

THE ALPINE SUN SHOPPER – December 1, 2011
Tattered Tidbits: Alpine Historical Society

ALPINE THROUGH THE EYES OF A PIONEER

F. B. Walker, a pioneer of Alpine and founder of Alpine's Willow's Resort, wrote the following article that was published in the *San Diego Union* on January 1, 1898. His sense of pride and entrepreneurial approach is evident.

“The name of the little town of Alpine, which is situated among the mountains thirty miles from San Diego, in a northeasterly direction, is suggestive at once of the snowy ranges of Switzerland's celebrated mountains. The name Alpine is not only associated with the town of Alpine, but the country around within a radius of five miles, partakes of the same general character, as well as the name.

To San Diegans and those who know Alpine the name is synonymous with an invigorating atmosphere, bright sunshine and balmy breezes. No dense, damp fogs or raw winds visit this favored section, its distance from the coast tempering the breezes, which blow over thirty miles of mesa and mountain before reaching this friendly clime. What California is to the United States as a health resort, Alpine is to the state of California.

The altitude of the Alpine country varying from 1,500 to 2,500 feet, gives a variety of temperatures and conditions of climate, some of which are found to meet the requirements and desire of all who avail themselves of it. While those who are seeking health find a friend in the climate of Alpine, it is none the less beneficial to those who have lived near the coast long enough to have become tired of the monotony of its even temperature and ocean breezes.

It is sometimes necessary when large parties come to Alpine together to arrange for entertainment in advance, but such arrangements can always be made. The following resorts are some of those where a pleasant time can always be had, any and all of whom will satisfactorily care for those coming to them: “Alpine Center Hotel,” kept by Mr. Campbell; “The Oaks,” by J. A. Love; “Alpine Berry Fields,” by Mrs. F. B. Walker; “Villa Viejas,” by S. H. Mauzy; Mrs. Dr. Pontius, Mrs. F. Hill, Mrs. R. B. Lyness and T. Horton.

The babbling brook which runs on forever is not a stranger to Alpine, and unlike so many streams in the state of California, it is not “bottom-side up,” for here one may find secluded nooks beside a rivulet and be wooed to slumber by the musical ripple of its notes.

Shade trees, not the artificial creation of man, but noble trees whose grateful shade offered a welcome to the Mission Fathers more than a century ago, are found in abundance. The live oak, than which there is found no more graceful tree, has its home in these Alpine valleys.

Viejas Mountain, the peak of which is distant about four miles from the post office, and towering more than two thousand feet higher, affords a view such as few people have ever enjoyed. From this elevation, 3,950 feet, a great portion of the southwest corner of the United States is visible. On a clear day the ocean line can be traced from the Catalina islands to a point far distant below the Mexican line. Turning toward the interior, one sees a great part of Lower California and meets the Colorado Desert on the east. All the habitable portion of San Diego County is here unfolded to the eyes.

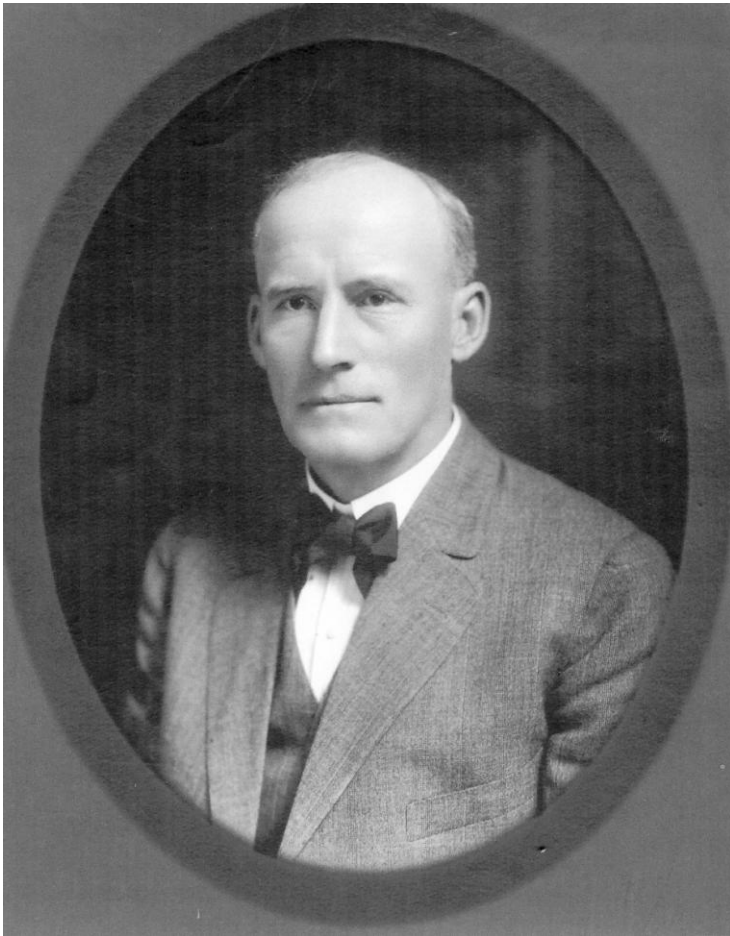
From the deciduous orchardist's standpoint Alpine has few rivals. All deciduous fruits thrive without irrigation and it is a fact well known to all housekeepers that the mountain fruit in flavor far surpasses that grown on the mesas nearer the coast, where irrigation is absolutely necessary. Scale is an unknown quantity

with us. Take away the expense of irrigation and the frequent spraying necessary lower down and more orchardists would find the balance at the end of the year on the right side of their books. For this reason the Alpine country is prosperous.

Alpine is reached by a ride of twenty-one miles over the Cuyamaca railroad from San Diego to Lakeside, thence by a charming staging trip of eleven miles over a good road and behind fast horses, the whole trip being made in four hours' time, the fare from San Diego to Alpine being \$1.25."

One can easily see that Mr. Walker, a farmer and an innkeeper, was a businessman at heart! This article was reprinted in a brochure "Alpine, Its Resorts and Resources." We'll visit other portions of the brochure in other articles and to follow how Alpine's first residents worked to develop and improve the community.

Carol Walker and her husband Paul lived in Alpine for 19 years. Carol is the webmaster and newsletter editor for the Alpine Historical Society. She can be reached at cwalker@alpinehistory.org or 619-467-7766.



F. B. Walker