

THE ALPINE SUN SHOPPER – February 1, 2007
Tattered Tidbits: Alpine Historical Society

TRACING LOST ROUTES THROUGHOUT ALPINE AND THE BACK COUNTRY

In future columns, I'd like to feature families connected to Alpine's history—tell about where they came from, their ancestors, family legends, properties and so forth. Input would be appreciated from anyone with interesting stories to share!

Mark your calendar for February 25—the Historical Society's field trip to Julian. Don Tarr has worked with the Julian Historical Society to put together a fantastic event. Among our stops will be the historic Stonewall Mine, the Old Schoolhouse, the Pioneer Museum, a climb to the top of Cemetery Hill and a self-guided tour of historic town sites.

On the way home, we'll stop at the Santa Ysabel Mission Church and be treated to a tour narrated by local historian, Albert Simonson. For more information, see our web site www.alpinehistory.org or contact Don Tarr at 659-1378. All are welcome—the more the merrier!

Alpine's history has strong links to the Julian area, as documented by Albert Simonson in his writings. The following information was taken from his story, *Tracing the Lost Route of the San Diego Julian Toll Road through Cuyamaca and Viejas*.

The highway from Julian through Cuyamaca, Viejas and Alpine primarily follows George Washington Webb's San Diego Julian Toll Road. George and his family were among the first settlers in Volcan Valley, now the location of the Julian water well field. He and his son Samuel began construction on the road in the winter of 1871.

Responding to a gold strike at the Stonewall Mine, and confident of Julian's future, Webb applied for a county charter to build a new toll road in September of 1871.

The March 16, 1872 San Diego Union reported, "We were favored yesterday with a call from Mr. G. W. Webb, who is now engaged in building a road from the Valle de las Viejas to Guatay (later renamed Descanso) and thence to the mines of Julian and San Felipe. This is part of the new road for which Mr. Webb has a charter as a toll road." The editor mentioned that a work gang of 18 men had spent the winter working on the "horrible Valle de las Viejas hill," but added, "From thence on to Julian the work is comparatively easy." The editor urged the county supervisors to support Webb by adopting Webb's route "as a county road."

On October 11, 1872, county supervisors declared it public road number 10. Webb got paid for his road three years later--money for roads was scarce!

Route 79 from Julian to the Sunrise Highway turnoff pretty much follows the surveyed road. At that point, the old road went through Cuyamaca meadow and east to what is left of the old Stonewall Mine. The toll road continued south, near the Stonewall Peaks, then followed Stonewall Creek for awhile, then Cold Stream Trail and its Indian milling sites to a corner of what is now a popular park trail. The present road past Green Valley Falls down to Oakzanita Springs also follows the old road.

There may be many traces of the old road visible in the ruination of Cuyamaca's firestorm. But the best-preserved section is found on the north slope of Viejas Valley, just upslope from Viejas Grade. This section of embankment is visible from Interstate 8 across the valley.

Albert once visited that section with two descendants of George Webb's oldest son Samuel. Sam the third and Sam the fourth have a special fondness for the place. It seems that young Mary Jane Miller from Campo happened to slip and fall while passing through the 1872 construction site. Samuel rushed to rescue the damsel in distress and seeds of young love sprouted in that "horrible Valle de las Viejas hill," on the way down to the Webb family's new "Alpine Ranch." They owe their very existence to her happenstance fall and his gallantry and that hill.

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