Along The Lee Highway
Highway 80
Alpine Boulevard
in
Alpine

ALONG THE LEE HIGHWAY
HIGHWAY 80
ALPINE BOULEVARD
IN ALPINE

COLLECTION OF PHOTOGRAPHS
COMPILED BY CAROL WALKER
FOR USE IN THE
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Highway 80 used to run through the center of Alpine's business district. Now the Freeway, Interstate 8, completed in 1968, passes the town center about a quarter of a mile to the north. The former Highway 80 has been renamed Alpine Boulevard. (Page 8)

Public road maintenance did not extend far into the back country before 1900. Farmers and ranchers were obliged to develop and keep up these roads on their own.

In 1900 San Diego County voted over a million dollars to improve County roads which were mostly narrow dangerous trails. Using standard horse or mule drawn equipment construction began; however, political influence is said to have steered the direction of the word towards country properties of politicians. Neil Galloway comments: "As roads advanced eastward, money got less and less and the roads got narrower and narrower. Nevertheless, that was the start of good roads."

Old Highway 80 (Lee Highway), part of that improvement program, was all dirt, maintained with horses. During the rainy season horses could not get on the muddy ground in time to repair washes and ruts before the mud had hardened, setting the damage. The further the road from town, the more it was neglected, some stretches becoming impassable. To combat this condition a group of local men formed their own maintenance crew, all volunteer labor. (Page 255)

April 1987 comments:

When Interstate 8 freeway was finished in 1969 speeding past Alpine on the north side, some people gloomily prophesied that the village would now become a ghost town. The seventies soon proved how wrong that prediction was.

In 1971, the huge Laguna fire that burned a wide path from the higher mountains down through Alpine, destroyed numerous structures in its way, including many Alpine homes. As soon as the smoke cleared, people started rebuilding. And new building continued. The fire seemed to act as a catalyst towards growth.

Highway 80, which for decades had run through Alpine's town center, was renamed ALPINE BOULEVARD for a distance of about ten miles, from Dunbar Lane west to the east end of Willows Road. (Page 505)

EARLY ALPINE
OLD HIGHWAY 80

THE TOWN HALL LEFT CENTER WITH EUCALYPTUS GROVE ABOUT ONE YEAR OLD.
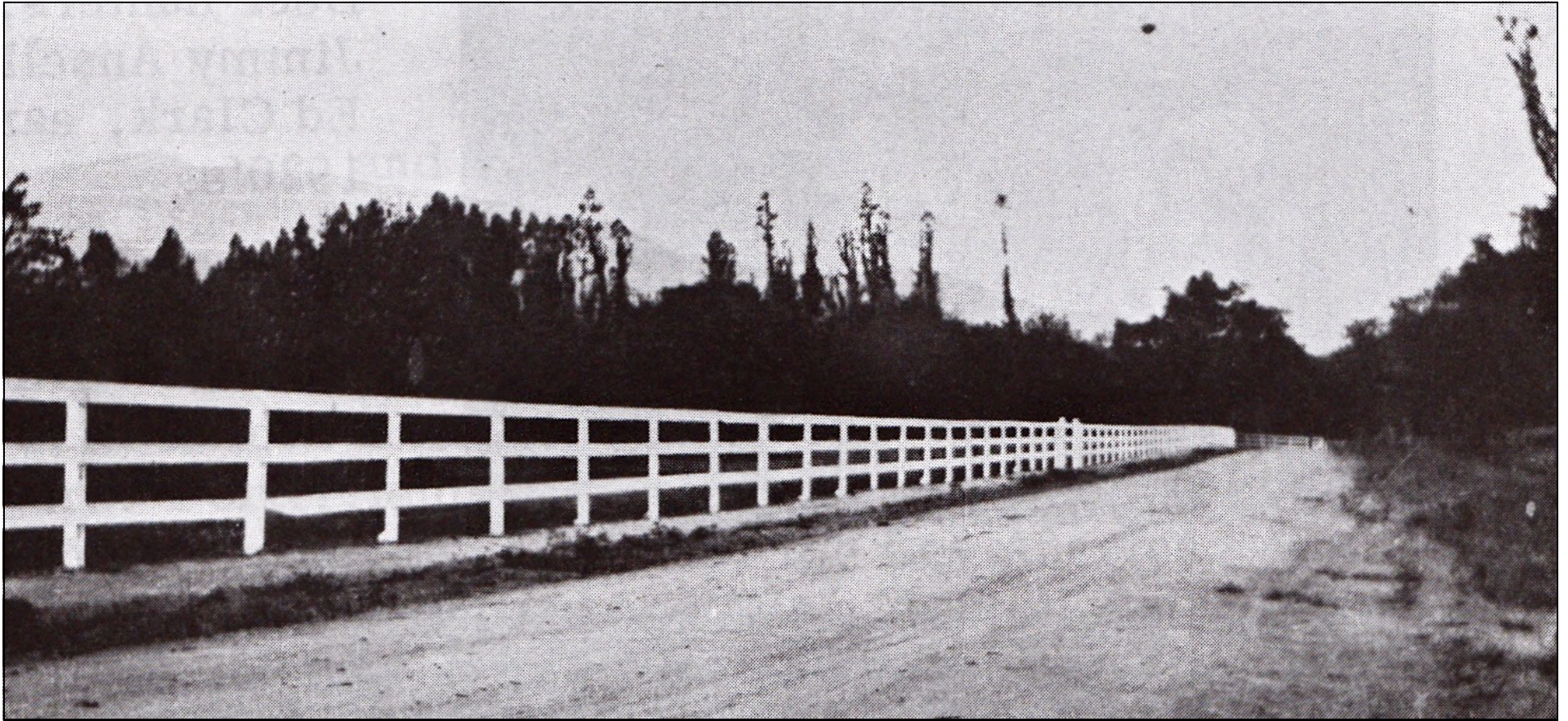ALPINE STORE JUST BEYOND TOWN HALL.
1900

ALPINE CENTER SCHOOL
1900

ROAD INTO ALPINE
CIRCA 1910

FENCE USED TO RUN ALONG THE LEFT SIDE OF THE ROAD
1910

SAN DIEGO STREETCAR BEING MOVED TO ALPINE CIRCA 1915

About 1915, a Spanish American War veteran named Sherman, who had been living with his family on a ranch in Japatul Valley, moved to Alpine Center and bought an old San Diego street car which he had hauled out to the present site of the LOG CABIN CAFÉ. From the street car the Shermans sold ice cream, soda pop and sandwiches on weekends and holidays to the passing motorists. Rumor says they removed about a third of the seats from one end and installed an ice box and counter; others say the food was handed out the street car windows.

In 1921, Warren and Emma Foster came up from Peutz Valley where they had been living on their ranch since the early 1900's, purchased the street car-ice cream stand, and remodeled it into the LOG CABIN CAFÉ by covering the outside with split logs and adding the dining room on the west side, enclosing the big oak tree inside with the top growing out of the roof. Inside the street car they used real log stools at the long counter, and equipped a café kitchen. (Page 284)

THE LOG CABIN CAFE
1936

LOG CABIN CAFÉ
ALPINE BOULEVARD—OLD HIGHWAY 80

Several small cafés have operated for a time up and down the mile and a half or so of Alpine Boulevard that is the village business strip, but only two have been in continuous operation for many years, the Log Cabin for half a century and Bailey's Café for more than a quarter century. (Page 287)

The Willows.
Alpine Calif.
#20

ENTRANCE TO THE WILLOWS RESORT
OLD HIGHWAY 80—ALPINE
CIRCA 1920s

**VIEW OF THE WILLOWS FROM
OLD HIGHWAY 80**

One day in 1902 a woman walking across the country stopped in and asked to spend the night. Of course, the family made room for her. When she left, after resting a day or so, the guest remarked that the farm was an ideal site for a resort. Busy farming, the Walkers gave little thought to her words at the time. Other people stopped in off the highway from time to time—old 80 then went right past the place—and after enjoying the Walkers' hospitality, many of the travelers made that same remark. Everyone wanted to come back. (Page 230)

From an early 1920's brochure:
"Just before reaching the broad Viejas grade on the Lee highway, the very essence of home is reached at The Willows as the guest is greeted at the door of this long established and hospitable resort." (Page 231)

ALPINE HIGHWAY GARAGE
1920
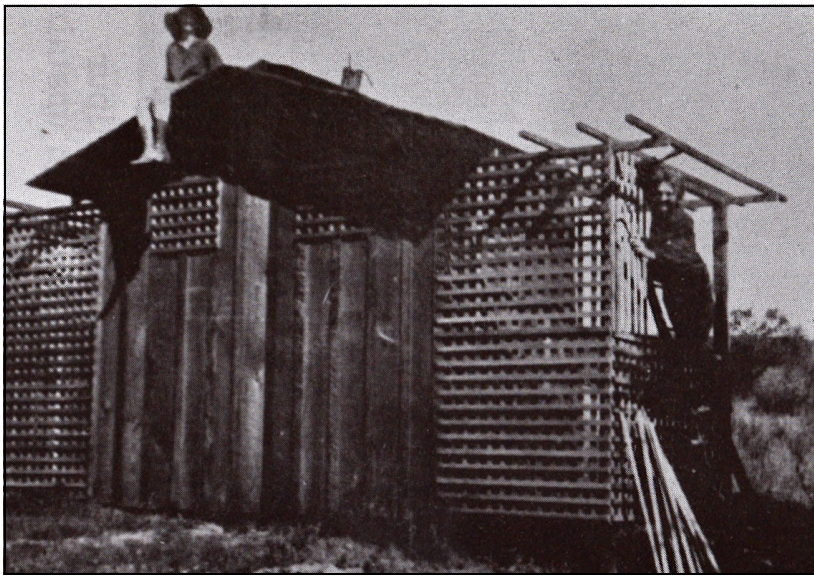
**THE COMFORT STATION—1920
ABOVE: MARIE CARLSON ON ROOF;
MARY ANSELL LATHER AT SIDE**

**BELOW: THE NEW COMFORT STATION, ON
RIGHT AT REAR OF THE
TOWN HALL BUILDING**

Echoes of the Past; The Comfort Station – This story taken from The Alpine Echo, July 16, 1962.

A grave situation had existed for some time. Visitors traveling highway 80 had increased greatly with the automobile, yet there was no public Comfort Station in the whole of Alpine! The time was 28 or 30 years ago when the title Rest Room had not been heard of and gasoline stations were unequipped for any emergency other than attending to the needs of the cars. The personal emergencies of the motorist had not been added to the architecture of the gas station.

Furthermore, there was no toilet in the Woman's Club building, formerly the Town Hall which the ladies had acquired in 1932. How building standards have changed. Imagine a Town Hall without a rest room and a coffee bar! Now we have to build a Powder room in a peanut stand.

As usual it was the women of the community who got behind the problem and saw to its solving. The need for a Comfort Station had long been recognized, but who was to pay for it? The ladies appealed to the County Board of Supervisors, who supplied a truckload of new redwood lumber. The men of the community then built, after proper excavation, in the rear of the Woman's Club parking lot, a neat two-roomed, two-seat outhouse, one side marked WOMEN, one marked MEN. But man—like the builders quit short of final touches—making the lath screens and applying the redwood stain.

So two leading Alpine Woman's Club members, Marie (Mrs. Lars) Carlson and Mary (Mrs. James) Ansell, finished the job.
Thus Alpine's first public COMFORT STATION came into being. The Woman's club was very proud of it, and more than a little glad to have it handy.

It was used for a number of years until the indoor toilet was installed in the club building. Whatever became of the redwood creation? (Page 305)

DARNELL'S GREEN PARROT LODGE

Rex and Bell Darnell, their son, Balfour, and daughters Isabel and Margery, came from Phillipsburg, New Jersey, to Alpine in October, 1921, arriving at Eagle's Nest Ranch, home of Mrs. Darnell's relatives, Lloyd Hill and his wife, Lillian. Eagle's Nest was across the road from the Willows up on the hill that now looks like a large rock pile; the house burned down in the 1930's.

After a month's visit in Alpine, the Darnells moved to San Diego where they built a home on Herman Avenue and ran a candy shop on 30th and University until late 1923, when they returned to Alpine to build their home and the GREEN PARROT LODGE.

According to Bal Darnell, the site was on Alpine's first subdivision. What is now Willowside Terrace was once part of the Eagle's Nest Ranch which Lloyd Hill subdivided into 28 lots, the first seven of which Rex Darnell bought; three on the highway and four back in the trees. About 1918 Mr. Hill had paid $8,000 for his 80-acre parcel, buying it from Charles Justice, a honey and hay buyer operating out of Imperial Valley and selling his produce by the carload lot from San Diego.

In October, 1923, too late to be included in the Resort Owner's brochure, Rex and Bell Darnell began to build the Green Parrot Lodge and Cottages, located on Highway 80 roughly a mile east of the Willows. The main lodge was designed as family living quarters and a public tea room. Open for business in the spring of 1924, the Green Parrot Lodge contained a soda fountain said to be the only one between El Cajon and Imperial Valley. This was another of the country places offering all homemade pastries and breads to a fortunate public. Most of the business was on weekends. Mrs. Darnell, as testified by her daughter, Isabel, and son, Bal, did all the cooking and still found time to crochet and make "fancy work" items for sale in the gift shop corner of the Tea Room. (Pages 286 and 287)

After more than twenty years the Darnells closed the Green Parrot Lodge and replaced the original sign with one reading Darnell's Cottages for the seven units they continued to maintain as rentals. After her husband's death, Mrs. Darnell ran the place alone until late in life when she sold it.

**WILLOWSIDE SERVICE STATION (PERHAPS NAMED AFTER FIRST ALPINE SUBDIVISION)
FROM A 1950s POSTCARD
(BUILDING ON FAR RIGHT HAS SIGN IN FRONT THAT READS "DARNELL'S MODERN COTTAGES")**

12.. Alpine, California

OLD HIGHWAY 80—ALPINE BOULEVARD
STORE AND LOG CABIN CAFÉ
CIRCA 1930s

ALPINE STORE AND POST OFFICE
ALPINE BOULEVARD—OLD HIGHWAY 80
1930s

ALPINE UNION SCHOOL
1938

TOWN HALL—LATE 1930s
OLD HIGHWAY 80

Built in the village center on what is now the northwest corner of Alpine Boulevard and Victoria Drive West, the Town Hall became the village social-political center. On the old Lee Highway, later Highway 80, the Hall, with its lightning rod topping the bell tower, was the first thing people saw as they came up the grade. The ringing of the bell sounded for miles across the mountain silence in that pre-noise pollution era. (Page 297)

ALPINE BOULEVARD—OLD HIGHWAY 80
CIRCA 1930S—1940s

TOWN CENTER—THE BIG SNOW
JANUARY 10, 1940

ALPINE BOULEVARD—OLD HIGHWAY 80
CIRCA 1940s

ALPINE BOULEVARD—OLD HIGHWAY 80
ALPINE STORE AND POST OFFICE—CIRCA 1940s

BUTLER'S GAS STATION AND GARAGE
OLD HIGHWAY 80
GARAGE ORIGINALLY OWNED BY TOM HILL SR.—1927

BEST CLIMATE SIGN
ON ALPINE BOULEVARD—OLD HIGHWAY 80
CIRCA 1941

THE BEGINNING OF TAPPY'S MOTEL—1947

Motels were a new way of serving the traveling public when Mr. and Mrs. Otto Tappmeyer came to Alpine in 1944 and began what developed into Tappy's, the first real motel for the village.

Since their place [home] faced Highway 80, motorists sometimes stopped to ask about a possible place to stay overnight, a few days, or a week. In this way the Tappmeyers discovered the need for accommodations for people passing through or seeking lodging for a short time. It seems that all the cabins then available were let by the month only.

"So," says "Tappy" as she was then and still is called, "we decided we might as well build a few rentals; we had most of the lumber we'd need. Since they were in the lumber business in San Diego, they had access to building materials, not under Government restrictions with which to make four small rental apartments.

When Mr. Tappmeyer died in 1946 work was well along on the four apartment units, and after his death, needing to supplement her income, Tappy developed the motel to its twelve rental units with a 13th for herself. (Pages 288 and 290)
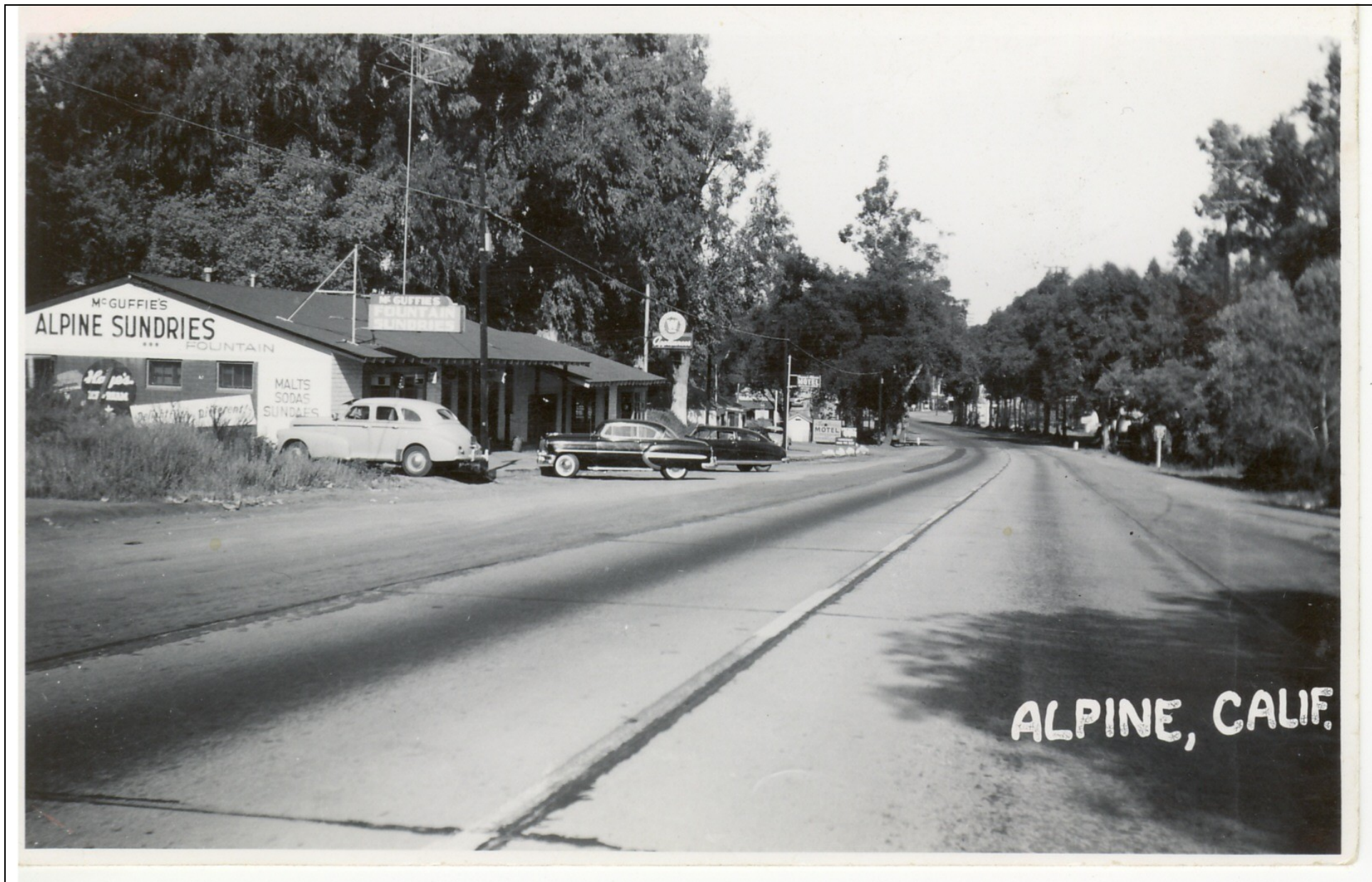
Tappy's Motel, Alpine

ALPINE'S FIRST MOTEL—COMPLETED 1960
HIGHWAY 80

ALPINE BOULEVARD

OLD HIGHWAY 80

EARLY 1950s

ALPINE BOULEVARD—OLD HIGHWAY 80
FROM A 1950s POSTCARD

POST OFFICE AND MARKET
ALPINE BOULEVARD—OLD HIGHWAY 80
CIRCA 1950s

ALPINE STORE
ALPINE BOULEVARD—OLD HIGHWAY 80
CIRCA 1950s

UNCLE GENE WETZEL AND MR. DAVE STURDIVANT
ALPINE BOULEVARD—OLD HIGHWAY 80
1951

"UNCLE" GENE WETZEL AND MR. DAVE STURDIVANT

About this time [1951] an incident occurred that many people remember with pleasure. It involved two elderly men of the community, one a devout church member and old-fashioned persuader of the unchurched, Mr. Dave Sturdivant, Southern Baptist, gentleman. The other elderly man was old-time westerner, "Uncle" Gene Wetzel, whose nephew owned and ran the Log Cabin Café.
Uncle Gene Wetzel never cared much for church going. He preferred to sit on the bench in front of the Log Cabin and watch other folks dressed up in their meeting clothes dodge the traffic crossing Highway 80 on their way to the church of their choice. He liked folks well enough and was pleased to have people stop and visit with him.

One of the people he enjoyed the most and who enjoyed talking with him was Mr. Dave Sturdivant, who was slightly younger than Uncle Gene at the time of this episode, though both were elderly men, Uncle Gene in his 90's and Mr. Sturdivant in his 80's.
Mr. Sturdivant was a tall dignified white-haired old gentleman with a courtly Southern air, while Mr. Wetzel was a small wiry oldster with a wry Western sense of humor.

Uncle Gene (Eugene Wetzel) had lived in Alpine for many years. He was the uncle of Clarence Foster of Alpine, whose parents bought the Log Cabin Café in 1912.

Mr. Sturdivant was a very devout man who not only attended church regularly, but thought other folks should do the same. He worried especially about Uncle Gene's nonattendance at religious services, and tried frequently to persuade him to go along to church of a Sunday morning.

One day while Mr. Sturdivant was exhorting him, Uncle Gene said, "All right, I'll go to church with you next Sunday morning, if you'll come and get me and take me there in your wheelbarrow."

"I'll do it!" said Mr. Sturdivant, "You be ready and meet me right here."

The hour was set. Word got around and folks speculated about what would happen. Came the appointed time for the ride to church and Uncle Gene, dressed in his best, waited in front of the Log Cabin on that Sunday morning. A shout went up from watchers when Mr. Sturdivant, an impressive figure in his dark suit, strode up trundling his wheelbarrow. True to his word, Uncle Gene climbed aboard and was wheeled triumphantly to the Alpine Community Church by Mr. Sturdivant.

A few months later Uncle Gene died at the age of 94. He had not continued to attend church. Mr. Sturdivant died at 93, a devout churchman to the end. (Page 123)
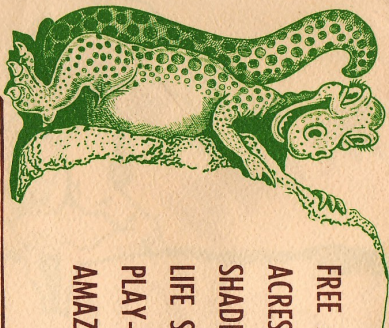
DINOSAUR LAND
Alpine

EAST →

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30 Miles from
DINOSAUR LAND

DINOSAUR LAND

US 80

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La Mesa

SAN DIEGO

MEXICO →

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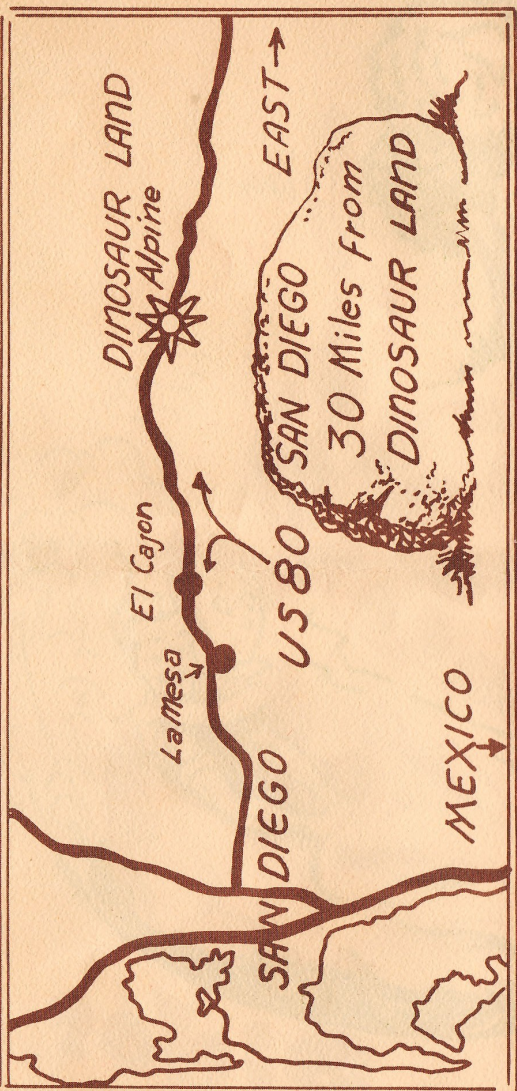
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**A DINOSAUR MOVES ALONG OLD HIGHWAY 80 ON ITS
WAY FROM DINOSAURLAND
EARLY 1960s**

THE VILLAGE STREET
1955

**BAILEY'S CAFÉ—OLD HIGHWAY 80, ALPINE BOULEVARD
CIRCA 1950s**

**BEST CLIMATE SIGN ON
ALPINE BOULEVARD—OLD HIGHWAY 80
CIRCA 1950s**

PUBLIC WATER COMES TO TOWN
VIEW OF OLD HIGHWAY 80—1962

Alpine Echo, February 15, 1962, Editorial.
"Rurban" Alpine—

With the rapid realization of a water system, Alpine is on its way to becoming a "Rurban" development—half rural, half urban. And with continued progress, there will be new problems and certainly temporary inconveniences. But no one minds.

Caution is the password in Alpine these days as you drive along our community roads and especially if one tries to pass the intersection of Highway 80, Arnold Way and Victoria Drive. The already narrow two-lane country roads, very charming in their winding way, are now cut to a one-lane squeeze, with the large water conduits going along one side.

People pass each other with the pleased looks that anticipate an adequate water supply this summer. Driving along South Grade Road, we passed Bonnie Clerk. "Well," she smiled, as we inched along slowly, squeezing between her car and a gigantic earth trencher…"It's going to be wonderful, isn't it?" "Sure is," we smiled back. Last year many wells went dry and many residents suffered hardships from lack of water. Now, finally, this problem is about to be solved for good.

Others commented: "I'm going to plant a wee patch of lawn, so help me." "There's a trench in front of my garage. And my car's inside." "Small fishpond is what I want." "I don't mind the mess, but it's driving my dog crazy." "This contractor sure has some good equipment." "I can get home, but it takes some doing." "Where did you kids get that pipe?" "I'm going to flush the toilet every day." "My driveway's better now than before." "I'm going to start building my swimming pool." "These guys work fast." "I'm going to start washing my dogs at home." "Think they will make it by March?" "These workmen are very courteous." "I'd like a lily pond." (Pages 470—471)

ALPINE VILLAGE BAKERY ON ALPINE BOULEVARD—OLD HIGHWAY 80
THIS BUILDING WAS BUILT CIRCA 1968 AND WAS USED AS ALPINE'S
FIRST FULL SCALE MODERN DRUG STORE AND PHARMACY. BAKERY OPENED HERE IN 1977
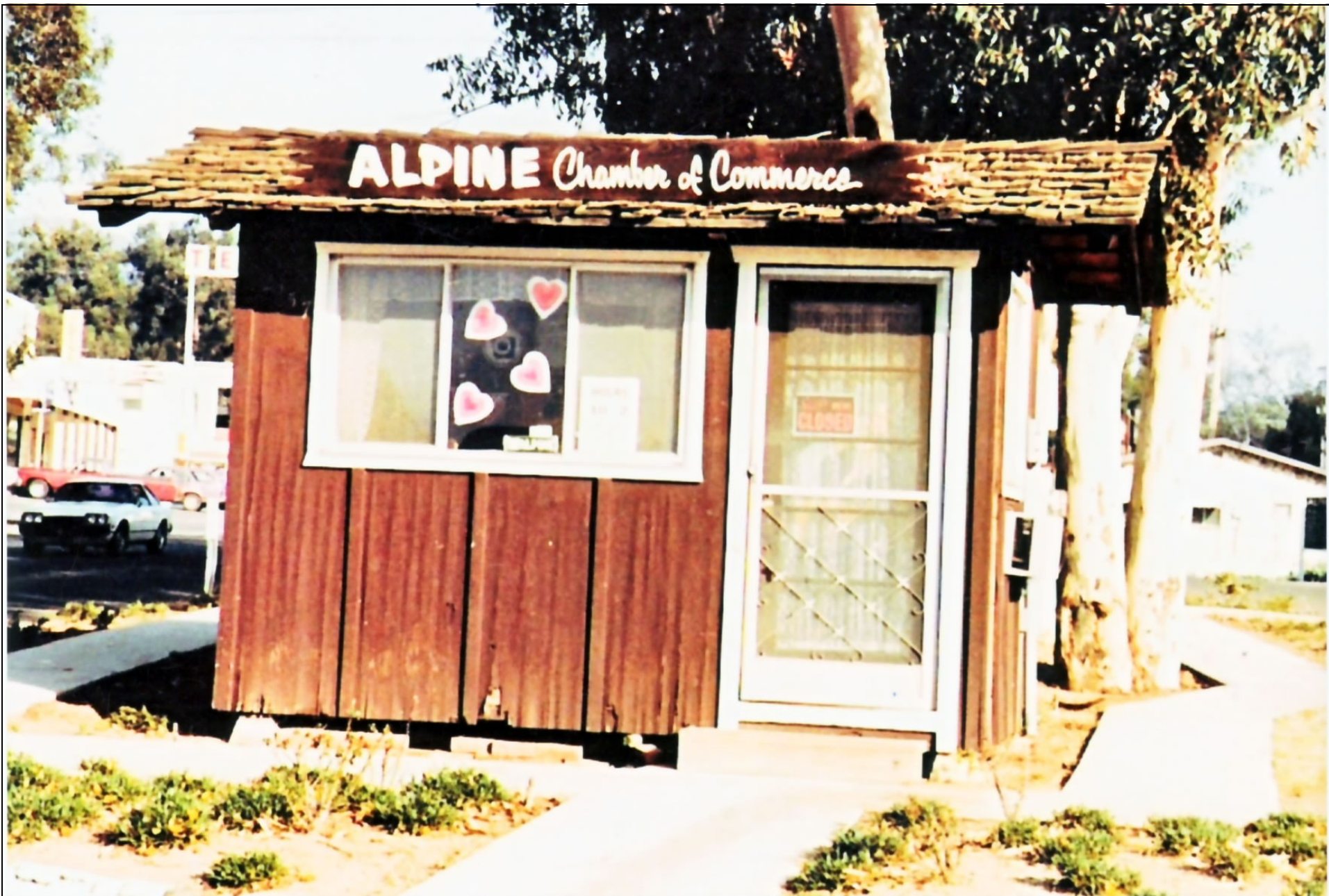
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE BUILDING ON ALPINE BOULEVARD

**ALPINE LIBRARY SIGN IN FRONT OF WOMAN'S CLUB BUILDING LOOKING OUT
TOWARD HIGHWAY 80—1968**

SITE FOR FUTURE ALPINE YOUTH CENTER

MARKET AND POST OFFICE
ALPINE BOULEVARD—OLD HIGHWAY 80
CIRCA 1971

ALPINE FIRE STATION
ALPINE BOULEVARD—OLD HIGHWAY 80
CIRCA 1970s

ALPINE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
1971

**ALPINE BOULEVARD'S NEW LOOK
AFTER THE SUNRISE POWERLINK TOOK OUT POWER POLES AND
INSTALLED UNDERGROUND UTILITIES—2013**