

## **The Alpine Studio, 106 West Murphy St, Alpine**

was built in 1907 by pioneer photographer John Thain as his studio. In 1928, it was remodeled in Mission Style: the exterior "...will be finished in a Spanish Style with oriental stucco, windows and doors to be arched and trimmed in blue....high class portraits ..." \*

Interview w/ Carl Thain (John Thain nephew) SRSU Archives  
OHT364wh1976 p. 12- 15

"...he was quite the photographer...he went to (Kansas) McMillan Institute of Photography..stayed there for several years and came back and he decided he'd just go taking pictures...he took his wagon and his horses and took off. He travelled west to El Paso and up into New Mexico and finally...came to Alpine....he bought that property when this was Murphyville (Alpine was Murphyville from 1883-1888)...he married a girl, her name was Burgess..(they) lived in Ojinaga....her father was an English miner and her mother was...Spanish, from Spain....quite a family...there was quite a lot of gold on that (Burgess) ranch and mercury too...course it's 30 miles in there..and it belongs to the federal gov. today...but they ranched it you know and did some mining..they got along with the mexican governor all right...then there was this attorney by the name of Fuller...and he came here. He had tuberculosis and he had a ticket as far as Alpine. And they took him off the train and he was awful sick...Uncle John Thain was over there-everybody met the train in those days-and they picked him up and took him over to the studio and took care of him for a year or two..and he and Uncle John went down to Mexico and they finally ran off all these other people and the Burgess family got their land back...and Mr Fuller set up as an attorney in Marfa in the early days. Then Mr Thain operated his photography Studio from then on...and he didn't travel much...married and settled...they had no children...they settled down here at the Studio...when he died, I inherited the Studio and the next door property and I sold it to Tom Valadez..he left some property to Luis Rodriguez's daughter, some of Aunt Lizzie's kinfolks...they inherited a lot of houses and things that Mr. Thain helped 'em build and loaned 'em money to build it, you know. And in his Will, he said that I was to forgive 'em their debts and it all went to them..most of the estate was inherited by her...nieces...

What happened to all of his old negatives and pictures and such?

"...I cleaned it all out...didn't think it was worth anything..there's some of those ol' tin plates and he (Thain) had made some pictures of Judge Roy Bean down there when they had that big world heavyweight championship boxing match ...and the Rangers made them take it across the river (into Mexico)...and the rest of it, i just dumped in that ol' well and covered it up...i guess I should have kept it all...

\*Mr. George H. Walker of Marfa took charge of the Alpine Studio March 2, 1925 (having purchased it from Mrs. Thain)

\*The Thains resumed management of the Studio March 1st, 1926...Mrs Thain "...has been studying under some of the best artists in the West the last few months and modern equipment has been added assuring the very finest portrait work for Alpine ..."

\*Mar 15, 1929 Mrs Lizzie Thain: George Walker from Ft Stockton will take over commercial work (kodak, post card and framing) of Studio. Mrs Thain will continue to do the portrait work...

\*June 3, 1938 Mrs Lizzie Thain Riggs took over mngmt of Alpine Studio, returning from Chihuahua Mexcio where she has lived for the past 4 years. JC Thain, owner of the Studio is leaving for an indefinate stay to Hot Springs, New Mexico.

The Alpine Studio was purchased by Liz and Hiram Sibley in 2012 and is now operated as a Bed and Breakfast (without the breakfast:). Please contact Liz Sibley at 432 386 3549 if you are interested in learning more.

\*The Alpine Avalanche, courtesy of the Sul Ross Archives.