

The Donner Summit

Airloom

History and stories of the Donner Summit Historical Society



February, 2012 issue #42

Unfinished Business

Cisco Boat Sled Pt. II cont'd from December, '11

Regular readers will remember our December, '11 issue reporting our archeological team out in the field finding the old Cisco Boat Sled (or UpSki or Jig Back or Boat Tow or whatever) First, as a reminder, pictured below is the UpSki found above I-80 at Cisco Grove.

Long before there were the major ski areas in California and long before there was the Interstate to take people to the mountains, there were small ski areas all along Old Highway 40 on the way to Donner Summit. There were ski areas at Baxter, Laing's Crossing, Emigrant Gap, Cisco Grove, Kingvale, Soda Springs, Clair Tappaan Lodge, Donner Summit at Lake Mary, and Sugar Bowl. Each had rope tows and Sugar Bowl, in 1939, had the first chair lift in California.

Before there were rope tows, people hiked or skied up the mountains to ski down (see the story about Emil Paplau elsewhere in this newsletter). It was a chore and not many people want to undertake that kind of physical exertion for the thrill of a few minutes going downhill.



Some entrepreneurs saw that if skiing was to become popular, there would have to be a better way to get up the hills. Dennis Jones (The Remarkable Dennis Jones in our February '09 issue) built what was probably the first ski lift on Donner Summit, something he called an UpSki. He may have gotten the idea from Yosemite.

The UpSki (also called Boat Sled, Boat Tow, or Jig Back) consisted of two large steel sleds attached to a cable. Skiers removed their skies and sat down facing backwards. As one sled was pulled up the other went down. For most people it was a good idea compared to hiking up the mountains. Dennis reported that his UpSki never worked right. Those that

Cisco Boat Sled Pt II - the old days

did work were inconvenient because skiers had to sit backwards, they traveled slowly, and skis had to be removed. Rope tows came along and the UpSkis disappeared.

We know from our December, '11 issue that the UpSkis are not all gone. One still sits high above I-80 at Cisco Grove (see previous page). That sled is the remains of the Boat Tow that the Auburn Ski Club had at their ski area at Cisco. That ski area consisted of a slalom or downhill course; a ski jump, because jumping was a very popular spectator sport; and a lodge. People parked all along Old 40 and stayed in the cabins and lodges at Cisco and elsewhere along Old 40 (see page 8).

Our research staff sat down with Bill Clark, the executive director of the Auburn Ski Club which owns land under Boreal ski area. He looked through their archives and pulled up the pictures you see here. He also pulled up a lot of other things which we'll be seeing in this Heirloom newsletter.

The lower picture here was taken more than seventy years before the picture on page one in almost exactly the same place. Here you can see how I-80 changed the terrain.



The UpSkis were inconvenient because riders had to sit facing backwards, take off their skis and travel slowly.

There are two more pictures of the Cisco Boat Sled on page 12 and 14



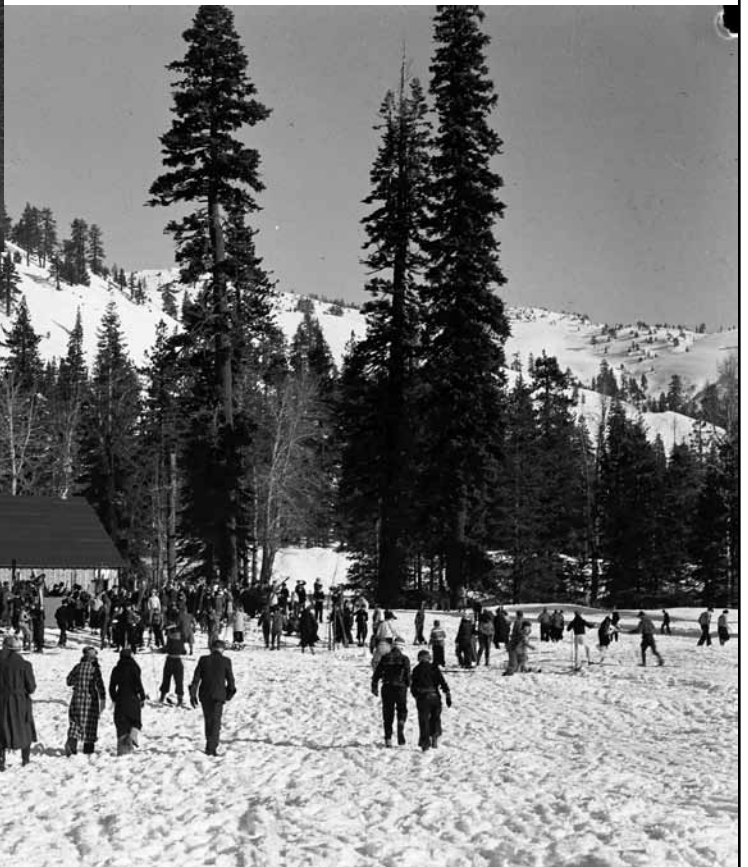
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Cisco Grove & Auburn Ski Club

Here are pictures of the Auburn Ski Club's Cisco Grove snow area in the 1930's. Top right shows the runsl. This shot does not show the UpSki which ran up the center of the photograph, up the knob you see which is the outside of Tunnel 4.

Below is a small out-building and at bottom, more of the ski area now covered by I-80, and the lodge.

When I-80 came in the Auburn Ski Club acquired Boreal Ridge where Boreal Ski Area is. The Club still owns the land.



**Thanks to
Bill Clark,
the Auburn
Ski Club and
the Western
States
Ski Sport
Museum
at Boreal
for the use
of these
photographs.**

Unfinished Business #2 -

Emigrant Trails - Coldstream Pass cont'd from November, '11

Some months ago, in October, we started a series exploring the emigrants' route once they got to the Sierra. We looked at a possible route leading to the Trails West marker east of Lake Mary. Then we looked at the main route that opened the year after the Donner tragedy, Roller Pass, between Mt. Judah and Mt. Lincoln. We also noted that there is thought that the Colstream Pass, between Donner Peak and Mt. Judah, was not used by emigrants. Last month Marshall Fey, author and emigrant trail historian, wrote about the first markings of the emigrant trail noting that Peter Weddell's research in the 1920's indicated that Coldstream Pass was used by the emigrants. Wedell marked the route with signs which you can still see on display at the Donner State Park and maybe even below Mt. Judah (at least one was there some years ago although we have conducted no census). Now Mr. Fey offers some proof of the emigrants' use of Coldstream Pass.

"Many of the new trail revisionists say the emigrants never used Coldstream Pass. Not so, the following is a diary quote from Heinrich Lienhard's 1846 Diary published before 1943 (the year of Irene Paden's Wake of the Prairie Schooner—it is in her Bibliography) and entitled 'From St Louis to Sutter's Fort 1846.'"

"On p. 161 in the 1943 edition of the Wake of the Prairie Schooner she wrote, 'His own company struggled up through the Aspen woods, crossed Trout Creek, bisected what is now the highway [Hwy 40] near the Gateway Motel...' and then, 'Early on the fourth of October, we, the eleven owners of seven wagons, prepared to bring our vehicles over the summit. We did not have by far enough chains to attempt the same course [Roller Pass] followed by the preceding party. To the right was another way [Coldstream Pass], which was longer, but the steepest stretch much shorter. We thought we would make it this way.'" To see the entire trail from the Donner Family Campsite to the Summit refer to page 7 in the November 2011 Newsletter.

Another clue is that in 1924 Fred Bratto, owner of the Summit Hotel, probably followed the remains of the Coldstream route up the west slope. This is probably why he found Peter Weddell at the summit (see our last issue pg. 11 describing their meeting). There is even more on page 15, a State exploration of the trail in 1949.

Marshall Fey Marshall Fey ----mfey@libertybellebooks.com

A Visit to Donner Peak, 1849

"Should you run the Coldstream Pass article, the following 1849 Isaac Wistar diary and the enclosed attachment might be a nice addition."

"While the mules were resting & being readjusted in the pass, I undertook to reach the summit of a high (not the highest) peak [Donner] on the right, in which there was no difficulty till near the top...It was bitterly cold, but from the almost pointed summit, the grandeur and wild confused desolation of the prospect was sublime indeed. North, east and south peak rose beyond peak in endless succession while in the west the eye looked far down into a chasm where every ravine and gorge shone and glistened with the spotless white of snowfields, and beyond, instead of the expected Sacramento Valley, nothing broke the expanse of mountain chains."



The attached Donner Peak photo [above] shows the interior of Donner Peak with its level floor surrounded by immense granite walls. It is only a 10 or 15 minute hike from the Coldstream Pass NETMC marker and the views are spectacular. If you have not done it. DO IT!

Marshall Fey

Old Donner Summit

By Jim L White

High on a windswept ridge west of Donner Lake, following old highway 40 is the gap in the Sierra Nevada we call the "Old Donner Pass". This is one of the most historic mountain passes in North America. Petroglyphs in the granite bedrock near the pass prove that natives used this pass to trade with the natives to the west, to hunt and because it is over 7000 feet in elevation, perhaps to escape the heat from the valleys below.

The surrounding terrain is wild, mostly granite mountain cliffs with juniper, lodge pole, red fir and white bark pines. Sierra juniper trees near the pass are more than one thousand years old are shaped by hundred miles per hour winds and the snow and ice of winter. These juniper trees present a stark statue which one must look at closely to see if they are really alive.

Down below the pass to the east you can see the long blue Donner Lake, where in the winter of 1846-47 stranded by heavy snows at the end of October, the Donner Party began their ordeal of hunger and cold and eventually death to many in the party.

The Donner Party is of course why we call the pass Donner Pass and the lake Donner Lake. At the time of the Donner ordeal Donner Lake was known as Truckee's Lake and the pass was most commonly referred to as "the summit" To most of the west bound overland emigrants the ascent to the pass brought joy and gladness. Their trip west was almost over. To the Donner party it brought terror and dismay.

They had stopped for 4 days at the Truckee Meadows for some reason and this was to cost them a dozen lives. It was the 28th of October, 1846 and it started snowing almost a month earlier than usual. The group was spread out and all did not arrive at Donner Lake at the same time. Some never made it to Donner Lake but ended up at Prosser Creek, short of Donner Lake, and spent the winter alone. Several times during the days which succeeded, parties attempted to cross the pass. Some wagons were drawn up the old road, almost to the top of the pass; others were driven along Coldstream Canyon to the north. The snow was already too deep to cross the pass. They had to return to Donner Lake. Starvation led to cannibalism in order to survive. Rescue was not completed until late in March. The early snows and the pass had fostered a disaster.

Just a few hundred yards north of the pass on old highway 40 lay Lake Angela. It was in this area, known as Lake Angeline in the 1860's that 4 members of the Donner Party, in Jan 1847, trying to find an escape route, became bewildered and lost in the deep snow. The "white snowy cliffs were everywhere the same" they reported, and had they attempted to proceed all would have been lost.

Years later, in 1864, the Dutch Flat-Donner Lake toll road opened for business, built over the pass by the "big four" Stanford, Crocker, Huntington & Hopkins, the builders of the Central Pacific railway to haul materials and supplies by mules and oxen to the 10,000 workers building the first transcontinental railway anywhere in the world. Faintly, this old wagon trail can still be seen just a few yards from old highway 40 east of the "Rainbow Bridge" on the east side of the pass. Faint traces of the old road now disappears into the massive "China Wall" a masonry-granite rock fill for the railroad, built by hand by some of the 7000 Chinese workmen building the railroad in 1867.

While looking for the old road, look for rust marks in the granite bedrock from the wagon wheels of old. By looking due south up at the railroad from the old wagon road, one can see the "China Wall" rock fill for the railroad and to it's left, old Tunnel (#8) just 300 yards from the highway and east of the China Wall.

The building of the Central Pacific Railroad over Donner Pass was the most terrible ordeal of all the backbreaking hand labor that went into the building of the railroad. At the Summit Tunnel, the Chinese were using great amounts of black powder, up to 500 kegs a day. The use of nitroglycerine, which was brand new, was responsible for many terrible accidents. Although work progressed at nearly double the speed, using nitroglycerine, the bone dust from the many Chinese to die building the Summit Tunnel is still in the decomposed granite below the railroad.

Drilling the tunnel by hand was an almost unbelievable task. Three men would hold drills by hand. One reaching as high as he could, another holding a drill at waist high, the third holding a drill at toe level. The men who pounded on the drills used sledgehammers weighing from 12 to 14 pounds each. Blow after blow for 8 hours, three shifts per day, all winter long. After the holes were drilled they were filled with black powder, a blasting cap, and the rock was blasted. This produced about one foot per day thru the solid rock. The tunnel is 1658 feet long and as much as 124 feet below the surface.

The tunnel was drilled during the winter of 1866-67 by Chinese laborers during one of the worst winters ever recorded in the Sierra. There were forty-four storms that winter. The snow was deeper than anyone could remember along the pass. The Chinese lived in snow tunnels at the work site. At the eastern approach to the Summit tunnel, the Chinese had to lengthen their snow tunnel fifty feet in order to get to their quarters and on to work. Twenty Chinese were killed in one snow slide. Individual workers simply disappeared. Often their bodies were not found until spring.

A good time to visit Old Donner Summit is in late October when all the shrubs and plants near the old wagon trail have turned gold and red. That is except when an early Donner snow can still catch one by surprise.

Jim White started skiing, fishing and hiking the high Placer County backcountry in 1944 when he lived in Sacramento. He started to learn to ski at the Soda Springs Ski Hill with lift ticket checker Carl Buek (Dick Buek's father) often letting Jim's girlfriend Shirley (now Jim's wife) ride for free.

Jim became the Fish and Game Warden for the area in 1957. He later was promoted to Patrol Captain and in 1970 was put in charge of all Fish and Game training and safety statewide.

Jim conducted cold weather survival training, wilderness horse use and snow avalanche programs in the Donner Summit area for various State and Federal agencies, private hydro- electric companies and various colleges. Jim worked on the Ski Patrol at all the ski resorts in the Donner Summit and N. Tahoe ski areas retiring from the Alpine Meadows Patrol after working there for 12 years in the 1970's. Jim retired from Dept. of Fish and Game after 36 years of service in 1990.

Jim now works as a freelance photographer and writer for several West Coast magazines. Jim (83) and Shirley (81) live in Auburn and still ski, hike, fish and camp the high backcountry of Nevada and Placer Counties. He can be contacted at padhorski@wavecable.com.

Jim has previously contributed to this newsletter in April and February of 2011, first with Fong Trainshed Chef and then with Lost Horse.

Emil Papplau - 1888-1970

Telemark King of Donner Summit

Milli Martin, Homer Alaska; Pat Malberg, Lake Mary, CA

Emil Papplau was one of the characters who helped create the modern Donner Summit. Here we have two articles. The first one is from Milli Martin of Homer, Alaska, whose uncle and aunt, Herb and Lena Frederick ran the Norden Store for decades (see last month's Norden Lodge article). The second comes from Pat Malberg of Lake Mary who remembers Emil

From the LDS (Mormon Church, Ancestry.com) archives I learned that Emil was born July 22, 1888 in Lokstedt, (a suburb of Hamburg) Germany. He arrived in the US on the SS Hamburg, June 18, 1928. He is listed in the New York City, district of Manhattan 1930 census. In the early 1930's he also declared his intent to become a U.S. citizen.

When my aunt and uncle, Lena and Herb Frederick, also emigrants from Hamburg, purchased the Norden Store and Ski Lodge in 1938, they hired Emil to build an addition to the lodge, as he was a skilled carpenter. In my home I have the two book cases he built in the 1940's for my grandfather, Papa, and the lovely table that holds



Jeanne Reynal's mosaic piece. In 1942, at the age of 53, he registered for the draft at the Norden Post Office. He was a frequent dinner guest at Norden, rarely driving from his home at Lake Mary, preferring to snow shoe, ski or walk. He was a skilled Zither player, and excellent photographer.

Bill Klein hired Emil for one season working in his shop at the Sugar Bowl. However, ski shop work was not to Emil's liking and the following year he returned to working for the Sugar Bowl, where he was very well liked by all. Emil was perhaps best known to climb Mt. Lincoln, early in the morning and execute his elegant telemark turns, climb back up, to do it again, before Bill's shop opened. Bill says Emil was the instigator to the development of Mt. Lincoln.

He was marvelous carpenter. His language was something else. He probably learned the swear words first, so every English sentence he uttered was well endowed with them!

Emil passed away at the age of 82 in November 1970, at Napa, California.

Milli Martin

From Pat Malberg, Lake Mary, we have the following wonderful, memory of Emil.

When we purchased our cabin on Lake Mary in the 1940's, Emil lived at the beginning of our access road, at the corner of Old Donner Summit Road. It took a long time before we got to know him, as he was pretty much of a hermit. We later figured out that the reason he was not very friendly at first was that some of the folks we invited to stay at the cabin were not yet very good skiers and when the going got rough to or from Sugar Bowl – too steep up or down for their abilities -- they would just take their skis



off and walk, in the middle of the ski track. This put big holes in the trail; this was especially bad at Easter time when we hosted my school mates from San Francisco who had never skied before, as the footprints would freeze up overnight and make for pretty treacherous skiing over to the Bowl, through the trees, in the morning. For a long time, Emil referred to my family as "Dem Peebul" and when he finally called us the Nast's, we knew we were in! Today it's the boarders' boot tracks on our ski trail that cause the same frustration Emil had with us years ago.

The trail to Sugar Bowl was one of Emil's signatures. To cross the lake, he had to ski the full length and we marveled at how very straight his track always was. It became a challenge for the rest of us, who had to break a bit shorter trail from our side of the lake to join his at the end closest to the Bowl, to see how straight we could make ours (maybe just to please Emil). We rarely succeeded in matching his in straightness, but to this day, we continue to try.

Whenever there was fresh snow, or conditions warranted it, Emil put on his skins and climbed Mt. Lincoln before the lift was installed there. All the folks on the Disney lift would watch him making his beautiful "S" turns in perfect telemark style, and then return to the top the same day to cross the S's to make perfect figure 8's. It was unforgettable.

My Mom and I spent entire summers at the cabin for many years. We rarely socialized with Emil, although we finally came to be on first name basis with him. Once, to my astonishment, he invited us over to his cabin to see his nature slides and, although I was still quite young at the time, maybe 12, I remember to this day the fantastic shots of fish in clear mountain streams and beautiful local flowers. It was such a treat and I appreciate the passion for capturing the beauty of the flowers on film, as I have many scrapbooks full of my own shots now. But I wonder if Emil's slides are saved anywhere – they would be a real find.

1942 for Emil Papplau

[View image](#)

Name:	Emil Papplau
Event:	Military
Event Date:	1942
Event Place:	Norden, Placer, California
Residence:	Norden, Placer, California
Gender:	Male
Birth Date:	22 Jul 1888
Film Number:	1781462
Digital Folder Number:	4667454
Image Number:	00980

REGISTRATION CARD—(Men born on or after April 25, 1877 and on or before February 16, 1957)

1. NAME (Print)	Emil Papplau	ORDER NUMBER
2. PLACE OF RESIDENCE (Print)	Norden Placer, California	
3. MARITAL STATUS	Same	
4. YEAR OF BIRTH	53	5. PLACE OF BIRTH
6. DATE OF BIRTH	July 22, 1888	Germany
7. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PLACE WHERE YOU ARE REGISTERED	Norden Postoffice	
8. PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT (Print)	Sugar Bowl Norden Calif	
I AFFIRM THAT I HAVE FURNISHED ABOVE ANSWERS AND THAT THEY ARE TRUE.		
Emil Papplau		

Above pictures by Milli Martin of Emil's house on the Lake Mary Rd. Emil's alien registration card, and draft information.

One anecdote will give a sense of Emil's character. My Mom, always enthusiastic and friendly, saw Emil one morning and said, "Hey, Emil, did you feel that strong earthquake this morning, around 6AM? It nearly threw me out of bed!" He answered, "Well, it was time to get up anyway."

Emil's cabin has changed hands a couple of times since he left the snow country to live in Nevada City. The garage needs repair, but otherwise the place is being kept up nicely and used as a second home by the current owners. No matter, we always refer to it as Emil's cabin. If he were alive and living there today, he would be very annoyed by all the traffic and activity that have resulted from the PCT parking and hiking right by his place and the entertainment at Wally Clark's old A-Frame nearby where Sugar Bowl has established their Lake Mary site. So may he rest in peace.

Pat Malberg

From the DSHS Archives



Here, pulled from the Historical Society archives, is the old Soda Springs Hotel, now condominiums, sometime circa 1940. The photograph is captioned saying the hotel was the "Grand Dame" of Donner Summit.

Imagine what the traffic on Old 40 was like.

To the right is an ad from March, 1949 highlighting all the overnight accommodations leading up to Donner Summit: Skyline Lodge at Emigrant Gap, Cisoo Grove, Big Bend Inn, Rainbow Lodge and Trout Farm (and Rainbow Garage), Crampton's Lodge, Kingvale Park, Donner Summit Lodge, Beacon Hill Lodge, Soda Springs Hotel, Norden Store and Lodge, Ice Lakes Chalets, Kiski Lodge, House of Vanderford, and Sugar Bowl Lodge.

Donner Ski Ranch was under construction and the Klein Ski School was at the Clair Tappaan Lodge.

Donner Summit All year HIGHWAY 40 Ski Area

FOR PURE SKIING PLEASURE, make your reservation NOW for the famous Donner Summit area. Many comfortable lodges and resorts along all-year Highway 40 are waiting to serve you. Over a dozen ski lifts in operation, including one chair lift plus several J-bar and T-bar lifts. National Ski Patrolmen on constant duty. Clois and frozzy zzzzzzz. Long Ski season, starting well before Christmas and lasting into late spring. Ski instruction available under famous tutors. Nightly entertainment and dancing. Gay mountain atmosphere.

For reservations or information write any of the resorts shown on the map

SKI THE TRAIL OF THE FAMOUS DONNER PARTY

Then & Now with Art Clark



This old photograph of a bluff just below Donner Pass was taken by one of the photographers for the Central Pacific Railroad, Carleton Watkins, Alfred Hart, or....? It was taken in the mid 1860's. You can see more railroad pictures at: http://www.andrewsmithgallery.com/exhibitions/hart_watkins/front/index.html

Art's photo, below, was taken from a few feet north of Tunnel 7 on the rock at its high point.

Here's the location:
39° 18.949'N 120° 19.310'W

Bluff and Snowbank Donner Pass
Compare to Watkins 200



Art's Sierra Scenes

Bluff and Snowbank Donner Pass
Compare to Watkins 200

Book Review - The Look of the Elephant

Look of the Elephant The Westering Experience in the Words of Those Who Lived It

Oregon California Trails Association
Andrew and Joanne Hammond 2009

Usually you pick up a history book on some interesting subject and you read about the historical facts, the interpretations, and ramifications. Those are all supported by evidence which may come in the form of speeches, writing, pictures, maps, etc.

In Look of the Elephant it is just the opposite. There is a little context. Almost the entire book is made up of the evidence, the actual words of the emigrants along with some pictures and maps. This book is meant for those who already know about the westward migration and now want to put a human face on it and explore what the actual migration was like.

The book introduces travel and trails, has biographies of the dozens of diarists and covers the “jumping off places.” Then it is emigrants’ diary quotes, “Ho for the Elephant” with the quotes being divided by the routes. So if the reader has an interest in a particular route like Donner Summit (there is a

whole chapter of Truckee Route quotes), she can go to the relevant section.

Emigrant Quotes

“Wagons, harness, stoves, and all kinds of property we find strewn along the road now.”

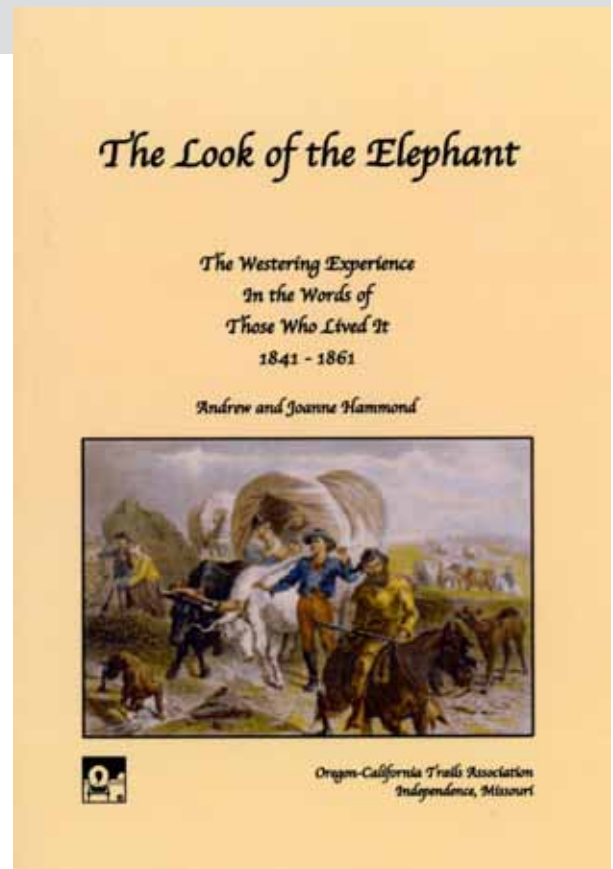
“I crawled into the wagon, and lay helpless as a child. This was my birthday, and it was the hardest one of all my life, for without sleeping I had walked fifty-five miles.”

The abandonment and destruction of property is extraordinary....bacon in great piles,....good meat, Bags of beans, salt, &c. &c. Trunks, chests, tools of every description clothing, tents, tent-poles, harness, &c. &c.” as well as a “Diving Bell,” “heavy anvils,” forges,” etc.

Seeing the “elephant” is a euphemism for seeing the real thing. The emigrants were lured by opportunity, the “land flowing with milk and honey.” “[I]n Oregon the pigs are running about... round and fat, and already cooked, with knives and forks sticking in them so that you can cut off a slice whenever you are hungry.” Lansford Hasting’s Emigrant Guide said that in California immense herds of domestic animals are raised with little or no expense. They don’t require feed or housing. The “purity of the atmosphere, is most extraordinary, and almost incredible.” Of course there was the lure of gold too.

The reality of the emigrants’ experience was something else.

It is the quotes that give the book its power as the emigrants write about beauty and pathos, being run over by wagons, being bitten by rattlers, how to cook a coon – be sure to walk ten miles to work up an appetite, passing graves by the dozens, Indians, dust, lots of dying, mosquitoes – “Musketoes in any quantity of all sizes ages from the size of a Gnat up to a Humingbird, with their bills all freshly sharpened, and ravenous appetities (sic)”, wasted buffalo, birth, murder – “he drew his pistol & shot Dunbar dead. He was tried & hung on our old



Emigrant Quotes

"This day only 7 graves, 33 broken down wagons, 49 head of dead stock." Contrast that to "Weather glorious and heartsom – roads splendid & all things right."

"Both sides of the road for miles were lined with dead animals and abandoned wagons. ...The owners had left everything, except what provision they could carry on their backs, and hurried on to save themselves...no one stopped gaze or to help."

"All the bad traits of the men are now well-developed, - their true character is shown, untrammelled, unvarnished. Selfishness, hypocrisy, &c."

There was Beauty Too.

"young pines....in the most splendid order of natural elegance & profusion,... so many faithful sentinels watching their most treasured care. Such a scene I never saw before nor need to see again to brighten my remembrance of so much Beauty and magnificent Grandure combined. (sic)"

"Oh! the pleasure of lying by on this river for wind, to feast our eyes on the high peaks and cliffs that adorn the banks of this river on either side. Sublime landscape, views that Raphael or Correggio would have given thousands and endured any fatigue to have seen,...'tis enchanting indeed!"

wagon at sundown", family relationships, ice – "every man was clad in an armor of ice; the mules, too, were harnessed in ice...", accident, oxen – "how the teamsters would whip those poor oxen until their sides were covered with gashes and the blood dripped down so. O you poor creatures!", human nature – one man offered a barrel of sugar for sale for three times the usual cost. When no one would pay that he poured turpentine in it and "burnt it up. The spirit of selfishness has been here beautifully developed" with discarded objects being broken up with hatchets so no one could use them, and July 4th celebrations.

The hardness of the emigration experience is shown in the many quotes about the dead and dying animals littering the trails, the graves, and the emigrants reduced to nothing such as, "a man and his wife...who were on foot, toiling through the hot sand, the man carrying the blankets and other necessities, and his wife carrying their only child in her arms, having lost all their team."

At the end there is a section about what happened to many of the diarists which is satisfying.

With all the misery and trial, despite human nature and Mother Nature, the emigrants succeeded and helped build a country. The quotes of the emigrants are eloquent testimony far more than any historical interpretation or after the fact description. They were really tough but also a lot like us.

On reaching California on emigrant said, "Strangers in a strange land – what will the future be?"



"Seeing the Elephant."
California Historical Society, FN-30610

Unless otherwise noted, the photographs and other historical ephemera in The Heirloom's pages come from the Norm Saylor collection at the Donner Summit Historical Society

DONNER SUMMIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

www.donnersummithistoricalociety.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) non-profit organization

If you would like monthly newsletter announcements, please write your email address below VERY neatly.



One last picture of the Cisco Boat Sled showing two sleds passing. Well, it's almost "last." See also page 14.

1934-35 "Cisco Pullback, Cisco, Calif. The Auburn Ski Club installed on its hill a "pull-back", 1000 feet long, giving a vertical lift of approximately 300 feet. Two double-ended toboggans were rigged so that as one ascended the other descended. California Ski News reports that early season difficulties were overcome, and on later weekends the operation of the pull-back has been highly successful" (Ski Bulletin, 3-29-1935, p. 6). Quote found by Art Clark.

Coming beginning in May, 2012

**The Most Interesting Unknown
Historical Spot in California: Tunnel 6**

**One of the most amazing engineering
achievements of the 19th Century:**

The Great Sierra Tunnel.

We'll be looking at granite, engineering, Chinese immigrants, avalanche, rock fall, star drills, the first locomotive in California (used on Donner Summit but not as you'd expect), the first locomotives over the summit (but not in the way you'd expect) and so much more.

Don't let your subscription expire.

The Cisco Snow Sled Today



Art Clark (our Then and Now columns and the Sierra Ski Ways explorer from past issues) and his hiking/skiing companion, Janet McMartin. Here they are enjoying the view from inside the original Cisco Snow Sled above the old Auburn Ski Club and I-80.

This picture was taken January 2, 2012. Typically there would be a few feet of snow here and the sled would be buried but this year's weather is making history. According to the California Dept. of Water Resources, snowfall to early January is the lowest on record, only 19% of normal. Last year at this time it was 200% of normal. The locals here on Donner Summit would like something done to even things out a bit, but as Mark Twain said, people like to talk about the weather but no one is ever willing to do something about it.

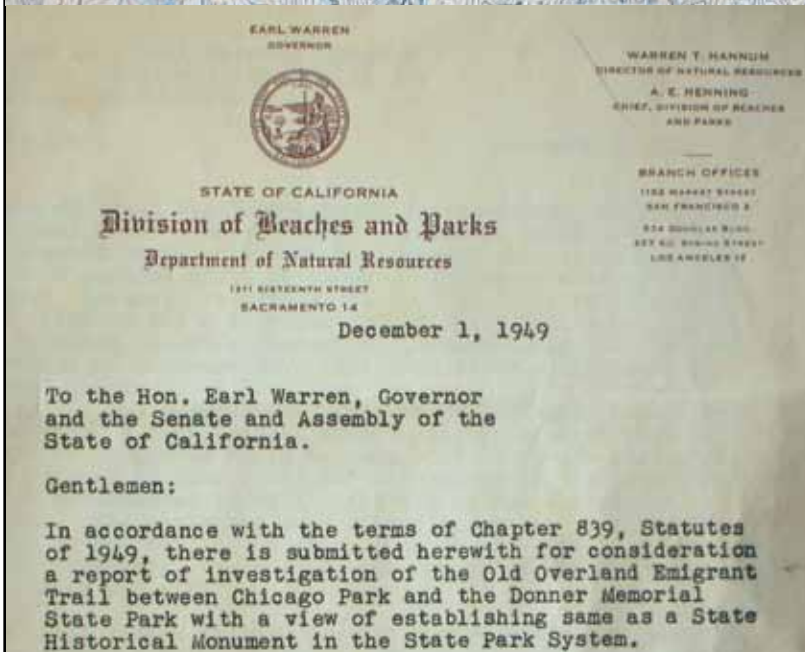
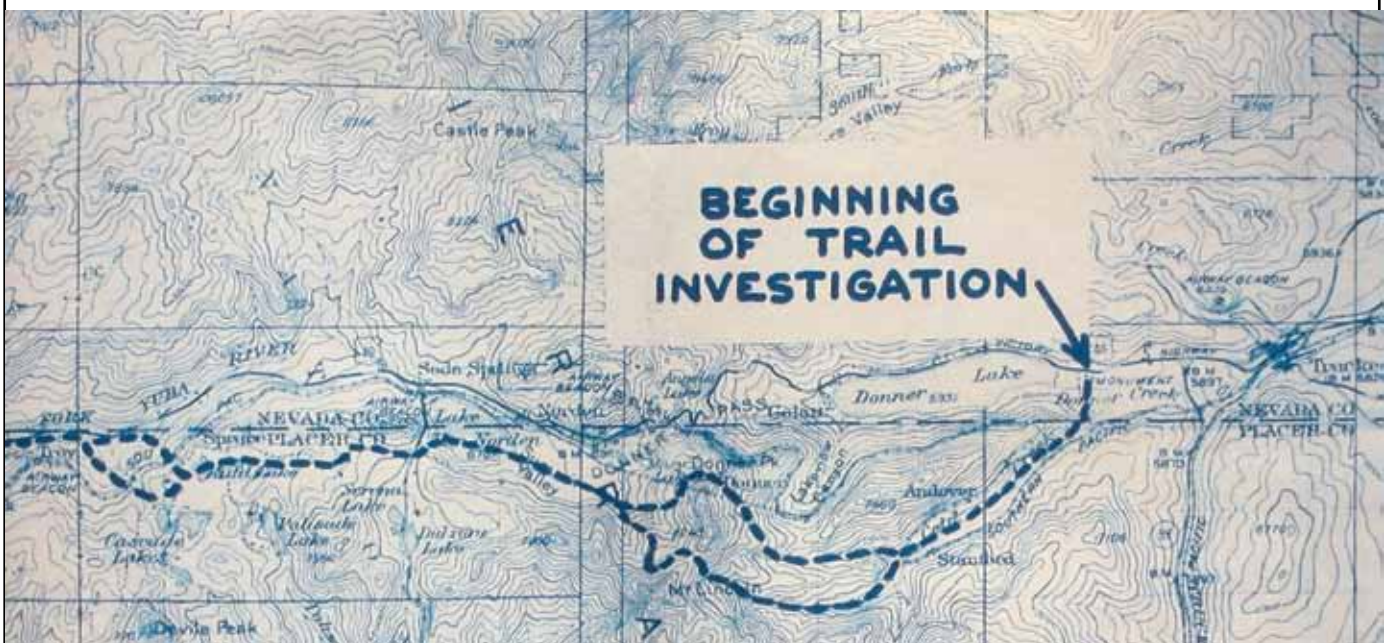
Unfinished Business #3 cont'd from pg 4

Emigrant Trails - Coldstream Pass cont'd from November, '11

Just as we were readying February for dissemination, Marshall Fey (see page 2) sent the following in.

In 1949 (the year before the State Centennial) California entertained a proposal that was made to incorporate the Overland Emigrant Trail from Chicago park to the Donner Memorial Park as a State Historical Monument. The estimated cost of acquiring the 60 miles of right of way varying in width from 20 to 50 feet, with three overnight campsites would be \$246,025. The trail would be used by pedestrians and equestrians.

The route of the trail was determined by 10 trail experts of the era and by referring to the 10 most descriptive emigrant diaries. The Proposal includes 42 pages of text, 8 pages of photos of trail sites and two maps. One map, shows the "Probable Route of the Emigrant Road" and defines both the Roller Pass and Coldstream Pass crossings.



One of these rare and valuable proposals is in the Collection of the Donner Summit Historical Society.

Marshall Fey

You can see that the 1949 experts decided that the Emigrant Trail, after the first few trains which went up the current Donner Pass in 1844-45, went up Roller and Coldstream Passes. On page 4 of this issue we see a description of someone going up Coldstream Pass in 1846. We would think then, that since Coldstream is much easier than Roller, that it became the main or only route.