



# Hwy 40 Scenic Bypass

## Clair Tappaan Lodge

### History

Clair Tappaan Lodge was hand-built by a hearty group of Sierra Club volunteers in 1934 as a retreat for hikers, skiers and mountain climbers. This rustic building, consisting of post and beam construction, was designed by Walter Ratcliff, a noted Berkeley architect and member of the Sierra Club. The superstructure of the lodge consists of large vertical logs with a rough-sawn beam roof structure from timber felled on the site. Volunteers expanded the building several times and maintain it today.

The lodge is named after Sierra Club President and Superior Court Judge Clair Tappaan.

### A Good Story

Ned Robinson was seven years old when Clair Tappaan Lodge was built. His job was to stand on the running board of an old Ford truck (right) and relay requests for the vehicle to move in order to raise the beams. There is a video of the bare-chested young men building the lodge with hand saws and hammers which can be viewed on the lodge website <http://ctl.sierraclub.org>



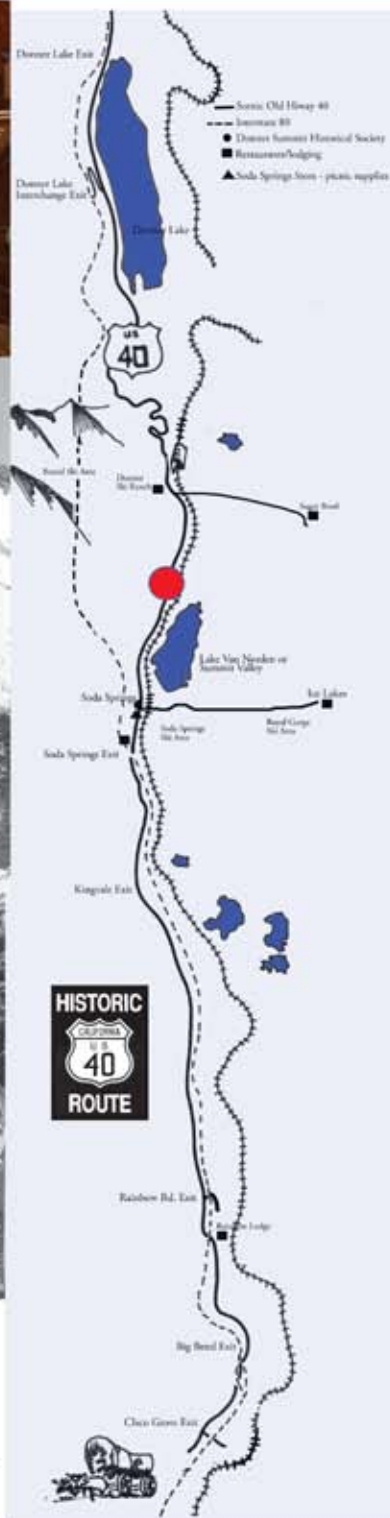
### Things to do right here

You can enter the building and view the enormous timbers (above) used in the initial construction. The cozy library has a display of historic photos, books of Donner Summit history, and early-day visitor's logs.

The friendly, casual atmosphere and affordable nightly rates (including family-style meals) make the lodge the perfect rustic getaway and a charming spot from which to explore the riches of the Sierra Nevada.

In summer, the recreational opportunities are unlimited. A network of nearby trails offers miles of hiking and provides access to remote meadows and peaks, crystal clear lakes and numerous fishing streams. The well-known Pacific Crest Trail is only a mile away. The Donner Summit area is great for both road and mountain biking. It is also widely known as a rock climbers' mecca.

The area receives the highest average snowfall of the entire Sierra Nevada range, making the lodge a favorite with cross-country ski and snowshoe enthusiasts. In winter you can rent skis or snowshoes to explore the many groomed trails, take weekend classes, or sled on the hill behind the lodge.



This sign sponsored by Clair Tappaan Lodge and the Sierra Club



pictured here top: contemporary picture of the main hallway.  
Middle and bottom: original construction pictures and 1930's skiers in front of Castle Peak.  
The black and white photographs are from the Clair Tappaan scrapbook.  
copyright 2010 Donner Summit Historical Society [www.donnertsummithistoricalociety.org](http://www.donnertsummithistoricalociety.org)