

### Upcoming events:

- **March 30 & 31:**  
Museum Open House
- **April 14:**  
General Membership Meeting, Miss Alpine Celebration—50 Years
- **April 27 & 28:**  
Museum Open House

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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

Program & Potluck Lunch • Sunday, April 14, 2019

## Miss Alpine Celebration – 50 Years

The first **Miss Alpine** was crowned in April of 1968. She was 16-year-old **Christine Higgins**. The pageant was sponsored by the Alpine Chamber of Commerce, and was held at a packed Alpine Elementary School auditorium.

Over the years other titles have been added to the program. In the 80's and 90's **Little Miss, Junior Miss** and **Teen** divisions were added. Alpine had a few former Teen title holders who went on to be crowned **Miss California USA** and **Teen USA** and first runner up, **Miss Teen USA**.



We are pleased to have **Miss Alpine 1971, Celeste Irvine Damron** as our guest speaker along with current **Director Kathy Foster**.

Over the last 50 years, hundreds of young women have participated in this great community ambassador pageant program giving thousands of volunteer hours to many organizations throughout San Diego County. Thank you all for supporting this wonderful organization.



**Please bring a potluck item to share for the luncheon which begins at 1:00 p.m. or arrive by 1:45 p.m. for the brief General Membership Meeting followed immediately by our program.**

**Admission is FREE, but your donation helps to defray the cost of programs.**

**Location: The Woman's Club, 2156 Alpine Blvd. Seating is limited, so please make reservations early by calling Tom at (619) 885-8063 or send an email request to [info@alpinehistory.org](mailto:info@alpinehistory.org).**

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

- Which of the following is **not** true?
  - The average lifespan of a bobcat is 75 years.
  - Bobcats are twice the size of housecats, but have a much shorter tail.
  - Bobcats are usually nocturnal and their preferred food is rabbit.
- Why did the Historical Society launch a Capital Campaign?
  - To move the Capital of California to Alpine.
  - To raise funds for essential plumbing & sewage repairs.
  - To sound more British as in "That's a capital idea old chap".
- Which of the following **is** true about Albon Athearn?
  - He was the younger brother of Caroline Foss and Sophronia Nichols.
  - He received a homestead patent in 1885 for land adjacent to Edward Foss.
  - He was the first Sunday School Superintendent in Alpine.
  - All of the above.

## CAPITAL CAMPAIGN OFF TO A GOOD START!

**R**ecently, we announced our **Capital Campaign Fundraising** effort to raise money needed for urgent plumbing and sewer repairs at the John DeWitt Museum property. In December 2018, we discovered that the septic system for the Caretaker's house was not leaching properly and was nearing the end of its useful life. We also discovered that the water service line for the Caretaker's Residence is deteriorated and near failure due to age—we believe it was installed in the 1940's. Complete failure of either system would make this building unfit for occupancy by our caretaker, his wife, and three teenage-to-adult children. We have met with contractors, studied possible solutions, and determined that the estimated cost for these urgent repairs is \$8,000, a huge cost for a small museum that operates on a budget of about \$25,000 per year.

We are happy to report that response to our initial request has been gratifying. To date, we have raised nearly \$3,500 toward the cost of these urgent repairs.

We are very grateful for the generous contributions received from the following members: *Carlette Anderson, Joan Anderson, Marcia Bair, Franklin Ball, Susan Barker, Kathy Bartonicek, Bob & Sharon Beale, Brabazon Alpine Paving, David Carey, David & Lisa Celeste, Brenda Clark, Vikki & Paul Coffey, Janet Harris, Lindy Harshberger, Diane Keltner, Norman & Delores Kling, Joanne & Martin Marugg, Judy Matlock, Ronald & Carol Matzenauer, Tom & Judy Myers, Joseph Sisson, Dave & Donna Smith, Gary & Suzanne Smith, Sandra Smith, Anne Tarr, RGT Charitable Trust, VFW Post 9578, William & Joan Waterworth, Jim & Sue Whitt, and Genna Yoder.*

If you have not yet contributed, please consider making your gift today to our Capital Campaign. The Alpine Historical Society is a registered 501-c (3) non-profit organization so your contributions to this campaign are fully deductible in accordance with tax laws. Contributions should be addressed to Alpine Historical Society, PO Box 382, Alpine, CA 91903.

## MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

**A Warm Welcome to Our New Members:** Charles Cantale, Vonnie & Mando Sanchez

**A Grateful Thank You to Our Renewing Members:** Sharon & Bob Beale, Brenda Clark, Linda Dean, Gerald & Kimberlee Dobbs, Pat Dolbeck, Marc & Marilyn Fox, Judy Matlock, Joan McCurry, Betty McMil-

len, Michael & Lorraine Nelson, Michael Nelson II, Scarlett & Gary Spencer, Linda Whitlock

**Many thanks to the following for making generous financial donations to the Historical Society:** Gerald & Kimberlee Dobbs, Malissa Rodenburg, Linda Whitlock

**Special Thanks to the following businesses who renewed their annual membership in the Historical Society for 2019:**

- ALFA •
- Barons Market •

## 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 • 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 • RGT Charitable Trust

**CURRENT MEMBERSHIPS:** Life Members ~ 49, Supporting Members ~ 85, Members up for renewal ~ 11

## ONE HUNDRED YEARS AND MORE...

**A**t the John DeWitt Museum, we have artifacts from the early days of Alpine all the way up to present day items. Pictured here are four items that are over 100 years old and the story behind each one.



This **J. Lancaster & Son Instantograph Patent 1/4-plate model view camera** was manufactured in Birmingham, England in 1893.

In 1888 a catalogue reference described the Instantograph camera with these words: *"This Apparatus is useful for all kinds of work,*

*instantaneous pictures of moving objects, Portraits, Groups, Landscapes, Architectural and Engineering Subjects, etc."*

It is camera number 13 from the Fred Bray Camera Collection, donated to the Alpine Historical Society in 2014 by Verna Poorbaugh, executor of the Fred Bray estate.

This century-old **washboard** was produced by the National Washboard Company of Chicago, Saginaw, and Memphis. It carries the U.S. Patent date of September 7, 1915, and the model number 181.

In 1918, the book titled *"The History of Saginaw County, Michigan"* claimed the National Washboard Co. produced 125,000 per day. From the late 1800s to about 1950, just about every home had a washboard for hand scrubbing laundry.

Now they are seen primarily in museums or used as an instrument in Cajun bands or similar grass roots bands.



This hand-powered **Corn Mill, Model #1**, was built by the C.S. Bell Company, in Hillsboro, Ohio.

Charles Singleton Bell began operating his own company in 1858, making post-mounted bells using cast steel alloy. In 1869, the company began making other products including the Model #1 grinding mill.

In 1894, the company incorporated and changed its name to The C.S. Bell Company. Burr mills such as these were used on family farms from the late 1800's to grind small quantities of grain for home use.



Donna Lockhart, a retired nurse, donated this **wheelchair** to the John DeWitt Museum. According to Lockhart, she purchased this chair in Pennsylvania and brought it to California. This wheelchair is made with wood frame, wicker back and seat, adjustable backrest and large, spoked wheels for self-propulsion. Donna believed that this was used during and after the American Civil War (1861-1865). The earliest found image of a wheelchair is on a 6th century Chinese sarcophagus.

Rolling chairs were used by wealthy individuals in Europe from the 16th to the 19th centuries. Early Americans had little use for wheelchairs because the survival rates were very low for persons with disabling injuries to the spinal cord or lower extremities. With improved medical technologies, wheelchairs were in higher demand during and after the Civil War and World War I.





## CONSERVATION CORNER

One of the joys of sharing your home turf with wildlife is that you get to see animals that you might not otherwise see. For example, for several weeks in February, we have been watching a bobcat walk through our yard to drink from the water basin that we keep filled for thirsty wildlife. Unfortunately, when we tried to photograph the beautiful cat, it saw us first and found a place to hide. The cat has not ventured out during the daytime since that encounter. So, we got permission from Gerald and Buff Corsi to publish these photos that they took of a similar bobcat.

Here's some interesting information about bobcats:

**Taxonomic Sub-Species:** *Lynx rufus, baileyi* (Southwestern U.S. and Northwestern Mexico)

**Description:** The bobcat is about twice the size of a house cat with spotted fur. It has a short, “bobbed” tail about one to two

inches long and tufts of hair in the ears.

***Lynx rufus*** is generally nocturnal and strictly carnivorous. It prefers rabbits, but also hunts rodents, birds, mice, and reptiles. Bobcats do not prey on livestock. Their average lifespan is about 15 years. Females usually have one litter of two or three young in the spring. The young are blind at birth and are nursed for two months. Youngsters usually are self-sufficient by six months old.

Writing in *Wildlife Conservation*, Nov/Dec 1994, Gary Turbak described the bobcat this way: “A highly adaptive animal, *Lynx rufus* is the dominant American cat, able to out-compete populations of cougar and coyote, and only seceding to *Lynx canadensis* in the north as a result of lesser performance



Photos courtesy of Gerald and Buff Corsi ©California Academy of Sciences

in snow.”

You can experience all kinds of fascinating creatures around your home by creating a wildlife-friendly habitat in your garden, yard, patio, or neighborhood open space. Wildlife just need food sources, water, cover and a place to raise their young to thrive. For more information, contact Carlette at [WildlifeHabitats@aol.com](mailto:WildlifeHabitats@aol.com)

If you have wildlife photos you would like to share with us, send them to [info@alpinehistory.org](mailto:info@alpinehistory.org). Tell us when and where you saw the critter and give us any other information or insights you may have. With your permission, we will publish your photo in a future newsletter.

## RAIN, GLORIOUS RAIN

We have been hearing a lot of comments about the recent rains in Alpine. Our “unofficial” backyard rain-catcher shows that we have received almost 18 inches of rain since January 1, 2019. Compare that to the same time period last year when we had only 6 inches of rain. Although last year was called a drought, it was nowhere near the driest year in Alpine. That record goes to the year 1877 when the total rainfall for the entire year was 0.00 inches.

One of the best stories in San Diego rainfall history begins in the year 1912 when the City of San Diego completed the Morena Dam to collect water for the city water supply. The next three years saw drought conditions and by 1915, the city decided to hire a rainmaker to fill the reservoir. Charles Hatfield took the job. The City agreed to pay him \$10,000 when the reservoir was full. Although a contract was never signed, Hatfield and his brother proceeded to build his rainmaking tower beside Lake Morena, ready to make rain by January.



*Charles Hatfield in 1919, mixing up his chemicals.*

©San Diego History Center, Photograph Collection

On January 5, 1916, it started to rain. Glorious rain! And LOTS of it! It did not stop raining until January 28. By that time there was enough rain to fill the reservoir twice. But, of course, the second half of the rain overflowed the dam and proceeded downstream, adding to the volume of runoff along the way. Soon, there were reports of downed phone lines, marooned trains, destroyed bridges, flooding farms and houses. The Sweetwater Dam overflowed as did the dam at Lower Otay

Lake, which broke on January 27. It is estimated that 20 people died and nearly \$4 million in damage occurred due to the rain.

The City said they would not pay Hatfield unless he agreed to accept liability for the damages. Hatfield said the damages were not his fault, the City should have taken precautions. Although Hatfield continued to practice rainmaking around the country until about 1950, he was never paid by the City of San Diego and he was never called back again.

## TIMELINE: ALPINE 1878

Not much is written about **Albon C. Athearn** in the annals of Alpine history, but what we know of his story is an interesting reflection on the homesteading period in the latter part of the 19th century. Albon Athearn was the younger brother of **Caroline Athearn Foss** and **Sophonra Athearn Nichols**. You may recall that Caroline or Carrie, married Civil War veteran **Edward Foss** in 1870, and in 1876 the couple, with two sons, **Charles** and **Percy**, moved to the area that would later be named Alpine. Much of what we know about Albon comes from letters written from Carrie or Edward to family members back east and from diary entries by their eldest sons, Charles and Percy.

The first mention of Albon (*Allie*), is in a letter from Edward to his mother in December 1877. The year was very dry and farmers whose crops depended on rain were hard-pressed to feed their families (see story "Rain, Glorious Rain"). Edward wrote "I think of going to 'Frisco to work in the store and leave Allie here with the family." In December a year later, Carrie wrote to her mother "Brother Allie is pretty well and has taken up a few acres (thirty or forty), one acre of which he is going to experiment on this winter by planting

potatoes and beans. He has cut and hauled logs for a little cabin and has commissioned digging a well. He has a few young trees, apple and cottonwood, ready to set out on it whenever the rains begin."

The Bureau of Land Management records show that Albon C. Athearn received a land patent for a 160-acre homestead on June 25, 1885. His land was directly north of the Foss family homestead, sharing a common border from east to west. On this homestead, Albon pursued farming and beekeeping. Some of the crops he raised were blackberries, beans, melons, and apples. Even in those days pocket gophers were a problem and Albon paid his nephew, Charlie Foss, 10 cents to poison the critters.

Describing Albon, Beatrice LaForce wrote: "He helped his sister sometimes, but also proved to be an added burden. Troubled with 'Catarrh', Albon's health improved [after moving to Alpine], but he was never completely well and, they say he always carried a baking powder can to church to spit in. (Catarrh is a build-up of mucus in an airway or cavity of the body. It usually affects the back of the nose, the throat or the sinuses). Albon lived alone in a small house built for him by the labor of Mr. Edward Foss and Mr. John

Snow. A nice site for a home with its huge trees and the hill sloping gently up behind it."

In the community, Albon was the first Sunday School Superintendent for the group that gathered to worship at the one-room schoolhouse that served Alpine from 1881 to 1886. He was a charter member of the Community Church that was organized as a mission project of the Congregational Church in 1894, and in 1901 worshipped with the congregation in the new Town Hall.

On April 17, 1912, Percy Foss wrote in his diary that Uncle Allie sold his place to Mrs. Campbell for \$2,000.

Edward Foss died September 16, 1898 of heart failure while snapping beans under an oak tree. He was buried under that tree. Carrie Foss died in 1905 and was buried in an unmarked grave at the Cemetery on the Hill, now called Alpine Cemetery. Sometime before Carrie's death, sister **Annie Athearn** moved from San Francisco to stay with the Foss family, dividing her time between caring for Carrie's children and caring for her brother, Albon. Annie died March 19, 1912, and was buried beside Carrie.

Albon died in 1919, and is believed to be buried alongside the Foss family in Alpine Cemetery.

### ALPINE HISTORICAL AND CONSERVATION SOCIETY

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**President:** Tom Myers  
**1<sup>st</sup> Vice President,**  
**Programs:** Vikki Coffey  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President,**  
**Membership:** Judy Myers  
**3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President,**  
**Property:** Dave Smith  
**Secretary:** Janet Harris  
**Treasurer:** Lisa Celeste

**Archivist:** Carol Morrison  
**Director:** Norm Kling  
**Director:** Jennifer Tschida,  
*Social Media*  
**Lifetime Director:** Elma Terry  
**Webmaster:** Pene Manale  
**Caretakers:** Baltazar & Laura  
 Marquez

#### MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the *Alpine Historical & Conservation Society* is to encourage the community in an effort to retain structures and sites of historical significance, conserve natural resources and parkland, make available the visible evidence of the history of our community, and develop historical programs which emphasize the contributions of the various cultural, ethnic, religious and social groups that comprise the Alpine area.

**ANSWERS TO POP QUIZ:** 1—a. The average life of a bobcat is 15 years, not 75. (page 4); 2—b. To raise funds. (page 2); 3—d. All statements are true. (page 5)

Alpine Historical & Conservation Society  
P. O. Box 382  
Alpine, CA 91903-0382

*Address Service Requested*

**ALPINE  
HISTORICAL &  
CONSERVATION  
SOCIETY**

P. O. Box 382  
Alpine, CA 91903-0382

Phone: 619-659-8740  
E-mail: [info@alpinehistory.org](mailto:info@alpinehistory.org)

**We're on the Web!**  
[www.alpinehistory.org](http://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):

- |  |  |   |  |
|--|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student \$5     | <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$25 | <input type="checkbox"/> Nonprofit \$30       | <input type="checkbox"/> Business \$50         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior (1) \$15 | <input type="checkbox"/> Family \$35     | <input type="checkbox"/> Nonprofit Life \$600 | <input type="checkbox"/> Business Life \$1,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior (2) \$20 | <input type="checkbox"/> Life \$500      |   |  |

**Amount Enclosed:**

Membership \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
TOTAL \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Volunteer Opportunities:**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Museum Open Houses  | <input type="checkbox"/> History Day         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Programs & Events   | <input type="checkbox"/> Oral Histories      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exhibit Development | <input type="checkbox"/> Archival Data Entry |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Garden Maintenance  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____         |

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