

---

# ALPINE REVIEW

---



WILLIAM AND MARY THORNBURG IN WEDDING CLOTHES

1882



The Alpine Review is published quarterly by the Historical Society of Alpine County

| Board of Directors 2017                              |                                |
|--|--------------------------------|
| President<br>Tom Sweeney                             | Vice President<br>Rick Dustman |
| Treasurer<br>Marilyn Kolpacoff                       | Secretary<br>Barbara Howard    |
| Director<br>Judy Wickwire                            |                                |
| Past President<br>Shannon Hickey                     |                                |
| <u>Advisory Board</u><br>Cassandra Fred<br>Irvin Jim |                                |
| Alpine Review Newsletter<br>Becky Thornburg          |                                |

Historical Society of Alpine County  
 PO Box 517 Markleeville, CA 96120  
 Phone 530-694-2317 - Fax 530-694-1087

Email: [alpinecountymuseum@yahoo.com](mailto:alpinecountymuseum@yahoo.com) Website: [alpinecountymuseum.org](http://alpinecountymuseum.org)

## Alpine County Museum

The Alpine County Museum is located in the heart of Markleeville, on top of the hill off of Montgomery Street, up the hill at the end of School House Road.

The museum features exhibits on Blacksmithing, the Old Webster School, Silver Mountain City, Jail, Basque Oven, early Alpine County's pioneer families, Native Washoe people, mining in the area, farming, and cattle ranching.

The museum is open Memorial Day weekend through October from 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. Thursday through Sunday.

Museum Curator  
 Jim Boyd

# President's Message

Greetings from Tom!

The next quarterly Historical Society meeting is Thursday, May 17<sup>th</sup> at Turtle Rock Park. As usual, it is a potluck, meeting, followed by our guest speaker, Mike Fischer. The board looks forward to seeing you there.

The photo display in the Administration Building is nearly complete. There is still time to sponsor a photograph for the display. For a donation of \$60 you can select a picture from a new group of photos. We are working on the text of the self-guided tour brochure of the pictures. If you have a short personal note about the picture you sponsored be sure to inform us. We would like to know any additional information about these photos. Each picture will have a tag with its location in the county and the sponsor's name along with the corresponding number in the self-guided tour brochure.

Interested in learning more about possibly volunteering in some capacity at your museum? Call Jim Boyd, curator at 694-2317. We are planning a coffee and special guided tour of the museum and grounds for those who are interested.

---

## **Meet our guest speaker for the upcoming quarterly meeting – May 17**

Born in Reno and formally educated as a dentist, Dr. Michael E. Fischer cherishes his role as an Independent Scholar in History. His love of Nevada history began when his family traveled to the State's historic sites and walked the ground covered by our pioneers. It continued with more reading and exploration of the Silver State. Leaving Reno to practice in Gardnerville, Dr. Fischer's patients offered a history lesson every time they visited his office and allowed him to work on their ranches performing the tasks of a cowboy.



Dr. Fischer has used his love of Nevada to perform in Chautauquas of H.F. Dangberg Sr. and Governor John Sparks. He is currently working on a performance of the Reno gambler and felon, James C. McKay. He has written articles on Tonopah's early bootleggers and their soft drink parlors and also on early University of Nevada history. He actively lectures on various people and assorted topics of Nevada history. On a statewide level he served two governors as the Director of the Department of Cultural Affairs until budget cuts decimated the Department. By serving on the boards of various non-profit institutions, Dr. Fischer continues his active support of our State's history and culture.

# Curator's Corner

This winter we have made some changes in the Washoe Room. We are focusing the room on how people have made a living over time in Alpine County. We have found artifacts and photos that have not been seen in a while and put them on display. While we are looking forward to opening on May 24<sup>th</sup>, before then there will be several opportunities for Alpine County Historical Society (ACHS) members to preview the changes.

On May 10<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 am, we will have coffee and pastries and a tour of the museum complex for potential volunteers. It will be a good opportunity to see what interest people have in Alpine County history and how we might help support those interests.

There is a need for people who like to research and to develop the history and story of our photos and objects. We would like to establish a Collections Committee. It would be a great opportunity to learn about the work the museum does behind the scenes. The meeting would be followed by the tour of the back offices of the museum.

There is also a need for greeters. This volunteer position is for people who like to interact with people and share the great cultural history of Alpine County.

On May 12, the museum will have the annual yard cleaning and tidying. I will be there and would be happy to show the changes to ACHS members.

Also, on May 19, we will have the Basques Oven fired up and will be baking bread. I will give a tour of the museum at that time or you can walk through at your leisure. Sample fresh baked bread and walk through the museum, what could be better?

Jim Boyd, Curator

[alpinecountymuseum@yahoo.com](mailto:alpinecountymuseum@yahoo.com)

530-694-2317

[www.alpinecountymuseum.org](http://www.alpinecountymuseum.org)

**Remembering Nancy Thornburg's dedication to Alpine County history,  
here is an article she wrote for Alpine Review, Vol. V, Number 4, Fall 1998**

THORNBURG FAMILY HISTORY  
By Nancy Thornburg

Following the Civil War, some members of the Thornburg family emigrated from Pennsylvania to Kansas, and in 1874/1875 John Ramsey Thornburg and William McElwee Thornburg headed out from there "to go west for the mining". Early in 1875 both arrived in Alpine County. John returned to Kansas in 1880, but William settled permanently in Alpine.

In 1875 William was registered to vote in at Silver King, listing his occupation as "Woodsman" and his age as 24. Sometime between 1875 and 1880 he moved to Markleeville.

On November 30, 1882, he married Mary Adeline Small in Markleeville. She was born in Indiana in 1860 and emigrated with her parents to California prior to 1870. In 1885, her father, Andrew Griffith Small, took over management of Small's Station at Lake Tahoe, now known as Edgewood, located at the foot of Kingsbury Grade. The station was a stop on the Pony Express route on the Emigrant Trail for many years.

William was in the wood business from about 1880 to 1885, spending many weeks in wood camps cutting cordwood to be floated down the East Fork of the Carson River to Empire, Nevada, for use in the Virginia City mines. Sometime during this period he operated a sawmill at the head of Thornburg Canyon west of Markleeville, for the purpose of cutting flume lumber.

Thornburg was instrumental in the location and construction of dams and reservoirs in the mountains west of Markleeville which enabled the development of complex eastside agricultural irrigation systems and in the development of the Alpine Land and Reservoir Company. The irrigated meadows around Markleeville, Woodfords and the upper Carson Valley continue to bear testimony to the success of these efforts.

He served as justice of the peace, deputy sheriff, and trust of the Webster School District. In 1894 he was elected district attorney, a position he apparently held until 1910. He died in Markleeville in 1912, and Mary died in 1936.



William and Mary Thornburg

## William and Mary's Seven Children

- William Andrew served as county supervisor, died in 1920, a victim of influenza
- James Walter was a warden with the California Department of Fish and Game, served as county supervisor, was a skilled cabinetmaker, married, had no children and spent his life in Markleeville.
- Inez Idella married, had several children and lived in Happy Camp, California
- Benjamin Harrison worked for a few years for the U.S. Forest Service, served during World War I in Siberia with the American Expeditionary Forces, married Lillian Bushing, had one child (Frederick "Fritz") and spent most of his life in Markleeville.
- John Ellsworth served as county supervisor, worked for many years at the Leviathan Mine, was a skilled cabinetmaker, served in World War I, never married.
- Charles Griffith was a farmer, served in World War I, never married, lived in Markleeville.
- George Ivan never married, lived in Markleeville, died at the age of 26



William and Mary Thornburg and six of their seven children

The Thornburg family, like most local families of the late 1800's and early 1900's, worked hard at being as self-sufficient as possible because they had to. They had a very large vegetable garden which took considerable time and attention, due to the short growing season in Markleeville – approximately 60 days. They raided a few head

of cattle and sheep, had a milk cow, cut and hauled all their wood for cooking and heating, baked all their bread and churned their butter, and canned fruits, vegetables, jams and jellies. They had a milkhouse, which boasted foot-thick walls filled with sawdust, where dairy products and other perishables were stored during the summer. They also had a woodshed which included a specially built area, with sawdust-filled walls and ceiling, for storage of fruits and vegetables in the winter.

Entertainment came from reading, sledding and swimming at Grover Hot Springs or in the creek or river. At times, skiing was for fun, but for the most part it was a means of transportation when none other was available, and while fishing and hunting were enjoyable, they were also economic necessities. The adults held dances, some of which lasted all night and were crowned by a midnight supper, and they formed debating clubs and poetry reading groups.



Ben Thornburg on horseback circa 1931

Ben Thornburg married Lillian Bushing, a native of Chicago, and they had one child, Fritz. Ben served briefly as Alpine County Clerk, Auditor and Recorder, but ill health soon forced him to give up the position. Lillian assisted him in the job for awhile and then ran successfully for the position in 1938. She held the position until her retirement in 1958. She assisted in the formation of the Markleeville Water Company and the Historical Society of Alpine County and served as a secretary and volunteer to both organizations. The Thornburgs were involved in the annual fund raiser for polio. Ben died in 1959 and Lillian died in 1995 at the age of 101.



Lillian and Fritz Thornburg circa 1938

Fritz has spent nearly all his life in Markleeville, attended local schools, served two years in the Army in Oklahoma, worked for the Alpine County Road Department for 16 years. He is self employed as a contractor. He has been an active volunteer fireman, served many years as a member of the board of directors for the Markleeville Water Company, and served five years as a county supervisor. He studied agriculture at the University of California at Davis for two years where he met Nancy Carmine. They were married in 1958 and settled in Markleeville. Nancy taught elementary school in Alpine for two years and has served in many volunteer capacities including helping to found the historical

society and museum and the Alpine County Library and Archives. Nancy served as director of the Alpine County Museum for ten years until her retirement in 1997. Fritz and Nancy have three daughters: Rebecca, Jennifer, and Stephanie (Nani).

Throughout the generations, the Thornburgs have contributed countless hours to the community, with special involvement in the activities of the volunteer fire departments.

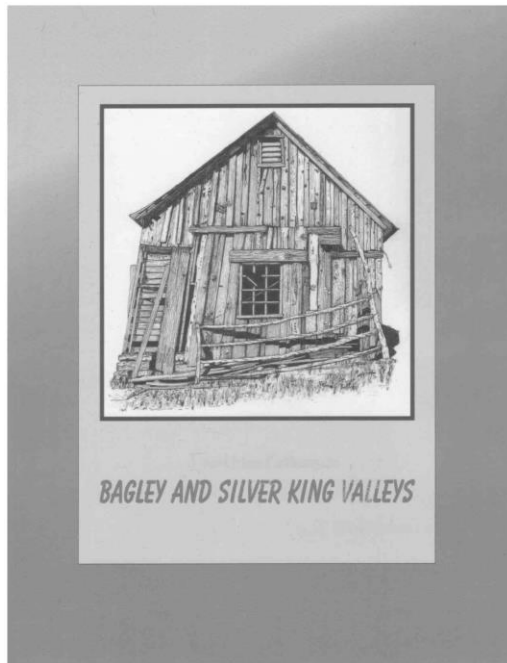


Fritz and Nancy Thornburg and family in 1971



## Books available from our local authors

The two books pictured below are our most recent additions. We also have walking and driving tours in the area, oral histories, and much more. Copies are available at the Alpine County Museum.



### **Land use Patterns in Bagley and Silver King Valleys**

By J.E. Warren-Wickwire  
August 2017 printing

A reference book on the history of this area from 10,000 years ago to 1983.

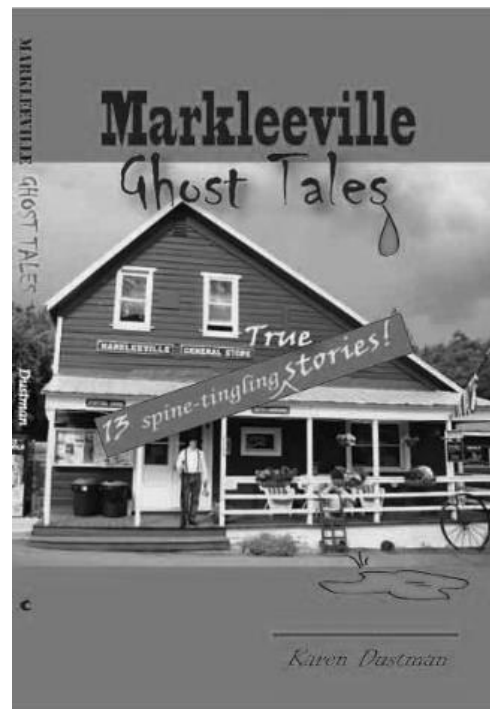
A book in the stirring for many years during extensive research and vintage photo hunts. Including the history of the irrigation practices by Dangberg Land & Cattle and Heenan Lake. Color and black and white photos including Vaquero Cow Camp and the brick house.  
Cover Price \$29.95

### **Markleeville Ghost Tales**

Karen Dustman

"With a pioneer history dating back to the early 1860s, it's no surprise that ghost tales abound here in tiny Markleeville! Locals have been telling and re-telling these ghost stories for years. But it took this book to gather them together for your enjoyment! From tantalizing tales of the unexplained to sinister, strange and spooky apparitions, here are more than a dozen hair-raising TRUE tales of the supernatural in and around Markleeville."

The cover price is \$14.95



## Miscellaneous Musings

---

Stolen Basque oven plaque at Museum complex. In late August, the plaque was removed from the Basque oven building. If you have any information, please contact Jim at the Museum. There is a \$100.00 reward offered for information or its return.

The museum is looking for Volunteers to help with exhibits, filing, and acting as docents for the coming year. See the long list of things you could help with in the Curators Corner. If you have time, please contact the museum to help.

Are you a modern world Historical Society Member who would like to receive this **Newsletter by email**, rather than on paper? If so (or if you want both) just forward your name and email address to us at [alpinecountymuseum@yahoo.com](mailto:alpinecountymuseum@yahoo.com)

Check out our **Website** and be sure to add us to your favorites. Come visit us at [www.alpinecountymuseum.org](http://www.alpinecountymuseum.org) Announcements and additional information about our events will also be posted so be sure to bookmark us.

---



WANT TO CONSIDER  
ADVERTISING IN THE ALPINE  
REVIEW?

WE WILL SOON BE ACCEPTING  
ADVERTISEMENTS.  
SUBMISSIONS MUST BE SENT IN  
JPG, WORD OR OTHER "PHOTO  
READY" FORMAT. PRICES TO BE  
DETERMINED.

FOR QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT  
[ALPINECOUNTYMUSEUM@YAHOO.COM](mailto:ALPINECOUNTYMUSEUM@YAHOO.COM)

# The Historical Society of Alpine County



Sketch by Dede Lyons

OLD WEBSTER SCHOOL    HISTORIC JAIL    BASQUE OVEN    MUSEUM BUILDING

The Historical Society of Alpine County invites you to become a part of our member family. Whether you are joining for the first time, or are renewing your membership: Please fill out this form and mail it today!

## MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>YOUTH \$10.00</b><br/>10% discount at Museum Store<br/>Subscription to the Alpine Review<br/>Invitation to all Society events<br/>Membership Card</p>      | <p><b>BUSINESS &amp; PROFESSIONAL \$50.00</b><br/>10% discount at Museum Store<br/>Subscription to the Alpine Review<br/>Invitation to all Society events<br/>Membership Card</p>  |
| <p><b>INDIVIDUAL \$15.00</b><br/>10% discount at Museum Store<br/>Subscription to the Alpine Review<br/>Invitation to all Society events<br/>Membership Card</p> | <p><b>BENEFACTOR \$100.00</b><br/>20% discount at Museum Store<br/>Subscription to the Alpine Review<br/>Invitation to all Society events<br/>Membership Card</p>  |
| <p><b>FAMILY \$20.00</b><br/>10% discount at Museum Store<br/>Subscription to the Alpine Review<br/>Invitation to all Society events<br/>Membership Card</p>     | <p><b>LIFE MEMBERSHIP \$250.00</b><br/>Life Member Certificate<br/>Copy of the Alpine Heritage<br/>20% discount at Museum Store<br/>Subscription to the Alpine Review<br/>Invitation to all Society events<br/>Membership Card</p> |



## CHOOSE A MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Youth \$10.00      | <input type="checkbox"/> Business & professional \$50.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$15.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor \$100+               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family \$20.00     | <input type="checkbox"/> Life Membership \$250.00        |

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone (Residence) \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone Business) \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Note if you want to receive this newsletter by email rather than print \_\_\_\_\_

Please make check payable to The Historical Society of Alpine County

Detach and mail to P.O. Box 517 Markleeville, CA 96120

Email: [alpinecountymuseum@yahoo.com](mailto:alpinecountymuseum@yahoo.com) Website: [alpinecountymuseum.org](http://alpinecountymuseum.org)

Membership dues are tax deductible. Thank you for your support.

## **Coming events**

- **May 10<sup>th</sup>** - Volunteer coffee and pastries in the Museum - 10 am
- **May 12<sup>th</sup>** - Museum Clean-Up - 10 am
- **May 17<sup>th</sup>** - Quarterly Membership Meeting - Turtle Rock Park - 5:30 pm
- **May 19<sup>th</sup>** - Basque Oven Bread Baking - bring your bread to bake in the oven. Call the museum for details on transporting your dough for baking.
- **June 9<sup>th</sup>** - Rediscover Woodfords event sponsored by the Mad Dog Café (not a Historical Society event). Free history walk with Woodfords and Chautauqua characters. Woodfords Station - 10 am
- **June 23<sup>rd</sup>** - Historic Markleeville Town Tours. Tours start at the Barrett Fountain at 3 pm and 5 pm.
- **July 27<sup>th</sup>** - Walt Monroe Art Reception at the Museum - 5 to 8 pm
- **August 17<sup>th</sup>** - Basque Oven Pizza Bake and quarterly membership meeting starting at noon. Also, the Markleeville Players will perform the re-enactment of the shooting of J. Marklee.
- **September 15<sup>th</sup>** - Fredericksburg Cemetery Tour.
- **September 29<sup>th</sup>** - Silver Mountain Tour. Call Karen Dustman to reserve a spot 694-2122

The Historical Society of Alpine County  
P.O. Box 517 Markleeville, CA 96120  
Address Service Requested