, 1962 Pigtales to Silver-Grey



Clarence, Myrtle, Sadie, George, Ida, Edith

Carriage Shed - Milk House - Clarence in buggy with Paloma About 1912



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Chatsworth Historical Society - The Gray Family in Chatworth

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1895 Darius Mead and wife Kate run the Chatsworth Hotel

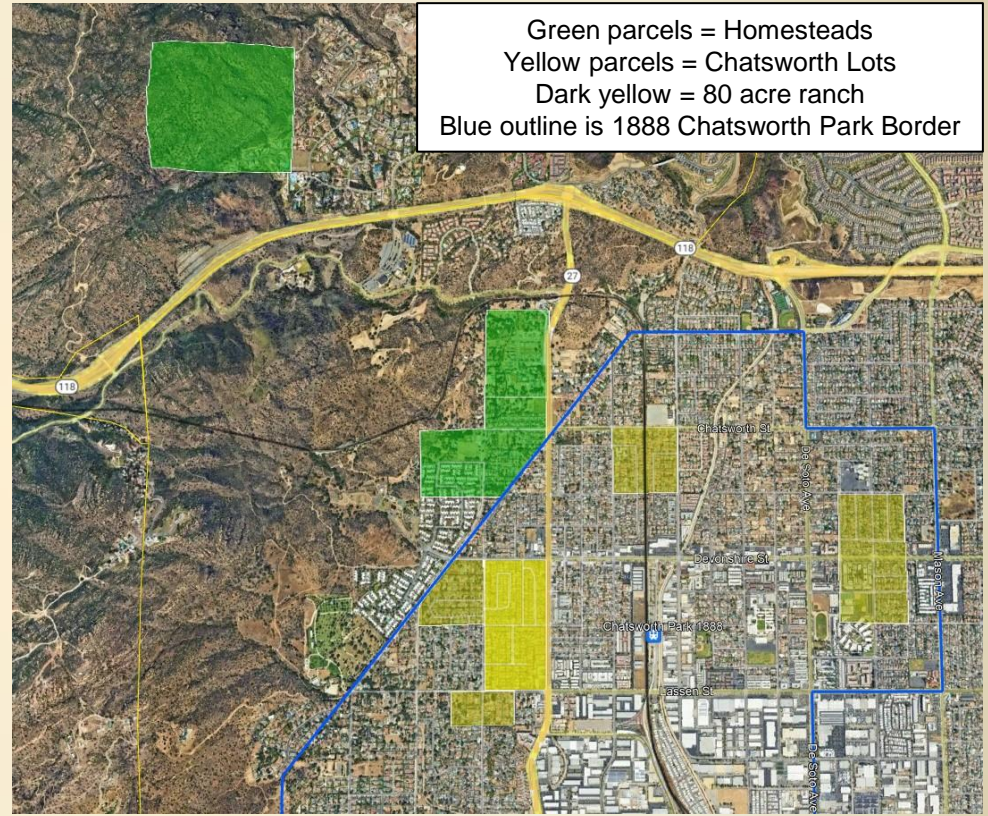
- Darius Mead owned the Hotel with his wife Kate in 1895. Darius was the younger brother of Nelson Gray's mother, Sarah Mead Gray.
- Darius and his brother John were lumbermen in Pennsylvania in the 1870 census, with real estate valued at \$50,000.
- Per his obituary, he once possessed a fortune but reverses came, and he removed to Chatsworth to run the hotel.
- Darius died in December 1901.
- Three months after his death, his wife Kate leased the hotel to Peter Lopez, who established a "social club" furnishing hard drinks.
- This was at the height of Chatsworth being a "railroad" boomtown, with men employed in building three tunnels for Southern Pacific and supplying rip-rap at the Quarry for the San Pedro Breakwater.
- A story on the Chatsworth Hotel from 1901 to 1904 is in the [Feb 2016 Smoke Signal](#)

CHATSWORTH PARK.
HOTEL PROPRIETOR DEAD.
CHATSWORTH PARK, Dec. 17.—
[From 'The Times' Resident Correspondent.] Darius Mead, proprietor of the Chatsworth Hotel, died yesterday morning of typhoid pneumonia, after an illness of two weeks. Services were held here today at 2 p.m., and the remains were shipped East for interment in Warren county, Pa., whence deceased came. Mr. Mead was 78 years old. He leaves a widow. Mr. Mead was formerly engaged in the oil business in Pennsylvania, and at one time is said to have possessed a fortune of \$250,000. reverses came, and six years ago Mead removed here and opened the hotel.

1901-12-18 Darius Mead Obituary
LATimes

1896 Nelson had purchased 750 acres of land

- (Around 1896) "By now Papa had purchased 750 acres of land" *Pg9, 1962 Pigtails to Silver-Grey*
- We used 1903 property tax maps to compile a list of Chatsworth Parcels and Homesteads that equaled 557 acres. Nelson no doubt had purchased other lots or homesteads that had been sold by 1903 to equal his 750 acres in 1896...
- Nelson purchased two homesteads that had water on them (in addition to his 80 acre ranch that had an artesian well)
 - The upper left green 160 acres is the Fred Graves homestead that includes Hialeah Springs.
 - The middle green 145 "L" shaped parcel was the Dejeremias homestead that includes the Santa Susana Creek.
- Around 1906 Gray piped water from Hialeah Springs to his reservoir. The pressure from the pipe drove a belting wheel that pumped water out of his aquifer into his reservoir.
- It is 2.5 miles from Hialeah Springs to the aquifer, and a 700 foot gain.
- The Hialeah Springs story is in the [Nov 2017 Smoke Signal](#)



Green parcels = Homesteads
Yellow parcels = Chatsworth Lots
Dark yellow = 80 acre ranch
Blue outline is 1888 Chatsworth Park Border

Parcels identified to NA Gray in 1903, overlaid on Google Earth

1898 Gray Estate Home "Rancho de Los Robles"

- Their new home was built a little to the north of the first house, within a few feet of the milk house.
- A cellar and pit were dug for the new acetylene light system.
- The two story home with its 14 rooms cost \$1,200; the 24'x24' central "court" living room had an 18' ceiling.
- The house was at 22165 Lassen, facing south, view looking north.



1898 Gray Estate Home "Rancho de Los Robles"



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1898 Gray Estate Home "Rancho de Los Robles"



Looking east, milk house is north of house.

1898 Gray Estate Home "Rancho de Los Robles"

Dress-up Party
On the side
porch



Dress up party

An Early Christmas Dinner 1911?



Photo above showing the tree in the corner reaching the 18' ceiling (sometimes two trees tied together)

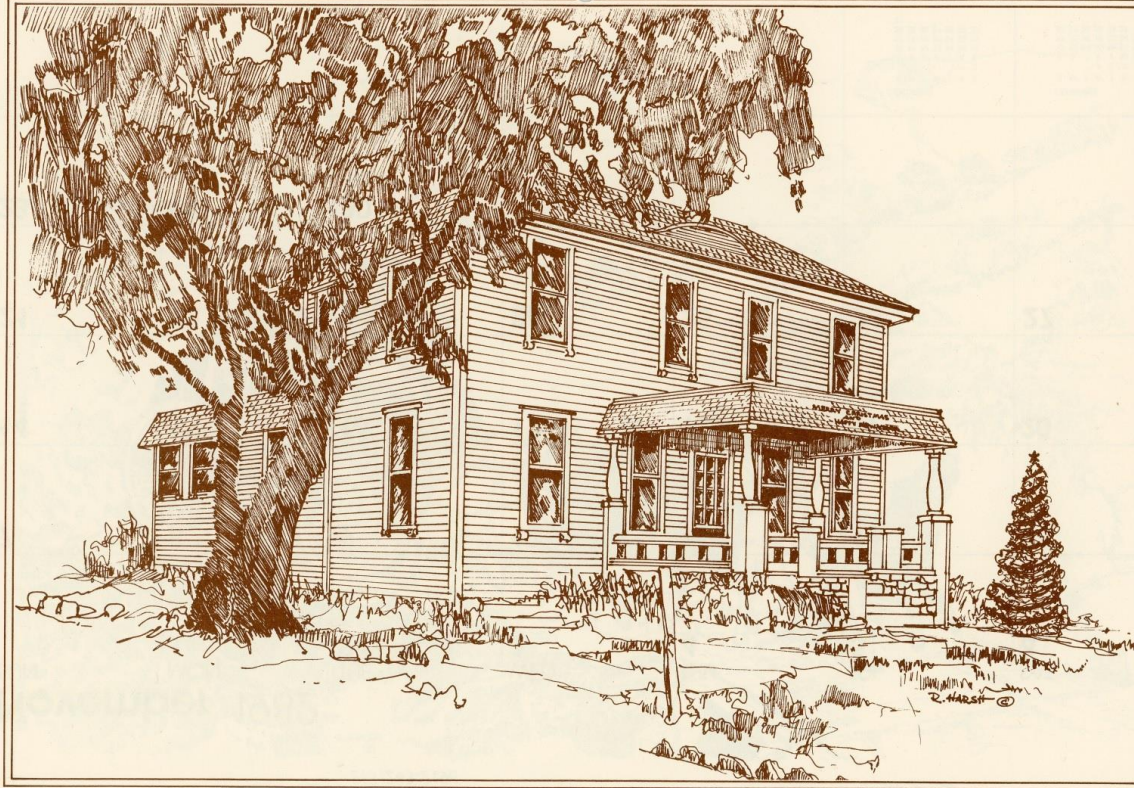
Photo at right taken at the opposite corner of the room.

All the rooms have 10' ceilings; the doors (26 in all) 7' tall with an additional 2' transom over each, wooden doorknobs on the inside doors and brass knobs on the outside.



1898 Gray Estate Home "Rancho de Los Robles"

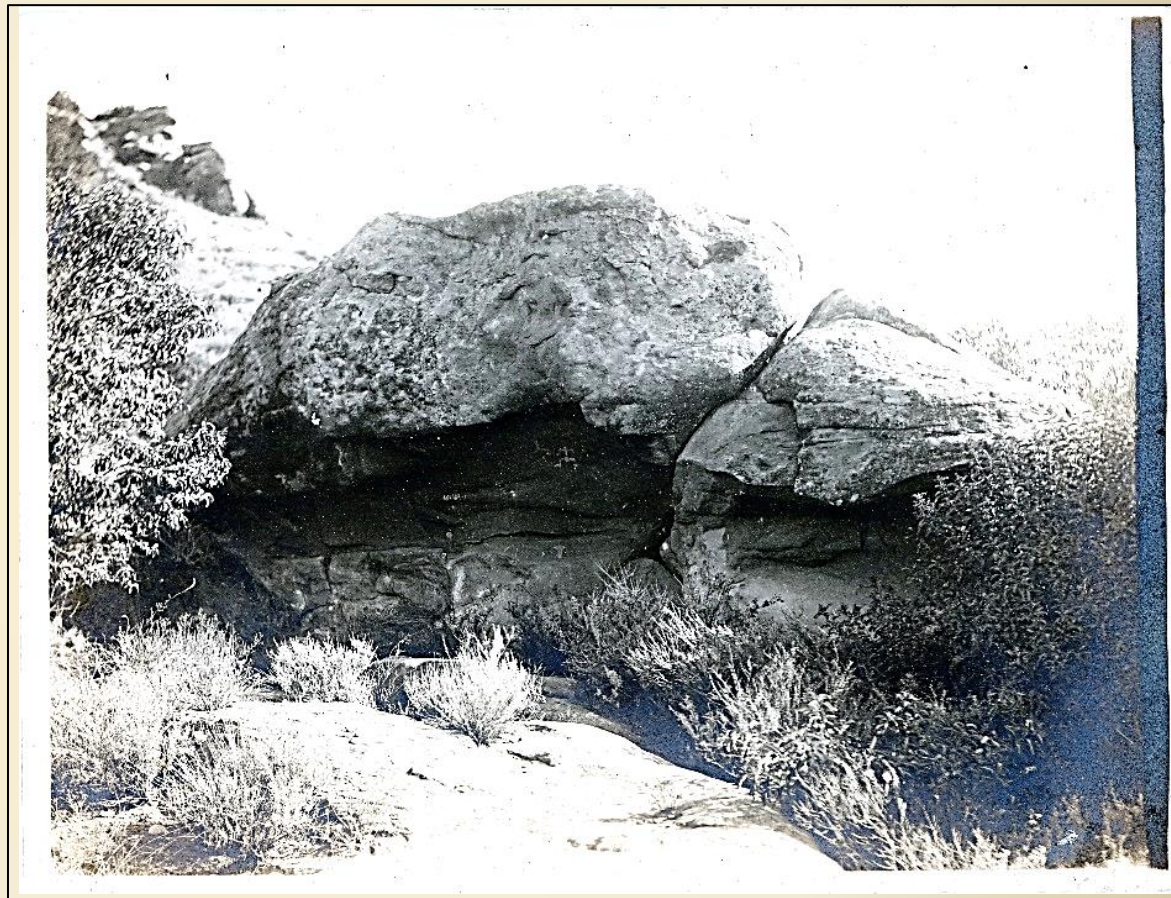
Line Art from the
CHS 1982
Calendar



Nelson A. Gray residence, 22165 Lassen Street, Chatsworth, built in 1898. This home with it's 14 rooms cost \$1,200.00 and was built on 200 acres. The 24' x 24' central "court" living room had an 18' ceiling. This was the first home in the valley to have gas lights.

1893-1903 Rock Art at Momonga (Stoney Point)

- The photo at right from the Gray family album was titled "*Rock with character inscriptions Chatsworth Park on old Indian Village*"
- The photo is exciting to find because it represents the oldest photographic record of this site taken over 120 years ago by the Gray family as they explored Chatsworth.
- Momonga is the Native American name for the village and ceremonial site near Stoney Point.
- Momonga Rock Art has been well documented by archaeologists, and was recently included in the justification for Chatsworth's most recent 2019 Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument, "[The Apeta Momonga Mission Trail](#)"



1893-1903 Rock Art at Momonga (Stoney Point)

- We have outlined two pictograph areas on the photo at right; the rectangular one is well documented, and the circled one a “new” find as seen only on the 1893-1903 photo on the previous slide.
- The 2012 photo below is the small section of the main panel that has been enhanced with D-stretch by an archeologist to bring out the colors embedded in the rock. The paintings are located in a very shallow sandstone rock shelter that is not well-protected from the elements, and most of the panel has eroded away and is difficult to see.
- When it was new and fresh, the main panel may have been as impressive as the main panel at Burro Flats Painted Cave, which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. [Three Chumash-Style Pictograph sites in Fernandeano Territory](#)



- If you zoom in and look at the upper right of the 1893-1903 Gray family photo of the main panel area (circled in yellow), you can see a stick figure of a deer and a man (our interpretation).
- We recently visited the site (on private property) and confirmed that the rock formation is the same as in the photo. We saw only faint traces of white today where the deer and man were, perhaps remnants of that image.

1900 Chatsworth Oil Company

- The certificate at right was offered on Ebay in 2016 for \$27.
- An accompanying article written in 1900 stated that the shares were being offered at 25 cents each.
- And that no oil had been drilled for at that time.

Sept. 15, 1900
Stock certificate for 100 shares,
signed by NA Gray, President



1901 and 1903 - Two children born in Chatsworth



Gladys Loretta Gray
was born Nov 2, 1903

Stanley Collins Gray
was born Dec 11, 1901
With his mother
Minerva on the front
porch at the ranch

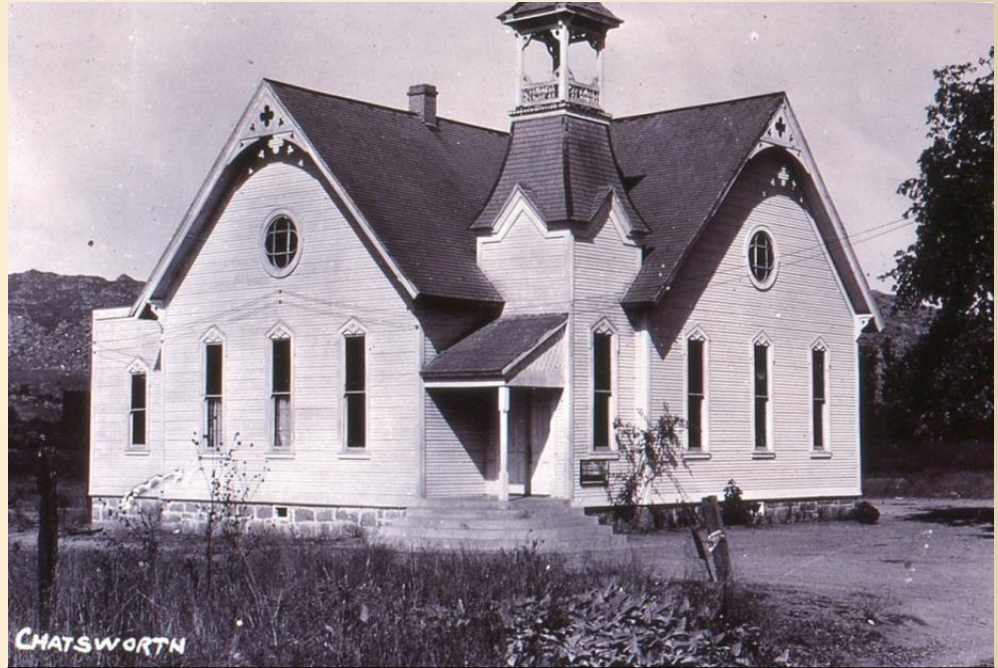


Now there are 8 children

1903 Pioneer Church

"By now more families were coming into our little valley and there was a growing need for a church. The school house no longer seemed adequate. Papa being President of the Official Board called a meeting at which time the question of where they would build came up. That was just what he wanted.

He smiled and said quietly, Well folks, I have a fine piece of property I would like to give you for a building site. There are 2 1/2 acres on the east side of my 80-acre section along the highway. The Board accepted with much appreciation and began to lay plans for building. The deed was given to the church for the property as well as the privilege of water rights from Papa's artesian well." Pg38, 1962 *Pigtails to Silver-Grey*



An early photo of the Pioneer Church, looking west.
The church was midway between Devonshire and Lassen on
Topanga Canyon Blvd.

1903 Pioneer Church

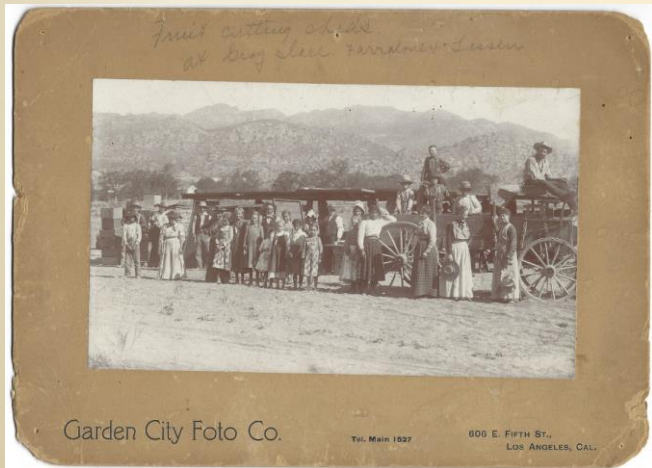
- The Church was built in 1903 with volunteer labor.
- In 1927 The Gray family sold their ranch to the Spinks family.
- The Spinks family purchased the church in 1962, with plans to remove the church and develop the surrounding property.
- The Chatsworth Historical Society was formed to save the church, which was declared Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Monument #14 in 1963.
- In 1965, the Church was moved to Oakwood Memorial Cemetery.
- Church services continue every Sunday at 10 am.
- Visit the full presentation [The Chatsworth Pioneer Church](#)



Moving the Church to Oakwood in 1965

1904 (about) Fruit Cutting Sheds at the Gray ranch

- A few months ago we “rediscovered” an original photo from the archives, from the Johnson Family. Written in pencil on the front, “Fruit cutting sheds at the Gray place Farralone and Lassen”.
- A note with the picture says: This was a crowd in Chatsworth in its early agricultural days. Woman second from left hand side, wearing hat is Emma Johnson Graves. Scene is a fruit cutting shed near “Tex’s” place. On Gray farm near Lassen St. & Farralone
- The full story of the photo is in our [Nov 2023 Smoke Signal](#)
- And there is a [600dpi](#) image available on our website where you can zoom in and get great detail of the scene.



- We identified Emma Johnson and Nelson Gray's mother Sarah Mead Gray.
- There are no doubt other Gray family members that we have not yet identified, please help us out...



1904 or 05 The older girls go to school in Pasadena

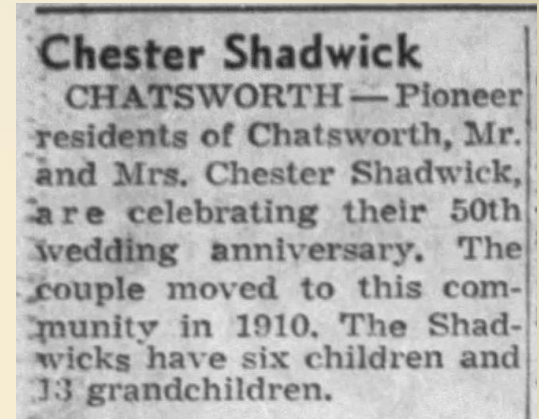
- Sadie, Ida and Edith attend Pasadena High, living with Grandpa Collins at 1272 Summit Ave. (Charles Collins was their mother's father)
- 1906 - One year later, Nelson buys a large house at 1320 Summit Ave, 4 houses north of Grandpa Collins. The family keeps the Chatsworth ranch, but moves to Pasadena.
- 1908 - Their ninth and last child, Helen Gray, is born in Pasadena.
- 1908 - Sadie marries Chester Shadwick. Their daughter Alice is born in Pasadena.
- 1909 - Nelson's mother Sarah Mead dies, and before that Sarah had signed all the papers and the big farm back in Illinois over to Nelson.
- 1910 - the Pasadena census lists Nelson Gray as a miner, owning a mine.
- 1911 - In February Nelson announces he will run for Councilman in Pasadena
- 1911 - "Within a few months a good-sized fortune was lost in a gold mine swindle--the sharks had taken him for a ride to the tune of \$100,000 spot cash" (per Edith in Pigtails to Silver-Grey)



1320 Summit Ave, Pasadena

1911 Broke and back to Chatsworth

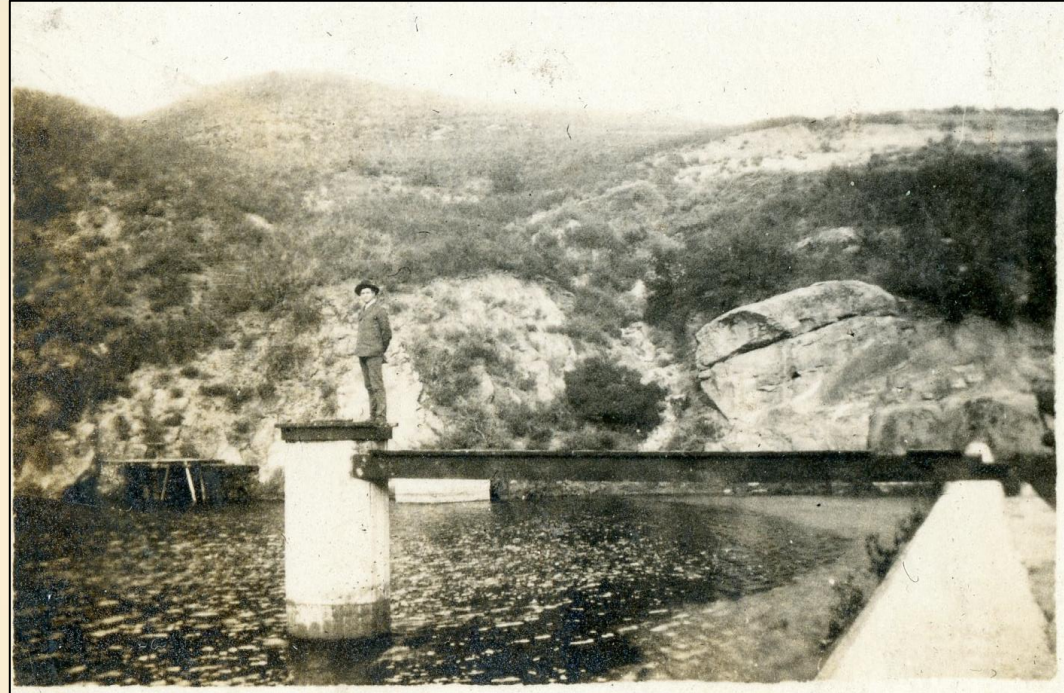
- Sadie and Chester Shadwick move back to the Chatsworth House first in 1910.
- Edith mentions that the first thing she and her mother did was to clean the upstairs rooms, as they hadn't been cleaned since the family left in '06. The men brought up the bedsprings and mattresses, the furniture and heavy goods had been shipped ahead on the train.
- And within a few days they were all busy harvesting summer crops.
- "That fall after we returned home, Sadie and Chester moved to a little house up across from the creek at the foot of the hills to the west (where we heard the doves cooing years before) among large shady trees."
- The Shadwicks had moved to a 7-acre parcel where the Rockpointe clubhouse is today. They had 7 children and lived there for more than 20 years. [Smoke Signal 2021-05](#)



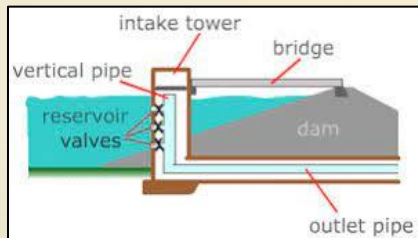
1958-11-09 Shadwick Anniversary
moved to Chatsworth in 1910
LATimes

The earliest photos of the DeSoto Dam

- In **1887**, Benjamin F. Porter contracts to sell 19,417 acres to F.C. Howes, William Booth Barber, W.F. Barber and George R. Crow for \$500,000.
- Chatsworth Park was founded on March 10, **1888**.
- The new purchasers conveyed their interest to the San Fernando Valley Improvement Company.
- In **1889**, The San Fernando Valley Improvement Co. builds a water-storage earthen dam in the Mormon Cañon, today's Browns Canyon. This dam failed 3 times (the first two were earthen dams), was rebuilt in **1896**, and can still be seen today at the very north end of DeSoto. (it silted up in the 1940's)



The 1896 DeSoto Dam - man standing on intake tower.
Photo about 1911 Chester Shadwick? from the Shadwick photos



The earliest photos of the DeSoto Dam

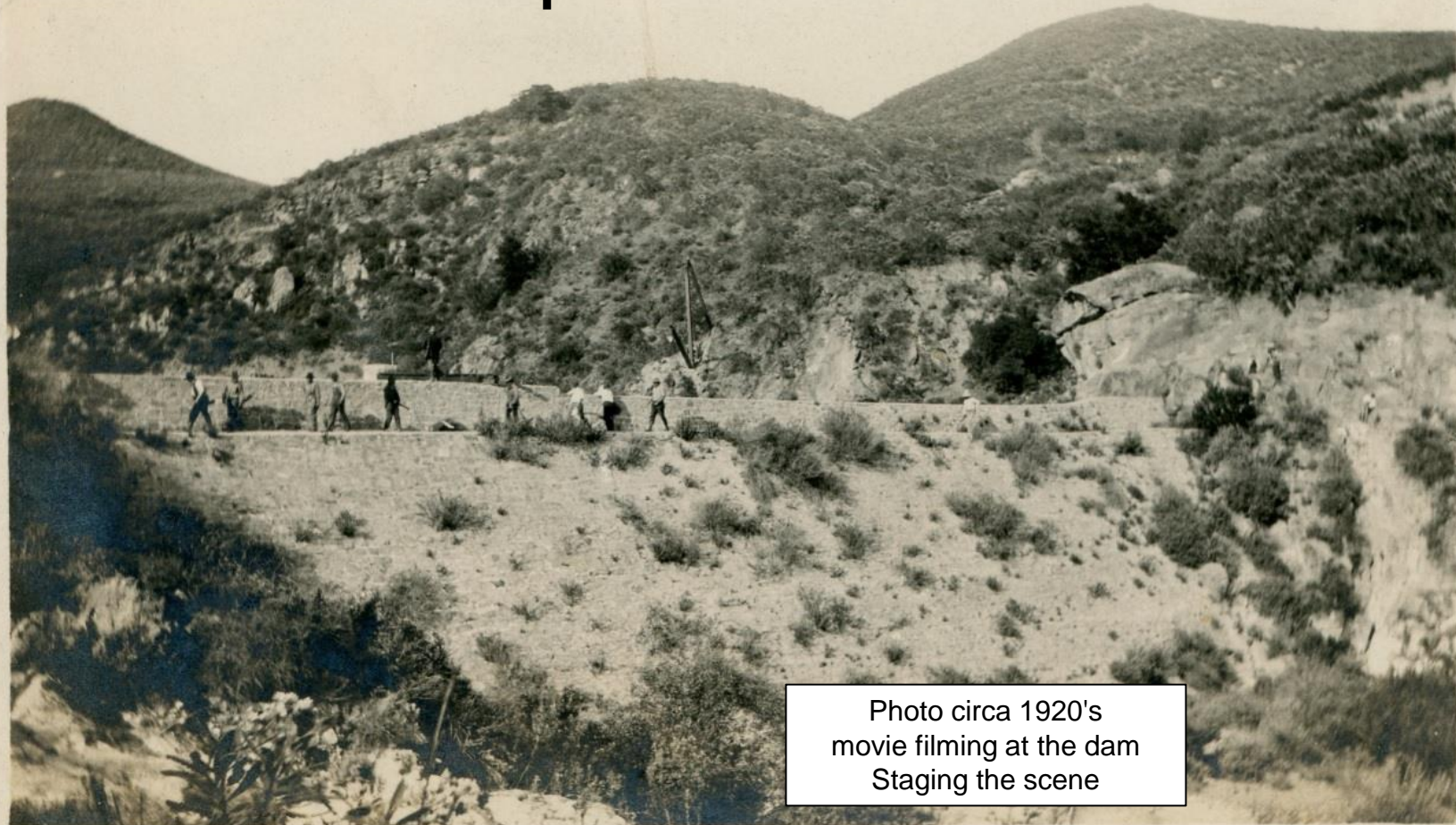


Photo circa 1920's
movie filming at the dam
Staging the scene

The earliest photos of the DeSoto Dam

• In

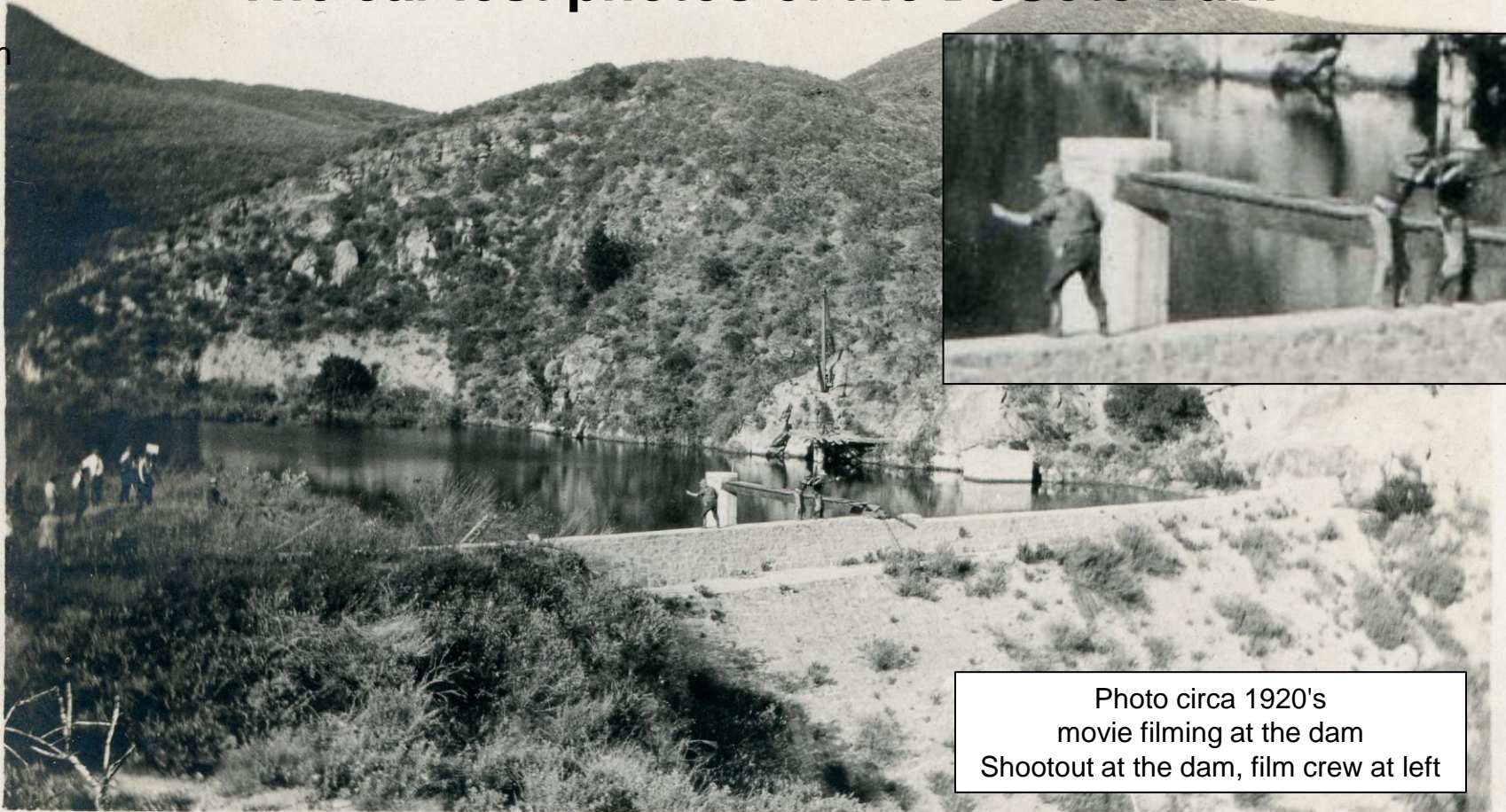


Photo circa 1920's
movie filming at the dam
Shootout at the dam, film crew at left

1914 The Chatsworth Chamber of Commerce

- 1915 Nelson A. Gray is one of the founders, and the 2nd president of the Chatsworth Chamber of Commerce
- Nelson is president eight times in the first 14 terms.

Past Presidents:

New Organization and Bylaws Apr 20, 1914

1914 – Norman C. Johnson

1915 – **Nelson A. Gray**

1916 – **Nelson A. Gray**

1917 – **Nelson A. Gray**

1918 – **Nelson A. Gray**

1919 – James J. Daly

1920 – James J. Daly

1921 – Alan R. Tillinghast

New Organization and Bylaws Feb 27, 1923

1923 – James J. Daly (elected, resigns early)

1923 – **Nelson A. Gray**

1924 – **Nelson A. Gray**

1925 – **Nelson A. Gray**

1926 – H. J. Breeze

1927 – **Nelson A. Gray**

1928 – Dr. Armstrong C. Pratt

1929 – Dr. Armstrong C. Pratt

1930 – James P. Butler

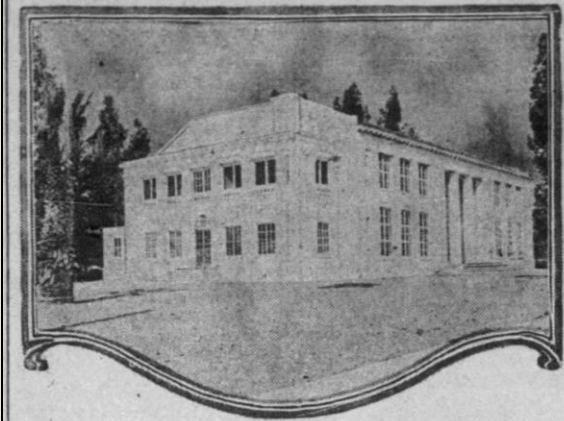
1931 – James P. Butler

1932 – James P. Butler

1917 New Chatsworth Schoolhouse

- Nelson Gray had an active part in the planning and building of the new schoolhouse, as he was a trustee for nine years.
- N.A. Gray, president of the Chatsworth Chamber of Commerce, acts as chairman of the evening during the opening dedication and exercises.
- For more information visit our presentation at [Chatsworth Park Elementary School](#)

1917-05-08 New Chatsworth
Grammar school LATimes



Chatsworth's new school.

One of the most attractive in the Los Angeles city system, just completed at a cost of \$35,000.

Palace of the People.

MAGNIFICENT SCHOOL IS OPENED AT CHATSWORTH.

CHATSWORTH, May 7.—The new Chatsworth grammar school was formally dedicated last Friday with appropriate exercises, the programme being presented under the auspices of the Chatsworth Chamber of Commerce and the West End Parent-Teacher Association. N. A. Gray, president of the former organization, acted as chairman of the evening, calling first upon Dr. Albert Shiels, superintendent of Los Angeles city schools, for an address.

After complimenting the people of the San Fernando Valley on the enterprise in providing such magnificent school facilities, Dr. Shiels expressed the hope that the same generous spirit would be manifested toward other sections of the city when the proposed bond issue for school purposes was voted on.

Former Judge Waldo M. York, member of the Board of Education, spoke earnestly of the high mission of the public schools, referring to the splendid educational institutions of America as "the palaces of the people and the nurseries of democracy."

C. J. McCormick expressed the pleasure it gave him, as a member of the Board of Education, to assist in making the fine new Chatsworth building a success. He said the school auditorium should be the community center for the use of all the people. After a short musical and literary programme, refreshments were served.

The Chatsworth school is one of the most attractive in the entire Los Angeles city system. It was designed by Architect H. H. Hewitt and constructed under the supervision of Architect O. P. Dennis.

1918 Stanley Gray dies

- Jan 1, 1918 Stanley Gray (age 16) dies in Chatsworth unhitching a team of horses with his cousin Eugene Collins.
- The horses became unmanageable and dragged the boys for some distance.

"He was crushed between the wagon wheels and the corncrib when the team of horses were running away and was in the throws of lock-jaw and was dying. It was a heavy trial for those of the family who stood around his bedside. I had not known of the accident until we returned home that night. He died that next morning before we could reach home.

The folks were grief-stricken. The day of the funeral the grammar school and high school were both closed as well as all the stores, honoring his memory. His two brothers and four brothers-in-law bore his body in the casket tenderly to its resting place." *Pg96, 1962 Pigtails to Silver-Grey*

- His cousin Eugene Collins (18) dies 4 months later.

CHATSWORTH

ANNA M. GRAVES, Reporter.

Mr. and Mrs. N. A. Gray have the sympathy of the entire community in the sad affliction which has befallen them in the death of their sixteen year old son, Stanley Collins Gray, on January 1.

On Friday of last week Stanley was unhitching a team of horses, assisted by Eugene Collins, when the animals became unmanageable and dragged the boys for some distance. In the struggle to control the horses Stanley received fatal injuries, his collarbone and several ribs being broken.

The injured lad was taken to the Pacific Hospital, where he passed away on Tuesday.

(1918-01-04 Owensmouth Gazette)

away on Tuesday.

Deceased was the first one to be taken from a family of nine children. Besides the sorrowing parents he leaves the following brothers and sisters: Mrs. Sarah E. Chadwick, George Gray, Mrs. Edith McFarland, Mrs. Ida Urton, Clarence Gray, Mrs. Myrtle Gillman, Gladys and Helen Gray.

Stanley Collins Gray was born at Chatsworth Dec. 11, 1901. He graduated from the Chatsworth Grammar School last year and at the time of his death was a Freshman at Owensmouth Hi School. He was loved by all who knew him and his loss is keenly felt by all.

The funeral services will be held at the chapel at Forest Lawn Cemetery Eriday at 2 p. m.

1926-27 Saugus to the Sea

- In January 1926, Chambers of Commerce of Santa Monica-Ocean Park and 18 Chambers from the San Fernando Valley met with County officials to improve Topanga Canyon Blvd from the ocean to Ventura Blvd. They also endorsed the extension of Topanga Canyon through Owensmouth, Chatsworth, and Saugus.
- The Topanga to Chatsworth route was completed in 1931, but what happened to the extension through the Santa Susana Mountains?
- In March 1926, 30 engineers and prominent valley residents travelled up Brown's canyon to the top of the Santa Susana Range. They left Chatsworth School in automobiles and enjoyed a dinner of barbecued steaks at the summit, and discussed various routes. A later route stated that "the preliminary view of the situation is that one of the two routes through the Johnson ranch will be selected."
- Three months later, "Saugus to the Sea" proponents met at a banquet at the Chatsworth Women's clubhouse, with President N.A. Gray and Secretary Ernest L. Johnson of the Chatsworth Chamber of Commerce presiding. A following article described the distance through the mountains to Saugus as 17½ miles.
- The Great Depression started in October 1929, and the project was too costly and difficult to complete. [Smoke Signal 2020-09](#)

1927-03-23 Saugus to the Sea
Topanga extension LATimes

EXTENSION OF TOPANGA TO BE URGED

*Valley Committee to Make
New Survey of Conditions
for Mountain Highway*

Recommendations for a definite route to be selected for the extension of Topanga avenue through the Santa Susanna Mountains between Chatsworth and Saugus are to be made by a joint committee composed of members of the Chatsworth Chamber of Commerce, property owners along Topanga avenue and a committee of the Girard Chamber of Commerce. The recommendations will be made to the Board of Supervisors and County Road Commissioner Jones after a new study of the situation which was started yesterday under the direction of N. A. Gray.

One of the principal developments which Gray has in mind for the district is the building of the highway between Saugus and the sea, using Topanga Canyon as a means of reaching the ocean. Mr. Gray is to be assisted by representatives from Chatsworth, Girard and property owners along the connecting highway. Mr. Gray has asked Nat E. Heacock of Owensmouth to head the committee of property owners along the valley portion of the highway.

The preliminary view of the situation is that one of the two routes through the Johnson ranch will be selected.

1926 Gray Family Christmas in Chatsworth

- 2012 Memories from Myrtle Shadwick Gray (1917-2014)
- Christmas was held every other year at the Gray House.
- 35 grandkids, big two story house, Christmas was potluck. Grandma had a big turkey.
- Grandpa Gray would cut two or three trees down and tie them together, and they would go to the top of the stairs.
- Had Christmas program at the church. Grandma Gray served buckwheat pancakes (which is a tradition passed on to this day).
- Grandpa Gray had a barrel of home-cured olives, with a dipper for the kids so they wouldn't get their hands wet.



Gray Family in later years - notable items

- In the 1930 census Nelson and Minnie are living with their daughter Gladys in Glendale. In the 1940 Census Nelson has passed away in 1935, and Minnie is living with Edith and Harry McFarland in El Monte. In 1950 Minnie is living with Gladys and Robert in Pasadena. Minnie passes in 1951.
- "Sadie" Sarah Ellen Gray (1885-1978) marries Chester Shadwick and they raise their family in Chatsworth on Devonshire St at Valley Circle. They then retire to farming in San Bernardino.
- George Allison Gray (1887-1947) and his wife Agnes had 13 children, he was a police officer in the Valley and retired in Simi Valley.
- Ida Belle Gray (1889-1986) married Charles Urton and they settled in Santa Barbara.
- Edith Anna Gray (1889-1969) married Harry McFarland, a minister. Edith wrote the book Pigtails to Silver-Grey.
- Myrtle Gray (1891-1995) married Fred Gilman, an auto dealer. Myrtle lived her last years in Washington, near her son's family.
- Nelson Clarence Gray (1891-1976) married Edyth Roath. He was a manager of a cement plant in Dinuba, California.
- Stanley Collins Gray (1901-1918). Died young at an accident at the ranch.
- Gladys Loretta Gray (1903-1984) married Robert Haines, an electrical engr. with a Utility Co., living in Pasadena.
- Helen Bernice Gray (1908-1997) married Robert Burns, a contractor, living in Palm Desert, then Prescott.

1927 The Gray Ranch is sold to the Spinks Estate

- "They sold their home in 1927 to the interests that have it today, known as the Spinks Estate, which now comprises 55 acres.

The Giddings first managed the property (parents of Mrs. Failor, 10116 Topanga);

then the Alex Summers managed the interest for 13 years during which time Mr. Summers put in the 30 acres of lemons, 10 acres of oranges and 15 in alfalfa.

In 1948 the Bob Werrens took over its management and are still there, loving every inch of the old home and its grounds." ([The Grapevine 1956-02-01](#))

- The church was moved to the Cemetery in 1965, and the property was developed in 1977-1978 (a few homes north of Mayall at Farralone were built in 1956-59)

Jim Summers,
son of Alex Summers,
in the Gray reservoir
circa 1937



1927 The Gray Ranch is sold to the Spinks Estate

- "One remaining clue that marks the location of this home, is the olive tree lined street along the front of the original Gray property on Lassen Street. These trees have been classified as LA Historic-Cultural Monument #49. The trees were planted around 1893 by N. A. Gray. They are believed to have been grown out of cuttings taken from olive trees at Mission San Fernando." ([Smoke Signal 2011-06](#))

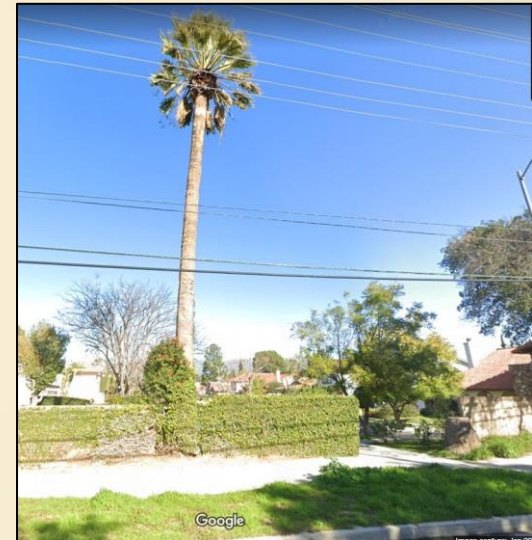
- A second remaining clue is the two palm trees on Lassen that marked the driveway to their mansion.

Lassen looking north, Two Palm Trees at the end of Nevada St.

The Palm Tree to the east (on the right) was cut down after 2016, only the stump remains today.



Google Maps Street View
2016

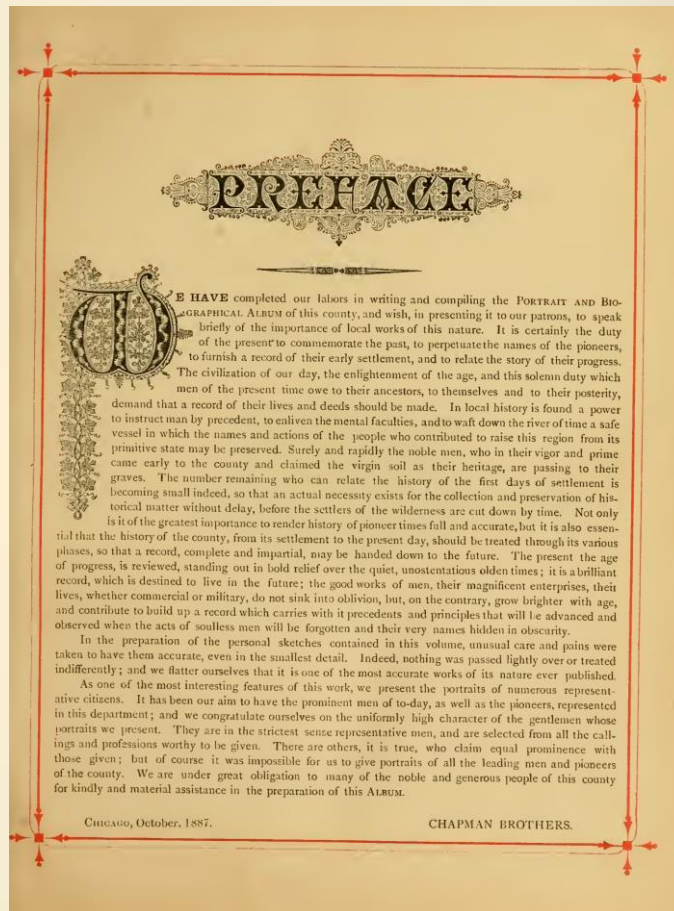
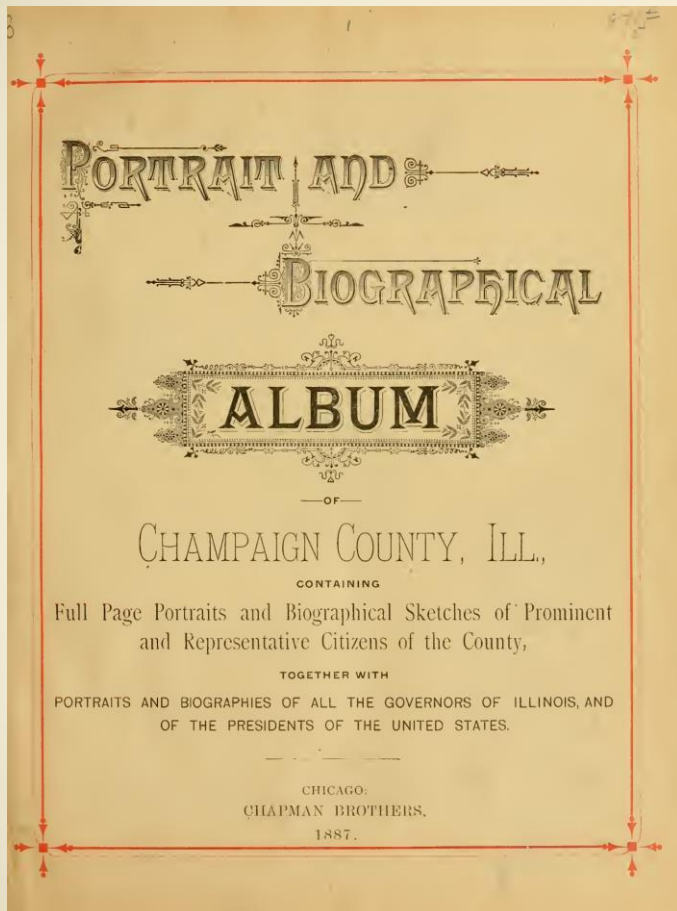


Google Maps Street View
2023

Sources and Acknowledgements

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 - [1956-02-01 Chatsworth Grapevine](#) Gray Family History
 - 1962 - Pigtails to Silver-Grey - Edith Gray McFarland - 201pgs
 - 2010 PATCH article - Virginia Watson - Pioneer Gray Family
 - 2012 memories of Myrtle Shadwick by Polly Pastre
- Smoke Signal Newsletter articles
 - Shadwick/Rockpointe History [Smoke Signal 2021-05](#)
 - Gray Family autobiography "Pigtails to Silver-Grey" [Smoke Signal 2019-09](#)
 - Gray Family Artesian Well Reservoir [Smoke Signal 2017-11](#)
 - Chatsworth Pioneers The Gray Family [Smoke Signal 2011-06](#)
- Prepared by Ann & Ray Vincent in October 2023

Appendix 1 - 1887 Portrait and biographical album Champaign County Ill - Nelson A Gray Pages



Appendix 1 - 1887 Portrait and biographical album Champaign County III - Nelson A Gray Pages

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CHAMPAIGN COUNTY.

kanas and Missouri, and upon returning to this side of the Father of Waters took up his abode in St. Joseph and here concluded to remain. His taste had always inclined to the newspaper business, and in 1854 he purchased the job office of V. J. Gallion, which he conducted two years, and then established the *Engle*, which he has since continued in a manner satisfactory to all concerned. The paper is Republican in politics, and a downright spicily little sheet, which contributes its full quota toward keeping the town lively and prosperous.

Mr. W. has been quite prominent in local affairs since coming here, and in 1885 was elected both Town and Village Clerk. Those who know him wish him and the *Engle* abundant success, as he is an enterprising citizen and should be encouraged.

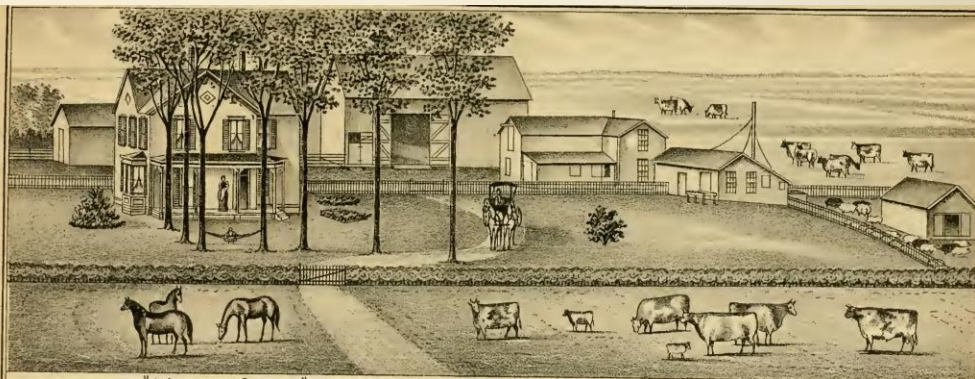
NELSON A. GRAY, an ambitious and enterprising young farmer of Rantoul Township, manages his father's old homestead of 485 acres, and also 280 acres belonging to himself. He possesses more than ordinary ability as a business man, and having had a lifelong experience in agricultural pursuits is eminently fitted for the task which at present devolves upon him. The homestead on section 19, a view of which is presented in this work, was established by his honored father in 1861, and is equipped with the finest description of farm buildings and machinery. In addition to the ordinary pursuits of husbandry Mr. Gray is operating a dairy, the proceeds of which yield annually a handsome income.

The subject of this history is a son of an old and excellent family, the later descendants of whom became well known in Pennsylvania, where he himself was born in Wayne, Erie County, Aug. 13, 1857. His father, William A. Gray, was a native of the same town, his birth taking place Dec. 15, 1821. His grandfather, Matthew A. Gray, was born in the eastern part of Pennsylvania or New Jersey, and became one of the earliest settlers of Erie County. He secured possession of a tract of timber land in Wayne Township, cut down the trees and prepared the soil for cultivation, and for many years industriously occupied himself in its improve-

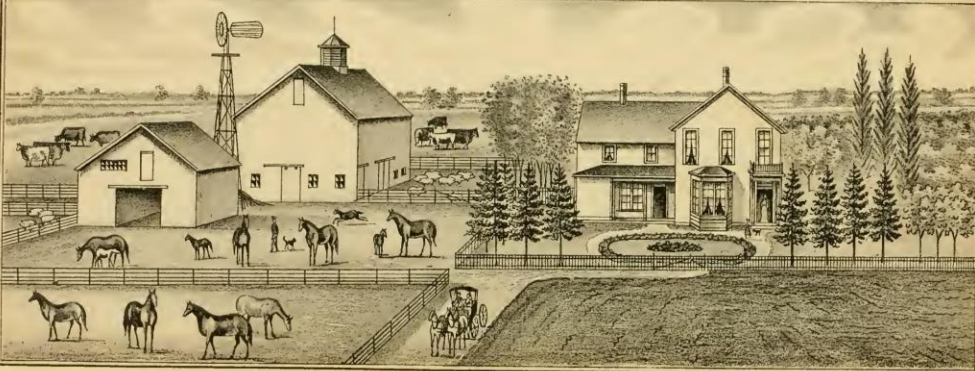
ment, establishing a comfortable home, where he remained until his death. His settlement was made before the days of railroads or canals, and for a number of years Pittsburgh was the only depot for supplies. Matthew Gray became a man of prominence in that section of country, being rarely intelligent and possessed of decided views concerning State, national and local affairs. He was for a long time Deacon in the Presbyterian Church, after the establishment of a society there, and his opinions were held in much respect, both religiously and politically. The grandmother before her marriage was Miss Esther Smith, a lady of Scotch-Irish descent. By her marriage with Matthew Gray she became the mother of eleven children. Two of these died in infancy, two died in youth, and seven lived to mature years, were married and reared families.

Among the sons who inherited in a marked degree the excellent qualities of both parents was William A., the father of our subject. He received careful home training, and was educated in the pioneer schools, which were conducted in a log cabin. When not in school, his education being principally carried on in the winter season, he assisted his father in clearing the land and tilling the soil. He remained a member of the household until establishing domestic ties of his own. At his marriage his father gave him 100 acres of land, which he operated intelligently and successfully, and in time added to his real estate by the purchase of 160 acres more. He prepared the greater part for cultivation by clearing it of the forest trees, and erected a good set of frame buildings. This farm he occupied with his family until 1859, then selling out, purchased a one-half interest in a flouring-mill and woolen factory at Cyrtuliana, Ky. Two years later he traded that property for eighty acres of land in Kansas and a half section in Rantoul Township, this county. His family removed to this locality in February, 1862.

The purchase in Rantoul Township consisted of wild prairie, and before the arrival of his family Mr. Gray put up a house and made things as comfortable as possible for their reception. After taking possession he occupied this homestead until 1874, then leaving it in the hands of a tenant,



"WILLOW GLEN" RESIDENCE OF N. A. GRAY, SEC. 19, (R-9-E) RANTOUL TP.



RESIDENCE OF GEORGE A. SMITH, SEC. 11, SCOTT TP.

Appendix 1 - 1887 Portrait and biographical album Champaign County III - Nelson A Gray Pages

