

Upcoming events:

- **November 24 & 25:**
Museum Open House
- **December 29 & 30:**
Closed
- **January 26 & 27:**
Museum Open House
- **February 17:**
General Membership Meeting, “Women Warriors” with Annette Hubbell

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JOHN DEWITT MUSEUM

2116 TAVERN ROAD
ALPINE, CA 91901

Open 2:00 to 4:00 p.m.
last weekend of each month

Tom & Judy Myers, Editors
619-885-8063

HURRAH FOR THE PUMPKIN-PIE!

Do you remember the poem by **Lydia Maria Child** titled *Thanksgiving Day*? Maybe the first line of the poem is more familiar: “Over the river and through the wood”, or perhaps the last line: “Hurrah for the pumpkin-pie!” That, of course, raises the question: Where did pumpkin pie originate and how long has it been a holiday food?

There is a good article titled *The History of Pumpkin Pie* at www.history.com. Here is some of what we learned from the article.

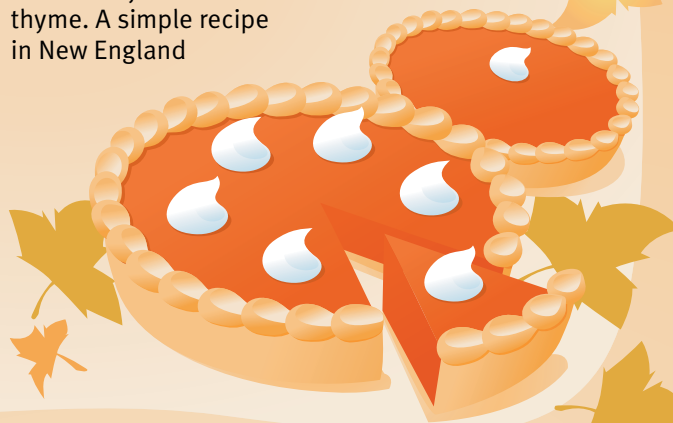
Pumpkins were first cultivated around 5,500 BC in Central America and were one of the first New World foods introduced in Europe during the post-Columbian era. The French called the orange squash “pompon” due to their round shape – the English pronounced the name “pumpion”, and cooked it as a filling in a sweet or

savory pie. Eventually the word evolved to the now familiar “pumpkin”. By 1620 when the Pilgrims set sail for the west, they were already familiar with pumpkins and it was likely served during the three-day harvest feast celebrated by the Pilgrims and Wampanoag people in 1621.

The original pumpkin pies might seem very odd to us today. A French cookbook in 1653 suggested boiling the pumpkin in milk and straining it, then putting it in a crust. In 1670, Hannah Woolley’s *Gentlewoman’s Companion* offered a pie recipe with alternating layers of pumpkin, apple, spiced rosemary, sweet marjoram and thyme. A simple recipe in New England

involved filling a hollowed-out pumpkin with spiced, sweetened milk and cooking it directly over a fire. Even today you can find many variations on the traditional pumpkin pie. One that has probably been served at least once by nearly every family is the Libby’s recipe for pumpkin pie. You can still find it printed on the inside of the label on every can of Libby’s canned pumpkin, which, by the way, was introduced in 1929.

Whatever your family traditions are, we wish you a Happy Thanksgiving and **HURRAH** for the pumpkin-pie!



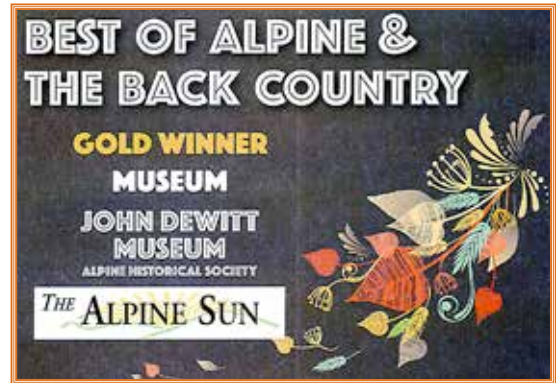
Did you know—

The largest pumpkin ever grown weighed 2,624.6 pounds.
That’s enough to make more than 700 pumpkin pies!

In the recent Reader's Poll sponsored by *The Alpine Sun*, the **John DeWitt Museum** was voted the "BEST" museum in Alpine & The Back Country. Thank you!

And, we're very proud that many members of the Alpine Historical Society were also voted "BEST" in their class:

- Dawn August, Alpine Premier Properties
- Barons Market
- Greg & Patti Fox, California Options Real Estate
- Laurie Hallihan, State Farm Insurance
- Roger Garay and Jan Morse, Online Bookkeeping & Tax Service
- Chris Wiley, Primary Residential Mortgage
- The Woman's Club



Thank you all for voting!

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Many thanks to Kevin & Alejandra Schumacher for their generous financial donation, to Mark Turvey for donating the Brand Book Collection, and to Jon Green and the Back Country Land Trust for donating and planting 2 (baby) trees and 3 native shrubs in our Chocolate Creek area.

RECOGNITION OF OUR CURRENT LIFETIME MEMBERS

Carlette Anderson • Deborah Anderson • George & Joan Anderson • Mark L. Anderson • Roy & Willa Athey
 Franklin R. Ball • Pat & Joe Brunold • David Carey • Ted Christensen • James H. Cleland
 Peggy & Jim Easterling • Beverly Falor • Katie & Brian Ford • Vincent Fritts • Paul Gonya • Gail Wilson Guth
 Janet M. Harris • Linda Harshberger • Ann Hill • Leslie Holben • Ken & Denise Hujing
 Ben & Kirby Johnson • Bill & Diane Keltner • Jill & Shawn Killon • John Krempp • J. Clayburn LaForce
 Joanne & Martin Marugg • Carol Morrison • Tom & Judy Myers • Helen Porter • Paula Saksa
 Kurt Scherbaum • Albert Simonson • Donna Sisson • Joseph Sisson • Virginia Sisson • Anne Tarr • Elma Terry
 Rodney & Guille Tuttle • Paul & Carol Walker • William & Joan Waterworth • Stanley Wilson

RECOGNITION OF OUR LIFETIME BUSINESS MEMBERS

Brabazon Alpine Paving and Trucking
 Ewiiapaayp Band of Kumeyaay Indians • Viejas Band of Kumeyaay Indians
 Tom Dyke Drilling • John Garbaczewski Family Foundation
 Chris Wiley—Primary Residential Mortgage • Turvey Granite Pit • Tuttle Charitable Trust

CURRENT MEMBERSHIPS: Life Members ~ 50, Supporting Members ~ 97, Members up for renewal ~ 1

POP QUIZ: *Answers can be found in articles in this newsletter.*

1. What is a Harbison's Dun Skipper?
 - a. A motorized vehicle similar to a dune buggy.
 - b. A grayish-brown butterfly named by John Harbison's grandson, Charles Harbison.
 - c. A playground game using a jump rope.
2. Which of the following is true about Louisa Alcott Willett Snow?
 - a. Interested in astronomy and botany
 - b. A 70 year-old homesteader
 - c. Founder of Alpine's first cemetery named Mt. Pisgah
 - d. All of the above
3. *The Alpine Sun* newspaper presented which "Best of Alpine & The Back Country Award" to the John DeWitt Museum?
 - a. Best Pumpkin Pie recipe
 - b. Biggest pile of eucalyptus firewood
 - c. Gold Winner, Museum category

SAN CARLOS SECOND GRADERS VISIT ALPINE

On October 5, docents at the John DeWitt Museum greeted 70 second-grade children and their carpooling parents from the *Green Elementary School* in the *San Carlos* area of San Diego. The children were divided into two groups, which took turns visiting our museum and visiting a farm on Japatul Road.

Museum docents (*Carol Morrison, Lisa Celeste, Carlette Anderson and Norm Kling*) were on hand to guide the students through our exhibits, tell stories about Alpine, and describe what it was like to

live in the backcountry a hundred years ago. For students living in San Diego, this was an entirely new experience for them. The youngsters enjoyed seeing the artifacts on display, old photos, beehives, Norm Kling's Model T Ford, the replica "outhouse", and the hand-operated water pump.

We particularly wish to thank the teacher in charge, *Jennifer Mounieimne*, for organizing the trip to introduce the Green Elementary School children to the history and culture of Alpine and the San Diego backcountry.



STATUS OF GRANT-FUNDED PROJECTS

We are delighted to confirm that The Alpine Historical Society received a 2018-2019 Community Enhancement Grant, approved by the San Diego County Board of Supervisors, for three much needed projects at the John DeWitt Museum.

We have completed our first project, replacing the floor in the Carriage House. A local contractor, *Rudy's Curbs & Concrete*,

removed the severely cracked and deteriorated existing floor and installed a new concrete floor. The work is complete and we can now move ahead with our plans to prepare the Carriage House for an exhibit on the *Walker Family and Willows Resort*. Archivist, Carol Morrison, is organizing the exhibit, which will be funded by donations from gifts to the Historical

Society in memory of Don Walker.

In November, we will complete our second project, removing six eucalyptus trees at the museum. You may recall from previous newsletters that two times in the last four years tree limbs dropped on the Nichols house during severe storms. Both times we escaped serious damage and quickly repaired the building. To avoid a future catastrophic loss, we are removing the non-native eucalyptus trees that tower over our centuries old buildings. With help from the Back Country Land Trust, we will be replacing the trees with

native oaks. If you would like to help with replanting and watering the new trees, please send a note to info@alpinehistory.org.

Our third project is to develop an on-site storage building for museum artifacts. Plans are underway to purchase and renovate a metal cargo container. If we can find a donor for the storage unit, the grant funds for this project will be used to renovate the container to improve the appearance and storage environment. If you know someone who can donate a storage container, please send a note to info@alpinehistory.org, or call *Tom* at 619-885-8063.



MORE IMPROVEMENTS ALONG CHOCOLATE CREEK

With strong support from the *Back Country Land Trust*, we are continuing our efforts to restore the habitat value of the portion of Chocolate Creek that runs along the south border of the Alpine Historical Society property on Tavern Road. Recently Jon Green of BCLT planted several species of native plants that have a special significance to the Alpine area. Lisa and David Celeste are providing water and care as needed while the plants acclimate to their new digs. The plants provided and installed by BCLT are described as follows:

Coast Live Oak, *Quercus agrifolia*, is a large, spreading oak tree found throughout California in the coastal mountain ranges below 5,000 ft

elevation. In drier areas it is usually found near seasonal streams. Coast Live Oaks produce large volumes of acorns providing food for many species of wildlife and was a staple food for the Kumeyaay people for thousands of years.

Engelmann Oak, *Quercus engelmannii*, a medium-sized oak tree found in southern California and Baja California with 93% of known trees in San Diego County. Engelmann Oaks are rarely found above 4,000 feet elevation and are threatened by development in rural areas. They are excellent sources of food and shelter for wildlife.

Basket Rush, *Juncus textilis*, is a perennial herb endemic to southern California. Basket rush grows

in creek beds often in the shade of oak trees. The dark green cylindrical stems can grow over four feet tall and have been used by the Kumeyaay for creating interesting designs in traditional coil baskets.

San Diego Sedge, *Carex Spissa*, is a grasslike perennial herb with blue-green foliage, native to California and Baja California. It is a host plant for *Harbison's Dun Skipper, *euphyes vestris harbisonii**, a dull, grayish-brown butterfly found almost exclusively in San Diego County. This butterfly was named by Charles F. Harbison, grandson of Alpine beekeeper John S. Harbison.



Coast Live Oak



Engelmann Oak

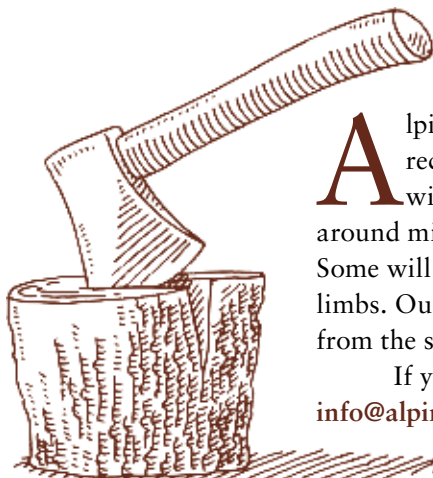


Basket Rush



San Diego Sedge

FREE FIREWOOD



Alpine Historical Society members and friends reading this newsletter are receiving **first notice** of **FREE** firewood at the John DeWitt museum. We will have lots of freshly cut eucalyptus wood available free to the public around mid-November. The wood will not be cured nor cut to fireplace sizes. Some will be very large trunk sections, some will be large- to medium-sized limbs. Our contractor will shred the smaller brush into mulch and remove it from the site. You must load your own truck, trailer, or vehicle.

If you want to put your name on the list, please send an email to info@alpinehistory.org or call Tom at 619-885-8063. Due to space limitations, we may need to schedule the pick-up in shifts.

TIMELINE: ALPINE 1883



One of the most remarkable stories of early homesteaders settling in Alpine is the story of **Louisa Alcott Snow Willett**.

Louisa Snow was born in Bangor, Maine, in 1813. She moved to Brecksville, Ohio, with her parents in 1837 and soon thereafter started her career teaching girls classes in a log cabin schoolhouse. Her long career of teaching included positions in Ohio, Illinois, Kentucky and Maine. Astronomy and Botany were among her favorite teaching subjects.

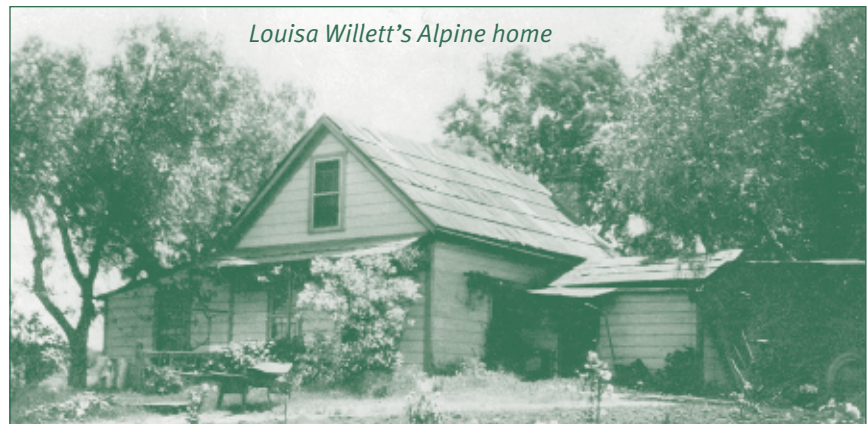
Although dates and locations have not been located, we know that at a young age she married Louis Vimont Willett. Sadly, Mr. Willett died during their first year of marriage and Louisa Snow Willett never remarried.

About 1883, Louisa moved to our growing town and found a suitable piece of land in the area now called Alpine Heights. Mrs. Willett established a homestead claim to 160 acres and proceeded to “prove up” the claim as required by the Homestead Act of 1862. This required that she build a house and improve the property within a five-year period. With help from some hired hands, she built a small house, a barn, a hen house and a corral. Quite a

remarkable accomplishment for a 70-year old single woman!

As it turns out, Louisa Willett is one of those rare individuals who leaves a lasting impact on their community. Mrs. Willett named her homestead “*Mt. Pisgah Ranch*” and set aside a small plot for the *Mt. Pisgah Cemetery*, the first burial ground in Alpine. Louisa was very enthusiastic about Alpine and in 1883 she enticed her nephew, **John Milton Snow**, to move with his wife and five children to Alpine, where they established a homestead just north of the Willett parcel.

Louisa was an active member of the community church, and lived her faith by lending a helping hand to everyone she met. When she passed away at the age of 94, she was the last person to be buried in her Mt. Pisgah Cemetery.



SWISS HOMESTEADERS IN ALPINE?

In our timeline series we have often identified early settlers coming to Alpine and establishing a homestead claim. You may recall that the Homestead Act of 1862 awarded up to 160 acres of public land to any adult who had not taken up arms against the



United States, including women and immigrants who applied for citizenship.

On a recent trip to Andermatt, Switzerland, we learned something about how this law affected folks half a world away. The innkeeper at 3 Konige & Post Hotel told us that prior to 1880 their economy was largely based on dairy farming and hospitality for people traveling through their village.

As might be expected, many of the young men in town were employed maintaining the roads in the area. Then, during the 1880's, a railroad was built through the town, making travel much faster and reducing horse and buggy traffic.

Soon the town realized that younger men were no longer needed for road building and repairing jobs. So, to avoid widespread unemployment, many of the young men were given passage to California, where they became immigrant homesteaders. The community of Andermatt paid their travel expenses and gave them each a dairy cow to start up a farm—and they got free land from the U.S. Government.

Although we have no evidence that any of these early Swiss homesteaders came to Alpine, it is interesting to learn how immigrants were welcomed to this country nearly 150 years ago to help build the American West.

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Address Service Requested

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CONSERVATION
SOCIETY**

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We're on the Web!
www.alpinehistory.org

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name _____ Date _____

Street Address/P.O. Box: _____

City/ST/Zip: _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Send Newsletters via: E-mail U.S. Mail

Membership Category (Please check one):

- Student \$5 Individual \$25 Nonprofit \$30 Business \$50
 Senior (1) \$15 Family \$35 Nonprofit Life \$600 Business Life \$1,000
 Senior (2) \$20 Life \$500

Amount Enclosed:

Membership \$ _____
Donation \$ _____
TOTAL \$ _____

Volunteer Opportunities:

- Museum Open Houses History Day
 Programs & Events Oral Histories
 Exhibit Development Archival Data Entry
 Garden Maintenance Other _____

Please complete this form and include your check made payable to the Alpine Historical Society, a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.