



Hwy 40 Scenic Bypass Soda Springs Station ●

History

Today Soda Springs is where you are standing but in the late

19th Century, Soda Springs (originally Hopkins Springs), or Summit Soda Springs, was the place to be – the “ne plus ultra” (the ultimate) for San Francisco society according to San Francisco newspapers and that was eight miles away.

Visitors heading for the Summit Soda Springs Hotel disembarked from the train at Tinker’s Station (right, renamed Soda Springs Station in 1873) which is today’s Soda Springs. The train station and Soda Springs Station sat across the river from here in what is now the parking lots for Soda Springs Ski Area and included a saloon, store, and hotel. There people climbed aboard the stage for the eight mile trip to the hotel, going past Ice Lakes (today, Serene Lakes).



A Good Story

James A. Tinker was quite a character. He was a rough, hard driving, hard drinking teamster who carried freight and mining machinery to mines below the original Soda Springs on the North Fork of the American River. He used two

wagons, one hitched to the other and drove a span of eight horses while riding the left hand “wheel” horse and guiding the team with a single jerk line. About six miles out on the North Fork or Soda Springs road a hairpin curve is named after him, “Tinker’s De-

feat”. Tinker had among other merchandise, a barrel of whiskey. He tapped into this barrel and drank to his heart’s content, thus enjoying the ride at least to this curve. At this point his outfit failed to make the curve and over the grade the whole she-bang went into the canyon. Thus, the curve was called “Tinker’s Defeat”.

Tinker was also known for a very prominent nose that looked a lot like Tinker Knob, a nearby mountain, and so he was immortalized again.

The story above comes from a 1949 speech given by James A. Sherritt. Sherritt’s grandparents were Joseph and Isabella Gowlings who owned the Summit Hotel for a time, as well as other summit property, and had arrived on Donner Summit in the mid-19th Century.

Things to do right here

Talk to Norm Saylor. Pick up one of the many brochures to learn more of the area or for directions to go exploring. Hike up to Tinker Knob or if you’re not that ambitious, just walk up to Donner Pk. for a spectacular view. Subscribe to the [Heirloom](http://www.donnersummithistorical.org) - it’s free (www.donnersummithistorical.org).

Stop in at Nancy O Glass for a look around.

Head up the street to the blinking light to the Donner Summit Historical Society. Look at the history there.

