

Early Truckee entrepreneur protected Chinese to no avail



Joseph Gray and his family built their cabin on land that would become downtown Truckee.
Photo/Truckee-Donner Historical Society

By Abby Stevens, Moonshine Ink

The fact that Joseph Gray grew restless with his life in Pennsylvania and decided to head west is something all Truckee residents can be glad about, as he is arguably the town's founder. Gray, who ended up in the Sierra Nevada in the 1850s, established a firm foundation for Truckee that was rooted in his own savvy, empathy, and generosity.

The story of Gray is well documented through articles and snippets written in the early pages of the local newspaper the Truckee Republican. More recently, pieces of his life have been re-told in articles written by Guy Coates and books including *Chinese in the Woods; Logging and Lumbering in the American West* written by Sue Fawn Chung and published in 2015, and *Driven Out: The Forgotten War against Chinese Americans*, written by Jean Pfaelzer and published in 2008.

Time and time again, Gray proved himself to be a fiercely

smart entrepreneur and businessman, and a compassionate citizen. Some of his quandaries, including the debate about illegal immigrants, are still in dispute today.

Read the whole story