

The infamous 'spring chicken' of Truckee



Carrie Pryor was a character in Truckee in the late 1800s
Photo/Truckee-Donner
Historical Society

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On April 13, 1873, the *Daily Alta Newspaper* reported “that Carrie Pryor has acquired an unenviable reputation in Truckee ... She is a dangerous woman and it is high time this community were rid of her presence.” This wasn’t the first time Pryor had been written up in a newspaper – her name was splattered across police logs from Virginia City to Truckee.

Truckee has always drawn a crowd of freewheeling and independent people. As the town began to establish itself in the Wild West, the list of characters who showed up grew. Among them, during this period, there stand a few outliers – people with the same wild spirit, but one big difference – they were women, not men.

1870s Truckee was a rough town. The rowdy town had little place for women, but among the brave who held their own was Carrie Smith Pryor, known to most as “Spring Chicken.” She

perplexed lawmen and vigilantes alike with her unbreakable spirit and propensity for getting into trouble. Pryor made her living working on Jibboom Street as a “lady of the night,” but her exploits did not stop there; she had a reputation for stirring up trouble in town.

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