



Sketch by Dede Lyon

Our museum is located in the great Eastern Sierra Nevada Mountains of California.

Our culture of the Washoe people, agricultural era, and silver mining of the surrounding areas display our pioneering history of Alpine County.

ALPINE COUNTY MUSEUM

PO Box 517
Markleeville, CA 96120
530.694.2317
alpinemuseum@yahoo.com
alpinecountymuseum.org

MUSEUM HOURS

Thursday, Friday,
Saturday, & Sunday
10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Memorial Day Weekend
thru the end of October



*Ron Bommarito gave permission to use the photograph of the illustration of Snowshoe Thompson (signed by Eastman) for the cover of the upcoming Winter 2019 issue of the Alpine Review.

ALPINE REVIEW

Volume XXV, Issue 4

November 2019

BREAKING NEWS ON OUR LOCAL HERO SNOWSHOE THOMPSON

by Lisa Gavon

Everyday is a nonstop treasure hunt. When you deal in antiques, you never know what document will surface, somehow remarkably preserved after well over a hundred years. It may be in an old box of papers that look completely innocent but need to be studied carefully

with a magnifying glass. It takes dedication to comb through news which may be interesting, but not significant, until one day a remarkable gem is uncovered. It can edit the past, giving us a new way to look at how things were.

Such is the adventurous life of local Genoa expert Ron Bommarito, who has immersed himself in the past: devoting his life to collecting objects that illuminate the window into a time gone by. There is magic and mystery woven into each day when you approach it as a never-ending search for clues.

The *San Francisco Newsletter* was published by Frederick Marriott and was said to support his financial interests, political goals, and to level attacks against his enemies. The publication dates were tied to the outbound Pacific Mail Steam Ship Company sailing schedule to Panama. It was sold by Wells Fargo and Company agents all over California. The *Newsletter* that contains "A Summary of events from February 20th to March 5th, 1857" is the one that holds the vignette about our local hero, pioneer mail carrier Snowshoe Thompson. The recipient was B. Howard Esq. in Boston Massachusetts.



Snowshoe Thompson continued on page 4

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



Historical Society of Alpine County

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Markleeville, CA 96120
530.694.2317

alpinemuseum@yahoo.com

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Newsletter



President's Message

BY: TOM SWEENEY



We have had another successful summer at the museum. You still have a couple of weeks to visit before we close for the season.

Come to the museum and meet our new curator, Katriina Rengo. She is settling in and has come up with a plan which she brought to the Board of Directors.

The Museum will have a new look in how and where our collection is displayed. Now if you would like to volunteer to assist in these changes just call the museum 530-694-2317 and talk to Kristiina, Lynnette, or leave a message and they will get back to you.

There is a task for everyone, just let us know what you would like to work on. The heavy lifting will be done by a group of volunteers who have been at work on the exterior displays. Be sure to look over the pictures of some of the outside work that the Crew have done.

The Crew has just begun to make space for additional items that have been donated to our collection.

The tentative schedule of events for the coming year is listed on the last page of this Alpine Review.

If you have not been to the Administration Building since we hung the historical photos exhibit you should make time. The second group of photos is now being collected and we need support for this effort. First off we are asking that if you have that family photo album or box of photos with anything that shows Alpine County history let us know. We would love to add it to our collection or allow us to see it and with your permission copy photos that would be added to the museum collection.

If you do not have pictures but you would like to support this project here is what you can do. Each picture needs a sponsor. Sponsorship allows us to have the picture blown up and mounted ready for hanging. Each photo will have a tag with the sponsor's name and any additional information will be listed on an information sheet on the wall. Sponsorship for a picture is \$60.00 which covers part of the cost of enlargement and mounting. The remaining cost is paid for in part with your yearly Historical Society dues.

If you would like to make a donation to the Historical Society and help support this project or any other project it would be greatly appreciated.

Once again, the Historical Society would like to give a big Thank You to the E Clampus Vitus - Snowshoe Thompson Chapter #1827 for all the support they have given to our Historical Society.

CURATOR'S CORNER

by: Kristiina Wiedenhoft

I'm thrilled to be able to introduce myself as the new curator for the Alpine County Museum. Having only started a few months ago and right near the end of the summer season, I've only had the pleasure of meeting some of you. So for those I haven't met yet, let me tell you a little about myself. I moved to the area a few years ago to satisfy my love for the mountains, and need for slightly warmer temperatures. I spent the majority of my life in the small mining towns of Northern Minnesota, known as the Iron Range. There I gained multiple years of museum experience working in historical societies, non profits, and small local museums. I took part in all areas including: archives, exhibits, events, education, fundraising and marketing. My early fascination for history and cultures led me to pursue an undergraduate degree in anthropology and cultural studies, and later a graduate degree in international management. With my experience, knowledge and passion, I'm hoping to have a strong positive impact on the future of the museum.

I was instantly drawn to Alpine County when I started working at the end of August, with the beautiful scenery, vast wilderness, small town charm, kind people, and history everywhere you look. I was so excited to begin studying and learning how this place came to be. I've been greeted by such warm and welcoming people, not only who I work with, but the folks who have come through the museum and ones I've met in town. I've learned so much so far, but I still have a lot more to go, and that's partly where you all come in. History comes from the stories of its people, told by its people. So I look forward to meeting more of you and hearing your stories first hand.



I have many ideas and goals for the museum in the coming winter

months. So far, much of my time has been spent studying the history and learning all about Alpine County, trying to become as much of an expert as I can before I dive into making changes. This is your history I'm helping to share, and I'd like to do it justice. I feel that currently the museum has good bones and such interesting stories are being told. So, I'd like to start by updating and revitalizing some of the existing exhibits, while beginning research to add some exciting new ones. Beyond this, one of my main goals is to increase attendance next season. This effort may take the form of increasing our online presence, marketing in local and neighboring areas, additional events, and bringing in more community and school groups. Alpine County has such a unique and interesting history, it deserves to be shared with as many people as possible!

Preserving and sharing this history would be much more difficult without the involvement of the community. We're continuously in need of volunteers to assist with upcoming projects, exhibits, events and many other areas. Whatever your skill set might be, we will certainly have a project for you. So please reach out and we'll discuss some of the upcoming opportunities. We couldn't do all of this without you! Thank you all so much for your kind welcome and continued support of the Historical Society. I'm so happy to be here and I greatly look forward to my future here in Alpine County.



The entire text reads: "MR. THOMPSON THE MOUNTAIN EXPRESS MAN, has again arrived at Sacramento City, and has forwarded to us the subjoined sketch of himself, wearing the celebrated Norwegian snow shoes, seven feet long, by which alone he was enabled during the late severe winter to accomplish his perilous journey over the Sierra Nevada, and deliver to our readers in Carson Valley the San Francisco News-letter. He says the snow-drifts were 50 feet deep – but that our friends were all well in the valley.

He says the snow-drifts were 50 feet deep – but that our friends were all well in the valley.

"Mr. Thompson, the Carson Valley Expressman, left Placerville on Wednesday, February 18th, on his return trip. The Placerville American says he was accompanied by an assistant, whom he found it necessary to employ to relieve him of a part of his load, which the requirements of the people on the other side of the mountain had increased to the weight of eighty pounds. The only way in which the people of Carson Valley can procure in the winter season the San Francisco News Letter, or the California Advertiser, and such other articles as they may happen to need, is through the agency of Mr. Thompson. Not an individual has visited the Valley over any other route, during the present winter. Mr. Thompson, however, has made regular trips, and has sometimes carried upon his broad shoulders over the entire route a load weighing fifty pounds. Seven pounds weight being San Francisco Newsletters. He has heretofore performed the journey alone, except when his protection and guidance have been sought by

persons desirous of crossing the mountains; but in order to keep pace with the increasing wants of the people of the Valley he has found it necessary to employ an assistant." The accompanying illustration, signed by "Eastman" was approved and submitted by Snowshoe himself. It clearly shows he is carrying a rifle. Many have previously assumed he did not carry a firearm because the added weight would cause an unnecessary burden to his pack. The writing also confirms that he had occasion to hire someone to help him on his journeys over the treacherous Sierra Nevada Mountain passes.

The most significant fact however, is that his "celebrated Norwegian snow shoes" were indeed seven feet long. This is noteworthy not only to the history of skiing, but also to end the longstanding debate on the length of his skis. Behind him the artist has drawn Carey's Peak (sometimes called Woodford's Peak), with Wade's Lookout to the right. This is the exact view up Woodford's Canyon from Snowshoe Thompson's homestead.

The most significant fact however, is that his "celebrated Norwegian snow shoes" were indeed seven feet long.

The most hardy of mountain men, Snowshoe was born Jon Anon Torsteinsson Rue in Norway on April 30, 1827. He died on May 15, 1876 from a burst appendix at his Diamond Valley home in Woodfords, California. But the search for details about his remarkable athletic ability and the events of his life still continue to this day. These elusive primary source materials give another glimpse into the truth about the real man behind the legends.



ALPINE COUNTY TOBACCO CONTROL PROGRAM

Our program goals are to:

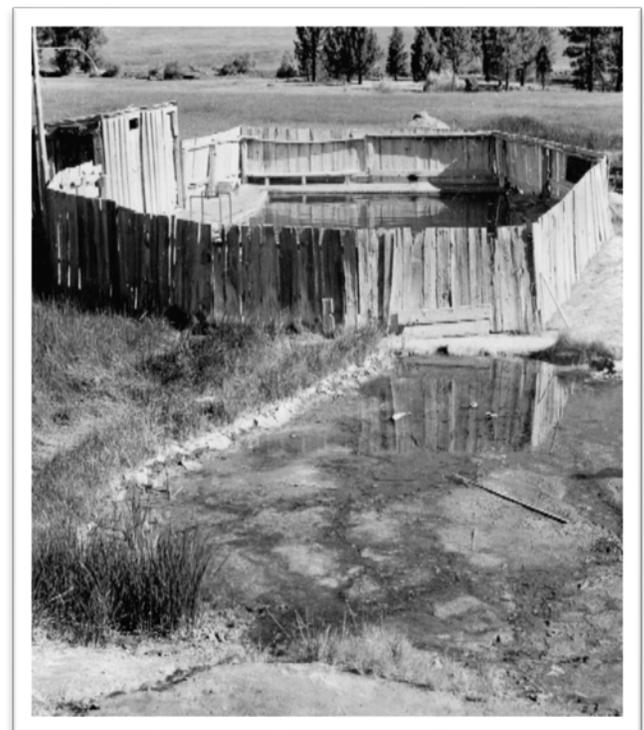
- Increase our awareness of the effects of smoking on personal and public health
- Improve communities' abilities to change smoking behavior
- Increase the influence of existing legal and economic factors that discourage smoking
- Strengthen social norms and values supporting non-smoking



Want to consider advertising in the Alpine Review?

We are now accepting advertisements!

Contact us for prices.



Grover Hot Springs



ALPINE COUNTY

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ALPINE COUNTY

HAPPENINGS AROUND THE MUSEUM

Staff Report

Have you ever wondered how they move antique equipment around the Museum?

Well, wonder no more...



Volunteers moving and reorganizing hay lifter and other artifacts.



*Thank you
Rick Dustman
Tom Sweeney
Dan Webster*



Human counter balance

Outdoor Museum Cleanup



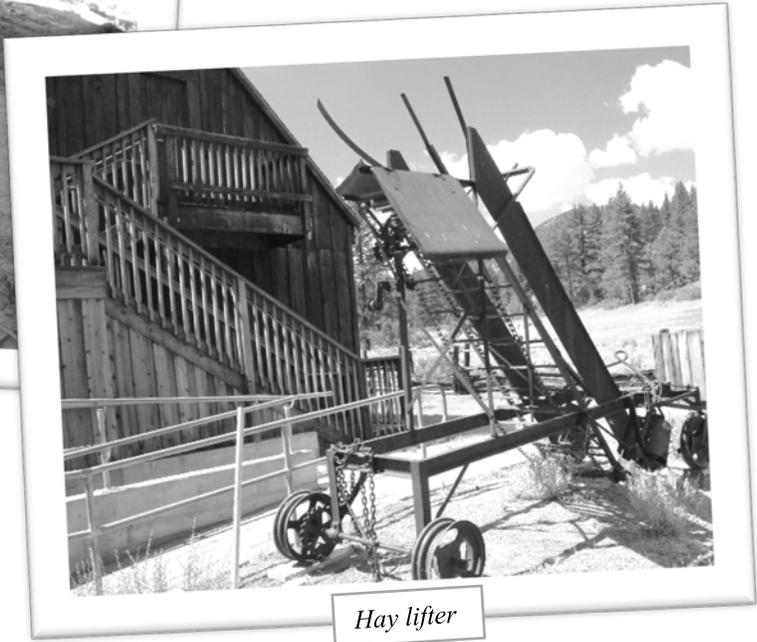
Moving a drag to new spot



Wagon being moved



Old road grader



Hay lifter

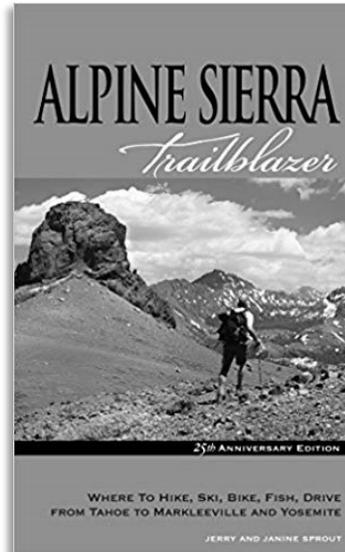
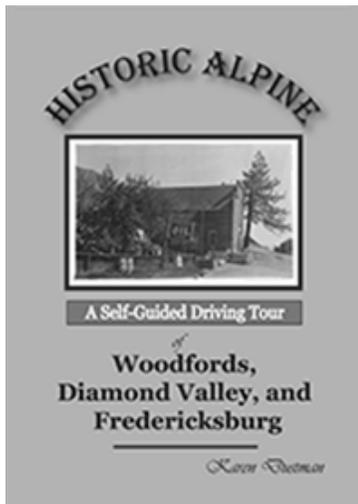
BOOKS available from local authors

These two books, amongst others, are available at the Alpine County Museum including walking and driving tours in the area, oral histories and much more.

A Self-Guided Driving Tour – Woodfords, Diamond Valley, and Fredericksburg

by Karen Dustman

Discover more than three dozen landmarks and early homesteads in the pioneering settlements of Woodfords, Diamond Valley, and Fredericksburg. This self-guided driving tour takes just about an hour. Visit such nearly-forgotten historic sites as Snowshoe Thompson's home; the old Woodfords School; the Wade House (the oldest continually-inhabited dwelling on the eastern Sierra); a pond reportedly used for early Mormon baptisms; and even a segment of the Emigrant Trail..



Alpine Sierra Trailblazer: Where to Hike, Ski, Bike, Fish, Drive from Tahoe to Markleeville and Yosemite

by Jerry Sprout and Janine Sprout

This 25th Anniversary (seventh) edition of Alpine Sierra Trailblazer includes the new Hope Valley Rim Trail, a 33-mile route that takes in all the streams, rivers and passes around the Sierra's most pristine meadowlands. A historic tour of Markleeville joins five other new trailheads, dozens of fresh photographs, and a new color insert in this completely revised and updated 2016 edition.

Trailblazer also directs adventurers to the Yosemite High Country, all around Lake Tahoe, Grover Hot Springs, Carson Pass, Monitor Pass, Carson River, Wolf Creek, Ebbetts Pass, Bear Valley, Kirkwood, Mokelumne River plus, Desolation Wilderness, Sonora Pass, Bodie, Mono Lake, Tioga Pass..



Alpine Review

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SPONSOR A PICTURE

\$60



○ Markleeville Store ○○ Woodfords ○○○ Markleeville ○○○ Fishing ○○○ Markleeville

Pictures will be rotated among Alpine County Offices

A selection of available pictures can be viewed at the Museum and all of the Historical Society Events.

Contact Tom Sweeney @ 530.694.2919 for details

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YOUTH

MEMBERSHIPS AND VOLUNTEER

The museum is dependent upon donations, retail sales and historical society memberships for its continued operation. Our goal as an organization is to preserve the rich history of Alpine County and the surrounding area. It is through our volunteers continued support that we can continue to achieve this goal.

Miscellaneous Musing

Are you a modern world Historical Society member who would like to receive this newsletter by email, rather than paper? If so (or if you want both) just forward your name and email address to us at alpinemuseum@yahoo.com.

If you would like to receive this newsletter by email, please let us know!

Check out our website www.alpinecountymuseum.org and be sure to add us to your favorites. Announcements and additional information about our events will also be posted, so be sure to bookmark us. ❖

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Email: alpinemuseum@yahoo.com Website: alpinecountymuseum.org

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



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**November 21, 2019**

Historical Society Quarterly Meeting and Potluck
Turtle Rock Park, Markleeville, CA
6:00 pm

Tuesday, February 18, 2020

Board of Directors Meeting
Alpine County Museum

Thursday, February 20, 2020

Historical Society Quarterly Meeting and Potluck
Turtle Rock Park, Markleeville, CA
6:00 pm

Saturday, May 16, 2020

Weeding and Flower Bed Preparation (Planting TBD)
Alpine County Museum

Tuesday, May 19, 2020

Board of Directors Meeting
Alpine County Museum

Thursday, May 21, 2020

Historical Society Quarterly meeting and Potluck
Turtle Rock Park
6:00 pm

The Historical Society of Alpine County
PO BOX 517, Markleeville, CA 96120

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Thursday, May 28, 2020

Alpine County Museum OPENS

Saturday, May 30, 2020

Basque Oven Bread Bake and Open House
Alpine County Museum

To Be Announced 2020

Frank Tortorich Historical Talk
Alpine County Museum

To Be Announced 2020

Antique Clock Maintenance by Steve Hibbs
Alpine County Museum

Saturday, June 20, 2020

Markleeville Living History Walk
Markleeville, CA

August or September 2020

E Clampus Vitus Snowshoe Thompson Chapter #1827
Event at Alpine County Museum

August or September 2020

Emigrant Trail Walk
Tour by Rick Dustman

Tuesday, August 18, 2020

Board of Directors Meeting
Alpine County Museum

Saturday, August 22, 2019

Historical Society Quarterly meeting and Basque Oven Pizza Bake Potluck
Alpine County Museum
12:00pm

September 2020

Silver Mountain City Tour
Tour by Rick and Karen Dustman

Saturday, October 3, 2020

Basque Oven Bread Bake and Museum Grounds Tour

Sunday, October 25, 2020

Alpine County Museum CLOSSES

Tuesday, November 17, 2020

Board of Directors Meeting
Alpine County Museum

Thursday, November 19, 2020

Historical Society Quarterly Meeting and Potluck
Turtle Rock Park
6:00 pm



US POSTAGE