

# Smoke Signal

CHATSWORTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
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Co-Presidents: Linda & André van der Valk

June 2020, Issue #2

Editor: Ann Vincent

## Co-Presidents' Message

By Linda & André van der Valk

I hope this newsletter finds everyone safe and well. The year of 2020 has proven to be a year that has tested all of us. As I am writing this article I started thinking about Minnie Palmer and her family going through the 1918 Spanish Flu Pandemic. While living at the acre, Minnie went through two World Wars, The Great Depression, Korean War and the Vietnam War. She saw us going to the moon and I wonder what she thought about that event. It is amazing in the time of Minnie's life what our parents and grandparents experienced. I am sure our children and grandchildren will think the same thing about us and wonder how we survived as children without Facebook and the rest of social media.

After a great deal of discussion we have decided to cancel Pioneer Day for this year. This decision was not an easy one to make. Usually by this time Ann has been working on this for a few weeks. She would be notifying the vendors, lining up the buses and looking for volunteers to help-out. At the time of this writing we are not sure when and if we could have Pioneer Day in October. We are unsure when Phase 4 will be phased in and can't wait until the last minute to put the event together.

We are hopeful that we can have the Garden Festival and Pioneer Day next year. There will probably be a lot of new regulations that we will be facing. We just have to wait and see. We hope that we will be able to have our General Meetings starting in October. Ann and Ray have been working on programs during this quarantine time so I am looking forward to having the meetings again.

Stay safe and well  
Linda and Andre

Chatsworth Historical Society  
Board of Directors 2019-2020

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## Upcoming Events

### Upcoming Open Houses

From 1:00 pm – 4:00 PM Sunday

Cancelled – July 5<sup>th</sup>

Cancelled – Aug 2<sup>nd</sup>

Cancelled – Sept 6<sup>th</sup>

Cancelled - Pioneer Day Oct 4<sup>th</sup>

General Meetings Tuesday 7:00 PM

June thru Sept – Closed for Summer

October 20<sup>th</sup> – TBD



Shopping in Chatsworth 1912

## DOCENT DOINGS at the ACRE:

Our docents keep busy with projects throughout the year.

### OUT IN THE GARDEN:

If you need some outdoor fresh air therapy, come join our gardening team.



**IN THE MUSEUM:** We have new displays that are available to share when we open again.

We normally 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](mailto: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>

Our next brick order will be September 1<sup>st</sup>.

For more information, send an email to [chatsworthhistory@gmail.com](mailto:chatsworthhistory@gmail.com) or call 818-882-5614.

## GARDEN FESTIVAL

I would like to say thank you to all the event volunteers who had already stepped up to participate with our April 2020 Garden Festival before it was cancelled. It is a shame that we did not get the opportunity to enjoy this event.

Ann Vincent

## WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING

Over the last few months while we have been home, the ACRE has had the ability to monitor calls made to the Museum with questions. In addition we have received emails from individuals with ties to Chatsworth that would like to continue to learn more about their own history.

Some of the questions have taken us down paths of research that we could easily do from home offices. So, we have a variety of fun stories that we will share in upcoming newsletters and presentations.

We did hold off on sending out an April Newsletter, so there will only be 4 issues this year. Due to uncertainties on how COVID-19 restrictions would unfold, it was best to wait and see.

For those of you that missed the program on Feb 18<sup>th</sup> about the first feature films of 1914, Dennis Liff did a great job and the program is posted at [chatsworthhistory.com](http://chatsworthhistory.com) with a write-up included in this newsletter.

On February 28<sup>th</sup> at the Rockpointe Clubhouse, Albert Knight, Anthropologist Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History and Ray Vincent, Historian Chatsworth Historical Society provided a program to a full house on "The Path to Cahuenga: Native American Participation in the Conquest Of California".

Both the Path to Cahuenga and the 1914 early Movies are posted on the Chatsworth Historical Society website under presentations and on slideshare, see links on the last page of the newsletter and in the articles below.

The program "The History of Twin Lakes and Deerlake Highlands" will be postponed until we can have a meeting again. We continue to create new programs for future meetings.

## The First Feature Films of 1914 were filmed in Chatsworth

At our February General Meeting at the Homestead Acre, Chatsworth Movie Historian Dennis Liff shared some Chatsworth Movie History breakthroughs.

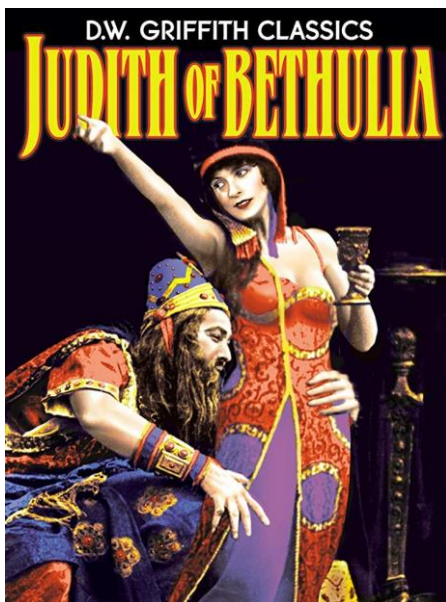
Dennis identified the locations of the outdoor scenes filmed in Chatsworth for two groundbreaking movies released in 1914. "The Squaw Man" and "Judith of Bethulia" were both filmed in the Chatsworth Lake Manor and Reservoir area. Both movies are available for viewing on YouTube.

Filmed in 18 days from December 1913 to January 1914, Cecil B. DeMille's landmark production "The Squaw Man" has been cited as Hollywood's first feature film, and one of the most important productions in the history of American cinema. Before the release of "The Squaw Man" in February 1914, the output of the U.S. film industry consisted almost entirely of short subjects, usually running less than 12 minutes. When "The Squaw Man" hit theaters at more than 60 minutes, it triggered a revolution in Hollywood.

The movie business was still in its infancy in the early 1910s. Even though a few visionaries like DeMille and D.W. Griffith recognized the medium's potential, Hollywood was run by businessmen, not visionaries. DeMille, Griffith and a few others wanted to use film to tell complex stories and elevate the medium to an art form. But in an era of skimpy budgets and penny-pinching movie moguls, they faced an uphill battle. It was a time when the images captured on film were considered disposable — far less valuable than the nitrate film itself, which would routinely be melted down following a film's distribution so the chemicals could be reused. For every DeMille or Griffith who wanted to make longer, better movies, there were studio bosses who were convinced the public would never sit in a darkened theater for an hour or more watching a flickering image. Both DeMille and Griffith had feature-length projects in the works in 1913.



"The Squaw Man"  
(Cecil B. DeMille, released Feb 1914) 1hr 12min



"Judith of Bethulia"  
(D.W. Griffith, released March 1914)  
1hr 12min

Griffith, who had arrived in Hollywood in 1910 — three years ahead of DeMille — was working in Chatsworth by mid-1912, and completed location shooting there on his biblical feature "Judith of Bethulia" in February 1913.

"Judith of Bethulia" would have gone down in history as Hollywood's first feature film, except for one problem: D.W. Griffith's ongoing clashes with Biograph's notoriously hot-headed bean counter Jeremiah J. Kennedy. Kennedy, who has been called Hollywood's first movie czar, was reportedly furious at both the length and the \$36,000 price tag of Griffith's four-reel "Judith" — at the time, the most expensive picture ever produced. Bad blood between Griffith and Kennedy prompted Biograph to delay the release of "Judith of Bethulia" by a year — opening the door for DeMille's "The Squaw Man" to make history as the first feature film released by Hollywood.

While interiors for "Judith of Bethulia" were shot at Biograph's New York studios, the movie's extensive outdoor location footage was filmed in 1912 and 1913 in Chatsworth, Calif. — known at the time as "Chatsworth Park."

**Starting with 1914 “Judith of Bethulia”** – Dennis noticed a gap in the background hills in a scene that looked like the 12 Apostles horizon rock formation above Chatsworth Lake Manor.



Notice the same **Gap in the background hills** in a 2020 photo taken from Chatsworth Oaks Park  
“The 12 Apostles” rock formation forms the right portion of the gap....

We created a short YouTube video identifying seven “Judith of Bethulia” clips that were filmed in the Chatsworth Reservoir Area. These can be found at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-faP-K3N3ow&list=PLv8te7q3e40sf\\_YMnGcvVh3vF986kIVtK](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-faP-K3N3ow&list=PLv8te7q3e40sf_YMnGcvVh3vF986kIVtK)

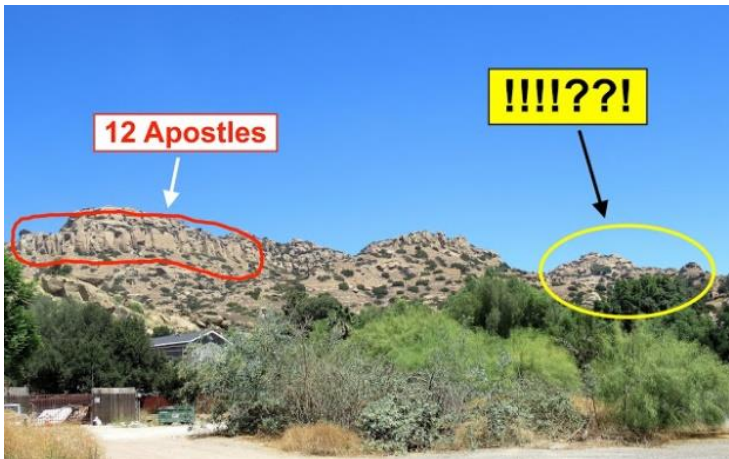
Clip number six shows the Gap in the background hills seen above.

Note: The area didn’t become a reservoir until 1918 (placed in service in 1919). However, the Department of Water and Power began purchasing the land in 1912, notably from the Schweikhard homesteading family, who homesteaded what is today Chatsworth Oaks Park. The Los Angeles Aqueduct was completed in 1913.

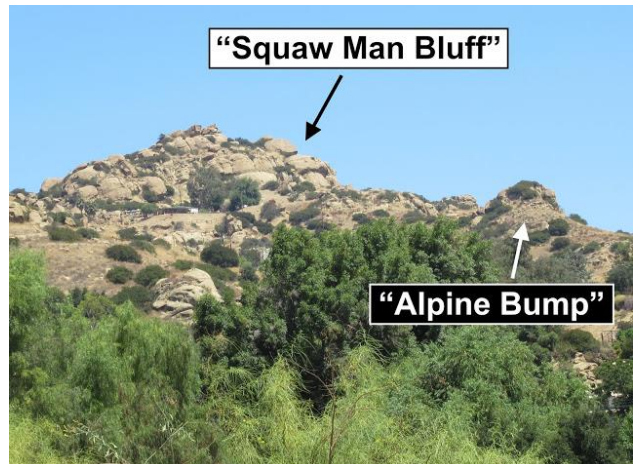
Extensive sets were built for the movie, including the walls of Bethulia (Left: notice the turrets in background, main gate in center – Right: inside the main gate of Bethulia).



**Now, on to “Squaw Man”** – You may be noticing a trend: A lot of early Hollywood productions were filmed in Chatsworth. And we can now add DeMille's landmark movie "The Squaw Man" to the list. The connection between "The Squaw Man" and Chatsworth comes down to one two minute sequence about 50 minutes into the movie. Based on the title card for the scene, it's known as the "Alpine sequence."



In surveying locations, Dennis noted a formation to the right — east of the 12 Apostles. In an instant, everything changed: He was looking at the elusive shooting location for the Alpine sequence, the "Holy Grail" of his personal mystery filming locations. In his research the two main features that pinpointed the Chatsworth filming location for "The Squaw Man" are now known as "Squaw Man Bluff" and the "Alpine Bump." Who knows, maybe the names will catch on.



The two minute YouTube video showing the Chatsworth scene filmed in 1914 Squaw Man, title card “Henry and Diana in the Alps”, is at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DIY2gsZQTqE>

Note: The boulder that the actors in the Alpine Sequence were standing on is near the top of Thompson Ave, just past a locked gate, where a water tank stands today. Much grading of the area has been done since 1914, the road has been widened and the boulders have been covered. And it is private property.

**Links and Acknowledgements** – For much, much more detailed information, please visit

PowerPoint Presentation – [chatsworthhistory](http://chatsworthhistory.com), Digital Archives, Presentations, 1914 Feature Films

Iverson Movie Ranch Blogspot - <http://iversonmovieranch.blogspot.com/2019/08/twelve-apostles-and-two-pioneers-dw.html>

[Judith of Bethulia 1914 Chatsworth Scenes](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DIY2gsZQTqE) on YouTube, chatsworthhistory1

[The Squaw Man 1914 Chatsworth Scene](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DIY2gsZQTqE) on YouTube, chatsworthhistory1

## The Path to Cahuenga: Native American Participation in the Conquest of California

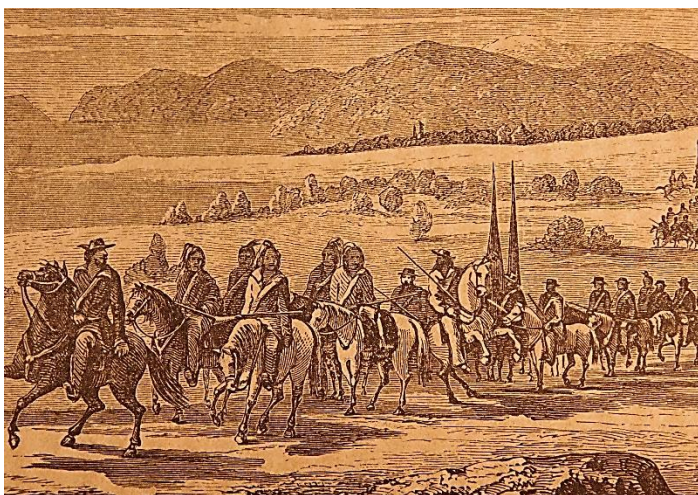
At the February General Meeting of the SSMPA at the Rockpointe Clubhouse, Albert Knight, with an assist from Ray Vincent, shared some research on the Native American Participation in the Conquest of California.

The program provided a good overview of Fremont's third expedition in 1845 from Kansas City to California, known also as the "Naval Battalion of Mounted Volunteer Riflemen" or California Battalion. The California Battalion accepted the surrender of the last Mexican Army, in what is now the United States, at Campo de Cahuenga, on January 13, 1847.

At full strength, in November 1846, the California Battalion was comprised of about 425 men. The third expedition was mostly Anglo-American and French-Canadian, as was the California Battalion. Several African-Americans also served with the California Battalion.



The 26-star US flag could not be displayed in Mexican territory. So Jessie Fremont designed and made this variation. The flag incorporated the stripes of the national flag, with an eagle holding a peace pipe in its talons. The original flag is archived at the Autry Museum of the American West.



The California Battalion on the move in  
Central California  
Kit Carson and Delaware scouts out in front  
Fremont and BOTH American flags close behind  
Cavalry troops following the Colors  
Note NO wagons – we are WAY out west

At least 60 Native Americans served with the third expedition and/or the California Battalion. These included Metis, Delaware, Chinook, Miwok, Walla Walla, Yokuts, Ohlone, and Chumash Indians. Company H (Scouts) was almost entirely Indian.

The bulk of the presentation discussed the events of the expedition/Battalion, focusing on Native American participants. The Native Americans were deployed mainly as "scouts and spies," guides, hunters, muleteers, and vaqueros. But they fought when it was required. Six Walla Walla and two Delaware fought at the Battle of Natividad, near Salinas. Tom Hill, a Delaware-Walla Walla, distinguished himself, and was promoted from scout to trooper (\$10 a month vs. \$25 a month!). Natividad was the California Battalion's only fight on its own. Only 2 of 8 companies were present at Natividad; the entire Battalion never fought a battle. About a dozen men, from both sides, were killed or wounded.

Many of the Mexicans that participated in the war in California were also Indian or part Indian. The presence and participation of Native Americans, on both sides in the Mexican-American War, has been almost entirely forgotten.

Visit [chatsworthhistory](http://chatsworthhistory.com), Digital Archives, Presentations, "The Path to Cahuenga - Native American Participation in the Conquest of California" for the complete PowerPoint presentation.

## Harold Lloyd at Tunnel 28 east portal in 1921, and 3,500 Tons of Chatsworth Sandstone at his Estate in Beverly Hills



Dennis Liff sent us a note last February that he had confirmed that the final scenes of the 1921 Harold Lloyd movie “**Now or Never**” were filmed at the eastern portal of Tunnel 28 at Stoney Point.

Dennis comments on the screenshot at left: *all the rocks are still there, surprisingly. And the two hills at top right line up too. The one on the left is “Pyramid Peak,” and the other one is the hill above Nyoka Cliff, on Iverson property. (Garden of the Gods park property now.)*

*The main point of interest is the tunnel itself. Not a great shot, but the movie came out in*

*March 1921, so it would have been shot right around late 1920 or very early 1921. The tunnel was “redone” later that year, reinforced with concrete, according to the monument that’s part of the “new” concrete tunnel. So this shot would be the last we would see of the “pre-concrete” version of the tunnel. I’ve seen a lot of historical photos of the various pre-concrete tunnels, but I don’t think I’ve ever seen 28 East.*



*Harold Lloyd doing an extended stunt, running along the top of the train and trying to avoid getting hit by the tunnel.*

*The movie is about 36 minutes long, and the tunnel stuff is at the very end. It also has some earlier stuff of minor interest, including a slightly more famous sequence showing the railroad water tank at Devonshire in the background of some footage shot near the train depot. The depot itself is barely glimpsed in the movie, maybe just a quick shot of the roofline above a train.*

*The movie also has what appears to be a quick glimpse of 28 West. I’m not sure it’s what it purports to be, but it seems legit. The movie includes a lot of shots of 28 East from a much closer angle, with*



Looking north, Stoney Point at left,  
Water Tank at right

The 36 minute movie is available on YouTube. We created a 3 minute video on YouTube of screen shots and video of the Chatsworth Scenes, available at <https://youtu.be/I-P0ZiHiCw>  
Here’s a link to the full movie on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z1n8haqiRY0>

In doing our research, Ann noticed a mention of 3,500 tons of Chatsworth sandstone on the Harold Lloyd Estate, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harold\\_Lloyd\\_Estate](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harold_Lloyd_Estate) ,which led us to this Feb 1926 article in the LATimes.

The Estate, LA Historic Cultural Monument #279, was a 44-room, 45,000 sqft mansion on 15 acres in Benedict Canyon. It included a 9 hole golf course, 900 foot canoe stream, and a 100 foot waterfall. Examples of sandstone at the Lloyd Estate are shown below.

**SANDSTONE  
BY TONS FOR  
TWO HOMES**

*Vast Amount of Material  
to be Hauled to Beverly  
Hills and Bel-Air Estates*

Calling for the use of more than 5000 tons of sandstone for steps, terraces and waterfalls, extensive landscaping work has just been started at the new Harry R. Callender estate in Bel-Air and at the new estate of Harold Lloyd in Beverly Hills, it was announced yesterday by A. E. Hanson, landscape architect. The sandstone is being taken from quarries near Chatsworth, leased by the Belyea Truck Company, which concern has been retained to transport the material to both sites.

The grounds of the new \$1,000,000 Harold Lloyd estate in Beverly Hills will be landscaped along lines similar to the Callender estate, Mr. Hanson said, using a total of approximately 3500 tons of sandstone. The landscaping work at the Lloyd property will take up the major portion of a year, he added.



The Harold Lloyd Estate has been called "the most impressive movie star's estate ever created." It remained Lloyd's home until his death in 1971.

So maybe Harold Lloyd liked the Chatsworth rocks during his 1921 filming of Now or Never.....

CHS member Charlie (Charlene) Vincent remembers: "Early in WWII my mother and friends gathered once a month at Harold Lloyd's house in Beverly Hills for charity work. I went also. Probably at 13 or 14 (1942). I remember swimming in the pool, an amazing play house for the girls, and a giant Christmas tree with more amazing ornaments that was never taken down."



"I specifically remember that the playhouse had running water in the kitchen. And I knew what street it was on, Benedict Canyon. I remember that the entrance to the home was huge with a capital H."



## 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](mailto: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](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:chatsworthhistory@gmail.com) 818-882-5614 [www.chatsworthhistory.com](http://www.chatsworthhistory.com)

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|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Member               | <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal        |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$15.00       | <input type="checkbox"/> Family \$20.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Organization \$20.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life Membership \$125.00 |   |   |

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