
ALPINE REVIEW



This beautiful house was once the home of *The Alpine Chronicle*.

Read more about this - [INSIDE](#)



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

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Alpine County Museum

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

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

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

Happy New Year to all of you. 2018 is a great time to visit to the museum and attend museum events. We are planning some good ones! Among them are a guest speaker series to be sponsored by the museum. If you are interested, or would like to present, please contact the museum or send an email to: alpinemuseum@yahoo.com and we will contact you.

The Historical Society Quarterly meeting will be held at Turtle Rock Park, February 15th, starting at 5:30pm, potluck dinner at 6:00pm, followed by our program. Our speaker will Leonard Turnbeaugh speaking on the history of trapping in Alpine County.

Later this year, there will be a guided tour of Silver Mountain City, just up the road from Markleeville. Karen and Rick Dustman are leading it and it is scheduled for Saturday, September 29th. A fine cast of historical characters are waiting for the chance to pass on the history of this grand old mining town. Call Karen at 694-2122 to register before it is full.

As you will see in the Curator's column, we are in need of volunteers! All sorts of opportunities are available from being a docent to digging in the dirt on planting day. Call Jim at 694-2317.

We are updating our records during this year's membership drive, and trying to go paperless, so if you would like to receive information on upcoming events in a timely manner, please send your email to: alpinemuseum@yahoo.com The mailing address is P.O. Box 517, Markleeville, CA 96120.

In closing, I would like to pay tribute to Nancy Thornburg. She was a tremendous asset to the museum, spending hours curating our photo collection, and that was only last year! I will miss seeing her at Board of Supervisors' meetings; she would come in and tell the unvarnished truth. She always did what she felt was best for the county.

Tom Sweeney

Curator's Corner

Nancy Thornburg was a major part of my experience at the Alpine County Historic Museum. She will be sorely missed. Each day when I go through various files, shelves, exhibits and books, not only her name, but the imprint of her mind on the museum is a living presence. In a museum world where it is not uncommon to be 10 years or more behind in cataloging, the Alpine museum is current. If you go back to the paper records, they are not only complete, but cross referenced to the many associated subjects. How she managed to create all those records as well as create the exhibits and maintain the premises is a testament to a different time as well as the power of passion.

Her memory was significant, the details of the early years of the museum were as well remembered as her breakfast. For a new person in my position she could lay bare the path that had been taken previously together with the reasons for the decisions that had been made. I will miss her.

This year we need to get back to the basics of our joint operating agreement with the county. I am afraid this means rolling up our sleeves and creating volunteer opportunities for the members of the Alpine County Historical Society (ACHS). The County provides a great base for the efforts of our volunteers: buildings, a paid staff, utilities, and maintenance. Our part comes in the collection of the articles which document our story and in providing the product of our history to the public.

At my last museum I was blessed with volunteers who had a long association with the museum. I had six docents when I started. Their average tenure with the museum was 17 years and the average age was 91. Their gift was their memories. Without them, I would never have developed the feel and passion for the area and its uniqueness. Along the way I added 7 more volunteers. Most were younger and brought additional skills to museum. The younger people could lift a case, paint a wall, or carry boxes of papers as well as act as docents. In common, all the volunteers, young and old, shared a passion for the history of their home and the desire to conserve it and bring it to the public.

In the coming year my first priority is to find and train docents to interact with the public. These people are the core of the museum. They allow the staff to work in the back room and on the computer. No age, sex, or height restrictions. The only requirement is a passion for the History of Alpine County and a willingness to learn and present that history. Docents allow the museum to stay current with back office functions such as cataloging and accessioning of the artifacts. I would love to have four to eight volunteers who are willing to be trained and can

work a regular, weekly shift of two to four hours during the open hours of the museum. These volunteers will be the face of the museum that the public sees.

I also need volunteers who can take on projects. These projects are generally office, exhibit or cataloging work of one kind or another: reading and summarizing, organizing, counting, and filing. These people also help with exhibits. There is work to be done from dusting to researching and writing labels.

We also need people who can move us into the 21st century. While we have no desire to Snapchat, Twitter, or become state of the art, it would be nice to have people who could create posts for Facebook (write a paragraph to be posted by the staff) and basically handle some of the email and social media communications.

And of course, there are the many events that occur each summer. Many of the people who do one, do two or more. I would like to see a much broader base of volunteers to help with these events. Especially the follow up. We should be recruiting new members at each event. But collecting lists of names, e-mails, and interests does little if follow up is not done and two-way communication is not pursued.

Last, but not least, leadership is developed: It is not an ingrained talent, but a result of passion tempered by experience. We need to share the work of leadership with a new generation. In 10 years it will be too late to begin.

Jim Boyd, Curator

alpinecountymuseum@yahoo.com

530-694-2317

www.alpinecountymuseum.org

Alpine History Photo Project

The Historical Photos project is now available for viewing in the Alpine County Administration Building. Many historic photos have been sponsored and are mounted for viewing. This is the start of a project involving a number of photographs which will be on a rotating display so you never know when something new will be displayed. Come on down and view the great work that has been done restoring and mounting a wonderful collection.

Additionally, a brief presentation about the project will be given by President Tom Sweeney at the quarterly meeting on February 15. The general membership meeting, potluck and presentation will be held at Turtle Rock Park. Doors open 5:30pm, potluck begins 6pm followed by a short business meeting and then the program. The speaker for this meeting will be Leonard Turnbeaugh, telling the story of the history of trapping in Alpine County. It will include show and tell items, and even a trap demonstration, if he has a volunteer.

The Folger Brothers

The Alpine Chronicle

By Karen Dustman

On January 11, 1849, catching the spirit of the times, Robert M. Folger sailed west from New York aboard the schooner *Anthem*. Robert was pushing thirty years old when he first set foot in San Francisco that June, with hordes of other gold seekers.

If Robert ever tried his hand at mining it appears he wasn't successful; before long he moved to Sacramento, where he pursued various commercial endeavors. Among his pursuits were a hardware store selling goods including machinery for quartz mills; he also served as chief for the Sacramento Fire Department.

After a brother (Charles) came west in 1851 and the hardware business (ironically for a fire chief) went up in flames, Robert eventually "drifted into journalism" in Sacramento. In 1852, three long years after leaving home, Robert finally felt established enough to return to New York and bring his wife west with him.

Perhaps attracted by the local silver mining excitement, R.M. Folger moved to Markleeville in 1864. And it was a lucky thing indeed for burgeoning Alpine County!

Here Folger opened the first newspaper on the eastern slope of the Sierra: *The Alpine Chronicle*. The newspaper office was located on the north side of Montgomery Street, directly opposite what he dubbed "the City Hall" -- the town Armory. A pro-Union patriot, Folger kept a large flagpole directly in front of his establishment.

THE ALPINE CHRONICLE,
Published Saturday Evenings,
by
ROBERT M. FOLGER,
Publication Office--Montgomery Street,
opposite the City Hall.

Terms:
For one year (in advance)..... \$7 00
For six months..... 4 00
For three months..... 2 50
Single Copy..... 25

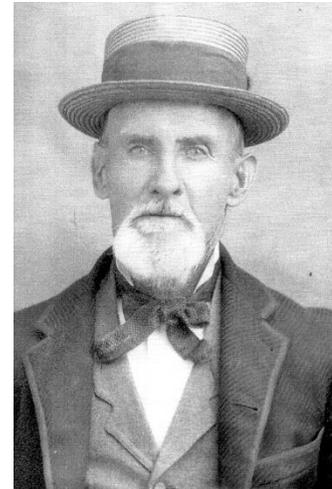
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Summons--Three months..... 21 00
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Lien Notices..... 18 00
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These rates are payable in gold coin.
Advertisements with cuts larger than newspaper cuts
will not be inserted.
Mining Notices must invariably be paid in advance.

**BOOK AND JOB WORK DONE AT THE
LOWEST RATES.**

Before long he was joined in the business by younger brother Alexander C. Folger, some twelve years his junior. “Bobby”, round and chunky, handled the presses, while tall, lanky Alex did the editing. Later observers called them the “long and the short of it.”

The competing *Silver Mountain Bulletin* folded its operation in 1867, and the *Chronicle* took advantage of this opportunity to move its press to the county seat at Silver Mountain. Here Alex’s name began appearing beside Robert’s on the masthead. For the next eleven years, the patient and unassuming Folger brothers put out weekly chronicles about life at Silver Mountain.



Alex Folger

Despite their physical differences, the brothers were known for their “impeccable manners” and ultra-conservative dress. Both favored “high, starched collars, frock coats, and striped trousers.” Some sources say the brothers were Quakers, and they maintained a high standard of journalism of honesty and integrity in their paper. They also weren’t afraid to call out competing papers for articles they felt were merely “wildcat speculation” to hawk worthless mining shares.

The Folgers were also not afraid to tackle politically-difficult issues of the day. Robert editorialized against building the expensive new stone jail at Silver Mountain in 1867, saying, “If the county comes out [prosper] the jail is too small; and if the county don’t come out, it is too large.” He even stepped up to serve as secretary for a local “Anti-Jail Meeting” held in Markleeville.

The Folgers also indulged a rather surprising view of justice on occasion. After killer Ernst Reusch was unceremoniously pitched over the edge of Hangman’s Bridge by a group of masked men, the *Chronicle* coolly observed that “the good people of Alpine County” approved of this expeditious form of justice with “unexampled unanimity.” Case closed.

R.M. Folger entertained political aspirations, and ran for State Assembly around 1867 on the Union ticket. A competing paper remarked uncharitably that Folger’s “chances are four-fold greater in catching the Asiatic cholera than of receiving the nomination,” and that proved sadly accurate; Folger lost.

By 1878, despite their long residence at Silver Mountain, the Folger brothers’ fortunes there began to sour. The Board of Supervisors refused to pay for their printing of official legal notices (despite a contract to do so). The town of Silver Mountain itself was undergoing an upheaval, as long-time locals began departing in droves for the new boomtown of Bodie.

Reading the tea leaves, the Folgers reluctantly decided to move on. By the end of 1878 they, too, had packed up their business -- lock, stock, and printing press -- and moved to Bodie.

There the Folgers launched a new newspaper, calling it the *Mono-Alpine Chronicle*, a name they later shortened to simply the *Bodie Chronicle*. A few years later they moved again, this time to Bridgeport, the Mono County seat, where they eventually merged their paper into the *Bridgeport Chronicle-Union*.

R.M. Folger passed away in 1899 at the age of 78. His obituary recognized him as the “oldest Journalist on the Coast.” Brother Alex continued the family publishing business for a few years until he, too, passed away in 1904.

The Folger brothers are both memorialized on a single headstone at the Bridgeport Cemetery in Bridgeport, California. They left an amazing legacy of Silver Mountain lore behind.



INFOBOX:

Were the Folger Brothers Related to the Coffee Company?

Though the similar last name has long prompted speculation, there's no known connection between the two Folger clans -- at least, yet!

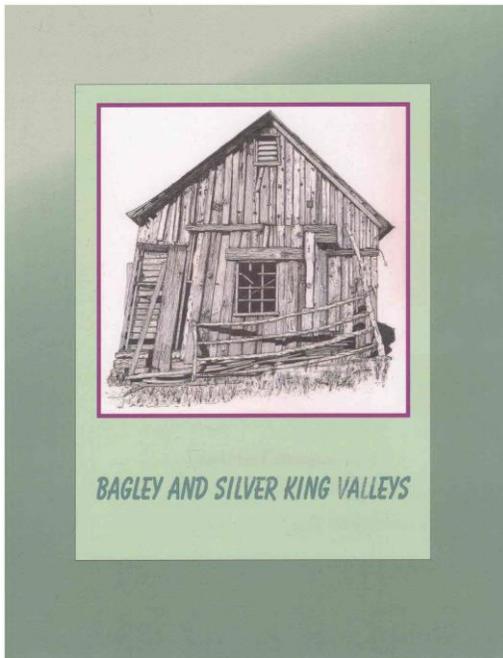
Robert and Alex Folger were born in New York, while coffee magnate James Athearn Folger and his two brothers, Henry and Edward, hailed from Nantucket, Massachusetts. We've never run across any data to suggest the two families were related. But given the proximity of those two states and the similar last name, it's likely there is *some* familial connection -- perhaps distant cousins.

If anyone manages to tie the family threads together with further ancestry research, we'd love to hear about it!



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.

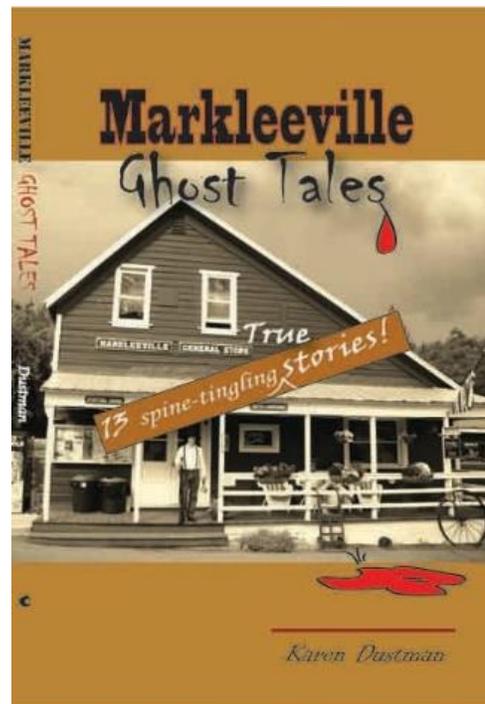
Cover Price \$29.95

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 \$50.00 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

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



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BECKYTHORNBURG@ATT.NET

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!

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

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

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

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

Coming events

- General Membership Meeting Thursday February 15, at Turtle Rock Park. Doors open at 5:30 p.m., Dinner at 6. Potluck sharing if you have something to bring but join us either way.
There will be a short business meeting and then the program. The speaker for this meeting will be Leonard Turnbeaugh, telling the story of the history of trapping in Alpine County It will include show and tell items, and even a trap demonstration, if he has a volunteer.
- Our Spring meeting will involve Firing up the old Basque Oven and Baking some bread. Keep an eye open for date and time.
- We finally have some snow today. But spring will come and with it will come spring planting, date and time to be announced.

The Historical Society of Alpine County
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