



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.



ALPINE REVIEW

Volume XXVII, Issue 1

February 2021

History Clues in Monitor Canyon

ALPINE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA



Wild hops (Dustman photo)

By: Karen Dustman

Locals know the secret of wild hops growing in Monitor Canyon – modern-day left-overs from an old brewery that quenched the thirst of silver miners in the 1870s.

But how did those hops plants find their way here in the first place? Ah, meet brewer Nicholas Piequet!

Piequet arrived in the bustling mining town of Monitor in 1868. The following October (1869), he managed to purchase “the old Beasley property” at a tax sale for just \$19.01. This 160-foot-wide parcel sat on the west end of town, sandwiched between the Schenectady (Colorado No. 2) tunnel to the west and the Schenectady mill on the east. And there Piequet launched his brewery.

Monitor Canyon continued on page 7

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



Historical Society of Alpine County

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President's Message

BY: TOM SWEENEY



Hello Alpine County Historical Society Members,

It seems like only a few weeks ago that I sent you the last Quarterly Newsletter. If it seems like that to you, it is because I was a bit late getting the November issue out. I can report that your Board of Directors met and we are setting dates of 2021 events for this summer. Knowing that, it might not be allowable for us to actually meet our goals.

So far we are planning on having the weeding and grounds cleanup with the traditional Planting Day. As usual, anyone who would like to volunteer is invited to participate in this event. At all the events we will be adhering to all the County's masking and social distancing requirements. Since it is outside we are hoping that we have a good attendance after all this time.

We are working towards either an in-person May Quarterly Meeting, May 20th. If that is not allowed, possibly we can set up a ZOOM meeting. The museum will open May 27th, again, following County rules on limited access and all the social distancing and masking requirements.

Then, on June 19th we are planning for the Markleeville Living History Walk. If you have never been, treat yourself, the family or a group of friends to a bright sunny day in Markleeville and learn the long history of the town. If you think you know all the history of Markleeville, our costumed actors will tell you things you never knew about our town.

Over the following months we will be having tours, talks and demonstrations at the museum. If you have any suggestions of subjects you think might be of interest, let us know by sending an email to the museum.

Another, not to be missed event that always fills up quickly is the guided tour of Silver Mountain City with costumed chataquans recreating the lives of the residents of Silver Mountain City. The stories they tell bring the town alive.

Please let us know what ideas you have that you think would help our Historical Society better serve our members and the public.

Tom

CURATOR'S CORNER

by: Kristiina Wiedenhoft

I have been spending these last couple of months dedicating a lot of time to work on the inside of the museum. As you saw from the pictures in the last Alpine Review, I have been deep in a reorganization project. I have been rearranging the exhibits to refresh the layout and organize the displays. I feel like the more chronological order of exhibits will be beneficial to show the progression of Alpine County's history. These changes were decided upon last year, so it is exciting to finally see them coming to fruition. Unfortunately, this project has moved a lot slower than planned since we have not been able to gather all our volunteers during the last year. There is still some work to be done before completion, but I have attached some pictures to show you the progress, this should give you a better sneak peak of what to expect next season.

Now when you walk into the museum, you will be greeted by the Washoe Exhibit, then transition into the Emigrant Trail, which leads you towards the back room which will now display the Mining Exhibit on the left wall. You will also notice that the Snowshoe Thompson Exhibit has been moved and expanded. None of these changes will take away from any of the other existing displays

that remain untouched. Don't forget, it is still a work in progress, so you can expect a

cleaner and more complete look when it is finished.



I am excited to have these big projects nearing completion and I am cautiously optimistic that I will be able to share it with you all this summer. If all goes well and Alpine County's reopening continues on this positive path, we should be open to the public this year and be able to go back to planning events and quarterly meetings in person.

Thank you all for renewing your memberships for this year and thank you for the donations that keep coming in. I am so thankful for all your support and for hanging in there with us during this very strange and isolated year. We hope you are as excited as we are to get back together again!

Website: www.alpinecountymuseum.org

Facebook: @alpinecountymuseum

Instagram: @alpinemuseum

YouTube: coming soon!

By late 1868, Nicholas Piequet had settled in Alpine County, registering there to vote that October. (Piequet had become a citizen in September, 1857.) His new brewery was no doubt a welcome addition to the rough mining town of Monitor, and Piequet invested a fair sum in supplies and equipment. Assessment records for 1871 show him owning not only hops worth \$40 and barley of \$60, but also brewing fixtures valued at \$300, and \$50 worth of "Lager Beer."

1871 Alpine Co. Tax Assessment for Nicholas Piequet.

Piequet Nicholas.	Monitor	The right of possession w th in Town of Monitor a lot of land adjoining the Placerville Co's land, known as Berley lot, also a lot of land adjoining D. W. Brod on the East and running West 110 feet. Solvent Debts \$150. Hops \$40. Brewing Fixtures \$300. Barley \$60. Lager Beer \$50.
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Piequet tried to sell his brewery property to young William H. Cadby in the spring of 1874. But that transaction evidently didn't go well; by that September, Piequet was officially the brewery owner again. He seems to have expanded into the saloon business as well; his assessment for 1874-75 now included "saloon fixtures" among his property.

Four years later, Piequet was still making beer. Assessment records for 1878-79 show him taxed on "brewing fixtures" worth \$150, and in possession of 120 gallons of beer, valued at \$36.

But somewhere along the way, Piequet had picked up consumption (tuberculosis), and his health began to fail. By April, 1879 the Carson Valley newspaper reported that Piequet was hoping to move to a warmer, dryer climate,

and eager to sell his brewery. "Sickness compells [sic] me to sell or lease," his advertisement read.

Sadly, another move was not to be. Piequet spent his final days in Carson City, lovingly tended by his daughter, Catherine Baldeck. Despite the best efforts of attending physician W.J. Kearney, Piequet — the "Good Samaritan of Monitor" — died in Carson City on May 23, 1879.

"No more shall we be greeted by his familiar 'Happy New Year' from the little brewery on Monitor creek," mourned the Carson Valley newspaper as it shared the news of Piequet's

death. "But we will ever cherish in grateful remembrance the name of Monsieur Piequet. He was one of those generous, noble-minded men that one so seldom finds now-a-days, and whose good deeds shine out all the brighter for the contrast." Piequet was just 65 years old.

His funeral was held at the Catholic Church in Carson City. Although we don't know for sure where he was buried, it is possible Piequet was laid to rest in the Catholic section at Lone Mountain Cemetery.

Unfortunately, Piequet hadn't bothered to leave a will. After his death, his Monitor brewery sat idle while formal probate proceedings ground on. His personal property was quickly auctioned off — assets that included some 2,280 pounds of barley and 21 ten-gallon

beer kegs. But the personal property value was small compared to at least \$700 he owed in debt, and Piequet's real estate proved difficult to sell.

**WILL SELL
Or Lease!**

*Sickness compells me to Sell
or Lease my*
Brewery at Monitor, Cal.,

And repair to a more congenial climate. I have on hand a sufficient supply of stock to carry on the business for a considerable length of time, which together with

The Building, Apparatus, Lot and Everything Pertaining to the Business,
I am Willing to Sell on the Most Reasonable Terms.

Am prepared to turn over to my successor a good paying business, with prospects of a great improvement in the near future. For particulars apply at the NEWS OFFICE, GENOA, or to

N. PIEQUET,
Monitor, Cal

Carson Valley News, May 23, 1879

An initial probate sale of his real property was scheduled for April 2, 1881, but attracted no buyers. Subsequent winters weren't kind to the buildings. Almost five years later, in December, 1886, the administrator of Piequet's estate grudgingly advised the probate court that heavy snow had "broken in" the buildings and it would be impossible to sell the properties until a "revival in business matters in Alpine County." Five *more* years crept by. In 1891 the probate court was informed that there was *still* no market for the property, and that an "immense" winter snow the previous winter had further damaged all the buildings.

The town of Monitor slowly disappeared. But the old Monitor brewery didn't quite die with

Nicholas Piequet. Look carefully, and you can still spot hops plants growing near the old roadway.



Wild hops plants near Monitor.

According to writer Sara Calvosa Olson, hops aficionado Dan Beveridge noticed the plants and sent samples of the wild hops off for testing. The result: the plants resemble a "Strisselspalt" strain from the Alsace region of France, known for its "intense aromatic qualities." One difference: the hops at Monitor have a lower oil content than their ancestors, perhaps due to the short local growing window. (Find that fascinating 2015 story from *Edible Shasta-Butte* [here!](#))

Amazingly, even without human hands to tend them, these wild off-shoots from the old hops plants have managed to thrive. And in them, the legacy of brewer Nicholas Piequet lives on.



Dried hops flowers.

Secondhand Smoke

What is Secondhand Smoke?^{1,2}

Secondhand smoke is a mix of two types of burning tobacco.

- One comes from the burning end of a cigarette, cigar, or pipe.
- The other is exhaled by a smoker.

Health Risks^{1,2}

- Secondhand smoke can be as harmful as smoking.
 - » It has over 7,000 chemicals, about 70 of which can cause cancer.
 - » It kills over 41,000 non-smoking adults in the U.S. every year.
 - » It can cause heart disease, lung disease, stroke in non-smokers.
 - » It can also cause cancer.
- Secondhand smoke slows healing.
- Kids who breathe it get sick more often. They are at risk for:
 - » Ear infections
 - » Colds
 - » Asthma attacks
 - » Bronchitis and pneumonia
 - » Coughing, wheezing
 - » Shortness of breath
- Babies are at higher risk for sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS).
- Secondhand smoke can harm pets, too.

Limit the Risk

- Any contact with secondhand smoke can be harmful. No level is safe.
- Keep your home and car smoke-free.
 - » In California, it is illegal to smoke in a car if anyone is under 18 years old.³
- Ask people not to smoke in your home or car. Going to another room, or opening windows, is not enough.
- Make sure that no one smoke around your kids. Be firm.
- If you smoke, stop!



**Call for FREE help to quit smoking!
1-800-NO-BUTTS**

¹ National Cancer Institute (2018). *Secondhand Smoke and Cancer*.

² CDC (2018). *Secondhand Smoke (SHS) Facts*.

³ California Legislative Information. *Health and Safety Code, Article 2.5. Smoking in Motor Vehicles*.

Inside the Museum...



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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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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

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SAVE THE DATES



MAY 2021

- Historical Society Quarterly meeting and Potluck
- Basque Oven Bread Bake
- OPENING of Alpine County Museum

JUNE 2021

- Markleeville Living History Walk

AUGUST 2021

- Historical Society Quarterly meeting and Potluck/Pizza Bake

SEPTEMBER 2021

- Silver Mountain City Tour

OCTOBER 2021

- CLOSING of Alpine County Museum

NOVEMBER 2021

- Historical Society Quarterly meeting and Potluck

FEBRUARY 2022

- Historical Society Quarterly meeting and Potluck

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