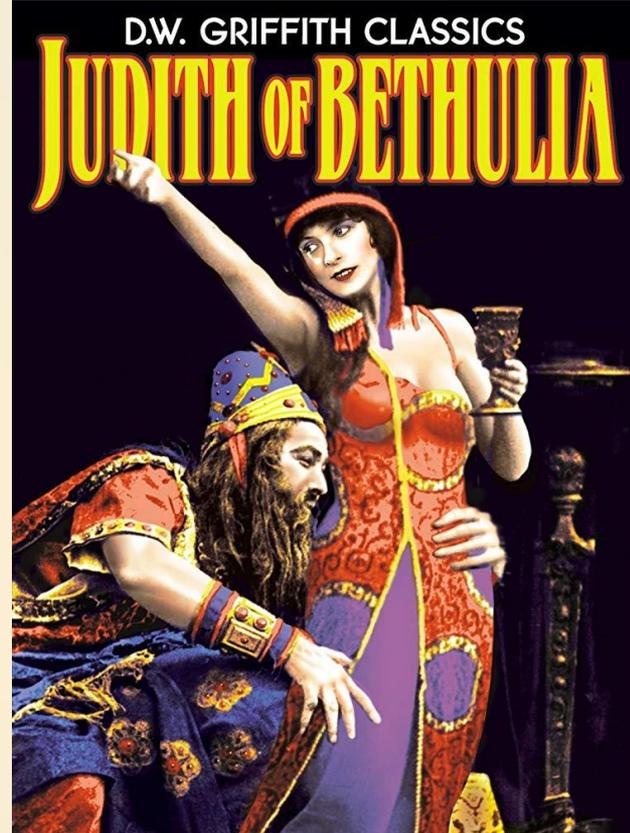


# 1914 Feature Films in Chatsworth



"IF YOU DRAW MY MEN WILL SHOOT YOU TO RIBBONS"

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



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

# Introduction

- This presentation was inspired by the research of Chatsworth Movie Historian Dennis Liff, and his identification in August 2019 of the locations of the outdoor scenes for two groundbreaking movies released in 1914. His blogpost is mostly reproduced in this presentation.
- ***The Squaw Man*** and ***Judith of Bethulia*** were both filmed in Chatsworth Lake Manor
- This presentation will discuss some Hollywood history, identify the filming locations for each film, and show the movie scenes filmed in Chatsworth.
- Both movies are available for viewing on YouTube.

# The Squaw Man

- Filmed in 18 days from December 1913 to January 1914, Cecil B. DeMille's landmark production 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.



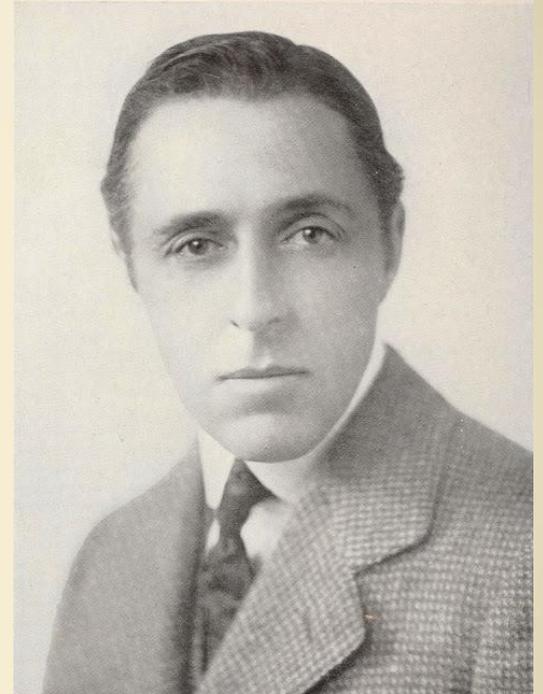
"The Great Train Robbery" (1903):  
Running time just under 12 minutes

# Hollywood History



Cecil B. DeMille  
(ca. 1920)

- 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.



D.W. Griffith  
(ca. 1907)

# Hollywood History



Early Hollywood power brokers (L-R): Laemmle, Fox, Goldwyn, Warner, Mayer, Zukor

- 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..

# Hollywood History

- Both DeMille and Griffith had feature-length projects in the works in 1913.
- 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.

Lillian Gish, left,  
and Blanche Sweet  
in "Judith of Bethulia"



# Hollywood History

- And "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.



Jeremiah J. Kennedy  
Biograph kingpin and  
Griffith nemesis

# Judith of Bethulia

- 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."

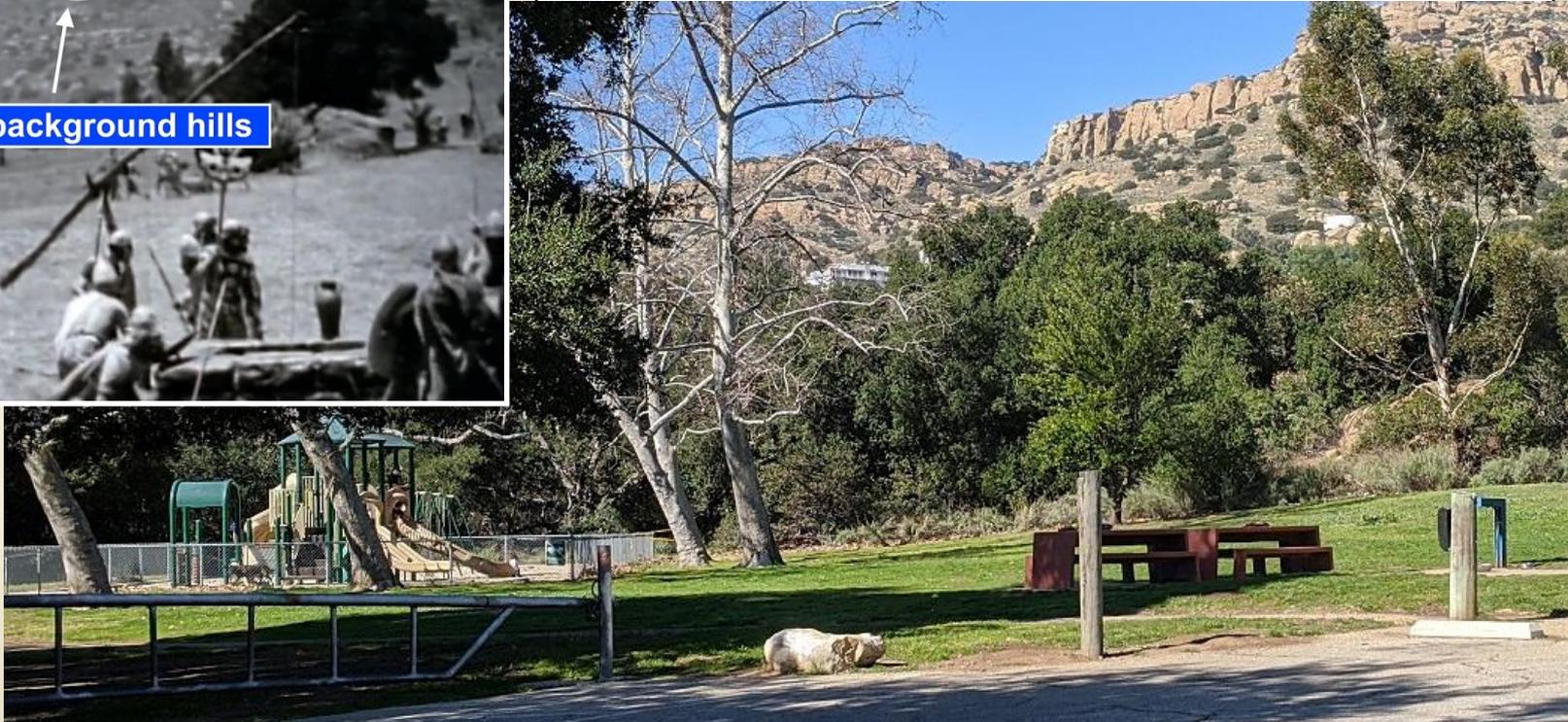


"Judith of Bethulia": Shot on location in Chatsworth

# Judith of Bethulia



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....



# Judith of Bethulia

- The **Book of Judith** is an ancient text, included in some versions of the Old Testament of the Bible.
- **Plot summary** --- The story revolves around Judith, a daring and beautiful widow, who is upset with her Jewish countrymen for not trusting God to deliver them from their foreign conquerors.
  - She goes with her loyal maid to the camp of the enemy general, Holofernes, with whom she slowly ingratiates herself, promising him information on the Israelites. Gaining his trust, she is allowed access to his tent one night as he lies in a drunken stupor.
  - She decapitates him, then takes his head back to her fearful countrymen. The Assyrians, having lost their leader, disperse, and Israel is saved.



The entire movie Judith of Bethulia is available on YouTube from the Library of Congress at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7a0tXDkvfG4&t=3688s>. It is 1 hour and 12 minutes long.

We have identified 7 Clips that were filmed in Chatsworth at Chatsworth Lake Manor, in today's Nature Preserve/Reservoir area. They total 27 minutes, and they are available at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-faP-K3N3ow&list=PLv8te7q3e40sf\\_YMnGcvVh3vF986kIVtK](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-faP-K3N3ow&list=PLv8te7q3e40sf_YMnGcvVh3vF986kIVtK)

This presentation will show just one Clip, the “Gap in the Background Hills scene”, a 4 minute battle scene.

***Judith of Bethulia 1914 Chatsworth Scenes Clip 6*** 42:33 – 46:59 – at this point in the movie, Holofernes has laid seige to Bethulia, has taken control of the wells outside the walls, and is waiting for famine to reduce the city. During this clip:

“Then a young captain of Bethulia led a brave dash for water at the wells.”

“Then the Assyrians taunted the city for its lack of water.”

“But the crafty guards of Assur lay in ambush and fell upon them with chariot and horse.”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aWMpp-8pzpl>

Judith of Bethulia 1914

Chatsworth Scenes

Clip 6 42:33 – 46:59

The Bethulians led a brave dash for water at the wells, the Assyrians taunted the city for its lack of water.

Guards of Assur lay in ambush and fell upon them with chariot and horse.

# Some scenes of interest....

screenshot  
Judith of Bethulia  
1min 27sec

at the well

Notice the  
horizon / skyline  
landscape



screenshot  
Judith of Bethulia  
4min 30sec

walls of Bethulia

Notice turrets in  
background, main gate  
in center





screenshot Judith of Bethulia  
5min 19sec  
outside the pedestrian & main gate of Bethulia



screenshot Judith of Bethulia  
5min 42sec  
inside the pedestrian & main gate of Bethulia



screenshot Judith of Bethulia

11min 11sec

Assyrian army on road, taking the wells

could this be the main road through the area?

screenshot Judith of Bethulia

11min 18sec

Assyrian army on road, taking the wells

Notice the well worn ruts in the road

screenshot  
Judith of Bethulia  
16min 48sec  
at Holofernes tent

outdoor scene with chariot  
notice canopy umbrellas in  
background

and Holofernes walks on the  
backs of some of his men...



screenshot Judith of Bethulia  
18min 50sec

storming the walls

battering ram in foreground  
siege tower in midground  
catapult behind tower

Notice people up on rock



screenshot Judith of Bethulia  
43min 25sec

brave dash for water

beginning of the scene,  
taunting the Bethulians at the  
wells

notice the gap in the  
background hills





screenshot Judith of Bethulia  
44min 47sec  
brave dash for water - archer



screenshot Judith of Bethulia  
45min 23sec  
brave dash for water -- archers

screenshot Judith of Bethulia  
69min 10sec

final battle scene  
rushing down hill



# The 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.

Cecil B. DeMille on running board,  
and the cast of  
"The Squaw Man," 1914



# The Squaw Man

- 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."
- Much has been written about shooting sites for the DeMille movie — including false reports that it was filmed on the Iverson Ranch. Dennis eliminated Iverson as a possibility years ago, but the search went on for the actual location.



"The Squaw Man" (1914): Title card for the "Alpine sequence"

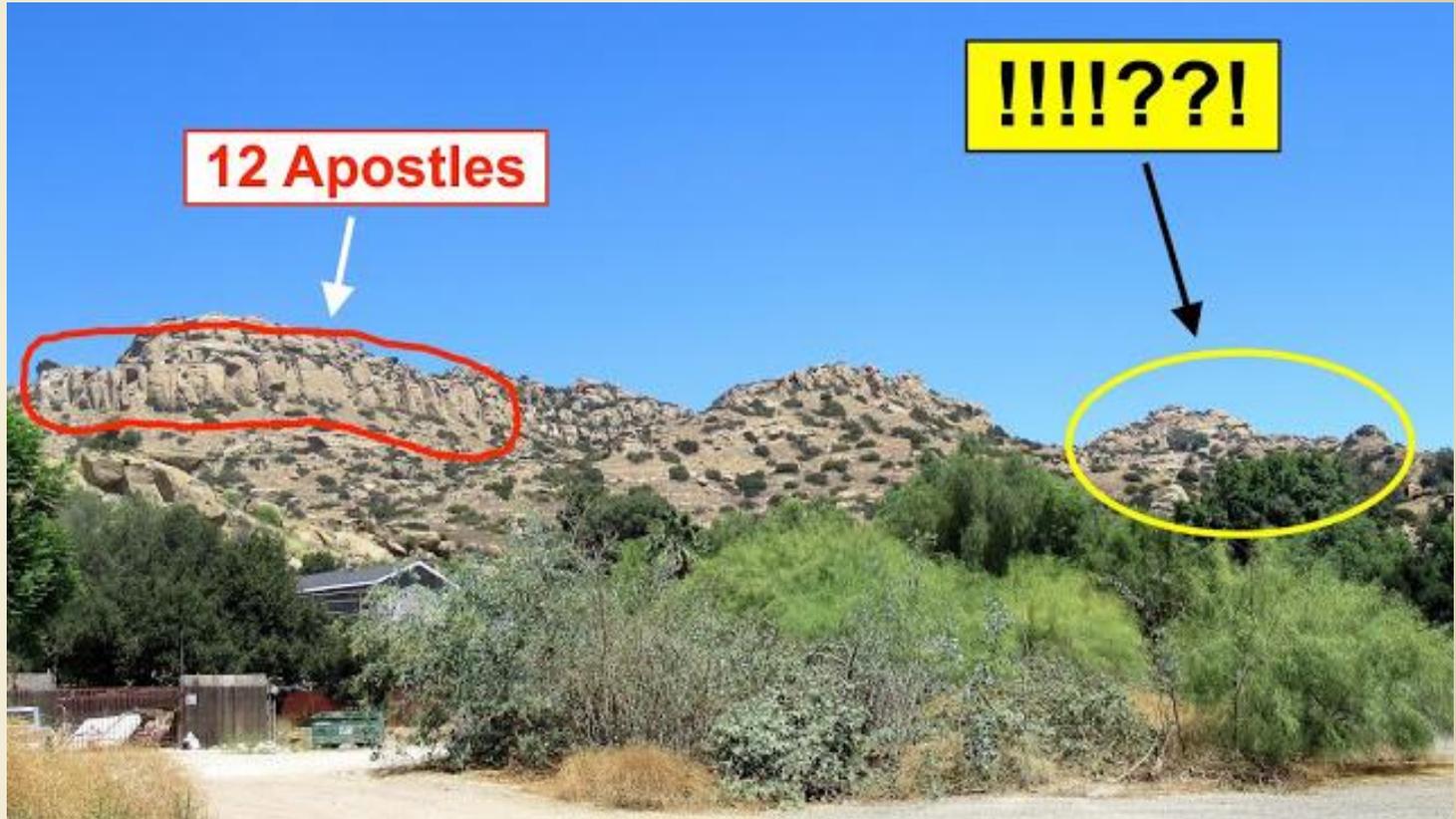
# The Squaw Man

- A screenshot from the “Alpine sequence”



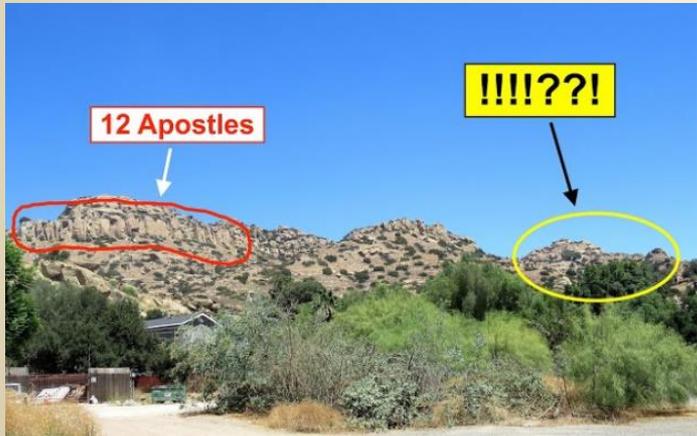
# The Squaw Man

- In surveying locations, Dennis noted a formation to the right — east of the 12 Apostles



# The Squaw Man

- 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.



Main bluff and "bump" seen in "The Squaw Man"

# The Squaw Man

- 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.

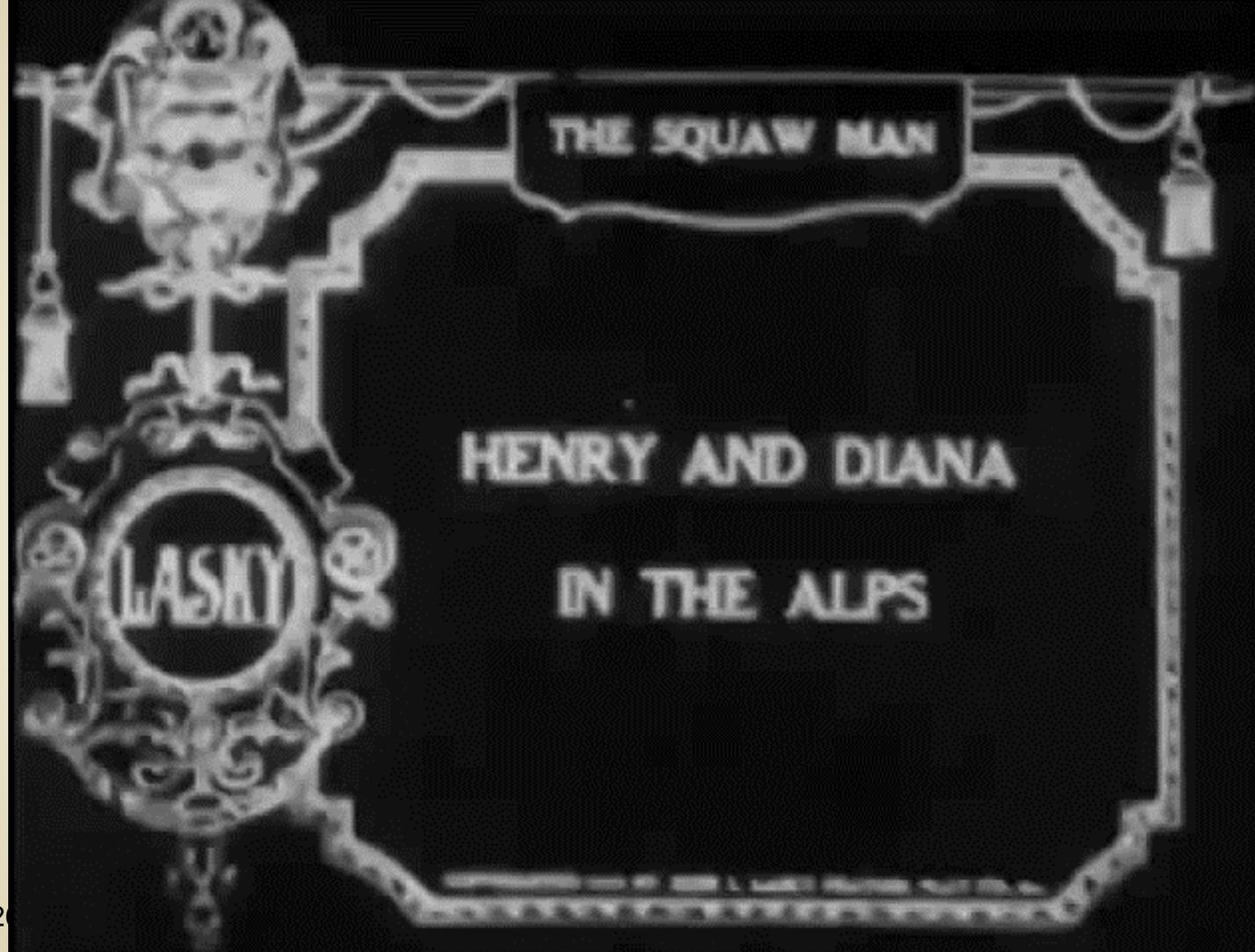


New names for "The Squaw Man's" Chatsworth landmarks

- **The Squaw Man** was a 1905 play – Western/Drama
- **Plot summary** --- Jim and his cousin Henry Wynnegate are upper class Englishmen and trustee's for an orphan's fund. Henry is the Earl of Kerhill and is married to Diana; Jim and Henry's wife Diana are close friends.
- Henry loses money at the derby and embezzles money from the orphan's fund. For the honor of the Kerhill name, Aunt Elizabeth asks Jim to assume Henry's guilt.
- Jim boards a ship and begins a new life in Wyoming. There, Jim rescues Nat-u-ritch, daughter of chief Tabywana, from outlaw Cash Hawkins. Cash tries to kill Jim, but is killed by Nat-u-ritch. Nat-u-ritch and Jim fall in love and later have a son.
- During an exploration of the Alps with Diana (**filmed in Chatsworth Lake Manor**), Henry falls off a cliff. Henry signs a dying letter of confession proclaiming "Jim is Innocent"
- Diana and the family find Jim in Wyoming, and announce that Jim is now the Earl of Kerhill, and that his son is the future Earl and is entitled to the education of a gentleman. In the meantime, the sheriff finds evidence to arrest Nat-u-ritch in the killing of Cash Hawkins. Nat-u-ritch goes into hiding.
- Diana and the boy prepare to go England. Jim and Nat-u-rich are broken-hearted. Nat-u-ritch takes her own life. The movie ends with Diana hugging Jim's son, while Jim holds Nat-u-ritch and says "Poor Little Mother"

Next up is the two minute scene from **1914 Squaw Man**,  
“Henry and Diana in the Alps”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DIY2gsZQTqE>



# Sources/Acknowledgements

- <http://iversonmovieranch.blogspot.com/2019/08/twelve-apostles-and-two-pioneers-dw.htm>
- [Judith of Bethulia 1914 Chatsworth Scenes](#) on YouTube, chatsworthhistory1
- [The Squaw Man 1914 Chatsworth Scene](#) on YouTube, chatsworthhistory1
- Prepared by Dennis Liff and Ray Vincent, February 2020