

Memories of Alpine
By Blanche McCall

At the turn of the century a most remarkable person lived in Alpine, doing her best practicing medicine during the horse and buggy era. Unusual at that time for women to become doctors, Sophronia A. Nichols received her diploma in the year 1874 when she graduated from the School of Medicine of Boston University.

She was in her sixties when she came to Alpine, some time around 1894, a strong husky woman, who kept her hair cut very short in a mannish style, and let nothing stop her when called upon to attend a sick person. She'd hitch up her own horse and buggy and go as quickly as possible, rain or shine. If she had to, she'd walk.

Dr. Nichols lived in Alpine in the little white house on Tavern Road at the corner of the Huey Ranch. She was active until 1901 when she suddenly had a stroke after which she moved to Rancho Barona to live with her daughter and granddaughter until her death in 1903.

This energetic woman practiced medicine in Cleveland, Ohio, and later in Petaluma, Riverside, and San Diego, California. She was a member of the California State Homeopathic Society, joining on May 10, 1893. Among her accomplishments was playing the pipe organ which she learned to do after she was forty years old.

Her granddaughter, Mrs. Myrtle Sisson, lives in San Diego at 4177 First Avenue. Dr. Nichols was Mrs. Edward A. Foss, whose daughter and sons continue to live in Alpine at Tule Springs.

(HISTORICAL SOCIETY NOTE: DR. NICHOLS WAS ACTUALLY THE SISTER OF MRS. EDWARD A FOSS—THIS MAY HAVE BEEN A TYPOGRAPHICAL ERROR.)