

A COUNTRY BOY RETURNS TO ALPINE COMMUNITY

What excitement in Alpine—the opening of a huge, full-service grocery store—Albertsons. Everyone was abuzz with talk about the grand opening, the pristine shelves stocked with everything imaginable, the deli and the friendly staff. Steering the ship for the new Albertsons is Bob Ring, the store director, whose roots are firmly implanted in Alpine soil. Bob has always loved our mountain community and is thrilled to be back. He has already established himself as an intrinsic presence in community activities.

Mr. and Mrs. Virgil Ring, Bob's grandparents, arrived in Alpine in 1923. At that time Alpine was a sparsely populated place—quiet and unhurried. They moved to Alpine at the urging of Mrs. Ring's physician for health reasons. Dr. Lischner gave Mr. Ring a job and provided a house for them across from the hospital. Unfortunately, very soon after they moved into the home the house burned to the ground. The family saved nothing except their baby. They were forced to move into a makeshift sort of apartment in a building where a drug store had recently closed. Mr. and Mrs. Ring raised three children—Robert, Norma and Dolly in Alpine. Dolly remained in Alpine and married Richard Place—several generations of the Place family have resided in Alpine.

During their many years in Alpine, Mr. Ring worked at several jobs. One of the most interesting of these, he said, was working for Bill Dalton, the female impersonator, whose stage name was Julian Eltinge. For years he served as caretaker for the John DeWitt estate, upon which sat the old home of Dr. Sophronia Nichols, Alpine's famous female doctor. Mr. Ring arranged for his grandson's family to rent the home and Dan and Kathy Place lived there for three years. When they left the Dr. Nichols house for their new home, next door to the Nichols place, the young Bob Ring (our new Albertsons director) was looking for a place to live. His grandfather suggested the Nichols place, and Bob was happy to move in. His rent was \$60 a month!

Bob recalls many happy times living in the old place. He, like many of us in Alpine, can feel the history surrounding him in that wonderful home. Recently, Bob was at the museum when an electrical outlet was needed. He recalled having installed one, and led the group to the correct place. What an asset! In his late teen years, Bob was active in his church in Crest and remembers that many a church youth gathering was held in the tiny home on Tavern Road. He says it was a favorite meeting place for all his friends. The barn in back of the Nichols place housed his vehicles—as most young men, his vehicles were important to him. Bob also remembers the cold in that home—he said that a sleeping bag and several blankets were needed during the winter—it was freezing in this house that has very thin walls. Bob moved from the Nichols house when he married his wife Carmen and moved to a bigger place, but he remembers with nostalgia those years between 1972 and 1974 when he lived in a home that is truly a part of Alpine's history.

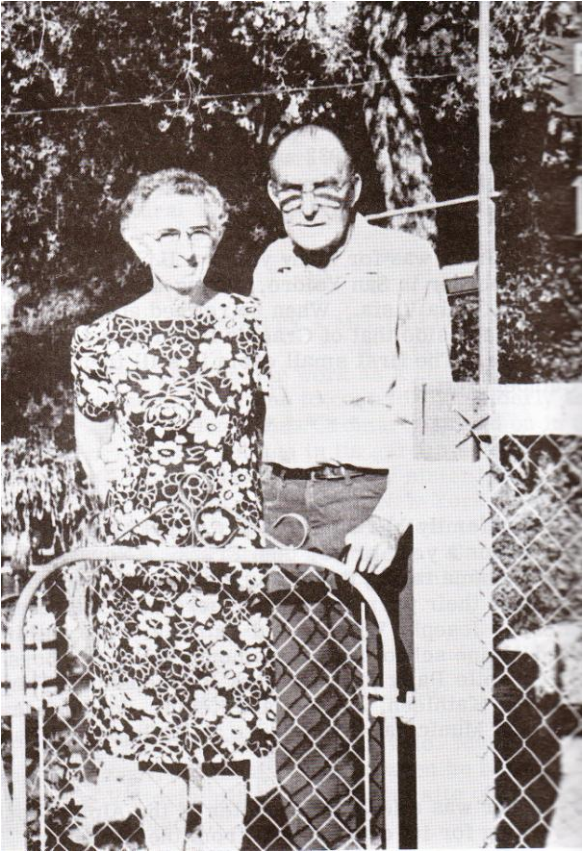
Virgil Ring remained the caretaker of the DeWitt estate until his death on December 17, 1973. In the 1990's the estate was sold to Paul Gonya. Part of the agreement of sale was that the Dr. Nichols house and an acre of land be deeded to the Alpine Historical Society. Thus, it has become forever a part of Alpine's history.

Welcome back, Bob! Alpine's so happy you're here and that Albertsons is now a part of our community!

Information for this article, in part, was taken from Beatrice La Force's book, *Alpine—History of a Mountain Settlement*.

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Mr. and Mrs. Virgil Ring are the grandparents of the new Albertsons store director, Bob Ring.