

Donner Summit Historical Society

October, 2009 issue #14

Newsletter

Donner Summit, 1939

Imagine a Pristine Donner Summit

Donner Summit is beautiful. The scenery is spectacular, there are great recreational opportunities, there is history everywhere, and there are friendly people. That's today. Imagine a pristine Donner Summit – before there were people. Our story in this and the next couple of issues won't go back that far, but imagine coming to Donner Summit in the 1930's when it was almost pristine. What development there was, was along the railroad corridor. There were houses and hotels aimed at a few travelers and railroad workers. Sheep grazing was a major industry with Soda Springs being a top sheep shipping center. The railroad was the major industry with many workers focused on maintenance and operation.

Rainbow Bridge had been finished in 1927 at the behest of the Forest Service to enable lumber to be transported out of the Tahoe Basin. The bridge also improved transportation for tourists and since cars were more reliable, auto tourism increased. Car camping was popular. Soda Springs Hotel and Rainbow Tavern were completed in 1927. Subdivisions began to appear (in Soda Springs, Lake Mary, Kingvale, and Cisco Grove). Winter was still a problem though, and there was annual excitement in Truckee about when the highway would open. Some years Truckee-ites would speed the process by shoveling off the remaining snow and racing to see how early they could open the highway. The winter of 1931-2 saw Highway 40 plowed in the winter saving the shoveling at season's end.

In the middle and late 30's entrepreneurs took advantage of the open winter highways and the popularity of the 1932 and 1936 Winter Olympics. Dennis Jones, son of Oscar Jones who opened the Soda Springs Hotel, opened a ski school at Beacon Hill (now Soda Springs Ski Hill – see our February '09 issue). Bill Klein (see our next issue) opened a ski school at Claire Tappaan. Other entrepreneurs and groups opened ski lodges. At the same time ski technology improved and new techniques were developed. Rope tows and other methods of getting skiers to the tops of hills appeared making skiing easier and more exciting. The first "lift" on the Summit was at Beacon Hill but it didn't work so well. In the next few years rope tows appeared at Claire Tappaan, Lake Mary, Signal Hill (Donner Ski Ranch), and at Beacon Hill. They spread down the highway appearing also eventually at Kingvale, Cisco, Big Bend, Laing's Crossing, and Emigrant Gap. Skiing moved from being a spectator sport to a participant sport and crowds of skiers flocked to the Summit. Skiing moved from a touring focus to a downhill focus.

In this issue: Sugar Bowl's start - the beginning of our 70th anniversary remembrance,
The Summit economy in 1939, The State of Skiing, 1939 -
also: Help with the 20 mile long museum (pg 16)

Next issue: Bill Klein, Peter Picard, Red's Story, the building of the first California chair lift,
William Wilson Wurster - the Sugar Bowl lodge architect.

December: Sugar Bowl's first year, the Silver Belt, life in 1938, The Snowball Express, catching
a spy at Sugar Bowl, and more.



It was into that environment that Sugar Bowl arrived in 1939 at just the right time to take advantage of the new popularity of skiing and the new forty hour work week, instituted in 1938. Sugar Bowl became the first California ski resort. Elsewhere until then there were lodges or hotels and the ski areas. Simple rope tows were some distance away from the slopes and were run by different entities. Being the first ski resort, Sugar Bowl then increased the popularity of skiing and paved the way for other dedicated ski areas that would come later: Squaw Valley, Heavenly Valley, Alpine Meadows, etc.

This is the 70th anniversary of Sugar Bowl's opening in December, 1939. Just because it's the 70th anniversary it deserves some attention but attention gets paid every ten years, particularly after the 60th when Robert Frohlich wrote his book, [Skiing with Style: Sugar Bowl 60 Years](#). Sugar Bowl also deserves attention because of its importance to the Summit and because of its importance to California skiing.

We are going to pay attention to the anniversary but in a different way than just reporting again its founding and throwing in some pictures. Rather than rehash what happened, we are going to put Sugar Bowl's opening on Donner Summit into context. What else was going on as Sugar Bowl opened and what was Sugar Bowl's part in increasing the popularity of skiing? Who were some of the personalities involved, besides Walt Disney?

This month we'll take a look at the Summit economy and the state of skiing. In November we'll cover some of the personalities involved and the construction of Sugar Bowl. In December we'll see Sugar Bowl's first year, the Snowball Express, and the Silver Belt. All along there will be lots of pictures, illustrations, and sidebars.

Readers may be interested in the sources for this series:

California State Library
 Sugar Bowl archives
 Starr Walton Hurley archives

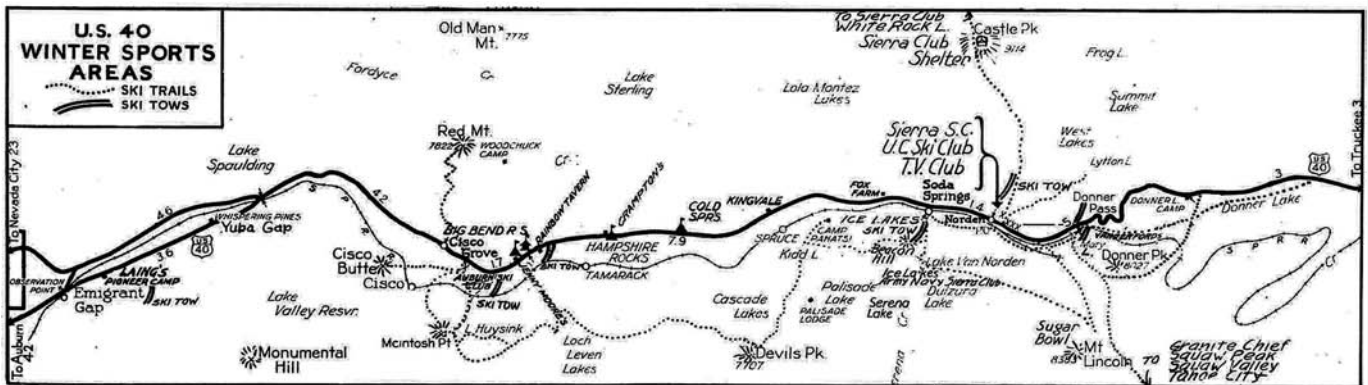
[Sierra Sun](#) archives
 Donner Summit Historical Society archives
 Interviews
 Skiing with Style: Sugar Bowl 60 Years
[The Coast Magazine](#) December, 1939
[Time Magazine](#) 12/21/36
[Collier's Magazine](#) January, 1937
[Modern Ski-ing \[sic\]](#) (1931 edition)
[Atlantic Monthly](#) 1/36

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Donner Summit, 1939

In our last issue one of the proposed but never built developments was dreamed and planned by Johnny Ellis. In the materials we received from the Ellis family there were pictures (some of which were in the last issue) notes, drawings (see last issue), to do and done lists, etc. The package gave an insight into the analytical nature of Johnny Ellis as he planned his development on Mt. Judah (which he named) in 1939. The package also gave us insight into the Summit economy of 1939. Johnny had done a "census" of the Summit as he plotted the viability of his proposed development on Mt. Judah. The following article comes from the various lists Johnny had compiled.

Johnny left for the war and never returned, turning to plastics instead and better educational opportunities for his children. The map below comes from The Coast magazine, December, 1939. Note all of the "ski tows" and the lodges along Old 40 in 1939.



Auburn Ski Club to Mt. McIntosh - 2 trails — 1 3/4 and 2 miles.
 * * * to Devils Peak 9 miles
 * * * to Mt. Lincoln 18 miles
 * * * to Cisco Buttes 2 miles
 * * * to Red Mountain 3 miles

Big Bend to Loch Leven Lakes 1 mile
 Norden to Mt. Lincoln 2 1/2 miles
 Soda Springs to Boy Scouts 2 1/2 miles
 Soda Springs to Castle Peak 5 miles
 Norden to Castle Peak 4 miles

TRAILS

Sierra Club to Sugar Bowl 2 miles
 Sugar Bowl to Mt. Lincoln 1 1/4 miles
 Sierra Club to Donner Monument 9 miles (via Sugar Bowl)
 Mt. Lincoln to Anderson Peak 3 1/4 miles
 Mt. Lincoln to Tinker Knob 4 1/2 miles

Mt. Lincoln to Squaw Valley trail 8 1/2 miles
 Mt. Lincoln to Granite Chief 8 1/4 miles
 Mt. Lincoln to Truckee Highway at Bear Creek 14 1/4 miles
 Mt. Lincoln to Squaw Peak 9 1/2 miles
 Mt. Lincoln to Five Lakes 10 1/2 miles

The Economy

Donner Summit has changed in the past 70 years. In 1939 people arrived by train as well as by car and could choose from among many lodges and other transient accommodations. There were also cafes, bars, and restaurants. Today the economic environment has changed. The lodges and other places to stay are mostly gone as are the various commercial establishments. Today the extended Summit is home to more than two thousand houses some of which are rented to visitors and only a few tourist centered businesses. In 1939 commercial activity, and so most activity, was along the Highway 40 corridor. Today almost all of the houses are in subdivisions off the corridor. Visitors today arrive via I-80 which makes day trips easy. In 1939 traveling Old 40 to the Summit was an adventure of many hours so almost all the visitors stayed overnight. Others arrived by train and were able to get off at one of two or three stops on the Summit (Soda Springs, Norden, or the Norden Ski Hut which was located in a snow tunnel - see our coming December issue). Some old timers remember they could ask the conductor to stop at spots that were not recognized stops and if there was time the travelers would be accommodated. Life is different today.

Ski lodges on the Summit in 1939 with (prices) in case you'd like to make a reservation:

- Vanderford's (4.00 per night across from Donner Ski Ranch)
- Donner Trail Ski Lodge (3.50 - Donner Ski Ranch)
- Stockton Ski Club
- Tourist Club
- Sacramento Ski Club
- Dartmouth Outing Club (coming soon to Lake Mary)
- Pawnee Lodge



Norden Ski Lodge (3.50)
 Sierra Club (1.50 members 2.00 non)
 University of California Lodge
 Soda Springs Hotel and dormitory (5.00-7.00 and 1.50)
 with steam heat and baths. Meals were 75 cents to 1.25
 Fox Farm (Donner Summit Lodge) tourist cabins (1-1.50)

The assortment of places to stay could accommodate 668 person per night.

In addition Kingvale could sleep 248 people per night in tourist rooms (1.50 per night), group lodges and private dwellings/ lodges. At Hampshire Rocks (above Rainbow) 40 people could be accommodated in tourist cabins at \$3.50 per night. Rainbow Tavern could sleep 82 in rooms (5-7.00) and ski huts (1.50), and private lodges in the area could hold another 85.

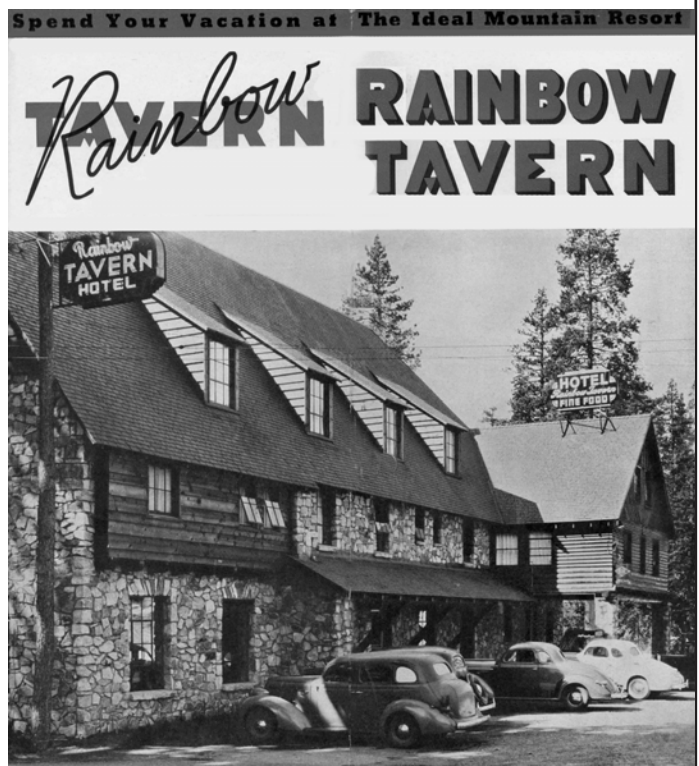
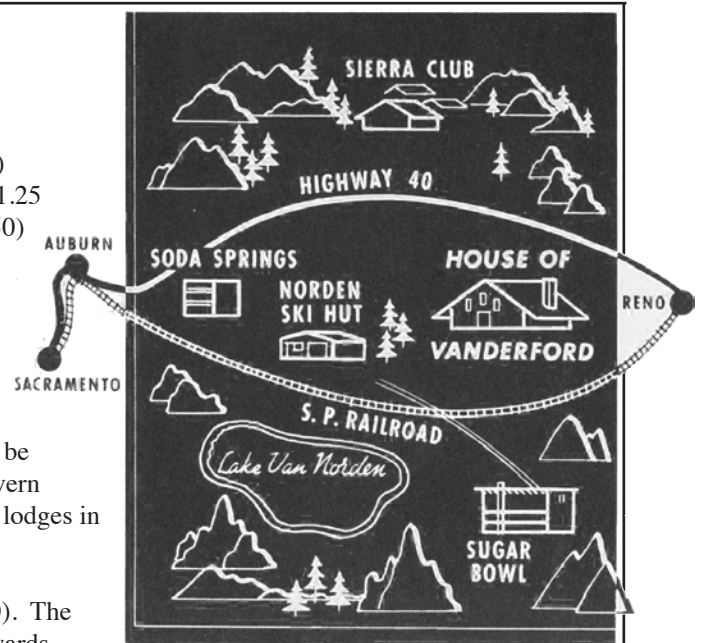
At Big Bend the Big Bend Inn could sleep about 12 people (1.50). The Auburn Ski Club, in those days a little further down the road towards Cisco, slept 100 (3.50-5.00). Cisco Grove Cabins (3.50-5.00) slept 40. Finally, Emigrant Gap Tourist Camp and Ski Lodge could hold about 100 at 1.50 a night and up.

On the other side of the Summit there were lodgings of course at Donner Lake and Truckee.

The total for Donner Summit from the Summit to Cisco was about 1300 people per night. Today in the same locations there are only Rainbow Lodge, some ski lodges, and Ice Lakes Lodge.

Interestingly, in 1939 1300 “beds” was not enough. In addition to the traditional beds in Truckee which we’d have to count since many people were coming up to the Summit to ski (there were not other places like there are today: Squaw, Northstar, Alpine, Granblibakken, Tahoe Donner, etc.), there were also Pullman berths. Southern Pacific would run its ski train, the Snowball Express, which included sleeping cars. People could rent a Pullman berth in a sleeping car and the cars would be parked in Truckee on a siding until the Sunday return. SP also brought in extra sleeping cars to accommodate the demand. According to Johnny Ellis’ 1939 economic survey, “Largest number Pullman beds in Truckee in recent years.....600.” That would have been fun.

People did travel to Donner Summit in 1939 by the highway which had been plowed since 1931-32. There were few parking lots in those days although the highway department did keep a number of cleared parking areas from Cisco to the Summit. People parked all along the roads. On Sunday afternoon, March 12, 1939 there were 1360 cars parked from Donner Summit to Blue Canyon. 14% were randomly surveyed and 40% came from the Bay Area. 21% came from Sacramento County, with the remainder from other areas in Northern California. It was estimated that 71% of visitors were “overnighters” because the Bay Area was so far away.



Adding typical weekends' overnight skiers to estimated day skiers, Johnny Ellis estimated that over 1800 skiers skied Donner Summit on typical weekends. For comparison, Sugar Bowl today expects 4000 skiers on a typical weekend day.

Where did the visitors ski?

Lifts on Donner Summit in 1939

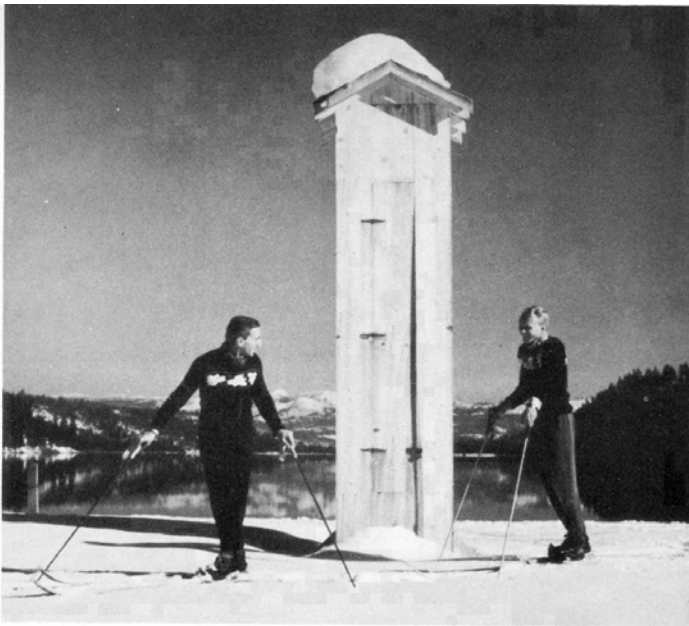
Today Donner Summit is host to some ski areas with many high speed chair lifts: Boreal, Sugar Bowl, Donner Ski Ranch, and Soda Springs as well as Royal Gorge for cross country.

In 1939, skiing was different. Nice hills near Highway 40 attracted small entrepreneurs who put up single rope tows.

Skiers parked along the highway and used the rope tows to ski the hills. Eventually the "mom and pop" operations would be supplanted by today's resorts, which access better terrain, have longer runs, and have large parking lots. It had always been a problem keeping the lower elevation ski areas open and the advent of chairlifts increased the investments needed to operate. Many rope tows were still operating in the 60's but slowly they disappeared and their runs became overgrown with trees.

Note the Donner Winter Resort brochure to the left and read "Skiing Facilities." In 1939 that was called the Donner Run. Wouldn't it have been fun?

The Auburn Ski Club at Cisco had 1 rope tow and two cable drawn sleds. Skiers there skied Snow Mountain and Red Mountain (Signal Peak). The vertical rise of the slope was 400 feet so the mountain runs must have been reached the old fashioned way (The top of Red Mtn. is 2000 feet or so higher than Old 40) with no mechanical assistance. At Rainbow Tavern there was a J-bar with 500 vertical feet on the slope and a 1250 foot tow. They charged 25 cents a ride or 5 for 75 cents. They also had a skating rink that was lighted at night. Admission there was 50 cents and skate rental 25 cents. Meals could be had for 75 cents to 1.25. Soda Springs had a J-bar and a rope tow which went up to the base of the J-bar. There were 700 feet of vertical runs. That cost a dollar a day. The California School of Sking was based there headed by Dennis Jones (see our February '09 newsletter). Lessons were 2.50 or 12.00 for the whole Swiss Technique course. Norden had a double rope tow with 400 vertical feet. At Donner Summit there was one rope tow north of Highway 40 (175 vertical feet) and one south (400 feet) all operated by Johnny Ellis. One of the Lake Mary tows was the first rope tow on the Summit and in 1939 was only two years old. The remains of one of those tows is just off the PCT on Mt. Judah (see our last issue). The southern one on Lake Mary and up Judah was "tiring because of steep slope. Popular with experienced skiers." Donner Summit skiing on Johnny Ellis' Lake Mary tow, according to a 1939 SP brochure was 75 cents a day. Walk up it in summer and you will appreciate the "tiring because of steep slope" comment. There were also ski runs at Laing's Pioneer Camp (Laing's Rd. exit just



Herb Bruck and Peter Wenzel at Donner Winter Resort.

DONNER WINTER RESORT

Location: Donner Winter Resort is located on shore of Donner Lake, about 3 miles east of Norden Ski Hut, at bottom of Donner Grade. Will meet passengers at either Norden Ski Hut or Truckee; 75c charge for round trip.

Skiing Facilities: Long, clear slope from top of Donner Summit to resort. Skiers are driven to summit: 10c per ride. Other ski fields in Norden area easily accessible. Skis rented: \$1 per day, \$5 deposit. Ski boots, 75c per day.

Ski school conducted by Herbert Bruck and Peter Wenzel. Rates, \$1.00 per lesson.

Ice Skating Facilities: Skating on flooded tennis court. Rink lighted nightly and music supplied over public address system. Rates: guests free; others, 30c except ski club members, 25c. Shoe skates rented: 30c per hour. Instruction by Herbert Bruck: \$1.50 per hour.

Sleeping Accommodations: Accommodations vary from 2 to 6 bedrooms. Week day rates per person (European plan), from \$1.50 to \$2.50; week end rates from \$2.00 to \$4.50. Special weekly rates.

Eating Accommodations: Meal prices at all times for guests and non-guests: \$2.00 per day or breakfast 60c, luncheon 60c, dinner \$1.00. Beer, wine and liquor served. Dancing nightly.

Reservations: Phone (Donner City 1), write or wire Herbert Bruck, Donner Winter Resort, Truckee, California, your S. P. Agent, or phone, GARfield 3505 in San Francisco.

down and east from Nyack) and at Emigrant Gap.

To all of this Johnny Ellis proposed a funicular up Mt. Judah which would be “mechanically excellent.” Skiers would be able to ski the west side of Judah (1200 feet) as well as the east side going down to Donner Lake from mid-way up Judah (2200 vertical feet). This would also open up all of what is now Sugar Bowl.

Donner Summit was host to many other commercial businesses: auto storage garages some with mechanics, stores and gas stations, and restaurants on and off the ski hills. The train stopped at Norden and Soda Springs. Telephones, telegraphs and electricity were common.

People could travel by Greyhound three times daily with stops anywhere on the Summit. There were bars and abundant non-union labor.

Subdivisions were also beginning to be built: “Demand high, prices high, building and buying active.”

Donner Summit was becoming popular and Sugar Bowl would open the coming winter.

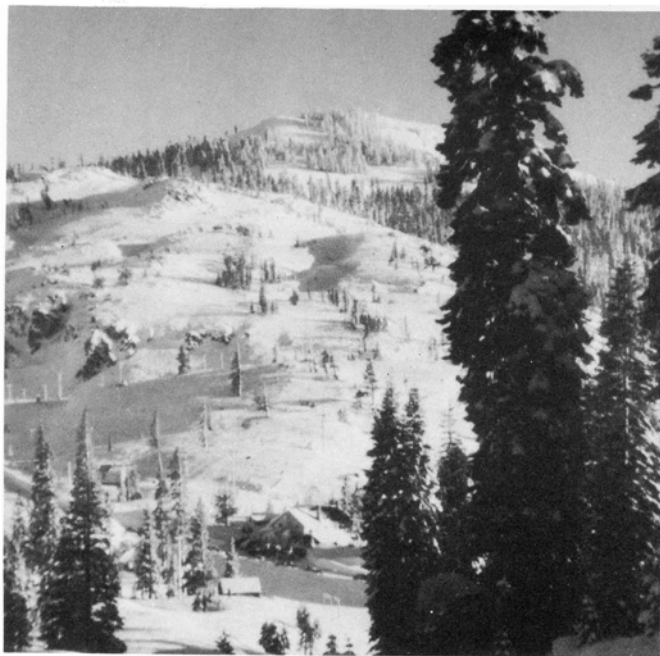
HOUSE OF VANDERFORD

Location: Elevation: House of Vanderford is located “atop the Sierra” at Donner Summit—about one and a half miles from Norden Ski Hut. Transportation between Norden Skit Hut and House of Vanderford provided by station wagon—no charge for guests. Representative meets trains.

Skiing Facilities: Many good ski trails near resort. Two new rope tows have been installed on Signal Hill. Nearby is Johnny Ellis’ Ski Tow, the Sugar Bowl and the Sierra Club which has a rope tow. Rates are comparable to other tows in the area.

House of Vanderford Ski School charges \$2 per session, 12 lessons \$12.

Sleeping Accommodations: New dormitories and new lounge installed this year. Rates per day, American plan (with meals): \$3.25 in dormitories; \$3.50 per person in double rooms without bath. Weekly rates:



Atop Donner Summit is the House of Vanderford.

\$19.50, dormitories; \$21 per person, double rooms. Rates for guests furnishing own sleeping bag: \$3 per person, \$18 per week.

Reservations: Write, wire or phone (Vanderfords via Truckee) Mrs. J. A. Vanderford or Bill Strickland, House of Vanderford, Norden, Calif.; 740 Market Street, San Francisco (DOUGLAS 6677), or H. C. Capwell Travel Bureau, Oakland (TEmplebar 1111).

SODA SPRINGS

Location: Soda Springs is located about 2 miles west of the Norden Ski Hut. However, Southern Pacific has a small shelter at Soda Springs for passengers wishing to entrain and detrain at this point. Rising to the south of the railroad tracks is famous Beacon Hill. Porter meets trains.

Skiing Facilities: Beacon Hill is one of the best equipped ski hills in the West. On the hill there is one J-Bar type ski lift (1250 feet long) and three rope tows. Rates: J-Bar lift, 15c per ride, \$3 per day; rope tows, 10c per ride, \$2 per day. Excellent ski runs from top of Beacon Hill. Sitzmark Lodge provides eating, warming and restroom facilities for skiers.

California School of Skiing charges \$2 per class lesson. Skis rented, \$1 per day; \$5 deposit.

Sleeping Accommodations: Soda Springs Hotel is enlarged and completely refurbished. Rates per day, American plan (with meals): Double rooms, \$5.50 to \$7.00; Dormitories (without meals): \$2.00.

Eating Accommodations: Rates for guests and non-guests in new, large dining room: breakfast, 75c; luncheon, \$1; dinner, \$1.25 and \$1.50. Bar serves beer, wine and liquor.

Reservations: Write Oscar Jones, Soda Springs Hotel, Soda Springs, California.



There are fine ski slopes on Beacon Hill at Soda Springs.

Accommodations

The guest rooms are all steam heated, electrically lighted, and the beds are made delightfully comfortable with the best of Simmons equipment. There is every modern convenience for the delight of the guest . . . some of the rooms are provided with combination tub and shower, private toilet, and ample closet space . . . others are equipped with private showers.

At popular prices there are dormitory accommodations sufficient to take care of parties up to sixteen persons.

The dining room with its walls of native stone and knotty pine finish is in keeping with the surrounding country. To dine in these attractive surroundings, breathing pure mountain air, adds zest to the enjoyment of every meal. The excellence of the food and the homelike atmosphere of its service is responsible, in a great measure, for the successful growth of **RAINBOW TAVERN**. Guests invariably praise the cuisine here.

One finds rest and relaxation in the friendly atmosphere of the cozy lobby which extends almost the entire length of the hotel.

These facilities mean much to the sportsman and vacationist alike, after an arduous day of outdoor activities.

A cocktail lounge provides complete beverage service.

The dress at **RAINBOW TAVERN** is informal . . . riding or sports clothes being most appropriate. Due to the cool evenings a light wrap is desirable in addition to the lighter clothes worn during the day.

To the left is part of the Rainbow Tavern brochure the front page of which is on page four of this issue. Note the last paragraph about dress. Times have changed. On the previous page and below are pieces of other brochures from 1939.

PRIVATE CLUBS

Location: Within short distance of S. P.'s Norden Ski Hut are several fine private clubs: Sierra Club, Sierra Ski Club, U. C. Club, Oakland Ski Club, and Viking Ski Club with headquarters at House of Vanderford. Sierra Club has ski tow facilities.

CISCO

Location: Elevation 5993. Auburn Ski Club, Cisco Hotel, Cisco Grove are located near S. P.'s Cisco station (about 10 miles west of Norden Ski Hut).

Skiing Facilities: Auburn Ski Club, one of California's oldest ski clubs, has ski tow facilities, good ski runs and ski jumps. Has ski school. No charge for use of grounds.

Sleeping Accommodations: Cisco Hotel caters to private parties, rates upon request. Cisco Grove rates from \$3.50.



NORDEN STORE AND SKI LODGE

Location: Elevation: 6880. Located within 100 feet of Norden Ski Hut's north overhead ramp.

Skiing Facilities: Ski slopes and tows easily accessible. Norden Ski Hut's overhead ramp leads directly to S. P.'s Winter Sports Playground.

Sleeping Accommodations: Overnight accommodations per day, American Plan: \$3.50.

Eating Accommodations: Meals served at reasonable prices. Grocery and supply store also operated.

Reservations: Phone or write Ernest Danzger, Norden Store, Norden, California.

Modern Ski-ing from the forward:

One of the first ideas to get out of your head is the fallacy that ski-ing is dangerous. It is not.... Therefore abandon fear. Be courageous. Let yourself go.

The State of Skiing, 1939

Fresh snow, hickory wood, and beeswax, besides smelling and feeling nice, have a natural affinity for one another; they are elemental substances; and the triumph over their joint and silent conspiracy to throw man on his neck is somehow, for this very reason, a more than ordinarily satisfactory one.

Atlantic Monthly 1/36

According to Colliers Magazine (1/2/37) Snowshoe Thompson's first skis were 8 feet long, weighed 25 pounds and were 4-6 inches in width.

By the 1930's skiing equipment had improved a lot over Snowshoe's first hand made skis and was in the process of changing even more. Along with improved equipment came improved technique. Along with technique and equipment came actual ski schools to teach people the new techniques and how to use the new equipment. Skiing became more popular which encouraged the building of ski lodges and ski areas. Advertisements for skis and ski clothes appeared. Ski movies featuring famous skiers were made. Books and magazine articles explaining skiing were published. Machines were invented to take skiers up the hills. A ski industry grew.

Prior to this almost all skiing was ski-touring or it was a spectator sport with crowds watching ski jumping. With the coming of the middle 1930's skiing became a downhill participant sport.

The transition of skiing into a popular sport can be seen as partly due to Bill Klein, who will be highlighted in our next issue. He commercialized ski schools on the Summit instructing the new crowds interested in learning and that in turn, encouraged more skiers. He also ran the ski shop at Sugar Bowl for many years. He learned to ski with a single long pole before moving to the two smaller poles people use today. He also moved to the new bindings which locked the heel down on the ski.

Those changes, the Arlberg technique, revolutionized skiing. People no longer skied as if they were cross country skiing (Norwegian), standing straight with their chests forward using telemark turns.



Hannes Schneider, the father of modern skiing, invented the first uniformly taught method of skiing called the Arlberg method. The Arlberg method had been invented by Austrian Mathias Zdarsky some decades earlier. This method replaced telemarking for downhill skiing. Standing up straight to ski, is impractical for irregular slopes.

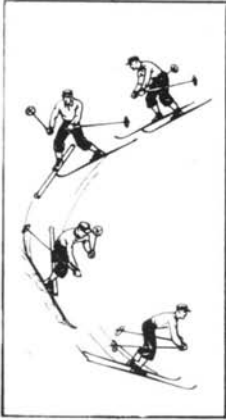
ALLIGATOR

... the fun starts when you purchase the outfit

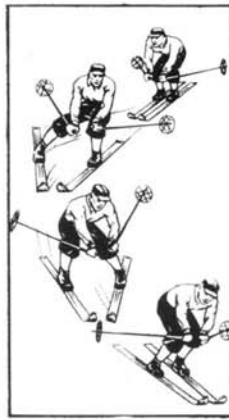
Of course you're going to ski this winter. It's such a thrilling sport. But the fun really starts at your favorite store when you try on the handsome Alligator GALECLOTH ski clothes! What beauties they are! Galecloth is water-repellent, very durable, so lightly woven it's practically wind proof! LOOK FOR THE ALLIGATOR GALECLOTH LABEL . . . AT BETTER STORES EVERYWHERE!

THE ALLIGATOR COMPANY
St. Louis, Missouri
New York
Los Angeles

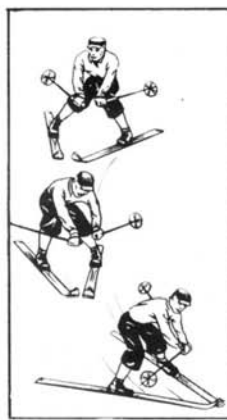
ALLIGATOR
RAINCOATS GALECOATS
SPORTSWEAR



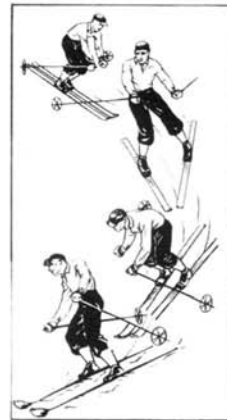
TELEMARK—Left: Skis parallel, crouch, right ski advanced. Edge, stem and weight, left ski following unweighted.



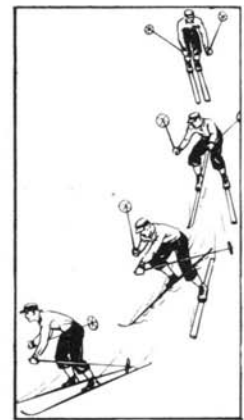
SINGLE STEM: Skis parallel at start, crouch, stem with right ski unweighted, for left turn; shift weight to right ski, skis parallel when turn is made.



DOUBLE STEM TURN: Skiing straight down the slope, force the heels apart, ski tips close together. Shift weight to right ski for left turn by pushing right ski ahead and swinging shoulder to left. Slide left ski parallel to right.



STEM CHRISTIANIA—Right: Skis parallel, crouch, the left ski is stemmed, the body weight raised—to start turn the body weight is lowered (reducing weight on skis), the right ski is brought parallel to left and body turned as weight is placed on uphill side of skis.



OPEN CHRISTIANIA—Right: Skis parallel, crouch, unweighted right ski pointing it toward right, unweighted, shift weight from heel of left to heel of right, complete turn with skis parallel equally weighted.

PURE CHRISTIANIA—Left: Skis parallel, crouch, left ski slightly advanced, unweight and swing body to left to start skid, crouch with skis parallel at finish.

With the Arlberg Technique, skiers lean forward with the weight on the balls of their feet in a bit of a crouch. This allows skiers to rotate their bodies and so guide the skis. Speed increased and control increased. With greater speed and control people could move beyond ski touring and downhill runs were opened. Coupling the new techniques with the equipment change allowed even greater speeds and control. An example in the change in skiing can be seen in that the 1932 Olympics did not have slalom or downhill races, but the 1936 Olympics did.

The Arlberg technique involves the use of snow plowing. As one skis and wants to turn, the tail of the uphill ski is moved out forming a “V” shape with the downhill ski. Weight is gradually moved from the downhill ski to the uphill ski as the turn or stem is completed. These turns were Christiannas or Christies. Stem Christies take the technique a little further to picking up the downhill ski and placing it next to the uphill ski as the turn completes. The graphics above from the Coast magazine in 1939 show contemporary ski technique and also show that the popularity of skiing was encouraging "lessons" in mainstream media.

There was no parallel skiing as we know it today but it would grow naturally out of the Christies fairly quickly.

Hannes Schneider was among the many Europeans who came to America to teach skiing. He had first come to the U.S. in 1936 to put on demonstrations of skiing. He demonstrated his skiing techniques at the Boston Garden and Madison Square Garden skiing on slopes of shaved ice. After the Anschluss between Germany and

1930's Ski Humor -- explaining the snow plow stop,

"Very frequently for instance when coming to a blind edge, that is, the crest of a hill beyond which we cannot see, it is of priceless value be able to check our speed in order to have time to see what is coming without being compelled to turn." Pg 28 Modern Ski-ing

GREGG Hickory SKIS

Gregg's price policy brings "championship grade" hickory skis within reach of any skier. Models for Slalom, Touring, Racing, and Jumping . . . hand-made by Scandinavian ski craftsmen. Every pair matched and numbered.



Other recreational models in hickory, maple, and pine.

See the New BENEDIKTER Model

. . . a registered, guaranteed ski for the top-flight skier. Designed, used, and recommended by Sepp Benedikter, famed Sun Valley instructor. Finished in the natural color of white hickory.

Write for new illustrated folder

GREGG MFG. CO.

ST. PAUL, MINN.

BYRD AND SCHNEIDER AGREE

Admiral Byrd, Antarctic explorer, and Hannes Schneider, world's No. 1 skier, agree on one thing definitely. Northland Skis meet all their requirements. Northlands come up to the rigid requirements of Polar skiing. The 3rd Byrd Expedition, as before, will be outfitted with Northlands at the South Pole. Ever since Hannes Schneider came to America, he has been using Northlands, now exclusively. Northlands come up to the rigid requirements Schneider sets for flexibility, performance and durability. They'll come up to your requirements, too, in beauty, long life and price. See Northlands at better dealers before you buy this year. Write for illustrated folder.

NORTHLAND

SKI MFG. CO.
World's Largest Ski Manufacturers
97 Merriam Park St. Paul, Minn.

Austria, Hannes came to the U.S. permanently and taught thousands of skiers.

There has been a rapid improvement in ski technology recently with materials making skis lighter and more responsive. Shape changes have made skis more controllable. There are even adjustable skis allowing the skier to make the skis match the conditions as well as specialized skis so that some skiers have stables of skis to match different conditions. Clothing has become lighter, warmer and more water resistant. Boots are more comfortable and supportive. The way they transfer power to the skis has changed too.

Ski Certification, 1937

In 1937 Professor Hildebrand, U.S. winter Olympic team manager and one of the founders of the Clair Tappaan Lodge developed a certification program for skiers much like the Red Cross has for different levels of swimming. It consisted of several tests for skiers.

4th Class

Ascend and descent 500 foot drop without assistance doing satisfactory "quick turns," four successive stem turns, a snowplow to a stop and short straight run.

3rd class


Demonstrate good cross country skiing. Prove ability to climb, ability to do telemarks, Christiannas and continuous stem turns on a 15 degree slope. Must also run down a 1000 foot course in seven minutes or less with varied snow conditions.

2nd class

Drop 1000 feet over a standard course in less than four minutes and prove skilled at straight downhill slides and slalom.

1st class

Limited to a few who have competed and placed in first class international contests.



DONNER THEATER

2 Shows: 7:15 and 9 p. m. Telephone 99

Saturday, December 16
RULERS OF THE SEA
 DOUGLAS FAIRBANKS, Jr., MARGARET LOCKWOOD

Sunday, December 17
OLD MAID
 BETTE DAVIS GEORGE BRENT

Wednesday, December 20
ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES
 BASIL RATHBONE IDA LUPINO

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HIGHWAY 40

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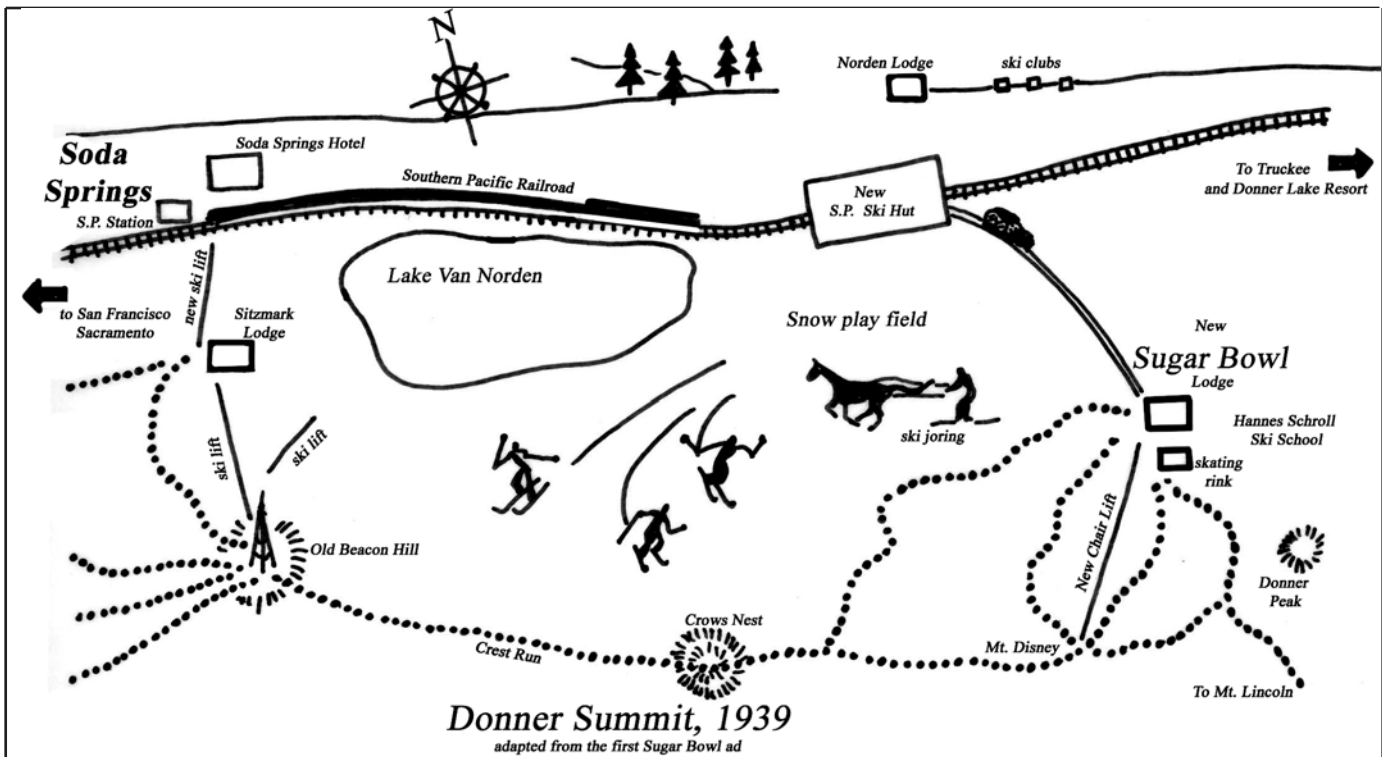
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Sugar Bowl, 1939

Until the mid 1930's skiing was a spectator sport for most but then that began to change in the United States. Up until then skis were bulky and long and bindings were simple. Technology improved skis, bindings which locked the heel in place improved control, and boots were designed better. Poles came into use. With more stable bindings there was more control over the skis. With more control there was more speed. With more speed there was more excitement. With the possibility of controlling speed skiers wanted to go higher more often and so there had to be a solution to walking/skiing uphill. The first rope tow was built in Vermont and was followed quickly in other areas. As skiing became more than a spectator sport, lodges had to be built to accommodate the skiers. More potential skiers and improved techniques to control the speed produced a need for more ski instructors and ski schools. Ski instruction became a profession in Europe and soon European ski instructors began appearing all over America.

As more people talked about skiing, there was more interest and so movies about ski champions, which also showed new techniques, became popular. As business picked up so did advertising and articles in periodicals which further increased the demand for skiing.

Sugar Bowl can be seen in two lights. First, it's a result of increased popularity that people considered building the first California resort dedicated to skiing. Second it is one of the factors that helped increase skiing's popularity. As Sugar Bowl opened with the first chair lift in California which attracted attention, there was also a parade of celebrities coming to the resort. They were attracted from Yosemite and Badger Pass where Hannes Schroll had been teaching skiing and they attracted attention as well. More people were attracted to Donner Summit, so much so, that Southern Pacific began to run special ski trains until, ironically, their popularity caused their demise (The Snowball Express will be highlighted in December).

Bill Klein (to be highlighted next month) was one of the first ski instructors on Donner Summit and spent many years instructing and running the ski shop at Sugar Bowl after the war. He commercialized the ski instruction industry on the Summit and made it viable. That viability then attracted more skiers.

Skiing Donner Summit it was easy for Bill Klein to see the potential of what would become Sugar Bowl. It was spectacular skiing. The land that would make up Sugar Bowl was offered to Bill for \$2,000 but he had no money. He had met Hannes Schroll however, who taught skiing at Yosemite, the only other California resort. Hannes was an Austrian ski racer who'd come to the U.S. to participate in a ski competition and stayed to become a ski instructor in Yosemite. "He was a wild man on the boards, was possessed of a quality accent and besides all that he was a good yodeler and entertainer."

Bill invited Hannes to Donner Summit in 1937 to look around. Hannes' arrival would change Donner Summit. Hannes walked the soon to be Sugar Bowl which had cows grazing all over and said, we have to develop this. He knew just what should be done and set to work. Hannes had money in Austria and he contacted his mother to bring some to America. Just as he was talking to his mother on the phone, the phone went dead (1938). It was Anschluss – Hitler had taken over Austria along with Hannes' money. Hannes had to look elsewhere, to the rich and the famous who had been going to Yosemite to ski. Hannes was able to buy the property from the Sacramento sisters who owned it for \$6700. Since Sugar Bowl is unique maybe that was somewhat akin to the deal the Dutch made for their Manhattan purchase.

More money was obtained for construction from an original group of one hundred investors and Sugar Bowl moved from being a vision to being reality. Walt Disney was "supposedly" investor number one although he "used the installment plan to pay up" and was one of the last of the hundred. His name added "zest to the project," Red Rockholm, who was a construction supervisor involved with Sugar Bowl's building, said in his memoirs.

Plans for Sugar Bowl included the first ski lift in California and the second in the nation. It would also have a lodge, skating rink, houses for some of the original investors, and a couple of rope tows. Before the Magic Carpet was built people would be transported first by horse drawn sleigh and later by tractor pulled sleds.

That brings up a sad story and the reason for the improved technology surrounding the transportation. But since space is limited we'll leave that for December's issue and leave you in suspense.



Hannes Schroll *Collier's Magazine* January 2, 1937
more pictures coming in November

Hannes Schroll

Hannes Schroll, Austrian skier, made his first appearance in America at the Olympic trials in 1936 as he "whooped and swooped down Mt. Rainer in such hair breadth ski glide that it almost popped the eyeballs out of the American team.... Hannes was an inspired skier that day." Hannes had been sent by the Austrian government to show what skiing could be.

"For safety's sake, in the Olympic tryouts the officials had staked out a slalom course which turns every so often to cut down the breakneck speed of contestants. The idea was to save necks. But, loosing a ringing yodel as he ripped own the mountainside, Hannes ignored the slalom markers in one of the most daring exhibitions of skiing ever seen in the northwest. He finished far ahead of his competitors."

That display encouraged a group of Californians to invite Hannes to Yosemite to teach skiing. He wondered where he'd teach because everyone knew California was the Golden State and there was no snow. Yosemite had been in the running to host the 1936 tryouts that Mt. Ranier won and the Olympic committee had awarded the '32 games to Lake Placid under the theory that there was no snow in California.

Upon seeing Yosemite Hannes said, "Nowhere in Europe have I send such snow! Nowhere are there such slopes, such weather conditions all winter long and even into the summer." Imagine what he said as he looked at what would be Sugar Bowl two year later which is higher in elevation and further north.

Hannes Schroll's vision would build Sugar Bowl - to be cont'd next month.



SUGAR BOWL LODGE — 1939

before 1940 addition

The Sugar Bowl lodge under construction below and finished in its first iteration. Later the lodge was expanded and made wider. Below left, one of the first towers of the first chairlift in California.

Next month: the building of the lift and the architect of the lodge



One of the 13 towers of Sugar Bowl's ultra-modern chair lift, which will take you 3200 feet (1000-foot rise) in six minutes.



RECEIPT FOR CLASS "A" STOCK

of
SUGAR BOWL CORPORATION

RECEIPT IS HEREBY ACKNOWLEDGED from SUGAR BOWL CORPORATION, a California corporation, on behalf of J. O. JONES, by the undersigned, Sherman Chickering, 111 Sutter Street, San Francisco, California, escrow holder under a permit issued to said Sugar Bowl Corporation by the Commissioner of Corporations of the State of California, under date of November 3, 1938, of Certificate No. A-87, dated Jan 5 1940 and representing ten Class "A" shares of stock of the said corporation of the par value of \$100 each, standing in the name of J. O. JONES, to be held by the undersigned subject to the further order of the said Commissioner of Corporations.

Reference is hereby made to the following excerpt from said permit of the Commissioner of Corporations, to-wit:

" . . . the owner or persons entitled to said shares shall not consummate a sale or transfer of said shares, or any interest therein, until the written consent of said Commissioner shall have been obtained so to do."

Dated at San Francisco, California, this _____ day of Jan 5 1940 , 1939.

(Signed) Sherman Chickering

Above is a copy of the original receipt to purchase 10 Class A shares at a par value of \$100 each given to Oscar Jones, owner of the Soda Springs Hotel.



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STEAK . . . lb. 25c

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6 to 8 pounds size
Salt Pork . . 2 lbs. 25c

FRESH
Ground Beef . 2 lbs. 25c

PURE
Pork Sausage . 2 lbs. 25c

1-lb. can 24c
2-lb. can 47c
4-lb. can 93c

Del Monte Grapefruit Juice
Unsweetened or Sweetened
No. 2 cans 2 for 15c
46-oz. can 15c

Fruit & Vegetables

GARDEN FRESH BUNCH
Turnips 1c

Mrs. Stewart—"It's Smart to Serve"
Salad Bowl 7c

GARDEN FRESH, YOUNG, TENDER BUNCH
Broccoli 9c

U. S. No. 1 Smooth, Medium Size
Sweet Potatoes . 5 lbs. 22c

POTATOES
U. S. No. 1 Oregon
25-lb. bag 35c
100-lb. bag . . . \$1.35

GOLDEN RIFE
Bananas 4 lbs. 17c

ALL GREEN, FRESH
Asparagus . . . 2 lbs. 29c

WHITE KING SOAP SPECIALS

Giant pkg, granulated . . . 41c
Family size pkg. granulated .25c
White King Toilet Soap 3 brs 12c
Sierra Pine Toilet Soap 3 brs 19c
Laundry Soap 10 large bars .27c
6 giant bars 19c

HEINZ or GERBER, Strained, all varieties
Baby Food 2 cans 15c
12 CANS FOR 87c

FONTANA, PURE 12 OZ. CELLO PKG.
Egg Noodles . . . 2 for 23c

VAL VITA NO. 2 1/2 CANS
Spinach 3 for 25c

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Tuna 2 for 23c

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CAKE FLOUR

Large pkg. 21c

SACRAMENTO BRAND 96 OZ. NO. 10 CAN
Tomato Juice 23c

N.E.C. REG. PKG.
Shredded Wheat . . 10c

FRANCO-AMERICAN with tomato sauce NO. 1 CANS
Spaghetti 3 for 21c

FRANCO-AMERICAN with cream sauce NO. 1 CANS
Macaroni 3 for 21c

CALIFORNIA, RIFE TALL CANS
Olives 2 for 19c

GHIRARDELLI'S L.B. CAN
Nu-Malt 24c

Scot Towels 3 rolls 25c

KRAFT, ELKHORN MILD
Cheese lb. 17c

Del Monte Peas
No. 2 cans
2 for 21c

ZEE TOILET TISSUE
Ivory, white or Orchid Pink
4 ROLLS 14c

WORLDWIDE GROCERY & MEAT

Help with the 20 Mile Long Museum on Scenic Old Highway 40

The Donner Summit Historical Society has many visions one of which is to make a twenty mile long museum along Scenic Old Highway 40 from Cisco Grove to Below Rainbow Bridge. We will "interpret" historic spots with the history of the spot, a good story, and local activities. We would like some help with the project and so make it a Summit community project. Stop by the Summit Restaurant at I-80 and Old 40, take a look at the display and help us out.

20 mile long museum links

Here is the explanation of the project:

<http://www.donnersummithistoricalsociety.org/pages/Old40.html>

On this page too is an 11X17 document called Donner Summit's Old Highway 40 Scenic Bypass with a stylized map and various spots to be highlighted.

Our first interpretive sign for Rainbow Tavern:

<http://www.donnersummithistoricalsociety.org/pages/Old40maps/rainbow.html>

Our first attempt at the petroglyph sign:

<http://www.donnersummithistoricalsociety.org/pages/Old40maps/petroglyphsign.html>

You can also access these pages from the main DSHS page which you no doubt have bookmarked (www.donnersummithistoricalsociety.org) and going to the "projects" link.

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mail to: Donner Summit Historical Society P.O. 1 Norden, CA 95724

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