

Who was the first settler in the valley on the west side of Alpine?

If you ever explored Peutz Valley Road on the western edge of Alpine, you probably guessed the answer to our mystery. Nikolas Peutz (pronounced Poitz not Pitts) emigrated from Germany in 1880 and after establishing his ranch in what is now called Peutz Valley he sent away for his bride. Many say she was a mail order bride with whom he had briefly corresponded but never before met.

In the Alpine Historical Society Archives, we found an article written by Ruth Loring Folger in the September 30, 1965 edition of the *Town and Country News*, a small Alpine newspaper at the time. The Lorings lived in San Diego and had a summer cabin in Peutz Valley. Excerpts from Ruth Folger's article give us a glimpse of the Peutz family and what it was like to live in Alpine in the early 1900's. Here's what she said:



This dark, stocky, bearded man must have been extremely intelligent as well as very energetic... he had several enterprises going that brought him income. Our contact was generated through our habit over the years of buying a live turkey on Thanksgiving and Christmas from Mr. Peutz. He always brought to San Diego, for the holidays, a wagon load, double decked, with wooden crates filled with turkeys to market.

The Peutz ranch was well established with vegetable garden, fruit trees, and livestock. There was a "milk cellar" dug deep into the ground across the driveway from the kitchen, with steps that led down to the screen door. Inside the light was dim as it came from a rather narrow strip of screen under the pitched roof. There was a long three-tiered table that held the wide shallow milk pans where the cream was always skimmed each day. It was cool there and had its own special atmosphere. Every week Mrs. Peutz had her regular customers for butter and cottage cheese in Alpine Center. I often drove up with her and it was quite clear she was a very well-liked and respected person.

No one could have been kinder to a child than these two quiet and deeply religious people. I never heard either say a harsh word and while my constant questioning as I trailed him about his work could have been a trial, Mr. Peutz always answered my questions with patience.

Our wonderful summers at camp came to an end when Mr. Peutz died one winter. Mrs. Peutz told my Mother he had a habit of cracking apricot and peach pits and eating the kernels. A doctor told her, too late, that they were poison. She sold the ranch, (I think to someone named Foster) and then moved to San Diego where she had a little house on Robinson Street. Later, my mother told me she married a widower who had five children. She had always grieved that she had no children during her marriage to Mr. Peutz. I feel sure she must have been a wonderful mother to this family.

Congratulations to Lynn Owens, Annie Buckwald, Lisa Kearley, Bobbie Hawkins, Sylvia Asaro, and Joyce Walter for coming up with the correct solution to this mystery.

Jim Hinds, the Alpine Historical Society Archivist for over 15 years, collected and organized original issues of *The Alpine Sun*, *Alpine Echo* and the *Town & Country News* that were published from 1958 to 1967. As the papers deteriorated with age, Jim envisioned scanning and saving them in a more durable format. Earlier this year the Historical Society completed scanning and archiving these papers to digital format. It pleased Jim to know that the documents are now preserved for and accessible to future generations. Jim passed away on July 29 and we will greatly miss his leadership and insight in managing our Archives.