

THE ALPINE SUN SHOPPER – March 7, 2013
Tattered Tidbits: Alpine Historical Society

THE BUGGY - A GIFT TO AND FROM THE PEOPLE OF ALPINE

Early in January, the Historical Society learned of a doctor's buggy that was available for purchase. Bill Waterworth, an active society volunteer, became excited about the prospect of purchasing the buggy to expand on the exhibit in the Dr. Sophronia Nichols Carriage House. Under the direction of Carol Morrison, President of the Historical Society, a flyer was sent to members asking for contributions toward the purchase price of \$2,000. The thought was to purchase the buggy with donations and then begin to raise funds to restore it.

As usual, the Alpine community responded with enthusiasm. Approximately \$3,200 was collected in a very short period of time. One very different donation came from out of the blue from one of the society's most generous benefactors, Don Walker. Don called Carol Morrison and said he had a buggy much like the one on the flyer and the society was welcome to come and pick it up! Thrilled, Carol made arrangements for the pickup and Bill, Norm Kling and Ed Morrison took care of the move. The money collected will be used to perform needed repairs and restoration to this beautiful new artifact. Don's latest gift to Alpine, combined with the contributions received from so many, have truly added to the preservation of Alpine's history.

According to descendants of Frederick and Bevie Walker, owners of The Willows Resort which operated in the late 1800s and early 1900s in Alpine, in the early 1900s there were two buggies owned by the Walker family. The Willows Resort was the home for the buggy with wooden hubs. The other buggy had metal hubs and was used at the dairy of Doug Walker in Santee. The donated buggy, which traveled to Oregon and back, is believed to be the one used at The Willows Resort. Can't you just picture it transporting guests from the dining hall to the cabins and then going on a tour of Alpine?

The buggy has a label indicating it was built by Larkins and Company, 631 and 633 Howard Street, San Francisco. The company, founded by William Larkins in 1865, moved to this address sometime after 1865 and did business on Howard Street until the 1906 earthquake destroyed the factory. It subsequently relocated its operation to a new site. This means our buggy was built prior to 1906—so it is truly an historical treasure that will provide a real taste of history for many years to come to the people of Alpine, especially the children. The fact that it was used at Alpine's famous Willows Resort makes it very, very special to all involved.

Between 1865 and 1900, four gold and nine silver medals for excellence in craftsmanship were awarded to Larkins and Company by the Mechanics Institute of San Francisco. The firm's advertisements included a wide variety of vehicles: Doctor's Phaetons, Ladies' Phaetons, Top Rockaways, Hacks, Coupes, Sulkies, Express Wagons and Fire Wagons. With the advent of the automobile, Larkins and Company switched its emphasis and advertisements changed to include automobile construction while maintaining the repair and maintenance of the old buggies. Larkins continues to operate in San Francisco and currently produces automobile tires.

Don't miss the opportunity to visit the museum houses which are open the last Saturday and Sunday of each month from 2 to 4 p.m. The buggy is on display in the Dr. Nichols Carriage House—it's definitely worth the trip. Thank you to Don Walker for his wonderful contribution and to all the donors who provided the resources to ensure this jewel will be restored to its former beauty.

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.