

Alpine History Mystery for October 2013: A Streetcar in Alpine

This month's mystery involves Alpine's first and only streetcar. Oh, you didn't know that Alpine once had a streetcar? Well, it's true and it dates back to about 1915. It was then that Mr. Sherman, a veteran of the Spanish American War, purchased an Old San Diego street car and had it moved to Alpine. Mr. Sherman operated the streetcar mostly on weekends and holidays. You didn't need a ticket or reservation, just show up. And a lot of folks did just that. Now in 1915 there were less than 240 people living in Alpine, and they were fairly well spread out. So you wouldn't think they had a great need for streetcar transportation back then. But, it seems that this was a very popular addition to our little town.

Some of you are reading this story and saying "This can't be true", so here's a picture from the Historical Society archives showing the streetcar being delivered to Alpine.



To continue our story, Warren and Emma Foster, who lived on their ranch in Peutz Valley since the early 1900's, liked the streetcar so much that they bought it from Mr. Sherman in 1921. By then, it needed some refurbishment and they set right to work cleaning it up, remodeling the inside and sprucing up the exterior. It was then returned to service and was a popular attraction for folks in Alpine. Although it changed owners several more times, it continued to operate on a regular schedule until 1987 when it finally went out of service for good.

But, here's the mystery: This former San Diego streetcar, relocated to Alpine to serve the community for nearly 72 years was not used here for transportation. There are no remnants of any tracks in the road or any overhead power lines for that matter. So, what purpose did the streetcar serve in Alpine? That is our mystery question for October.

You can find the answer to this mystery at the Alpine History Museum, located at 2116 Tavern Road in Alpine. Come visit the museum Open House on October 26 & 27 from 2 to 4pm to learn more. Admission is free to the Alpine History Museum.