

THE ALPINE ECHO

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ECHOES OF THE PAST

The Old Timer

By Niel Galloway

I am now going to write about one of the cattle drives I promised you. First, I forgot about two of the Alpine storekeepers. One was John Wilkinson, the other was Simmons. So you see over the years there were quite a lot of storekeepers. There was a grocery store where the Alpine Cleaners are. That building was built by S. M. Marshall. Coleman was one of the keepers of that store. He passed on, then there was Caldwell. He ran the Empire Market, and there is now Blankenship.

Now, above the Willows where I left off last week. Mr. and Mrs. Hardy Simpson lived north of the Willows. They lived there many years. They both passed on not too long ago. Then we come to the Darnells. They came here in 1922. They had three children, Balford, Isobel and Margery. Balford was in with Butler for several years drilling wells. Since that he has been interested in mines all over South America. One daughter, Isabel, lives in Alpine and runs a hobby shop. I think it would be a very good idea to prod Balfour and get him to write about his experiences in South America. It should be most interesting. (The Echo invited him to do this some time ago. Editor).

The father, Rex Darnell, built several cottages to rent. They sold this property not too long ago. Mrs. Darnell is still a spry young thing of 81 summers. She is fortunate in having most of her children living near her.

Next is the Poplars. It was owned by the Anderson brothers who owned and operated the San Diego Steam Laundry in San Diego for many years. One of them had a son, we always called Dutch. He was an alcoholic. Too bad. These people should not be condemned. When it gets them, very few can abstain from it. I have known a few that had will power enough to completely abstain from it. They should be commended for that. The Anderson family all died some time ago.

A little further on, this is on the old Viejas grade road in the Viejas Valley, was the Viejas school, where the Walkers and McNetts went to school. When it was consolidated with Alpine was when the school troubles began. From then on we had school buses. There was a civil engineer who engineered the present Alpine. He had a crippled girl he wanted hauled to school. So he talked up the consolidated school to get that bus service. When the road was finished, he left. He was near retirement anyway. No taxpayer has ever got out of that deal, since it keeps rolling like a snowball down hill getting bigger all the time. There are now several houses near where the Viejas school stood. S. M. Marshall bought the old schoolhouse and tore it down for the lumber.

Next I come to what I called the Campbell place. It was the first house on the left after you passed the school. My memory is vague on Campbell. There was another family after them. They had a shepherd dog that used to go to the road every day when the mail stage came through, pick up the mail sack and when it was heavy, toss it across her shoulder and carry it on her back. Those people were the Gregorys. Some gypsies came along one day and Gregory traded them the dog for a sack of rolled barley. I tried to buy her from Gregory, but couldn't make a deal.

Before the 1916 flood, the field where the road makes the sharp turn north used to be in alfalfa. That valley had a lot of damp land before the flood made that deep hole and drained most of the valley. It never was the same after that. There had been quite a few owners. I will mention the few I knew. Gregory, Campbell, Havermail, Wellington, Brawley, Letterman, Erner Allen. Roscoe Porter owned the Golden West Ranch, seems to me. Roscoe Porter was a very prominent man in San Diego; he passed on a long time ago. Montague Brabazon owns what I knew as the Brawley ranch. When I came here Douglas Ogden owned most of it. He bought several ranches in there and consolidated them all into one large cattle ranch. Douglas was always a good friend of mine clear up until he died. He was a queer individual. If he liked you, he liked you, if not you sure knew it. When he was young he used to do a lot of wild things. Among them was lassoing the smoke stacks of the San Diego Cuyamaca and Eastern railroad locomotives at Lakeside, or perhaps it was El Cajon.

He lived at the entrance to the Los Canajos Indian Reservation. The Indians could borrow some farm machinery from him; the whites couldn't. I asked him, how come. He said, "If an Indian breaks it, he tells me, and just as soon as he gets the money he fixes it. The whites bring it back broken and say nothing." During World War II, I bought 50 sheep to raise wool for the soldiers. They were old sheep with bad teeth. After they raised some lambs, I tried to fatten them. I had fed them for about 60 days. Douglas came along as he often did; he asked me if they were getting fat. I said no. He wanted to know why. No teeth, I said. He grinned and said, "You know, I bought one of them hammer mills that will grind hay so they will not have to chew it." He still had it at the Implement Dealers, brand new. He told me to go get it. Well, I did. I got them all fat, but three and it cost me \$1.75 apiece more to fatten them than they sold for. During the war the wool was worth 40 cents a pound. After the war was over the Government dumped their wool and it went down to 6 cents and broke all the sheep men in the United States.

I better get back to my cattle. At that time Ogden had the general run of longhorn cattle. They were long-legged and as I have said before, it took a good horse to outrun one. The Viejas valley was only seven or eight miles from here so they only stopped for a short rest. They used to drive them all the way to Charlie Hardy's packing house in Old Town, San Diego. Hardy sent out men to meet them the night before they got to the packing house to see they did not fill them up with water just before they was weighed.

I will continue this Viejas Valley writing next time. There is too much for one time. See you all next week.