

An Alpine History Mystery:

How Did Zumbrota Road Get Its Name?

June 2014

Many of the roads in Alpine carry the name of Alpine's earliest settlers. A good example is Foss Road, named after the Edward & Caroline Foss family who moved to Alpine in 1875 and established a ranch called Tule Springs where they raised all kinds of fruits and vegetables and also established one of the earliest Turkey farms in eastern San Diego County. Harbison Canyon Road is another example, taking its name from John Harbison, King of the Beekeepers, who set up his apiary along the Sweetwater River in the area we call Harbison Canyon. And we will always remember Alpine's earliest benefactors, Benjamin and Harriet Arnold, as we travel along Arnold Way. Did you know that before Old Highway 80, Arnold Way was the primary route into Alpine for travelers coming up the hill from San Diego?



Of course, not all of Alpine's roads are named after our pioneer settlers. Some are named for landmarks that still exist or are memories of the past. Take Tavern Rd for example; this roadway got its name from "Ye Alpine Tavern" that once graced the southwest corner of Tavern Road and Arnold Way. Sadly the Tavern burned to the ground in 1955. Bell Bluff Truck Trail is the rustic country road that crosses Bell Bluff Mountain, and there can be no doubt that Viejas Creek Trail gets its name from the waterway over which it crosses. Willows Road east of Alpine got its name from the famous Willows Resort that was demolished, but for a few remaining cabins, when contractors pushed I-8 past our wonderful little town. Perhaps one of the most recognizable landmark roads in Alpine is Victoria Drive, which takes its name from the iconic rock formation in the shape of Queen Victoria's profile that can still be seen today in the area of Victoria Drive just east of Coyote Road.

From Victoria Rock, if you head east on Victoria Drive and turn left on Anderson Road, the second street on the right is Zumbrota Road. Now there's an interesting name. As far as we know, there has never been a Zumbrota family living in Alpine and there are no landmarks by that name either. So where did the name come from? Searching the internet takes us to only one place, Zumbrota, MN, where the local Zumbrota Area Historical Society website tells us that in 1856 German & Scandinavian settlers moving west from Massachusetts found the beautiful Zumbro River Valley much to their liking and established the town of Zumbrota. Well that is very interesting, but it really gives us no clue about why a road in Alpine bears that unusual name.

Zumbrota Road

Do you know how Zumbrota Road got its name? Well that is our Alpine History Mystery question for June. If you know the answer, send us a note to mystery@alpinehistory.org. Need help solving this one? Come visit us at the museum open house from 2 to 4 pm on Saturday, June 28 or Sunday, June 29, where docents will be on hand to help you solve this mystery. And for just \$10 you can purchase a T-shirt boasting: "I Solved the Alpine History Mystery". All proceeds support your Alpine History Museum, a 501 c-3 non-profit organization. The museum is located at 2116 Tavern Road in Alpine.

Alpine History Mysteries are created by Tom Myers from stories, collections, and archives maintained by the Alpine Historical Society.