



# Hwy 40 Scenic Bypass Pioneer Monument

## History

Charles McGlashan, local luminary, historian, and author of the History of the Donner Party (1879) wanted a monument to the Donner Party. He wanted to commemorate their suffering, determination, and heroism during their isolation at Donner Lake in the winter of 1846. It took decades for his wish to come true and even then the resulting monument was not for the Donner Party alone.

The effort started in 1898 but fund raising was disappointing.

In 1910 ground breaking was done for the concrete foundation to a monument but there the project stopped again. By the mid 1910's fund raising had been more successful for a monument to the "pioneers who crossed the plains." A sculptor, John McQuarrie, was chosen in 1913. The sculpting and casting took years, but in 1918 the parts of the 18 ton statue were assembled on the pedestal which had been completed the year before. Thousands of people came to the dedication of the statue, dedicated as an inspiration to determination and endurance and to show the "conqueror's soul." The monument had been funded by the State legislature, the County of Nevada, individuals, and the Sons and Daughters of the Golden West.

The pedestal is 22 ½ feet tall, the height of the snow in 1846. The monument sits near the site of the Breen cabin. That cabin had been occupied two years before the Donner Party, by 17 year old Moses Schallenburg who was a member of the Stephens Party, the first wagon train to reach California with wagons. Moses spent the winter alone at Donner Lake in 1844. Schallenburg Ridge, just to the south, was named after him. Splinters of wood from the Breen cabin were placed in glass vials and 5,000 were sold as souvenirs to help fund the monument.

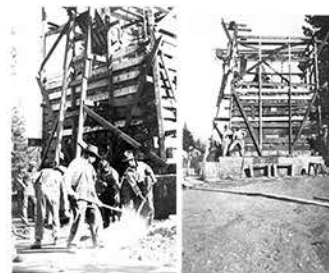
## A Good Story

Almost immediately after the monument's completion, tourists began removing rock from the pedestal for souvenirs. T.C. Wohlbruck had a novel idea he thought would serve the public in two ways. He offered to lease the site for \$1 a year. In return he would supply a caretaker, a fence and landscaping. He would also build "souvenir and refreshment station" He would sell souvenirs and refreshments to

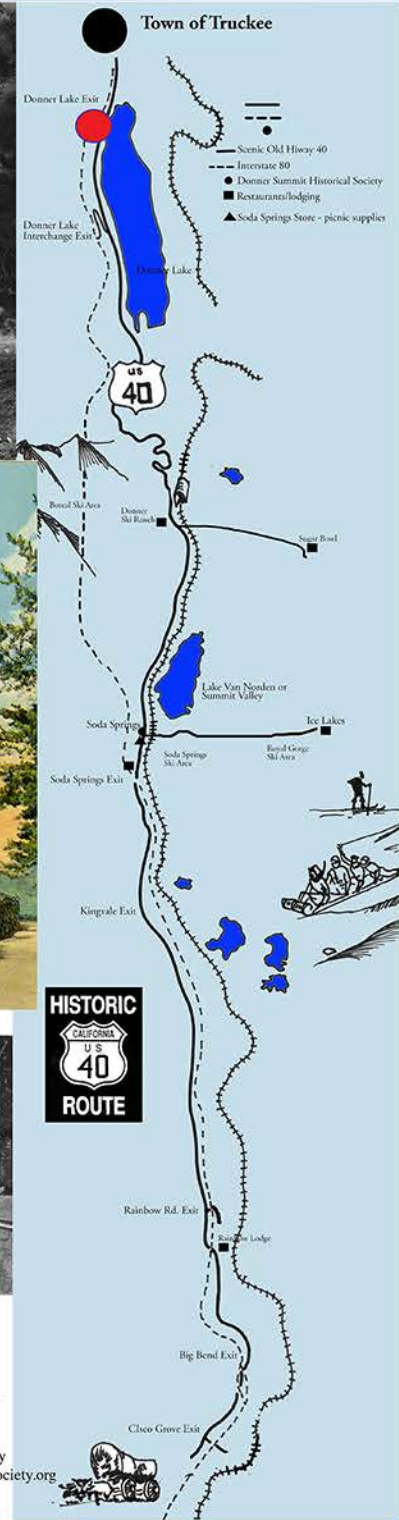
tourists and Red Crown gas for their automobiles. That "canteen service station" was forerunner of today's convenience markets and was the forerunner of the State Park museum that is here now.

## Things to do right here

You must go inside the museum here and then walk outside and then take the interpretive trail around the area. After you've enjoyed the history, go and enjoy Donner Lake. Go for a bike ride. Take a boat ride, or go for a hike to the top of Schallenburg Ridge.



Pictured here top: T.C. Wohlbruck's Canteen Service Station at Donner Lake; Pioneer Monument dedication, 1918. .... Breen of the Donner Party is second from the right. Pedestal construction photographs, 1917



This sign sponsored by the Old 40 Kitchen & Grill, Donner Spitz Inn, and Sticks Market



Kitchen & Grill  
13720 Donner Pass Rd.  
530-582-4040

pictures courtesy the Norm Saylor Collection at the Donner Summit Historical Society  
copyright 2013 Donner Summit Historical Society [www.donnertsummithistoricalociety.org](http://www.donnertsummithistoricalociety.org)