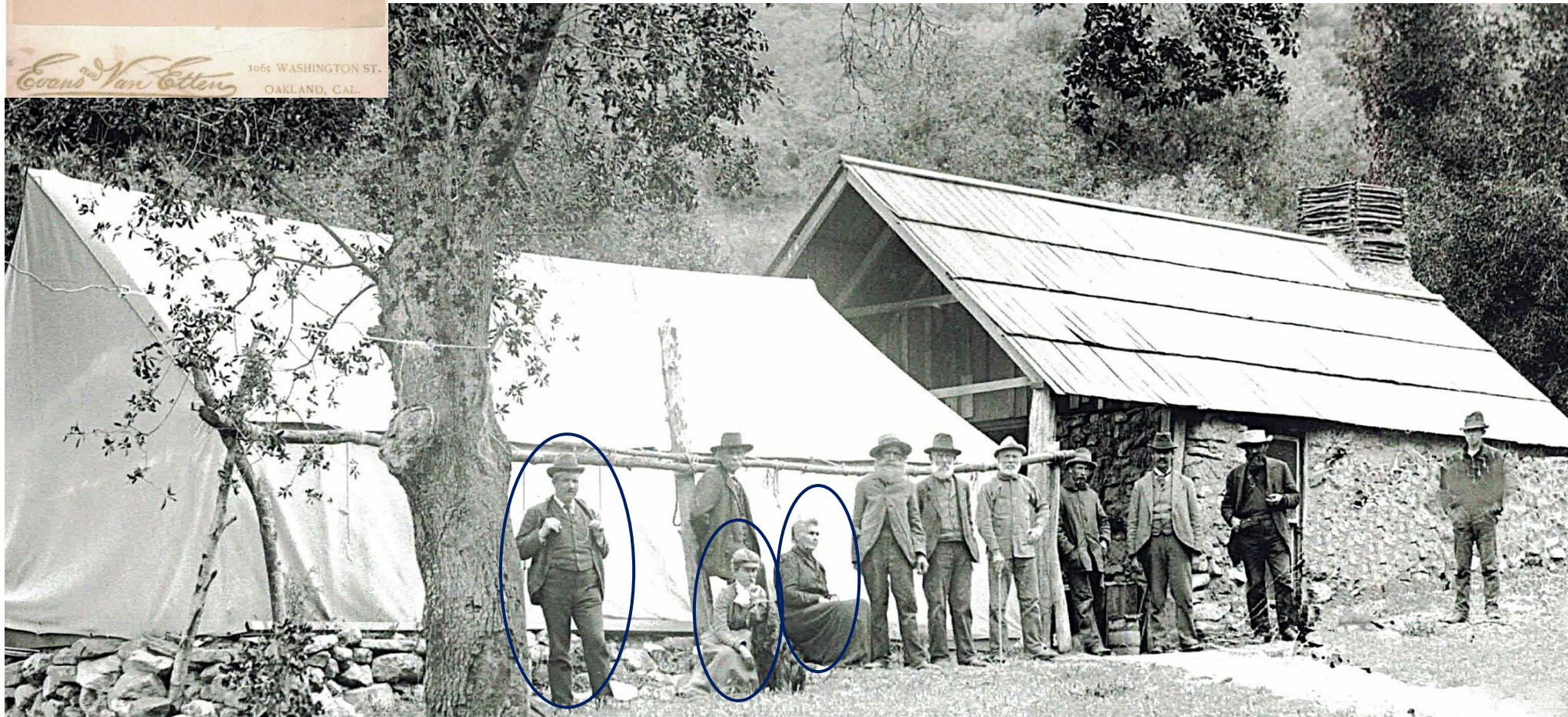




James G. Evans (Grandfather of Frank Evans Walker) became a photographer in the 1850's. His son Frank Evans joined him in the photography business about 1878. Frank E. Evans took the photo (pictured left) of his young nephew Frank Evans Walker about 1887. Uncle Frank Evans was a photographer and artist. He had a studio in Los Angeles for decades. However, Grandfather James Evans caught "gold fever" around 1885 and bought mining rights in Placerita Canyon. James built a "Miner's Hotel" on his property at what is now Walker Ranch (pictured below). When Frank Walker was 8 years old, living in Los Angeles with his parents, William & Rosa Belle (Evans) Walker, he spent as many weeks during his school breaks with his Grandfather James Evans as possible. When Frank Walker reached 19 years of age, he wanted to homestead at Placerita. His Grandfather helped him acquire his homestead land on the north side of what is now Placerita Canyon Road, 2 miles east of this second Walker Cabin in the Golden Valley Ranch Open Space hiking area.



In the late 1880s James G. Evans built the Placerita Miner's Hotel. Pictured L-R: James, Rosa Belle (daughter), Mary (wife), & Miners

**Frank built his “Homestead Cabin” using rocks from the canyon to create large pillars for the open-air front porch.  
He met Hortense Victoria Reynier who lived in a nearby canyon.  
They were married in 1907 and settled into their homestead.**



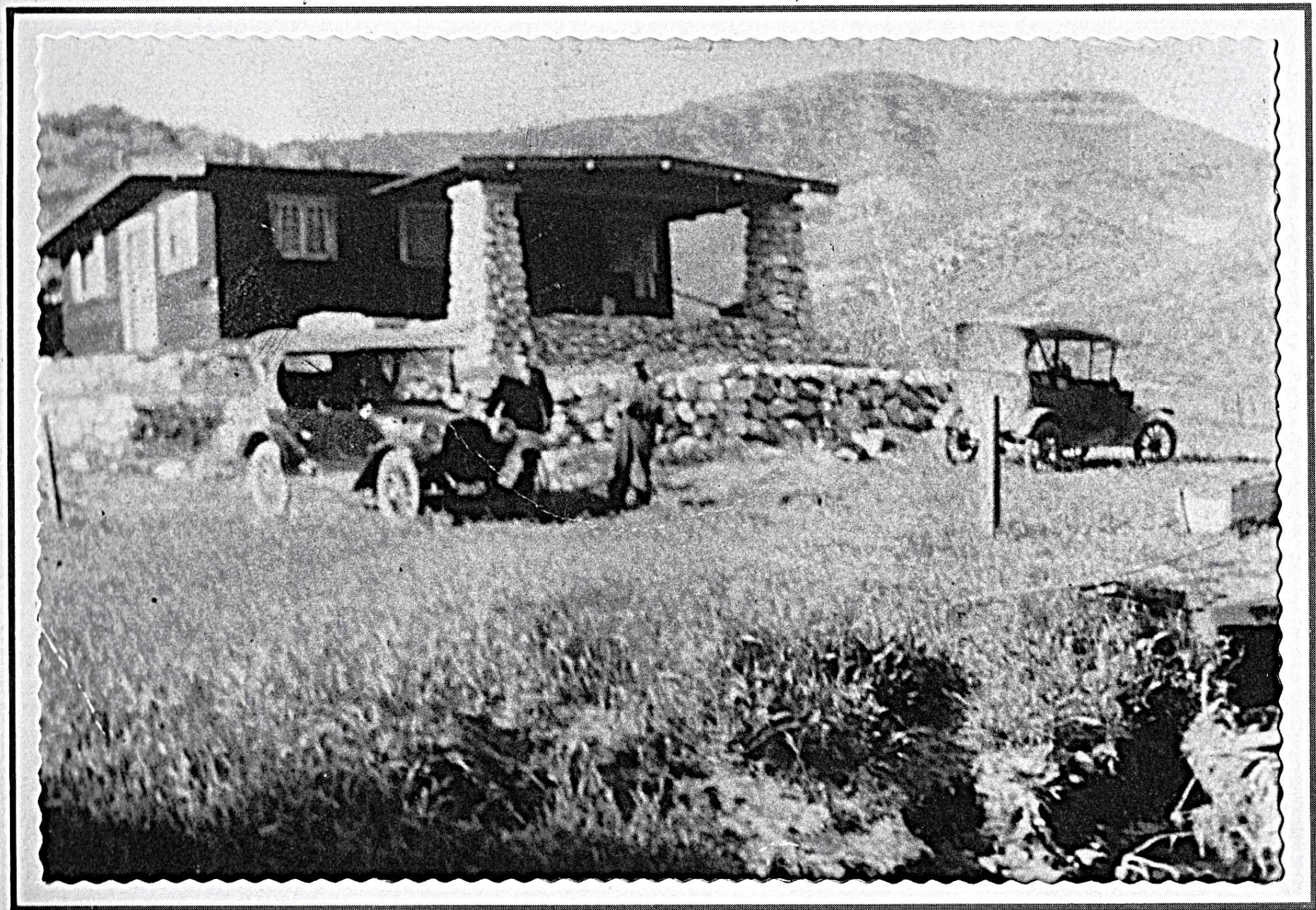
**Painting by Teri Walker, Granddaughter of Frank & Hortense.**

We thank Teri for this beautiful and accurate painting of the Walker's homestead life. She recreated the scene by referencing actual photos that were taken c.1916 along with her memories and stories from other family members.

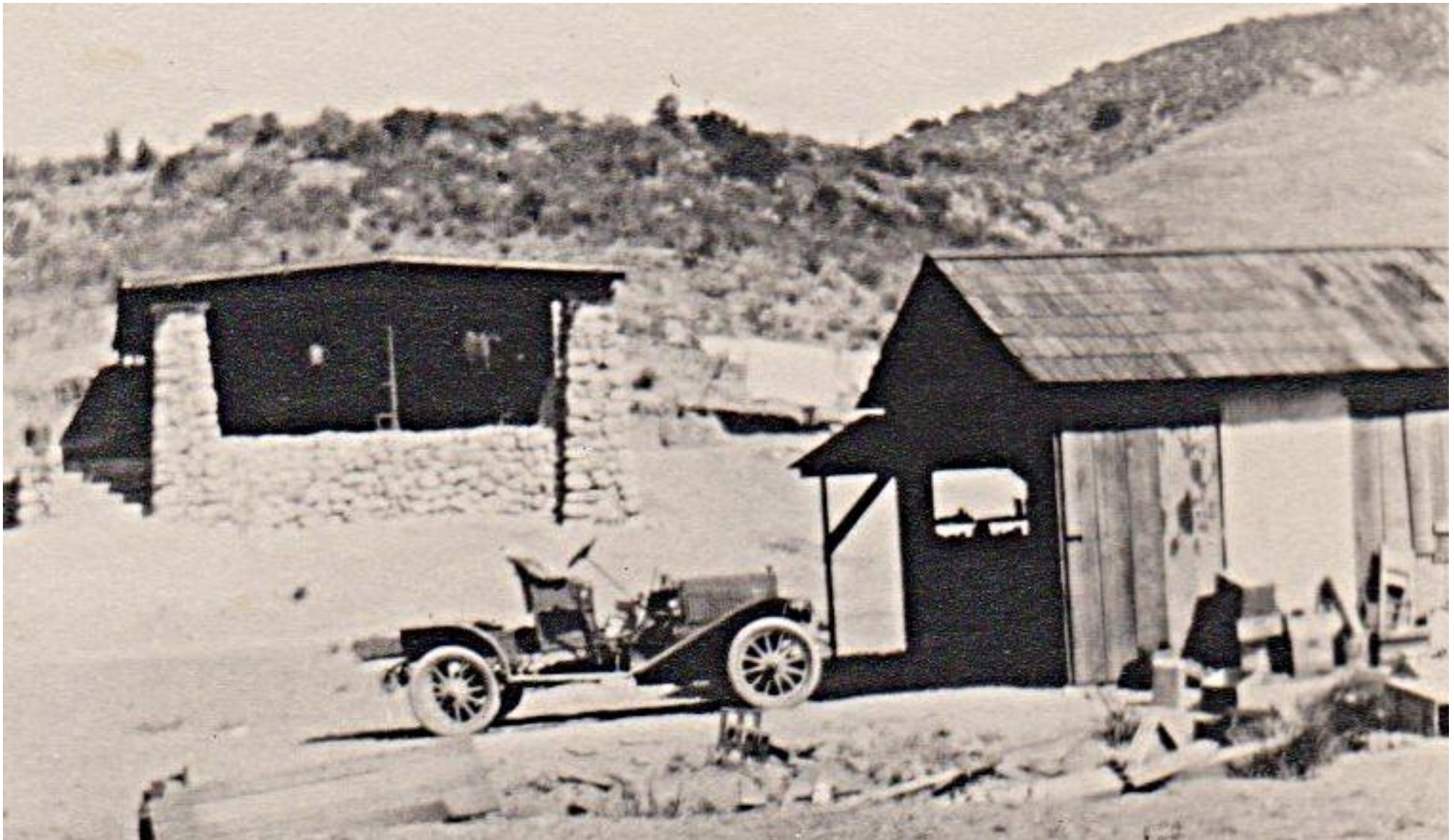


**1907 Frank Evans & Hortense Victoria (Reynier) Walker**

*Frank & Tom Walker 1916*



**Frank & Hortense Walker's Homestead c. 1916**



**Frank & Hortense Walker's Homestead Cabin with Rock Porch.  
Barn to the Southeast of cabin (right side of photo).  
View from South, looking North**



**1909 Hortense and baby Irene on the Homestead porch steps  
(West side of the porch)**

**The Homestead stone pillars remain standing today (2025) on the north side of Placerita Canyon Road, 2 miles east of the Placerita Park entrance in the Golden Valley Ranch Open Space public hiking area. They can be seen from the road just east of the Golden Valley Ranch Open Space parking lot.**



# 1919 Seven Walker Children Move into the Second Walker Cabin



**In front of their new home**  
(Cabin is in the background):

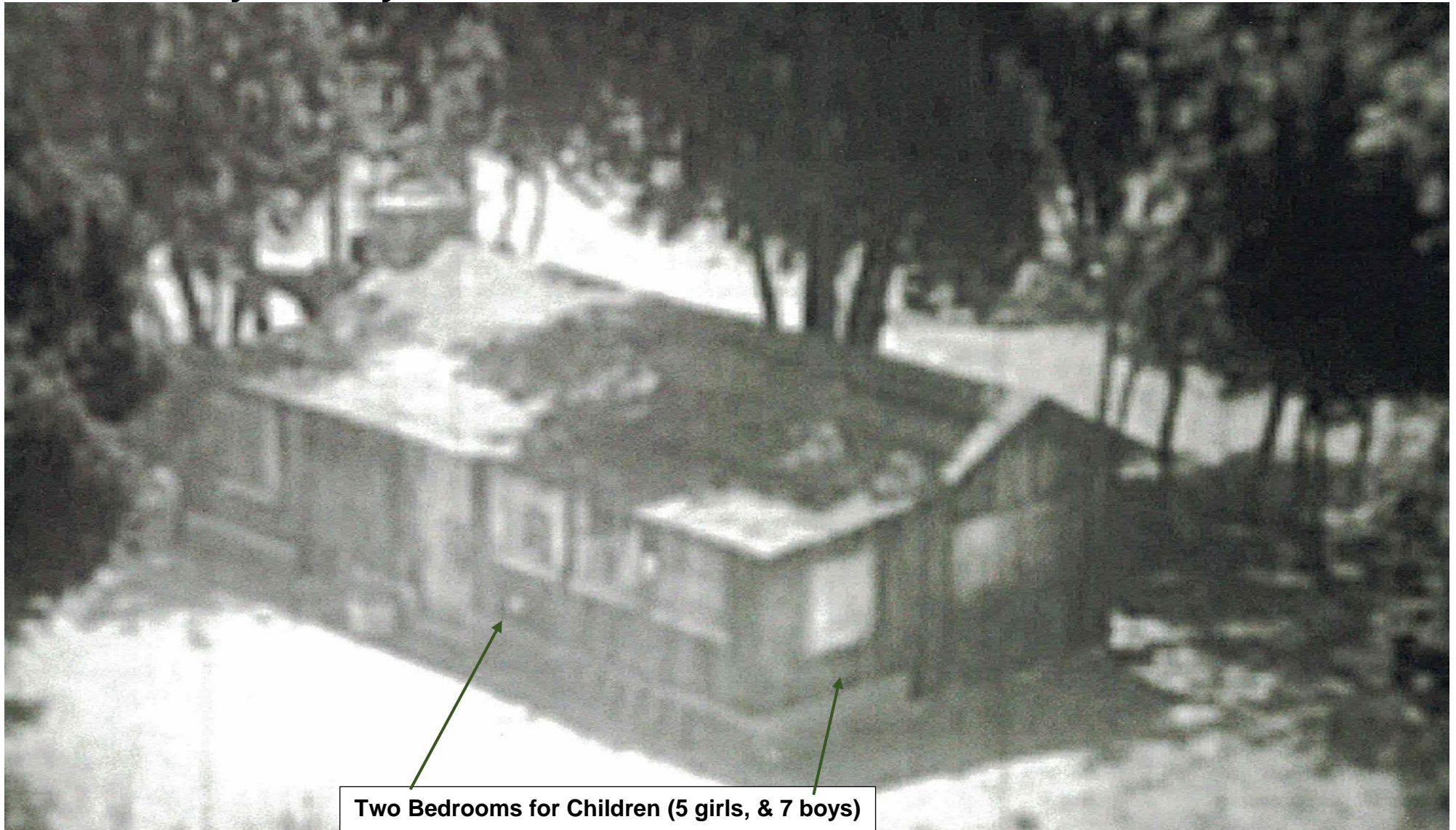
**Irene** (back)  
**Edward, Melba, Charles, Helen, Clarence** (Middle)  
**Francis** (front)

**This is the second cabin that Frank built here at Placerita. This location near the creek had a better water source than they had at the homestead.**

**It was also farther away from the many rattlesnakes at the homestead.**

**This Cabin had dirt floors, no running water, no electricity, and only a wood fire in the fireplace for heat. In back, there were 2 bedrooms for the children on the northwest corner. (lower right corner of photo). There was also a storage room on the northeast corner. (lower left corner of photo)**

**The woodburning stove was outdoors in the back. Cooking was done outdoors. Weekly laundry and baths were most often done outdoors as well.**



**Two Bedrooms for Children (5 girls, & 7 boys)**

**All water for household use was hauled from Placerita Creek in buckets until about 1924 when Frank dug a well, that was fitted with a hand pump.** The pump still had to be primed so a bucket of creek water was kept nearby to prime it. *In the photo below it appears that a pipe was fitted to the pump, to carry water to a livestock trough, or possibly a reservoir near the cabin so that water wouldn't have to be carried in buckets the entire distance to the cabin.*



***c. 1920 View from the southwest corner of the cabin showing the children's bedrooms attached in the back and without a front porch.***



**Herman Moser (pictured above) was the founder of New Century Oil Co. He leased the drilling rights for the white oil found in Placerita Canyon from Frank Walker's grandfather James Evans, in 1900.**

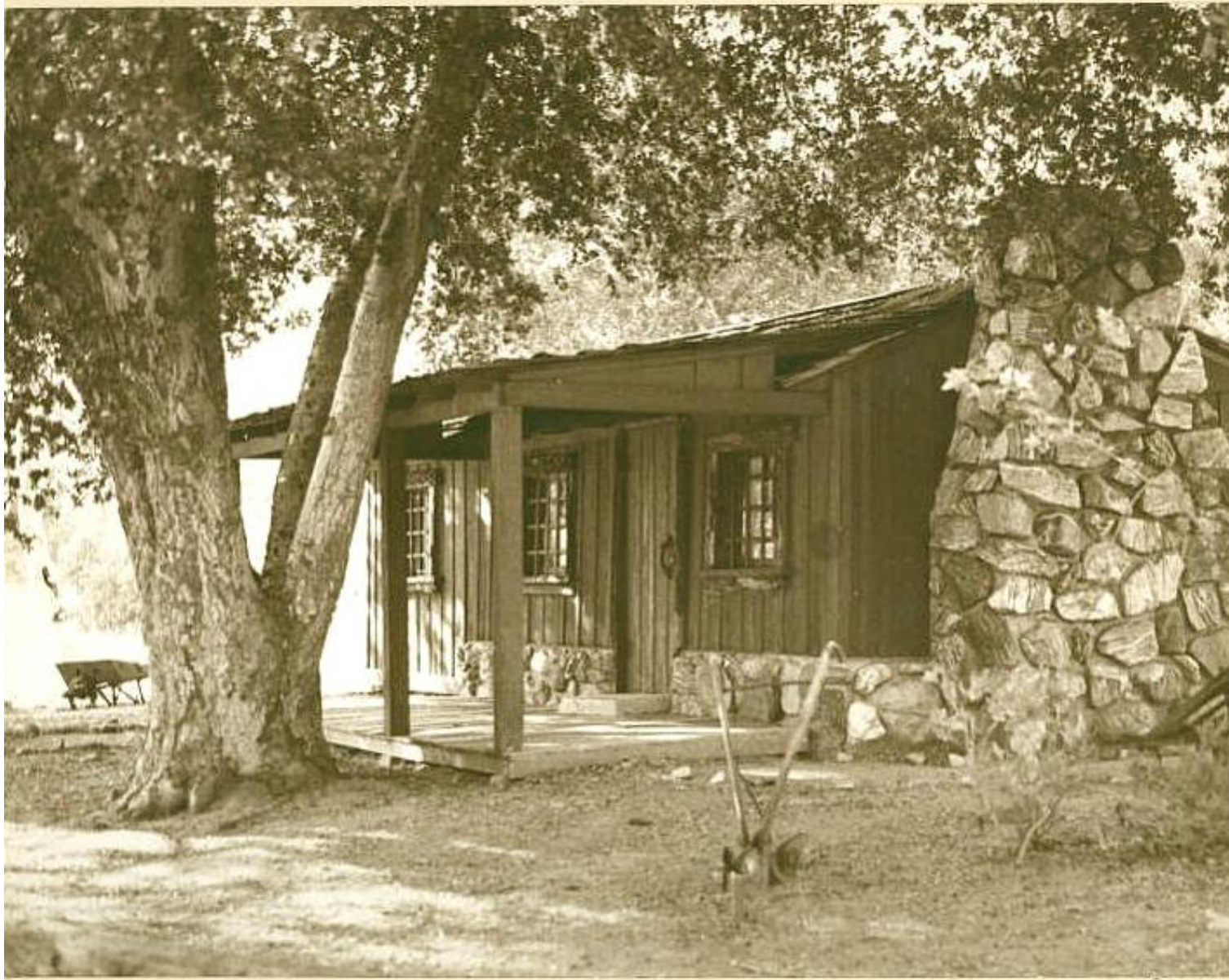
**He visited the Walker Ranch from time to time to check on his oil derrick.**

**When the Walkers lived in their second cabin  
there were no shingles on the roof and no front porch.**



**1936 Front View of Cabin (#2). Movie still photo from "Border Caballero" shows the front door view of the cabin as it appeared when the Walkers lived here.**

**The Walkers lived in this cabin full time from 1919 to 1929. Frank then built a third cabin two miles southeast on what is now known as “Walker Ranch.” In 1930 Frank began renting the cabin and areas in Placerita Canyon to movie studios to film movies during spring, summer and fall.**



**WALKER CABIN DEDICATION - 1977  
PLACERITA CANYON COUNTY PARK**

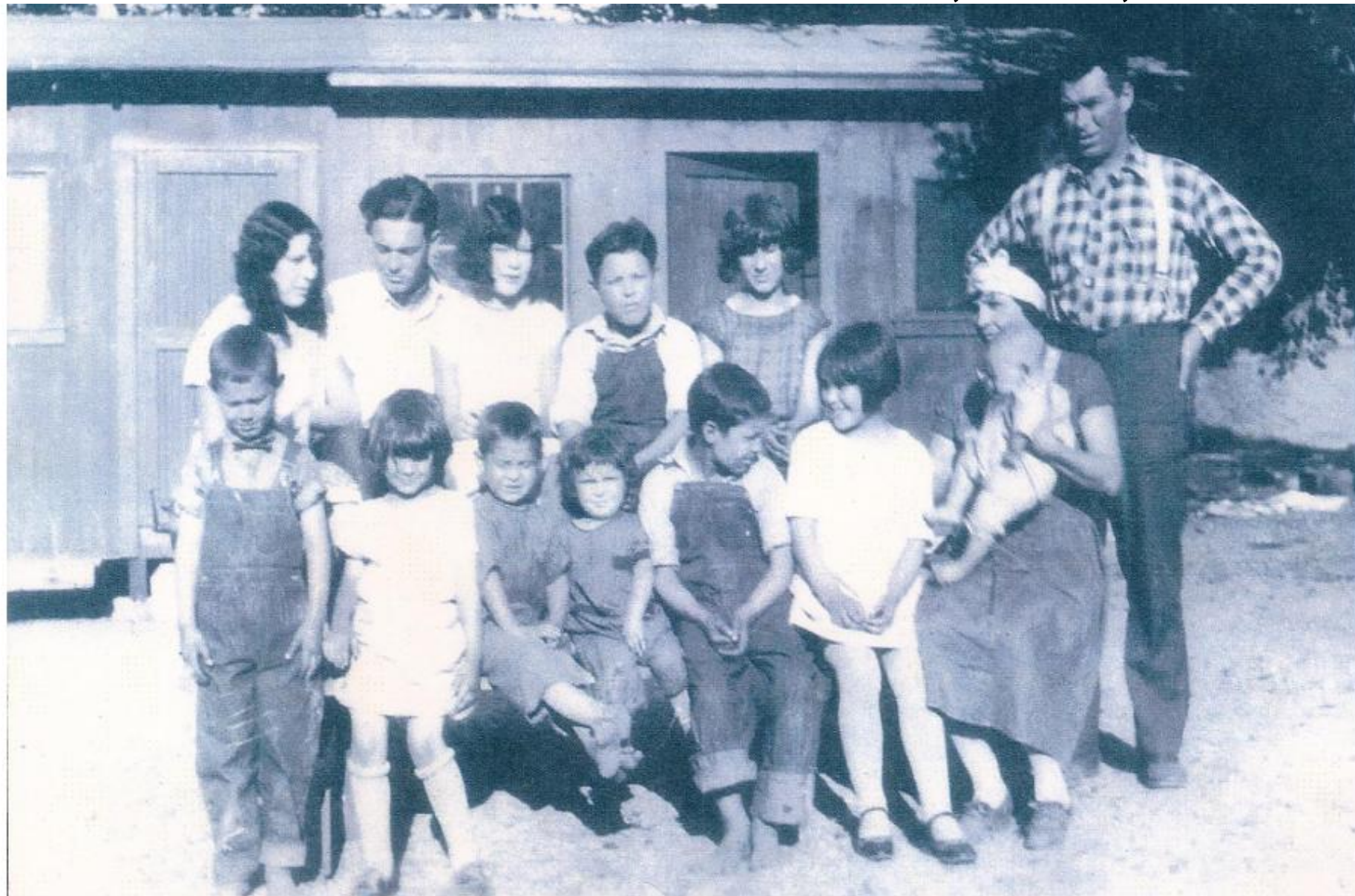
**The family had to return to the “Winter Cabin” (#2) during winter months for some years because rains and snowmelts raised the water levels of the four creeks surrounding the “Summer Cabin” (#3).**

**High water levels made it impossible to safely reach the roads leading to schools and local merchants.**

**After a new road was built, they could live in the Summer Cabin full time and rent the Winter Cabin for movie location work year-round.**

**In Frank Walker’s 1948 diary he always referred to the “Winter Cabin” as “The Movie Cabin.”**

In 1928 Hortense and Frank welcomed their 12<sup>th</sup> child, Richard, into the family.



**Hortense Victoria & Frank Evans Walker Family 1928**

**Irene**  
1909-1954

**Clarence**  
1911-1932

**Helen**  
1912-1931

**Edward**  
1914-2012

**Francis**  
1915-1935

**Frank Evans**  
1886-1971

**Raymond**  
1920-2004

**Hortense G.**  
1921-1992

**Frank R.**  
1923-2013

**Thomas**  
1925-2010

**Charles**  
1917-1995

**Melba**  
1916-2015

**Richard** held by **Hortense Victoria**  
1928-2020 1886-1931

**c.1929 Walker Summer Cabin (Cabin #3) Under Construction**



**This cabin later became known as the “Summer Cabin.”**

1.5 MI. TO  
SIERRA HWY & SR 14

## Walker Family Cabins in Placerita Canyon. Built in the early 1900s

2.5 MI. TO  
SAND CANYON ROAD



PLACERITA CANYON  
NATURAL AREA  
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES  
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

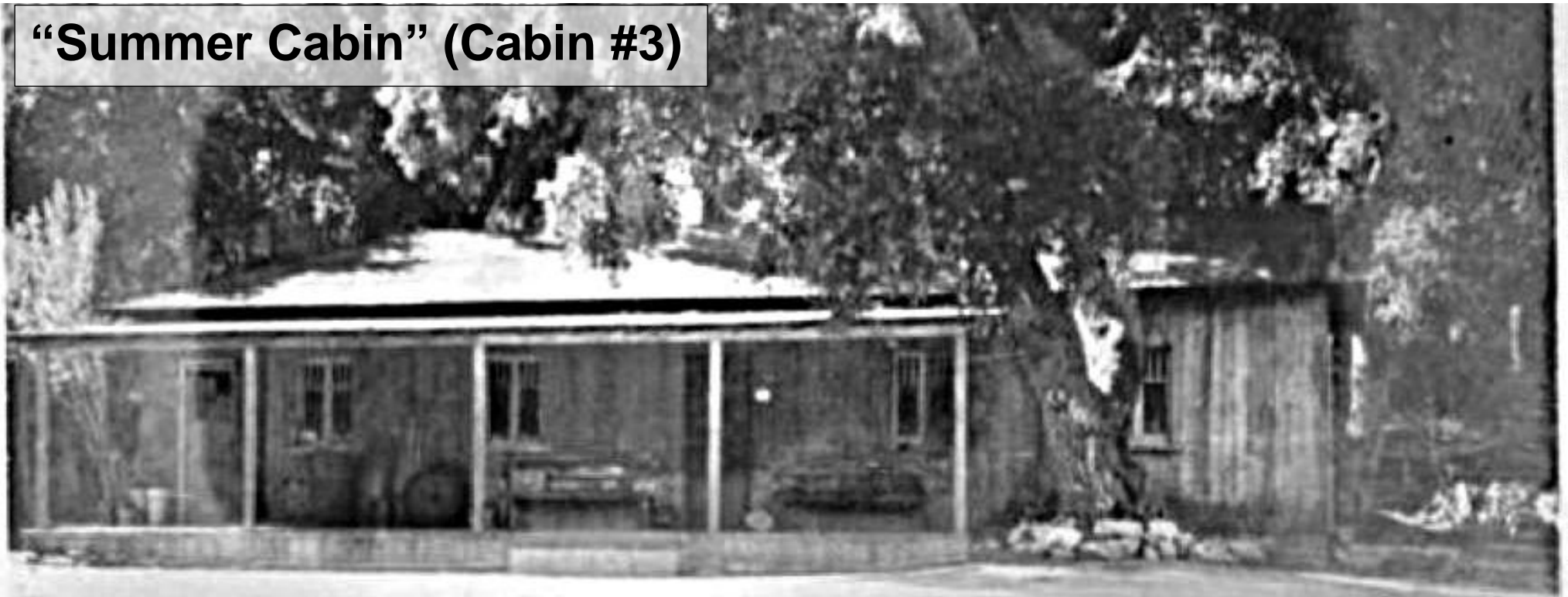
Placerita Canyon Road



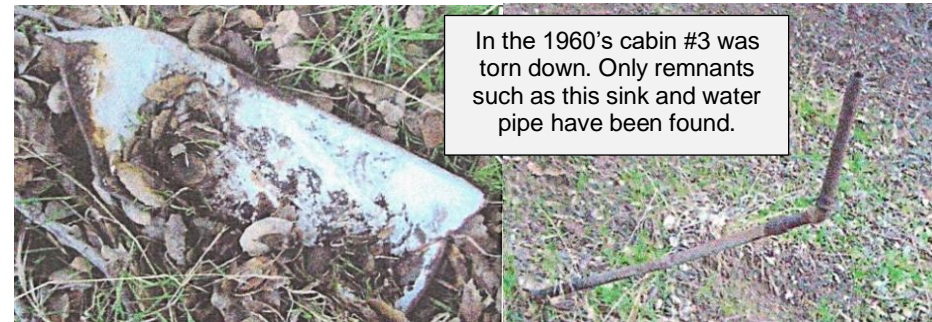
1907 Frank & Hortense (Reynier) Walker



## “Summer Cabin” (Cabin #3)



The Walker Family moved into their 3<sup>rd</sup> home also known as the Summer Cabin about 1929. This home had more living space. It had a big living room, and big kitchen with a sink that ran the entire length of one wall. In this more spacious cabin the family cooked, ate meals, and spent time together. It had a covered porch that ran the length of the house. A three-bedroom bunkhouse was built nearby for the children to sleep in. Frank and Hortense had a separate sleeping cabin. There were also some other cabins for guests in this area. Up the canyon was a natural spring. Frank was able to bring water down the canyon by constructing a pipeline to make a reservoir. He also connected a pipe to the sink, but as it did not have an on-off handle, the water ran all the time. Frank also invented a device he called an oil-gas-water separator that was placed over the white oil well. The invention allowed the Walkers to direct the oil to a storage drum while routing the natural gas to a pipe that went straight to the stove in the cabin's kitchen. Gas flowed freely from the stove, so to prevent a buildup of excess gas and possible explosion, beans were always cooking in a large graniteware pot and coffee was constantly brewing. The mantle lamps also used this gas so the lights were never turned off completely. Melba and the grandchildren spoke often of how the cabin smelled: a mixture of strong coffee, refried beans and gas or oil. Any one of these scents still triggers a flood of memories for family members. [scvhistory.com](http://scvhistory.com)



In the 1960's cabin #3 was torn down. Only remnants such as this sink and water pipe have been found.

**In the 1930s, Frank started Walker's Placerita Camp (aka Walker's Gold Panning Camp). A lot of city people wanted to come to Placerita to experience gold prospecting. Admission to the park was 25 cents per person, per day, and included parking, a picnic table and stove, gold panning privileges and recreation.**



Visitors could rent a completely furnished cabin, housekeeping included, for \$1.25 per person, per day. Barbecue dinners could be specially prepared for parties of 10 or more if provided with four days' advance notice.

*Return to Mrs. A.S.C. Forbes  
385 W. 31st - Bt. Los Angeles*

**WALKER'S  
PLACERITA  
CAMP**

SITE OF THE FIRST GOLD DISCOVERY  
IN CALIFORNIA BY FRANCISCO  
LOPEZ IN 1842

Six Miles East of NEWHALL in Placerita Canyon  
Elevation 2000 feet

One of California's Finest Picnic  
Grounds, within easy distance  
of Los Angeles

Furnished Housekeeping CABINS  
By Day or Week

PRIVATE PICNIC TABLES  
AND OUTDOOR STOVES

Mineral Springs—Old Padre Trails  
INDIAN OIL SPRING

Barbecue Pits - - Dance Floor  
**SPECIAL BARBECUE  
DINNERS**  
Games and Playground

**GOLD PANNING**

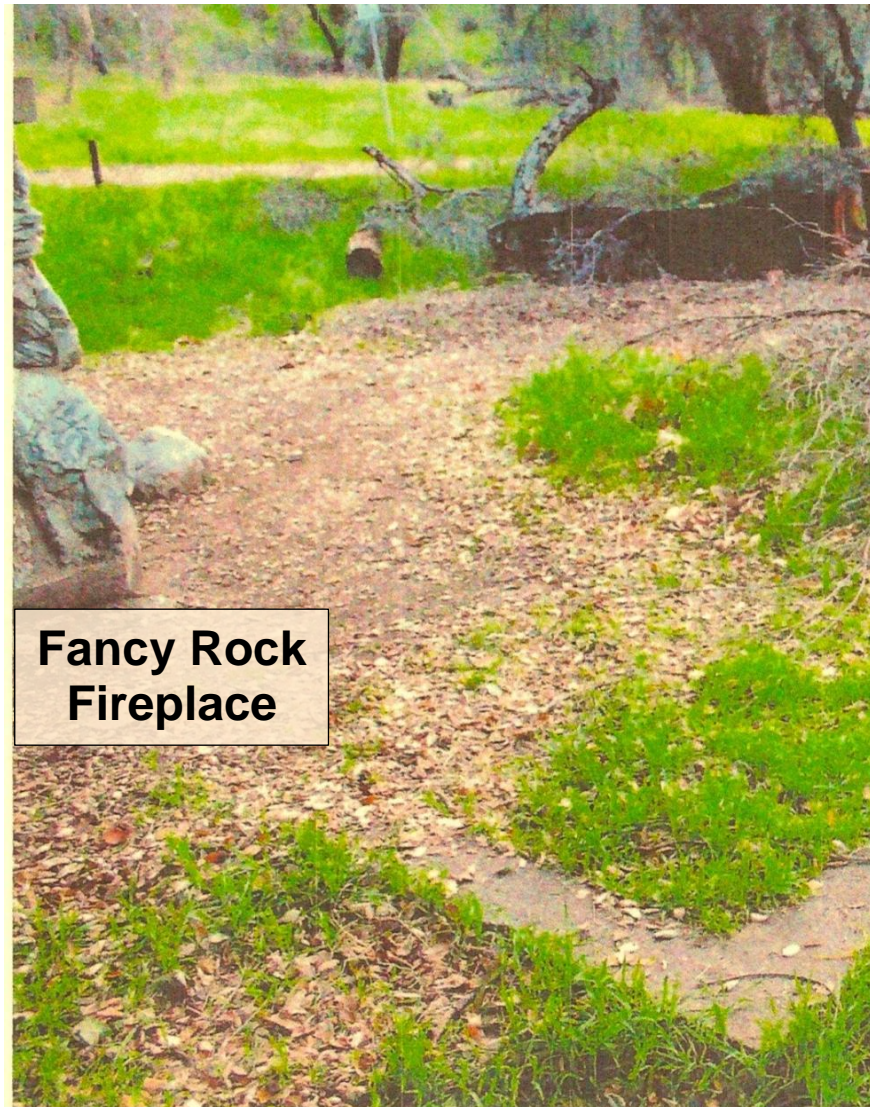
Write for Reservations to  
**FRANK E. WALKER**  
Box 305, Newhall, Calif.

*Be Careful of Fire!*

Camp visitors were treated to music, dancing and other entertainment. It's been said that Frank would salt the sluice or the individual pans with his own gold at times. The project was well planned and quite profitable. On Saturday nights the Walkers also held dances so their friends and others from town could socialize and dance. They could also secretly purchase brandy or whiskey. In addition to helping with the family budget, the dances were a welcome source of entertainment and a reprieve from the daily drudgery. Hortense played the fiddle and guitar and other musicians would come to play dance music as well. The children were not allowed to be out after 10 p.m. but they would watch and listen to the dances from the windows of their bunkhouse. There was a dance floor in the vicinity of the Summer Cabin.

Frank built a cement foundation and a "Fancy Rock" fireplace in this vicinity planning to use it to build a fourth cabin for his wife and himself. He wanted to build Hortense a nice place to live. This foundation can still be seen about 1.75 miles southeast of the Visitor Center on the Canyon Trail.

Bootlegging alcohol was fairly common during the Depression and Prohibition eras. It is said that Frank distilled the wine his father-in-law didn't consider good enough to sell into brandy. He made several flavors of brandy including peach and also some whiskey. He quietly sold these beverages in town and at their dances.



**Fancy Rock  
Fireplace**

#### RATES

Admission to park, including Auto Parking, Picnic Table and Stove, Gold-Panning privileges and all other camp recreation, 25 cents per person per day. Children under 14 admitted FREE, when accompanied by parents.

Gold Pans and Picks to Rent—25c per Day  
Free Spring Water to Take Home

#### CABINS

Completely furnished Housekeeping Cabins  
\$1.25 per Person per Day

Weekly rates: \$8, \$10, \$15 and \$20 according to size and location, to accommodate from two to six people.

No face towels, bath towels or dish towels furnished.

#### BARBECUE DINNERS

Specially prepared for 10 persons or more on four days' notice

\$1.25 per Person, Which Includes Park Admission and All Other Privileges

Reservations for Sunday dinners must reach us by preceding Wednesday, accompanied by a deposit of 50 per cent of total. Reservations for other days must reach us four days in advance. Specify meat desired. Choice of Beef, Pork or Lamb.

SPECIAL RATES FOR LARGE GATHERINGS such as Lodges, Societies and Industrial Picnics

Secluded Coves for Private Parties

#### AUTOMOBILE ROUTE

Drive out San Fernando Road through Newhall Tunnel to town of Newhall, about three blocks past the business district of Newhall, just over the bridge, turn to the right at Auto Club sign marked, "PLACERITA CANYON."

Cross railroad track and keep to the right hand road about six miles to camp.

Distance from Los Angeles, 35 miles.

*Be Careful of Vixen!*

# **“Fancy Rock” Fireplace Built by Frank Evans Walker**

**Intended to be the site of their fourth home**



**Sadly, Hortense passed away in 1931 before the fourth cabin could be built.  
The Fireplace still stands about 1.75 miles southeast of the Visitor Center on the north side of Canyon Trail.**

**We are very grateful to the entire Walker Family for this wonderful Placerita Canyon Natural Area. Frank E. Walker sold this land to the state of California in 1949 designating it to be kept in its natural state and open for community use. The Walker children and grandchildren have continued to share and support the Walker Legacy since that time.**



**2023 Walker Family Reunion at Placerita Canyon Nature Center Open House**

**To this day Frank and Hortense Walker's grandchildren and great-grandchildren continue to share stories, photos and artifacts with us. They support the Placerita Canyon Natural Area in many ways. Annually they gather at the Walker Winter Cabin and Nature Center for a family reunion and to honor their amazing pioneer ancestors.**



**2024 Walker Family Reunion at Placerita Canyon Nature Center Open House**