

MEMORIES OF ALPINE

As told by Pearl Foss to Blanche McCall

My parents came from Reading, Massachusetts, to San Francisco by boat around the Horn, in the fall of 1874. In February, 1875, they came to Alpine where there were just a few families. They bought our place, "Tule Springs," from Adam Beaty, who had a squatter's right to the property, as it was called in those days, and paid him \$1200 for 160 acres. He was a poor man and a gambler, and that night he went to the city and by morning he didn't have a cent left. Our receipt bears the signature of President Grover Cleveland.

At that time there were only three stores in San Diego. Hamilton and Marston were in business together and had everything from shoes to sugar. Sugar then cost \$1.00 per 6 pounds.

When we went to San Diego it was a three day trip. We went by wagon and took one day to go to San Diego, one day to shop, and the third day to come home.

El Cajon was a lovely valley with a few people and grain fields.

Mr. Webb, who lived in Harbison Canyon, named Alpine because the mountains made him think of the Swiss Alps. Later Mr. Stephenson got up a petition to have it permanently named Alpine.

There was no Post Office here then, nor store. The first store was held by a Mr. Whitney. Mr. Charles Emory started the Post Office, and then took over the store from Mr. Whitney.

My brother, Thaxter and Percy and I still live here in Alpine at "Tule Springs," my brother Robert lives in Escondido, and Harry lives in Pasadena.

FAVORITE FAMILY RECIPES

A favorite recipe of Miss Pearl Foss and Mr. Percy Foss is Boston Brown Bread. This recipe was brought by their mother in 1875 to Alpine in a cook book which is still cherished.

1 pt. of yellow corn meal.
1 pt. of rye meal or graham meal.
½ cup of molasses.
½ cup of sugar.
1 tsp. soda dissolved in 1 cup milk.

Add 1 quart milk and a little salt. Pour into steam kettle and steam 2 ½ hours. Then bake in moderate oven 1 ¼ hours.

ALPINE MEMORIES BY BLANCHE MCCALL

In 1875 there were no schools in Alpine and it presented a problem to Mr. and Mrs. Edward A. Foss on how to educate their two small children. It was decided to have the first school in what is now Percy Foss' bedroom and the young teacher, Miss Beaucamp, boarded and roomed with them.

Later, a school house was built at the old Field ranch, on a site to the east of Romain's on South Grade road. After some years, it was moved to where the Hohanshelt's now live, and when the present school house (the frame building) was built in the 1890's the old building was sold. It was moved to Tavern road, near the Huey ranch, where it is now being occupied as a home.

During this time there was considerable water in the creek running past the school at the Field place. They even had a bridge to ford it; and every now and then the boys would go for a swim. There was a pool and it was deep enough for the boys to dive into, and as Percy relates, "They'd catch the dickens when they got caught." But such fun!

There was a lot of water rushing through the gully behind Dr. Sophronia A. Nichols, who lived in that little white house on the Tavern road near the Huey ranch., down to Tule Springs, and children did a lot of swimming and wading there, too. One year it rained so much, and the water rose so high until it drowned out the orchard planted at Tule Springs. All that remains are the 70 year old pear trees planted by Percy's and Pearl's father.

School trustees in 1882 were Dr. H. M. Johnson, Adam Beatty and H. H. Field. The teacher during that year was Miss Marion Ward, followed by Miss Eleanor L. Finley, who recorded 29 pupils in the school. Strangely enough, at that time the records showed no school during the months of May and June, and sometimes July, but school would start again in July or August, with a week vacation for Thanksgiving and two weeks more for Christmas. Frequently, there was no school in January, and in February it would resume until April.

School days were fixed by the school board, which was governed by the six months minimum of school required at that time by the State of California, and the amount of money available. Now, the state requires a minimum of 170 days of school.

Classrooms were rugged in those days with nothing to sit upon but boards or benches, and no desks such as are now used. All grades were in one room, and children were all ages. Teachers were generally young, one being only 15!

Children either walked or rode horseback to school. Mostly they walked, and it was nothing to walk four miles. Percy started school at four (to keep his older brother company) and had to walk four miles a day!

Wild flowers were plentiful, with many varieties no longer common. The only wild fruit was the grape and the elderberry, and Percy and Pearl both recall the delicious elderberry pies their mother made.