

Then and now: From residence to library to coffeehouse



Alpina Cafe was once a library in South Lake Tahoe. Photo/Lake Tahoe Historical Society

In 1946, Bob Wakeman bought an 18 foot x 20 foot cabin at what is now 822 Emerald Bay Road near the Y in South Lake Tahoe. He paid \$600 for the land and cabin.

He enlarged it to house his growing family, and then in 1948 he opened the front room to become the first library on the South Shore while his family still resided there. Neighbor and friend Pat Amundsen's house was the other library part: children's books. In the 1950s, the library migrated to various larger locations including the Clarke Building (recently vacated by the Mattress Outlet), to upstairs at the American Legion Hall, and to other locations. In 1959, the local community erected a new block building in Al Tahoe which housed the library for 24 years.



Alpina Cafe today.

Photo/Bill Kingman

Over the years, that original Wakeman residence on Highway 89 has housed numerous endeavors. Today, it is Alpina Coffee Cafe. The slightly-elevated kitchen, cash register and serving counter area in the Alpina Cafe was the original 1940s cabin.

The local community built a new library in the 1950s which now is the Lake Tahoe Historical Society Museum on Highway 50 in Al Tahoe.



The museum was originally a library. Photo/Lake Tahoe Historical Society

Today the county library is at 1000 Rufus Allen Blvd.



El Dorado County library in
South Lake Tahoe today.
Photo/Bill Kingman

– *Bill Kingman*