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# ALPINE REVIEW

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## **The Story of Kermit Neddenriep**

*By Karen Dustman*



**The Story of Kermit Neddenriep** *continues on Page 5*



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 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

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello Members,

First off I would like to thank Frank Tortorich, Author and Historian for taking his time to come over the hill and spend a morning at our Museum speaking on the subject of "the impact of the Carson River Route on Alpine County History". We had a full house at the museum and every one enjoyed his story telling and the question and answer session that followed. Frank and Mary Ann are valued members our Historical Society we were lucky he made the time to be a presenter.

August 17th is the date of our Quarterly meeting starting at noon. The Basque Oven will be all fired up and a full crew of Basque bakers lead by Rick Dustman will be ready to supply fresh baked hot pizza, a Basque specialty. They will be ready to bake your homemade bread or cinnamon rolls to share with everyone at the meeting. This event has turned into a potluck so bring something to share or just come up the hill and enjoy the food, friends, and the museum and the grounds.

If you have not been up to see all the changes that were made to the museum inside this will be your chance. We are planning changes to the grounds along with new display items in the Carriage Shed and Stamp Mill.

You could be part of these changes by volunteering your time there are chances both inside and outside for you to help a little or a lot.

I would like to have you take note of the wonderful job of refinishing the log wood bench on the front porch. Shelia and Jeanne Reuter spent the time to give the bench a good sanding and then spent a few days waiting for the wind to stop blowing many more than a few. Persistence paid off and bench is ready for use.

When you are sitting at the picnic benches notice the fine job of painting that Pat Crosby did on them. They take a beating but Pat defeats the elements and the sprinklers.

The Clampers came up on a workday and volunteered time to work on the steps of the school house and started the repair of the split rail fence along the perimeter of the grounds.

There have been volunteers working all over the complex. There are jobs for every skill level and ability, volunteers can help in many ways and rest assured the praise is all the pay you need.

If you have any questions or suggestions let the Museum Director know and we will get back to you.

Enjoy your museum and tell others about your visit experience.

Tom

# Curator's Corner

*Look for the new Curator's Corner in the next quarterly Alpine Review in November.*

**COMING SOON!**

Curator

alpinemuseum@yahoo.com

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

## **The Story of Kermit Neddenriep** *continued from page 1*

*Put July 26<sup>th</sup> on your calendar. Three-quarters of a century ago on that same date, our community lost a local son.*

The year was 1944. The place: somewhere near San Romano, Italy. Europe was convulsing in the final, ugly months of World War II.

Kermit Neddenriep had been cooped up in a foxhole for several days with his unit, the 88<sup>th</sup> Division of the 351<sup>st</sup> Infantry. And while there, he'd been thinking of the folks back home. "You seem to get used to the big guns going off and all the excitement," he wrote his parents on July 20<sup>th</sup> from his uncomfortable quarters in the trench. He tried to add a reassuring touch: "There are planes zooming back and forth over our heads all the time, but mostly all ours."

Kermit had just celebrated his 34<sup>th</sup> birthday three months earlier. Born April 5, 1910 in Diamond Valley, (Alpine County), he was the second son of Henry Dolf Neddenriep, Jr. and Eugenia ("Gene") Harvey. His siblings included an older brother, Virgil (Ripp), and two younger sisters, Louise and Gloria. Louise, too, had enlisted when the War broke out, joining the WACs.





*Claus and Anna E. Neddenriep,  
probably taken in Germany.*

The Neddenriep family's roots ran deep in Carson Valley. Kermit's father, Henry (Jr.), was one of the ten children of Henry Neddenriep (Sr.). *His* father, the senior Henry, had made his way here in 1869 with a cousin, by stowing away aboard ship. And Henry Sr.'s parents, Claus and Anna Neddenriep, soon followed their son across the ocean, arriving in 1872. The land that Claus and Anna purchased would eventually form the nucleus of the 900-acre Neddenriep Home Ranch in Carson Valley.

Although officially an Alpiner by birth, Kermit moved with his family to Carson Valley when he was three years old. About 1929 the family moved again, this time to Smith Valley, and Kermit graduated from Smith Valley High. After graduation he joined his father in working the family ranch and also was employed by L.L. Wedertz of Wellington.

And then World War II broke out. For a time, ranchers were exempted from military service, their work considered critical to the home front. But as the war ground on, that changed. In November, 1942, Kermit Neddenriep received his draft notice greeting from Uncle Sam. He enlisted in the Army on November 30, 1942, and was assigned to the Fifth Army, 351<sup>st</sup> Infantry, 88<sup>th</sup> Division, under the command of General Clark. And a year and a half later, he found himself in that foxhole in Italy.

**Pfc Kermit Neddenriep**

Italy

(This letter was received by Mrs. H. D. Neddenriep of Smith Valley.)

Dear Mom and Dad;  
Just a line or so to let you know that I am O. K. and hope you are all well.

I guess I might just as well tell you that I am writing this letter in a dug-out on the side of a hill. It is (censored) days today that the outfit that I am with have been on the front lines but you just seem to get used to the big guns going off and all the excitement. I wrote to 'Al and Lois telling them about being here and told them not to tell you, but thought that I might just as well let you know. There are planes zooming back and forth over our heads all the time but mostly all ours, if an enemy plane comes in sight we soon know it as our big guns start firing on it at once. Will close now and drop a few lines later.

As Ever,  
Kerm

*Kermit's last letter to his parents, six days before he died.*

On July 26, 1944, Kermit's unit staged an attack on the town of San Romano. "Fighting in the streets was exceedingly fierce," the Army chaplain would later write to Kermit's parents. "During the advance he was struck by enemy sniper fire." Kermit died there on the streets of a town more than 5,800 miles from home. The letter he'd written his parents from a trench just six days earlier, assuring them "I am O.K.," arrived the same day as the telegram announcing his death.



*Grave of Kermit Neddenriep at Fredericksburg Cemetery, Alpine County. (Photo courtesy of Judy Wickwire)*



*Banner of the Kermit H. Neddenriep VFW Post No. 8084 (courtesy of Post Historian Charlene La Belle).*

Kermit's grave at Fredericksburg Cemetery has always had a special place in my heart, even before I learned his story. Tucked into a quiet, shady corner beneath an overhanging tree, it just has a sense of peacefulness about it. But how this grave came to be here is a story in itself — a tale of a family's abiding love and a community's deep respect.

You see, Kermit wasn't buried here initially. Like so many servicemen killed overseas, his body was laid to rest close to the place where

he died. After a family friend located Kermit's grave in Italy, the Neddenriep family began the process of seeking to return his remains. And eventually they were successful.

On November 17, 1949, over five years after he passed away, Kermit's body was finally laid to rest here in Alpine County, where he'd been born. In the intervening years a VFW post had been established in Smith Valley in Kermit's honor: the "Kermit H. Neddenriep VFW Post 8084." Members of this new post served as pallbearers at his funeral, and ensured he was given full military honors for the observance, including the playing of taps and a 3-rifle salute. And this Post (later re-established in Yerington, NV) now maintains his gravesite.

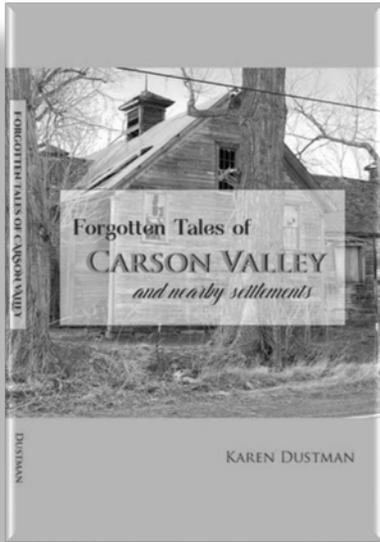
This year, July 26, 2019, will mark exactly 75 years from the day Kermit Neddenriep was killed in action, so far away from home. I hope you will join me in remembering him.



*Fredericksburg Cemetery, Alpine County. (Photo courtesy of Judy Wickwire).*

## Books available from our local authors

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



### **Forgotten Tales of Carson Valley Karen Dustman**

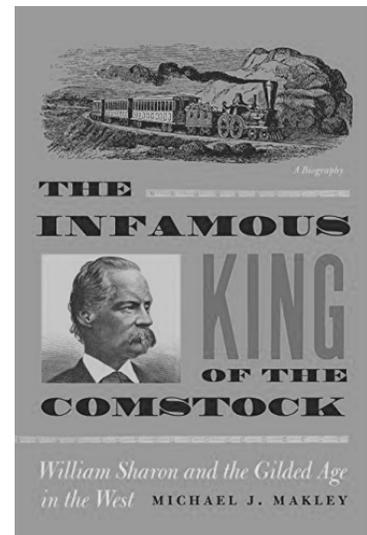
Unsolved murders. Brazen stage robberies. True tales of stage robberies, murders, the clash of land barons, and even a romance or two. 33 great "forgotten" stories from the history of Carson Valley and surrounding communities -- including the backstory on some fabulous buildings you can still see today!

New Release, \$19.95  
*Amazon.com* Kindle \$6.99

### **The Infamous King of the Comstock Michael J. Makley**

William Sharon was one of the most colorful scoundrels in the nineteenth-century mining West. He epitomized the robber barons of the nation's Gilded Age and the political corruption and moral decay for which that period remains notorious; yet he was also a visionary capitalist who controlled more than a dozen of the greatest mines on Nevada's mighty Comstock Lode, built the Virginia & Truckee Railroad, manipulated speculation and prices on the San Francisco Stock Exchange, and revived the collapsed Bank of California.

*Amazon.com* Kindle \$23.70, Hardcover \$18.06  
Paperback \$9.95



## Miscellaneous Musings

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**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.

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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.



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# The Historical Society of Alpine County



Sketch by Dede Lyon

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></p> <p>10% discount at Museum Store Subscription to the Alpine Review Invitation to all Society events Membership Card</p>	<p><b>BUSINESS &amp; PROFESSIONAL \$50.00</b></p> <p>10% discount at Museum Store Subscription to the Alpine Review Invitation to all Society events Membership Card</p>
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Membership dues are tax deductible. Thank you for your support.

# THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF ALPINE COUNTY

## 2019 EVENT DATES

- **August 17<sup>th</sup> 12pm** Basque Oven Pizza Bake Noon and quarterly membership meeting.
- **September 21<sup>st</sup>** - Silver Mountain City Tour call Karen Dustman if you're interested in a spot!  
694-2122
- Presentation by Steve Hibbs on how to preserve antique clocks **date and time to be determined**
- **November 21<sup>st</sup>** – Quarterly Historical Society meeting location to be determined.

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