

LONG-AGO MURDER AT ALPINE RANCH TO BE REENACTED

On November 16, 1875, a murder took place by Alpine's schoolhouse doorstep. Miss Emma A. Everhart, the first teacher at the Alpine School District, was rumored to be romantically involved with Warren Webb, the son of George Washington Webb, one of the area's leading citizens and the owner of Alpine Ranch. Albert Simonson wrote the following about this notorious event in his article, "A Country Schoolmarm of the Fashionable Kind." The entire article may be found on the Alpine Historical Society's website, www.alpinehistory.org.

"The night had begun in a congenial way at the adjacent ranch house. There were cozy murmurings with young Warren Webb. But things soon took a bad turn. The Alpine School District had been formed in July of that year and Miss Everhart set up school in a two-story building just 40 feet east of George Washington Webb's Alpine Ranch house. She had rooms upstairs in the schoolhouse, but took her meals and slept in the ranch house. The schoolhouse was situated between present Harbison Canyon and Interstate 8 [at site of Shadow Hills Elementary School].

From the ranch, a wagon road ascended due east to where a Frenchman, Pascal, his brother Pierre and an Indian had a shepherd's camp. As the restless, fateful night began, Pascal bedded down under his wagon. But before the moon set, he was gunned down by young Warren on the wagon road by the schoolhouse over a mile to the west.

Judging from Miss Everhart's testimony, she had been dreamily gazing out of her bedroom window at midnight when she saw Pascal near the window. The damsel in distress uttered a cry and young Warren, conveniently near, dashed out to bombard the presumed voyeur with a crude concatenation of obscenities. We wonder if this endeared him to the grammatically correct femme fatale. We wonder if the Frenchman even understood the brash 18-year-old. Then there was a shot.

The ashen light of dawn revealed a nasty hole above the Frenchman's right eyebrow and a face charred by gunpowder. The corpse lay flat on its back arms straight out like a cross, the feet wrapped in old rags. Warren tried to escape from San Diego on a coastal steamer.

Many pages of conflicting testimony from two separate investigations fail to indicate clearly if this was justifiable homicide or murder. Somehow, while the old folks slept, young Pascal, Warren and Miss Everhart all had left their beds and ended up at the scene of the killing. We can only imagine why. Warren was charged with murder, then released, and the lovely Miss Everhart remained a teacher, but moved on to other schools."

The Honorable William J. Howatt, Jr., a retired judge, will reenact the trial of Warren Webb at the Alpine Historical Society's quarterly meeting on Sunday, October 21, 2007. Judge Howatt performs reenactments of trials as a hobby and has graciously agreed to come to Alpine for this event, which will be held at the Alpine Woman's Club at 5:00 p.m. Board members of the Historical Society will prepare and serve an Italian Dinner for everyone's enjoyment. The cost of the dinner will be \$5 per person and will include various pasta dishes, salad, bread, a drink and dessert. Anyone interested in the history of Alpine is invited to attend.

If you have stories to share about Alpine history, or need to know something about it, please e-mail or call me and I'll pass stories along and research questions.

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