

San Diego Union

June 1, 1900

An excerpt

REMINISCENCES OF EARLY SAN DIEGO HISTORY OF PIONEER DAYS

As told by Ephraim W. Morse Last Evening

At that time nearly all the grain and flour used in the county was imported, though usually each Mexican ranch would have a small patch of corn, beans, and possibly wheat, for home consumption. In 1853 more grain, principally barley, was raised in the little valley of Viejas than in all the rest of the county. It was hauled in to Old Town, over a wild, broken country without roads for more than half the distance. Only Mexican carts (which, by the way, were built on the ranch), with their solid, block wheels, drawn by oxen, their yokes lashed to their horns, could be used on such a trip. Considerable engineering ability was exhibited in piloting even such a train through safely. Long stretches of the road, then first opened by those primitive trains, though since greatly improved, are now traveled daily by mail coaches. The distance traveled was about four miles, and the route from Valle de las Viejas lay through Mesa de Oros (now Alpine), Secuan, Jamacha, San Jorge (now Spring Valley), Las Chollas, and New Town. Between the valley and New Town, a distance of forty miles, there was but one house, the Rancho Jamacha. The grain brought 3 cents per pound in trade and was sold by us at same price.

E. W. Morse was a forty-niner who became an important Old Town merchant and civic leader in San Diego's formative years. In 1900, he was retired at his home in Alpine at the Tavern Road-South Grade Road intersection. His wife, Mary Walker, was the first San Diego teacher in the Anglo period.

Collected and endnoted by Albert Simonson.
Typed and submitted by Carol Walker.
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