



Donner Summit Historical Society

August, 2011 issue #36

Newsletter

# Happy Birthday DSHS

Look at the Headline. This is the 36th monthly issue of this newsletter. 36 months means our newsletter staff has been putting out these issues for three years. That means the Historical Society is three years old.

That's really quite something. During that time we've incorporated, started a museum, built the 20 Mile Museum of 32 interpretive signs along Old 40, made brochures and exhibits (see our last issue), explored Old Highway 40, written and printed newsletters, built up our newsletter subscriber list to over 560, crafted posters, hosted our annual Donner Summit Pioneers Awards twice (with number three coming - see page 3), built an ever expanding website, and written and disseminated turn by turn instructions for the "old Time Sunday Drive" along Old 40 from Rocklin to Truckee (come in and get a copy or go to our website).

We've also been working with the Donner Summit Business Group to revitalize the Summit economy.

We've done it all with volunteers - only volunteers. Of course we're looking for more volunteers (see page 3)

We aren't stopping there however. We have lots more ideas that will come to fruition. We'll keep quiet about some of them for now. We have a backlog of stories coming in our newsletter: Tunnel 6, Alexy Von Schmidt and the drive to send Lake Tahoe water to California under Donner Summit, Giant Gap, dynamiting for fish, Josie Freeman, local cabins, The Snowball Special, post offices, offices, snowsheds, the first transcontinental telephone, T.C. Wohlbruck, famous artists and famous photographers of Donner Summit, life at the Donner Summit Hotel, and shepherding on Donner Summit. That's just what we have on tap and doesn't count what we find as we explore the rich history of Donner Summit.

## Meanwhile in This Issue

I'd like to invite you to **Lake Mary on August 19** for dinner. It's a beautiful spot overlooking Lake Mary and Sugar Bowl's chef does a wonderful job. Take a look at page 2 and make a reservation.

You'll be able to meet various DSHS personalities and see some new exhibits.

**The Annual Placer County Museums' Heritage Tour** is on again. See page 2. It's a fun event and for the second time we're being included.

August 6 there will be a showing of **Charlie Chaplin's "Gold Rush"** which was filmed on Donner Summit. See page 2. Everyone is welcome.

We can use some **help with our easel fund**. See page 9



See our new 2011 DSHS poster: page 12

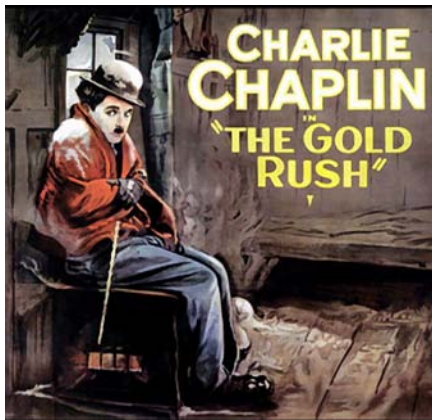


The 4th annual Heritage Trail event will be held on August 6 – 7, 2011. Nineteen participating museums from Roseville to Tahoe are planning fun activities for the entire family. All of the museums will be open from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm on both days and admission is free.

Visitors can grind wheat for biscuits, explore the wonders of a granite quarry, view the world from a 19th century farm wagon, pan for illusive flakes of gold, listen to Native American stories, and watch a blacksmith in action. Many of the museums will also offer fun food and beverages such as hand-churned ice cream, root beer floats, cookies, and lemonade.

All the museums are easy to reach from Interstate 80. Five valley museums are in South Placer. Six Auburn museums are located within one mile of the Historic courthouse. There are eight mountain museums located in Foresthill, Colfax, Dutch Flat, Donner Summit and the North Lake Tahoe areas.

The official Trail Guide is posted online and copies are also available in local museums. To access the most up-to-date information, visit [www.theheritagetrail.blogspot.com](http://www.theheritagetrail.blogspot.com) or call 530-889-6500.



## Charlie Chaplin's Gold Rush - August 6

The Serene Lakes Donner Summit Conservation Association is hosting a free showing of Charlie Chaplin's "Gold Rush" at the Serene Lakes beach on August 6 at dusk. This is the original version: black and white and silent.

Admission is free and includes the movie, a presentation before hand about the movie and then "The Rest of the Story," afterwards.

If you've always wanted to see the movie, this is your opportunity.

## Sugar Bowl Lake Mary Evening to benefit DSHS August 19

Sugar Bowl's Lake Mary Cabin Dinner Series will return this year with great food by Chef Alan Davis. The Lake Mary facilities sit above Lake Mary and dining is on a deck overlooking the lake. DSHS will be a beneficiary of one of the summer evenings, August 19. Seating is from 5:30 to 9:00. Reservations are a good idea (530) 426-7002.



Besides a varied menu selection of homemade soups, salads, seafood, wild game, vegetarian dishes, pastas, wines and desserts, the DSHS will have its newest exhibits on display (see our last issue).



# If you Enjoy....

Our crack newsletter staff works hard each month to bring you some historical fun about Donner Summit. We've covered all kinds of things: stories about people, escaped circus animals, historical firsts on Donner Summit, and humor. We have lots more that needs covering (see page 1).

We have more than 560 subscribers to our free newsletter but only a few dozen DSHS contributors. To continue on our way reporting on history and improving the Summit we need some help. We can use money, for example for our easel fund (see page 9) or our various brochures and their printing (see our website), or our 20 Mile Museum and our actual museum.

We can also use help: docents in the museum; help with cataloging; help with events; writing, researching and editing; and just things in general.

**If you enjoy our monthly newsletters and think our work is good,** how about contributing some of your or some money? How about a birthday gift to the DSHS? See page 10.

## Donner Summit is Special That's Why They Make Movies Here

Well we all know that: spectacular scenery, interesting history, lots of fun things to do - it's great. The outside world has recognized that too. Think about your home town. How many movies have they made there? Exactly my point.

But on Donner Summit they've made a lot of movies or parts of movies. For a complete article about movies and Donner Summit see Donnerwood in our March, '09 issue. Briefly though, The "Gold Rush" was not the only movie filmed on the Summit. Goofy's "The Art of Skiing" (1941) was filmed entirely on the Summit featuring Sugar Bowl. It is a tour de force for skiing style. "Two Faced Woman" (1939) took place on Donner Summit and has some familiar views for those who know the Summit.

Other films with scenes on the summit are: "Bushwhacked," 1995; "Cobb," 1994; "Take It To The Limit," 1999; "Misery," 1990; "Jack Frost," 1998; "The Forlorn," 2008; and the opening scenes in "True Lies," (1995)

The snowboard training for the chimps in "M.V.P. 2: Most Vertical Primate" 2001 were done at Donner Ski Ranch

The first movie ever filmed on Donner Summit was Charlie Chaplin's "Gold Rush" in 1925. It was filmed at what would become Sugar Bowl fourteen years later and included hundreds of extras from Sacramento who became Klondike gold prospectors and the Truckee Ski Club which made the path through the snow up the Palisades at Sugar Bowl.

Since it's the first movie made on Donner Summit, was really famous at the time, tells a good story, and is good entertainment, we've chosen to make it a highlight of this month's newsletter. If you would like to see the movie with a lot of other people, and isn't that really how silent movies should be seen, see page two for an upcoming showing.

**3rd Annual Donner Summit Pioneer Awards  
at the blinking light in Soda Springs  
August 13 10 AM to 2 PM**

editor:  
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# Charlie Chaplin's Gold Rush

A classic is timeless. It speaks to people across generations. The "Gold Rush" is a classic movie.

Have you ever been the one left out? The last one picked?  
Have you ever thought everyone else was having fun but you?  
Have you ever been the one not invited to the party?

Have you ever wanted to get the beautiful girl or cute guy?

The "Gold Rush" is a good story with all the elements: humor, pathos, excitement, and of course, love.

Charlie Chaplin had been looking at some stereopticon slides of the Klondike while visiting fellow actors Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks, his partners in United Artists. He had also been reading about the Donner Party. He was intrigued by the Donner Party emigrants being reduced to eating their own moccasins and presumably some of their friends..



The stories of the Klondike and the Donner Party with their hardship, starvation, and cannibalism came together in a tragedy and slapstick comedy overlaid with a love story in 1925.

It was an unusual combination but even so it became the highest grossing comedy and the most elaborate and most expensive film of the silent era.



This movie was the movie Charlie Chaplin said he most wanted to be remembered for and he made it when he was at his most popular. It took one and a half years to finish.

The Gold Rush is excitement, pathos, love, and humor.

Top picture, Charlie Chaplin directing at what would become Sugar Bowl 14 years later.

Center: actual stereopticon slides of the Klondike gold hunters scaling Chilcoot Pass.

Bottom and top next page: gold rush town set at what would be Sugar Bowl with "gold hunters" climbing the palisades in the background.



# The Gold Rush

## A quick synopsis

People are coming to the Klondike to find gold.  
Among them is the tramp, Charlie Chaplin.  
Charlie avoids a bear (right)  
There is a wild storm and Charlie seeks shelter.

He comes to a house and saves his arm from being eaten by Big Jim.  
Charlie is so hungry he eats a candle.  
Someone has to go for food.  
Black Larson "wins" the draw and heads out.  
The law is looking for Black Larson.  
Black Larson kills the law.

Meanwhile back at the house, Thanksgiving hunger.  
Charlie cooks boot  
Big Jim and the little fellow share the boot (right).  
Big Jim is hysterical with hunger and imagines Charlie is a large chicken.  
Big Jim chases Charlie around the cabin.  
A bear gets shot and eaten.

Big Jim and Charlie leave and separate.  
Black Larson steals Jim's gold.  
Black Larson goes over a cliff.

Charlie comes to town and to the dance hall.  
Charlie is ignored by Georgia, the beautiful dance hall girl  
but Charlie finds her picture and falls in love.  
Georgia dances with Charlie to spite another.  
There is a dog on a rope - very funny.  
Hank Curtis has to go away.  
Charlie looks after Hank's house.

Charlie sees Georgia again.  
Her picture is under his pillow.  
Georgia and girl friends have fun at Charlie's expense.  
Charlie's foot catches fire.  
Charlie invites the girls to New Year's dinner.  
There is the dance of the dinner rolls.

There is pathos - the girls stood Charlie up.

Big Jim has no memory of where his gold is.  
A house moves with the wind.  
A house teeters.  
Gold is found and Charlie and Big Jim become millionaires.  
They get on a ship to leave Alaska.  
Georgia is coincidentally on board and she mistakes Charlie for a stow away.  
Charlie sees Georgia.

Georgia and Charlie (right) - the first ending.



# The Rest of the Story

Gold Rush was made when Charlie was at his most popular and film studios could not afford him. 5 Years before he, Douglas Fairbanks, and Mary Pickford had started United Artists.

The Gold Rush filming started with the whole story done which was unusual for Chaplin. It took 1 1/2 years to finish.

Charlie was 35 when he started filming the "Gold Rush."

The leading lady to begin with was Lilitta McMurray who had been in "The Kid" at twelve years old. She was 16 and was cast as the leading lady of The "Gold Rush." Her name was changed to Lita Grey and a romance with Charlie followed. Pregnancy followed romance and that halted production. A new leading lady was found, Georgia Hale.

Charlie married Lita and they had two sons, Charles Jr. and Sidney Lita was wife two of four and the two boys were two of 11 children Charlie had. They were married in 1924 and divorced in 1927.

Charlie would also have a romance from time to time with Georgia. Georgia was 19 at the time of the "Gold Rush." At the conclusion of the film, Charlie was having an affair with Georgia so that the final kiss between Charlie and Georgia was not acting (previous page.)

In 1942 Charlie added music and commentary and removed the scene of him kissing Georgia at the end. The affair was over by then.

600 extras were hired from Sacramento and they were taken by train to the Summit for the "Gold Rush."

The Truckee ski club cleared the path up the "Chilcoot Pass" in what would become Sugar Bowl 14 years later.

The Sierra shooting took two weeks but a lot of the cast got colds and Charlie got the flu. The remainder of the shooting took place in Hollywood where sets were constructed of burlap, chicken wire, 250,000 feet of lumber, flour, and salt (bottom next page)

This was so different, the Alaskan wilderness in Hollywood, that the set became a popular tourist spot.

Elaborate models were constructed and the filming was done so well you cannot see the transitions between models and sets. The top picture on the next page is a model of the teetering cabin. The picture below it is "inside."

Much of the Sierra footage was left on the editing room floor.

Charlie was the chicken in the movie.

Bottom here: Charlie on rocks above what would become Sugar Bowl in 1939.



There was 27 times more film filmed than used.

The scene where The Lone Prospector and Big Jim have a boot for supper (page 5) took three days and 63 takes to make to satisfy Charlie.

The boot was made of liquorice. After 63 takes, eating the licorice boot, Charlie was rushed to hospital suffering insulin shock and had to have his stomach pumped.

The boot was made by the firm of Hillaby's in Pontefract, West Yorkshire, England; Pontefract is famous for growing liquorice and making it into "Pomfret [Pontefract] Cakes"

Georgia Hale never made the transition to talkies. She became wealthy through real estate.

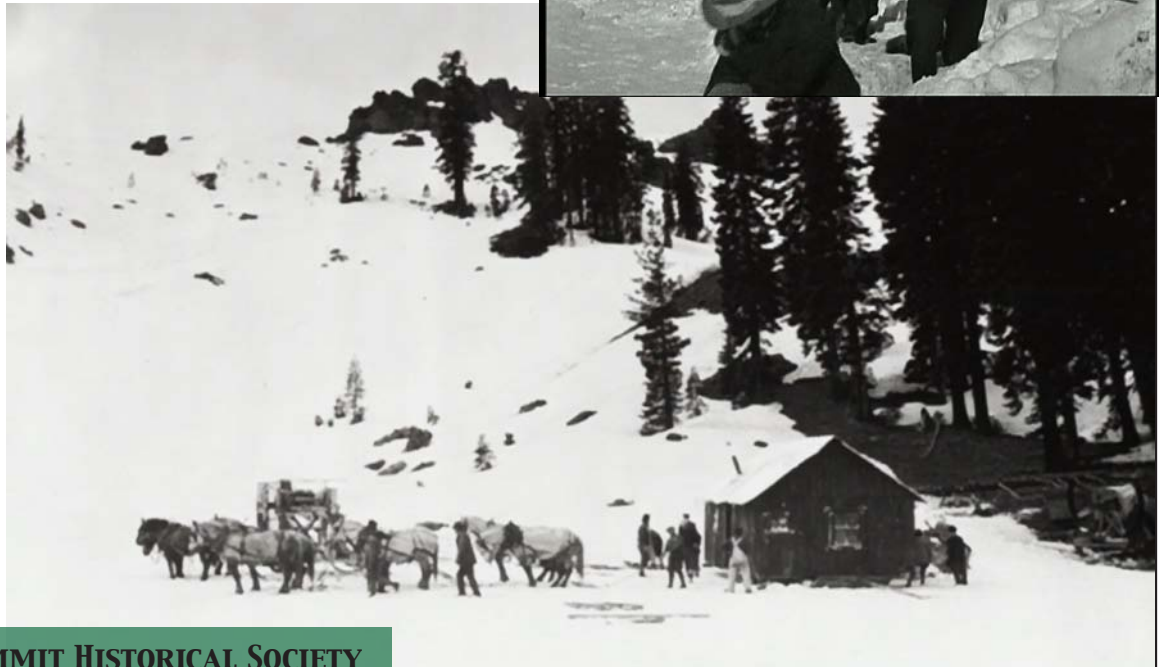
The length of the 1925 version of the movie was 95 minutes. Interestingly it fell out of copyright when the copyright was not renewed. Other versions of the film remain under copyright.

The 1942 version which had music and commentary added was 77 minutes.

The Dance of the Dinner Rolls was so popular that in some theaters the film had to be stopped and the dance run again and again.



Right: "Klondike gold seekers" climbing the Palisades at what would become Sugar Bowl in 1939. Below, part of the set being moved into place at the future Sugar Bowl.



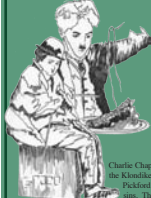
## DONNER SUMMIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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Volume #1 display 7

Potter Edition

The highest grossing comedy of its time. It was the movie Charlie Chaplin most wanted to be remembered for.



# Charlie Chaplin, the "Gold Rush," and Donner Summit

Charlie Chaplin saw stereoscopic pictures of the Donner Party and the Klondike while visiting Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford. He was intrigued by producers eating their moccasins. The two ideas coalesced into a story idea and Chaplin wrote the "Gold Rush," a story about the "little tramps" search for gold, wrapped in humor and pathos.

It was kind of strange to take the tragedy of the Donner Party, the cannibalism and starvation, and turn it into a comedy but Charlie Chaplin was successful. The "Gold Rush" was, according to some, his most successful movie. It was the highest grossing comedy of its time. It was also the most elaborate and expensive of any comedy of the silent era.

Donner Summit served as the setting for the "Gold Rush" which became the first movie to be filmed there. Watching the movie you will see gold seekers climbing the Palisades at what is now Sugar Bowl (right). Unfortunately many of the cast caught colds and flu so filming moved to Hollywood where the elaborate sets, with ash and flour as snow, became a tourist attraction.

Among the many people coming to find gold was the "little tramp." He avoids a bear on arrival to Alaska (Donner Summit), weathers a storm, and comes to an isolated house. There's no food so someone has to go for some and Black Larson "win" the drive.

Big Jim and Charlie are left in the cabin, starving. They cook a boot (right column second from top), hallucinate, and shoot a bear.

Big Jim and Charlie separate. Black Larson steals Big Jim's gold and goes over a cliff. Charlie falls in love with Georgia, a beautiful dance hall girl who ignores him. Charlie puts her picture under the pillow of the house he's holed up in. It's found by some girls. A foot catches fire. Charlie invites the girls to New Year and prepares. He's stood up. There's a dance of dinner rolls. A horse tumbles on a cliff edge. Gold is found. Charlie and Jim ship out where Charlie is mistaken for a stowaway by Georgia who happens to be on board. Charlie wins Georgia. The ending is happy.

Charlie Chaplin told the "Gold Rush" was the movie he most wanted to be remembered for.



### Other movies on Donner Summit

The "Gold Rush" was not the only movie filmed on the Summit. George's "The Art of Skiing" (1941) was filmed entirely on the Summit around Sugar Bowl. It is a tour de force ski movie. "Two Bad Women" (1939) took place on Donner Summit and has some familiar spots for those who know the Summit.

Other films with scenes on the summit: "Hinterbacker" 1995, "666" 1998, "Take It To The Limit" 1997, "Mystery" 1990, "Jack Frost" 1998, "The Frontier" 2006, and the ongoing series of "Blue Lake" (1995).

The overhead tracks for the changes in M.V.P. 2-Mile Vertical Pillars 2001 were done in Donner Ski Ranch.



www.donnersummithistoricalociety.org  
P.O. Box 11  
Norden, CA 95724

Left: one of three new DSHS exhibits about the "Gold Rush" which will be used as traveling exhibits and which will be on display at Lake Mary on August 19 (see page 2)

# 3rd Annual Donner Summit Pioneer Awards

at the blinking light in Soda Springs  
August 13 10 AM to 2 PM



# Summering in the Sierra – On the Summit pt 2, 1874

Arrived at the summit of the Sierra Nevada on the line of the railroad, there are many delightful pedestrian and horseback excursion to be made in various direction, and the finest pints are fortunately the least hackneyed. At Summit Valley (which is associated with the relief of the tragically fated Donner emigrants, and is only three miles from Donner pass) there is an odious saw-mill, which has thinned out the forests; an ugly group of whitewashed houses; a ruined creek, whose water are like a tan-vat; a big sandy dam across the valley, reared in a vain attempt to make an ice-pond; a multitude of dead, blanched trees, a great, staring, repellent blank. And yet this valley is not unlovely. It's upper end, still a green meadow leads to the base of peaks 10,000 or 12,000 feet high, whose light gray summits of granite, or volcanic breccia, weather into castellated forms, rise in sharp contrast to the green woods margining the level meadow. A little apart from the noisy station, the woods are beautiful, as we have described them, and the boulder-strewn [sic] earth reminds one of the pasture dotted with sheep. On the northern side rises the square butte of Mount Stanford, [Castle Peak] 2,453 feet above the valley, and 9,237 feet above the sea. It's volcanic crest is carved into curious resemblance to a ruined castle, and hence it was named, and is still popularly called, Castle Peak; but as the same title is affixed to several peaks along the range, the State Geologist has wisely given it another on the official maps. This peak can be ascended to the base of the summit crags on horseback; the remaining climb afoot, up a very steep slope of sliding debris, is arduous but short, and is repaid by a superb view, embracing at least a hundred miles of the Sierra crests., their numerous sharp peaks streaked with snow, and lying between them t intervals the many lakes of the region, including the flashing sheet of Tahoe....On one side of this characteristic peak the foot-climber stops to rest on a depression where grass and flowers grow luxuriantly, and the swarms of humming-birds hover over the floral feast, their brilliant iridescent plumage flashing in the sun, and the movement of their wings filling the air with a bee-like drone. Above all this beauty from the bare volcanic cliffs and pinnacles that top the mountain – Eden and the desert side by side. The upper Sierra is full of contrasts and surprises. After tedious walking over rocky barren, or toilsome climbing up slippery gorges, in the very path of recent torrents, one comes suddenly on little bits of wild garden and lawn, where butterfly and bird resort, and the air is sweet with perfume. At the base of cliffs which looked forbidding at a distance, cold springs will be found, painting the ravines with freshest green; red lilies swing their bells; lupins [sic] and larkspurs call down the tint of heaven; ferns shake the delicate; plumes, bright with drops of dew; and the rocks offer soft cushioned of moss...the delighted pedestrian lingers as such oases, loth [sic] to go forward...

The tourist who stops a few days at Summit Valley, will find a walk along the railroad, through the snow-sheds, peculiarly entertaining. These sheds, covering the track for thirty-five miles, are massive arched galleries of large timbers, shady and cool, blackened with the smoke of engines, sinuous, and full of strange sounds. Through the vents in the roof the interstices between the roof-boards, the sunlight falls in countless narrow bars, pallid as moonshine. Standing in a curve, the effect is precisely that of the interior of some of Gothic cloister or abbey hall, the light streaking through narrow side-windows. The footstep awakes echoes, and the tones of the voice are full and resounding. A coming train announces itself miles away by the tinkling crepitation communicated along the rails, which gradually swells into a metallic ring, followed by a thunderous roar that shakes the ground; then the shriek of the engine-valve, and, in a flash, the engine itself bursts into view, the bars of sunlight playing across its dark front with kaleidoscopic effect. There is ample space on either side of the track for pedestrians to stand as the train rushes past, but it looks as if it must crush everything before it, and burst through the every shed. The approach of a train at night is heralded by a sound like the distant roar of surf, half an hour before the train itself arrives; and when the locomotive dashes into view, the dazzling glare of its head-light in the black cavern, shooting like a meteor from the Plutonic abyss, is wild and awful. The warning whistle, prolonged in strange diminuendo notes that sound like groans and sighs from Inferno, is echoed far and long among the rocky crags and forests.

Nine miles southward, and 661 feet lower – say 6,113 feet above the sea – are the little known but remarkable “Summit Soda springs.” The drive to these springs is one of the most picturesque and enjoyable in the Sierra. Passing by fine dark cliffs of volcanic breccia, to the right, and over low hills covered with tall firs, the road leads to Anderson Valley – a green meadow embosoming three little lakes, which are perfectly idyllic in their quiet beauty. These lakes are the remnants of a larger single body of water which evidently once filled the whole valley. Their outlet is through a narrow and rocky gorge which empties into a tributary of the north fork of the American River. The road follows the steep side of this gorge for a short distance, and then reaches the summit of a ridge overlooking the canon of the American, 2,000

feet below.

The author goes on to describe exploring the Summit: climbing Anderson, Tinker's, Donner, finding Lake Angela, going down the canyon of the American River and up to Lake Tahoe and then to the Truckee River.

Benjamin Avery, "Summering in the Sierra," Overland Monthly and Out West Magazine 12:2 (February 1874): 175-83.

# Letter to the Editor

Bill: Just a note to say I really enjoyed reading about the old 1895 topo maps [our June '11 edition]. The re-prints of these maps I used to buy in Sacramento in 1946 for \$.50 each at the Sportsman store on J street. The store was owned and run by Frank Pullman who was a skier and fisherman who like me, used to hike and fish remote places in the Sierra. Frank was the first person in the U.S. to import spinning reels from Switzerland and thus introduced Spin Fishing to the U.S. I still have 2 of the Swiss Fix reels I bought from Frank. I packed and used these maps for years. I think I tossed the last of them in

about 1956 when DFG started furnishing me my topo maps. I used to bitch to Vern Johnson ( whose family owned Weber Lake) about the maps in-accuracy, since I used to stop by Weber Lake and talk him into telling me about his secretive fishing spots. Vern used to take my maps and hand draw his trails and lakes on them. Many of the trails he drew were trails his shepherders had pioneered while driving their sheep from one area to another. Vern sure save us miles of walking by showing us his trails and shortcuts not on the maps. I also learned from Vern that the surveyors who drew the maps of the Donner Summit area spent the summer at his old hotel and drew the maps while sitting at his bar drinking whiskey while drawing the maps. Vern said the surveyor seldom went out in the field to check on the placement of lakes or streams and he (Vern) tried to keep the mistakes to a minimum but what could you expect when he was drinking too?

Now-a-days when I turn on my Garmin hand held GPS and it does not show me the small lake I am standing by I think of Vern. I wonder if there is a bar in the Gamin factory where their maps are made? Jim

Jim White wrote the "Lost Horse" article in our April, '11 newsletter, and "Fong the Famous Snowshed Cook" in our February, '11 edition.

**DONNER SUMMIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
 Volume #1 display 1 copyright 2011 Poster Edition

## Public Lodges & Hotels of Donner Summit

### A Little Help

All along Highway 40 there were little signs with directions, maps, and lodge information. You noticed, no doubt, on page 6 that we have developed some large displays. We can display them in the museum, at our gatherings, and when we travel to give presentations or help other groups.

We have the dozen displays and with our template we can make more as groups or individuals wanting presentations have new topics needing illustration.

The next step is to buy some easels to hold the displays.

If you'd like to donate to our display fund, use the form at the left and note, "displays."

Behind this little notice you see another of our new displays, lodges and hotels of Donner Summit.

Take Old Highway 40 from Rocklin to Truckee. You can obtain a brochure with turn by turn directions and pictures from the Donner Summit Historical Society in Soda Springs. You can also download the directions as a Word document from [www.donnersummithistoricalsociety.org](http://www.donnersummithistoricalsociety.org)

**Donner Summit Historical Society**  
[www.donnersummithistoricalsociety.org](http://www.donnersummithistoricalsociety.org)  
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**DONNER SUMMIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
 donnersummithistoricalsociety.org

**Membership 2011**

I/we would like to join The Donner Summit Historical Society and share in the Summit's rich history.

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

NAME(S) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ New Membership

MAILING ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Renewing Membership

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ Individual Membership - \$30

(Please mail this card with your check payable to DSHS to Donner Summit Historical Society, P.O. Box 1, Norden, CA 95724)

\_\_\_\_ Family Membership - \$50

\_\_\_\_ Friend Membership - \$100

\_\_\_\_ Sponsor - \$250

\_\_\_\_ Patron - \$500

\_\_\_\_ Benefactor - \$1000

\_\_\_\_ Business - \$250

\_\_\_\_ Business Sponsor - \$1000

Donner Summit Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization

# A Trip to Donner Peak, 1885

Last Wednesday morning a party of sixteen from Dormer Lake united in a picnic expedition to Dormer peak. Following up the summit road as far as Lake Mary, some engtged ingathering flowers, and others, admiring the grand scenery of the summit peaks, towering tip like some grand castle, far 'above the snow sheds. After leaving Lake Mary the party proceeded a short distance, when lunch was served cut under pine trees. which aided the mountain air as an excellent tonic for sharpening appetites.

The party then proceeded up the mountail trail near the summit of Dormer peak, passing over a large bank of snow. Here a gay game of snowballing was indulged in by the entire company. After fully ascending Dormer peak some crand scenery was presented to view. In the distance could be seen Truckee, Martis Valley, Tinker's Knob, Castle peak. Summit Valley, lied Mountain. Devil's peak and six lakes. From off this peak fair Dormer reminds one of a mirror spread out beneath amid the mountains.

7/31/85 Sacramento Daily Union

## A Trip to Donner Peak.

EDS. RECORD-UNION: Last Wednesday morning a party of sixteen from Donner Lake united in a picnic expedition to Donner peak. Following up the summit road as far as Lake Mary, some engaged in gathering flowers, and others admiring the grand scenery of the summit peaks, towering up like some grand castle, far above the snow sheds. After leaving Lake Mary the party proceeded a short distance, when lunch was served out under pine trees, which aided the mountain air as an excellent tonic for sharpening appetites. The party then proceeded up the mountail trail near the summit of Donner peak, passing over a large bank of snow. Here a gay game of snowballing was indulged in by the entire company. After fully ascending Donner peak some grand scenery was presented to view. In the distance could be seen Truckee, Martis Valley, Tinker's Knob, Castle peak, Summit Valley, Red Mountain, Devil's peak and six lakes. From off this peak fair Donner reminds one of a mirror spread out beneath amid the mountains.

The party, satisfied with sightseeing, returned to former levels, greatly pleased with the trip. The party consisted of James Stuart, Frank Tomlinson, Hector Stromberg, George Mills, Lewis Tomlinson, Joseph Tomlinson, S. Willet, Tom. Martin, Albert Harney, Edgar Newkirk, Mrs. James S. Curtis, Mrs. Martin, Ida L. Tomlinson, Mattie Tomlinson, Kate Hyde and Maud Martin. Yours, T. Truckee, July 28, 1885.

# Our 2011 Poster

Since we started the DSHS we have designed annual posters. Here is this year's designed by Nancy Oudegeest, giving nod to the bold graphics in old time fruit labels. You can see previous years' on our website.

These posters, as well as some of our new display posters (see our list issue or our website) are available at the Soda Springs store as well as at the Historical Society.



# Brisbin Crew Installs 20 Mile Museum Sign



## Hwy 40 Scenic Bypass Petroglyphs 31

### History

The Washoe Tribe lived on the eastern face of the Sierra Nevada mountains for more than 6,000 years. They didn't actually call themselves the Washoe Tribe, though. They called themselves the Waashiw (Wa-she-shu) tribe, meaning "people from here" in the Washoe language. The Washoe language is unique because it was left virtually untouched due to the isolation of the tribe from other tribes.

The Washoe people were very peaceful and had few enemies. One of their enemies was the Paiute tribe. The Washoe were also very independent, so they formed their own language. One of the main food items of the Washoe Tribe was pine nuts.

### A Good Story

The Washoe had many traditions. A well-known tradition was when a young boy killed a deer, he was considered a good hunter and earned respect from the older men. A celebration would then be thrown in honor of the first kill, representing the boy's entry into manhood. Another tradition the Washoe were known for was weaving baskets. A member of the tribe named Datsolalee became famous for her baskets.

### Washoe Language:

Hello Huna me hesi  
My Name Is \_\_\_\_\_ de gum dia le' i  
Long Time No See Ha lina meligi esi

### Things to do right here

First, please respect the petroglyphs; do not walk on them.

Walk a little past this sign to the petroglyphs. Walk up to Rainbow Bridge and admire the view. Hike to the top of Mt. Stephens just north of Rainbow Bridge. Hike up the north side of Old Highway 40 to the catfish ponds. Beyond the catfish ponds are nice lakes: Angela, Flora, and Azalea. Watch the rock climbers on the different rock walls. Trace the Lincoln Highway and walk the route. It is the road cut you see above. Go up through the underpass and then through the train tunnel - the original Tunnel 6 built in 1867 for the transcontinental railroad.

If you are even more ambitious, go to the Summit and take the first left after the Sugar Bowl Academy. Go down to the turn and park. To the left is a trailhead for the Pacific Crest. Turnoffs will lead you to the tops of Mts. Donner and Judah for spectacular views. From Donner Peak you can look 1000 feet straight down to Donner Lake.



This sign was produced by the Brisbin Crew of Sierra Expeditionary Learning School in Truckee, a fourth and fifth grade class during the Fall of 2010.



This sign was sponsored by the Truckee Rotary Club, through a grant to the Brisbin Crew, and by the Donner Summit Area Association.



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Faithful readers will remember that the Brisbin Crew, Julie Brisbin's 4-5th grade class at the Sierra Expeditionary School in Truckee, worked last fall studying Donner Summit petroglyphs and Donner Summit.

They visited the Summit a number of times and then worked on their contribution to the 20 Mile Museum.

Their sign is left and was installed in early July just down the road from the Rainbow Bridge along Old 40.

That's Mrs. Brisbin taking the picture in the center photograph below.

Your contributions help with these kinds of projects.

