

The Donner Summit

Heirloom

History and stories of the Donner Summit Historical Society



April 1, 2013 issue #56

History Preserved

Restoration of Lincoln Highway "Masterpieces"

Committee for Historic Restoration on Donner Summit (CHRODS) Project I: 2012-13

Can a Historical Society be Serious if it does not engage in preservation and restoration?

A problem with "old stuff," the historically correct term for historical artifacts, is that it's old and generally looks old. Historical artifacts with their faded colors, chipped paint, dust, and dirt are just not appealing to those with more modern sensibilities. "Modern stuff," the ephemera of our current times, is brilliant with color, clean, and sometimes even has flashing lights.

The past might be more attractive with a dash of color.

There is a lot of "old stuff" on Donner Summit and it looks old (see the picture to the right). How much better and more attractive things could be if we did a bit of redecorating or restoration. So the Donner Summit Historical Society embarked on an ambitious undertaking: setting up an entirely new department, the Department of Artifact Renovation and Renewal (DARR) which in turn set up the Committee for the Historic Restoration of Donner Summit (CHRODS) which will be a 501c4 under the IRS code.

This new endeavor by the DSHS brings the organization in line with "best practices" when dealing with "old stuff" and makes us an organization to be taken seriously. Leonardo's "Last Supper" is a famous painting but Leonardo did not know how to do frescoes and so, over the centuries, the painting has been restored many times. Some art historians say that the "Last Supper" contains almost none of the original paint. That of course is an extreme example. Just now the DeYoung Museum in San Francisco is exhibiting the "Girl with the Pearl Earring" which is visiting from the Netherlands. It too is centuries old and over the centuries, to maintain its vibrance and attraction, has been restored a number of times. The Sistine Chapel ceiling is



Old garage that could really use restoration. The building sits on Old 40 just down from the summit. It was the garage for the weather station - see the next page. It is leased by Norm Saylor from the UPRR

another case in point. Candle smoke, dirt, and age dimmed the art. A thorough cleaning and restoration that lasted years, restored its beauty.

Lots to Restore on Donner Summit

With those examples as precedent, as well as many more, we cast about Donner Summit for some “old stuff” to restore. There are old buildings and there are missing buildings. There is ancient art in the petroglyphs and there is Tunnel 6 and China Wall. There is the Lincoln Highway. For our first attempt, though, all those seemed a bit ambitious and no one we know knows how to work like the Chinese did laying their mortarless wall or blasting through Sierra granite. Nitroglycerine (see *The Heirloom* August, '12) seems so scary too.

The discussion about choosing a project seemed to go on and on and then a committee member looked at some “old stuff” on the wall and bolted upright, “I’ve got it...”

Donner Summit Rock Ads

When the Lincoln Highway (see *The Heirloom* 12/08, 10/10, 11/10, 5/11, 12/10) was the main route over the Sierra and the first automobiles carried the first independent tourists (as opposed to those going by stage or train), the merchants at Truckee and Donner Lake had to think about how to attract those independents. They went to such lengths as to have snow shoveling bees to clear the road over the pass, contests for the first autos to cross, and they spread soot on the snow to speed melting. But that’s a digression and story for another time. (Don’t let your subscription lapse.)

With the coming of automobile travel merchants could no longer just go to the train station and gather up passengers or hand out advertisements. They had to think about how they could attract the “autoists” (that’s a real word from the old days – see *The Heirloom* 12/11 and 10/12).

So they went out with their cans of paint to attract tourists (see the examples on pages 3 and 5).

Right is the old weather station that sat on the rocky outcropping across from Donner Pk. This was the weather station for the transcontinental air route (see *The Heirloom* for July, '11. The little building is no longer there so it would require a lot of restoration but the foundation is still obvious as are the anchor points for the steel cable that “tied” the building to the rock so the winds would not blow it away.

More Summit possibilities for restoration.



The Lincoln Highway - wouldn't it be fun to run old cars up it again?

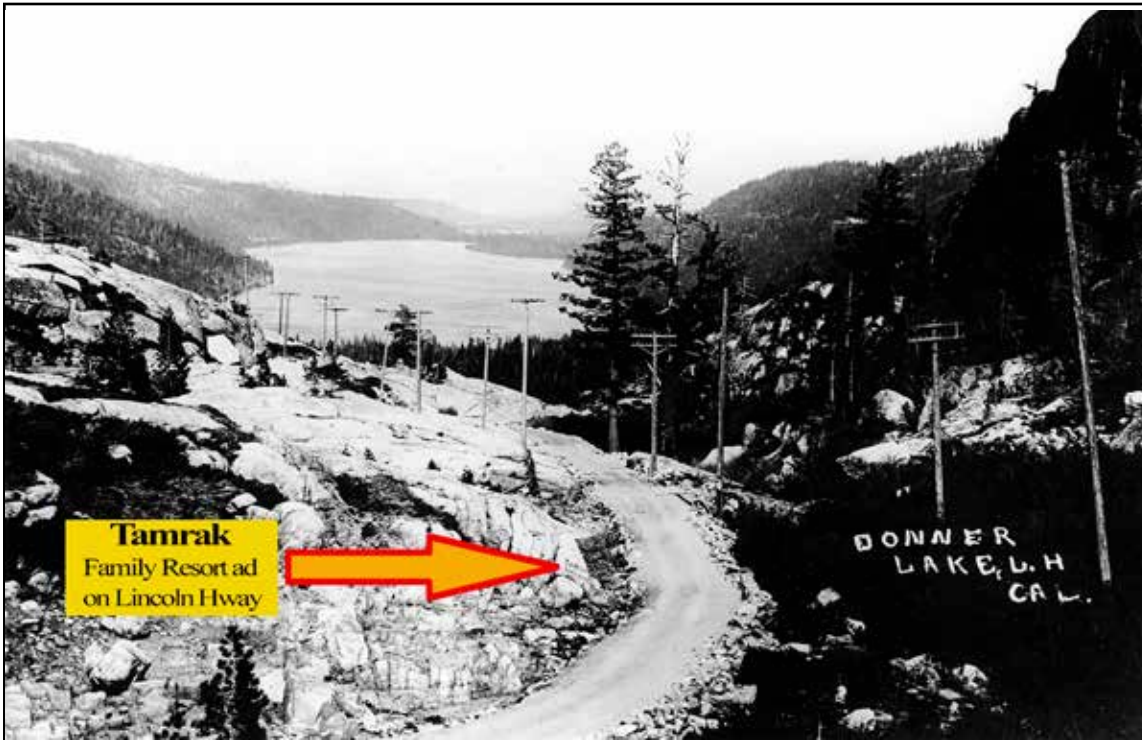


Native American petroglyphs, thousands of years old. In all that time there has been some degradation. What if we incised them more deeply and made them more complete?



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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



The Lincoln Highway overlooking Donner Lake. At the end of the arrow is a sign, "Tamrak Family Resort". If you come in to the DSHS and borrow a magnifying glass you can see the ad in the original.

Tamrak Lodge sat at the SW corner of Donner Lake.

In the early days of advertising for automobile travelers there were no billboards or even "Burma Shave" signs. Advertising was decidedly low-tech. Advertisers painted their ads on the sides of barns and other buildings. As drivers approached Truckee from Donner Summit there were no buildings, except the Summit Hotel which sat at the top and probably would not brook rivals' ads on their walls. There is one "canvas" that is ubiquitous on Donner Summit though – rocks.

Early Truckee advertisers took advantage of the rocks – some of which come in great granite slabs. There they painted their advertisements luring people to Truckee and environs. (Which brings up the question of why the Native Americans were marking the rocks - but that's another story too.)

There are a number of those ads still to be found in the area, including one the Truckee Historical Society keeps hidden to protect it. The ones on Donner Summit are hard to hide or even protect given their exposure and the fact that they sit on large rocks. Renaissance masterpieces are kept in Climate Controlled Conditions (CCC's) but our Donner Summit paintings are in Climate Uncontrolled Conditions (CUC's). They are subject to weather, foot traffic, and even rock movement. Fissures are the bane of rock art. Then too, when they put in the fiber optic lines workers drove their bulldozers over one ad and the petroglyphs but that's another story too.

Those rock ads have been sitting, exposed to the elements, for about one hundred years. With that age and exposure has come degradation. No one thought to photograph them when they were fresh, or rather no one saved any photographs. Now they are almost invisible and indecipherable (see the close-ups on page 4).

Ah, but we have the precedent of the restoration of fine art: the "Girl with the Pearl Earring," the Sistine Chapel, and the "Last Supper." We can bring modern technology and restoration practices to Donner Summit.

The most well-known of the ads is the one for the New Whitney Hotel in Truckee (center page 5). It has to be dated after 1913 which is when the New Whitney replaced the original Whitney after a fire, and before 1926 which is when the road was re-routed following the completion of the Rainbow Bridge. This sign is just down and around the corner from the 1914 underpass that goes under the railroad next to the China Wall.

We were trying to divine the route of the original Lincoln Highway last summer in 2012 for our "Summit Canyon" and "Lincoln Highway" brochures (available at the DSHS and at www.donnersummithistoricalsociety.org on the "brochures" page). As we canvassed the area and noted the various route changes we discovered another large ad (see bottom page 5) for the New Whitney Hotel.

There are other ads to be seen as well as one follows the route of the Lincoln Highway down to Donner Lake. There are a number

of “Tamrak” ads painted on rocks advertising the Tamrak Lodge on the southwest shore of Donner Lake. (top of pg 5 & top pg 3.)

So we have paintings on Donner Summit too and in 2012 they needed restoration. The "CUC's" are extreme here with our annual average 34 foot snowfall.

Restoring the Rock Ads

With our inventory of rock ads to restore we looked for the “Paintings (or Masterpieces) Restoration for Dummies” handbook.

It doesn't exist.

We knew that to do a credible job we'd have to match the paint color, density, and the brush strokes. We did not want a reprise of last year's incident when the Italian lady went into her local church to restore a medieval painting with her amateur painting skills. The church ended up with a saint that was reminiscent of a monkey. We had to do a professional job – the honor of the Historical Society was at stake.

Research was key. But before the research a thorough analysis of the problem was in order. So last Fall our restoration committee headed out with cameras in hand to record every square inch of our chosen signs. You can see some of that collection here to the right. Then followed endless sessions of deciphering. What did the signs say exactly? Where did the letters end? Revisits were required and holes were worn in pants knees. Recognized restoration techniques of "squinting" and "pondering" were used. We had to get it right.

The next step was the analysis of the paints originally used. We rented a spectrophotometer which we put on a trailer along with a generator and hauled up to below Rainbow Bridge then on to the Lincoln Highway and up to the site. Spectrophotometers operate with interference filters now-a-days because they are more accurate. The machine determines the wavelengths of light reflected by paint colors and transmits that data to a photo diode which digitizes it. Software algorithms then decide exactly how much of each primary color pigment is needed for an exact match.

That sounds pretty simple but the process was not. We had to obtain good samples. That required first scraping the proposed color samples to remove surface oxidation that would have reduced the spectrographic analysis accuracy. Then we had to get usable samples. Hammers and chisels were used to remove samples but where we tried to remove them from small unobtrusive areas, we discovered the best samples came from the middle of the colors. Oh well. We were going to restore this anyway.

With the colors mixed and ready we analyzed brush strokes and discovered that the ads were done by a number of different sign artists including one left-handed painter. 1914 sign painting parties? We practiced with different sized brushes and methods until we had the general techniques. We ended up with three “experts” to copy the different brush strokes of the originals.

Then before actually beginning restoration we coated the ads with

Original samples of the Donner Summit ads to ascertain paint shades and brush stroke styles. Given the faintness of what remains you can imagine the trouble our team had deciphering what was left.





Left: Tamrak Lodge ad on a rock along the Lincoln Highway. You can see that a future restoration of this ad will require a lot of work to straighten the letters that have somehow gone askew (technical restoration term for "not straight") over the years.

Below: Donner Lake Resort ad along the old Lincoln Highway. The lettering here is askew as well.



Before

Below - New Whitney Truckee - before restoration



Above: Original New Whitney Hotel ad in context. It sits at the lower left. Highway 40 and Mt. Stewart are in the distance.

Right: Original larger New Whitney - you can barely make out the lettering just above the foreground tree.





Restored New Whitney Truckee ad.

After

“petrified liquid” which is water proof and prevents dry rot (paint can rot). Once that was dry the new paint was applied. This treatment has the added benefit of making future restorations more easily accomplished because the 2012 paint can be removed down to the original layer without removing more of the original paint. The “petrified liquid” also gives a stronger color when used as a base.

The Results

Here you can see the results of our restoration. We finished just in time because a few days later it snowed diligently. We are sure though, that our restorations are ready for snow melt. So take drive up after a few warm days begin to expose the rock faces.



New Whitney Truckee after restoration

Following our successful endeavors we of course began to think about future Donner Summit restorations. We have some ideas – so stay tuned. Maybe next April.

Next month, back to Summit Valley.

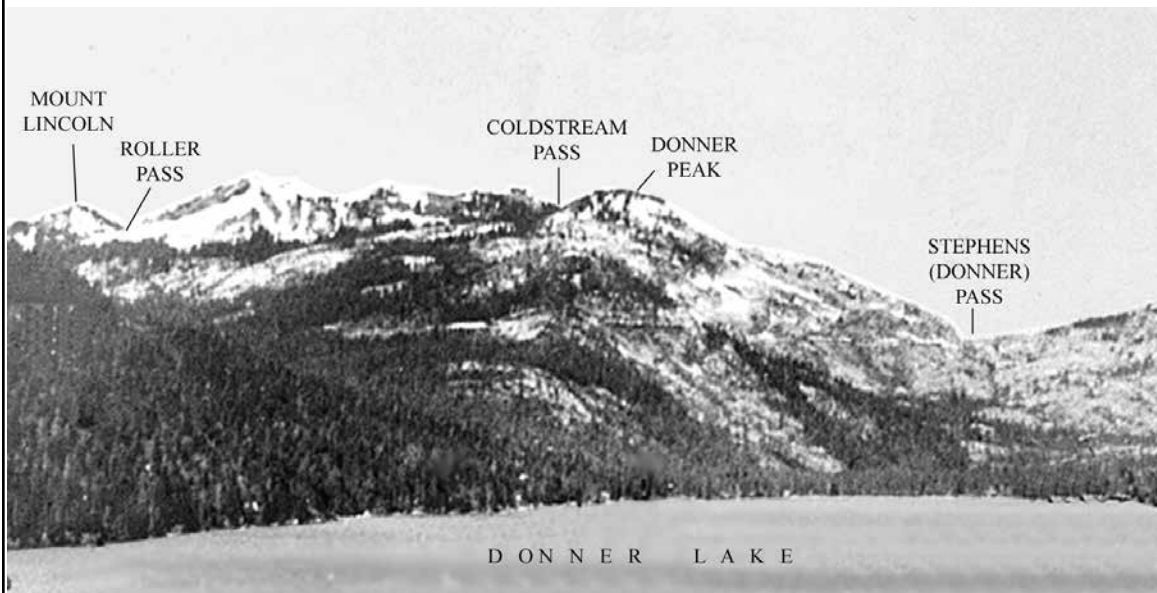
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Just a Thought

by Marshall Fey

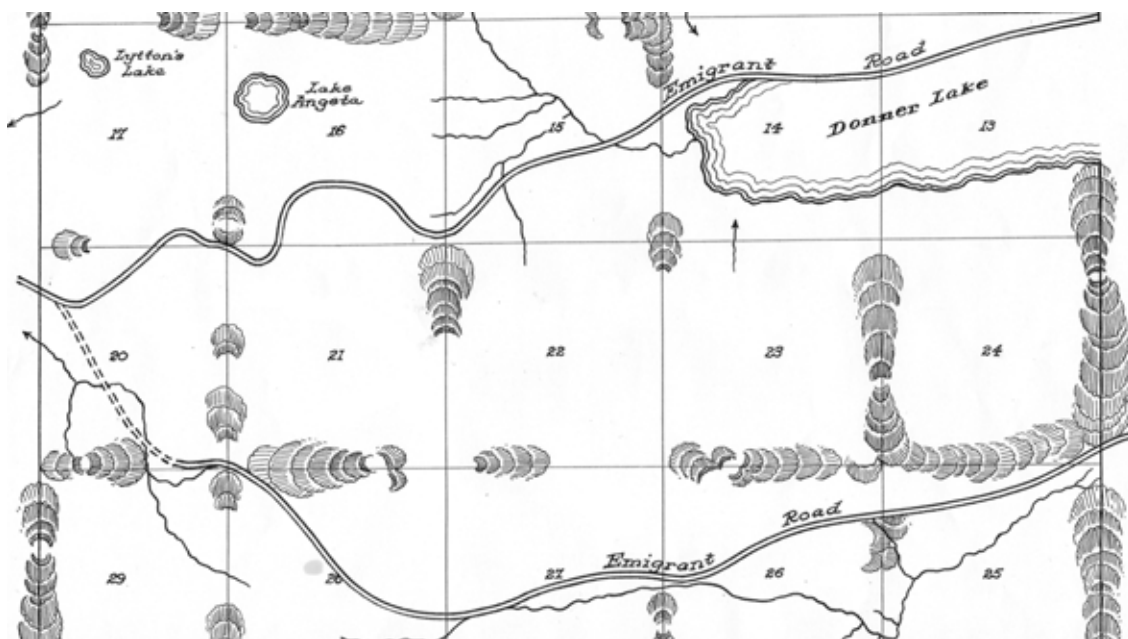
Since the Donner Summit Historical Society recently installed a marker at Roller Pass. How about installing one of your informative markers at the Pacific Crest Trail Head. This location is right on the 1844-45 emigrant Trail (Stephens Pass), the 1864 DUTCH Flat Donner Lake Road and the 1913 Lincoln Highway Road. [We did try locating a 20 Mile Museum sign at the spot Marshall suggests but the owner was not interested - the land is not USFS lands but is owned by a private party. - editor]

Many area hikers may not know about the Coldstream Pass and the splendor of Donner Peak. It would also complement your Roller Pass sign.



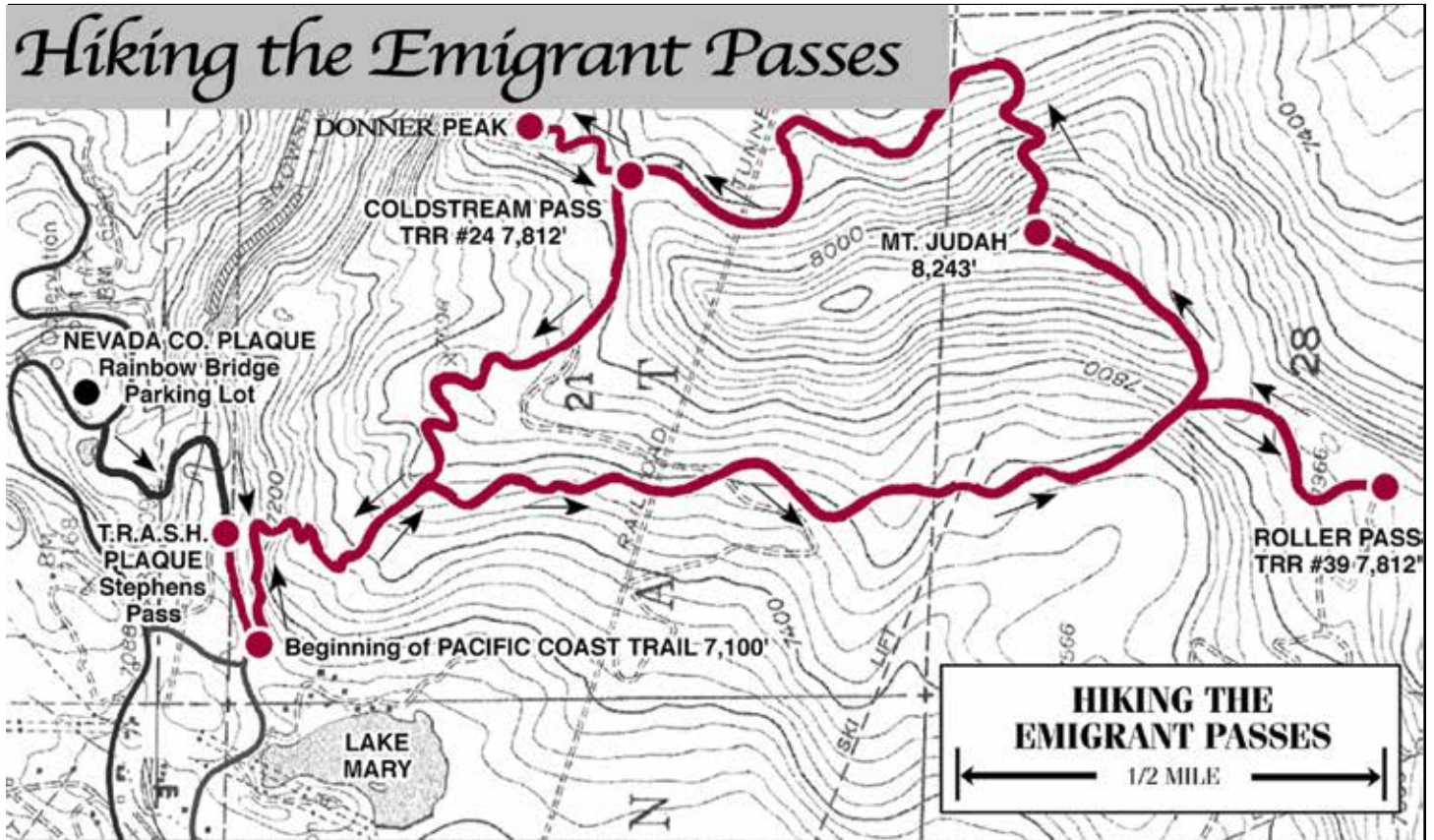
The first emigrants (1844) crossed in the lowest saddle shown as Stephens (Donner) Pass. In 1846 to avoid the very difficult granite ledges two new routes were blazed going up Coldstream Canyon. The first was over Roller Pass. The second with a more moderate grade at the Summit was dubbed, Coldstream Pass.

This 1866 map by a government surveyor shows the 1844-45 Emigrant Road from Donner Lake to the Summit and the 1846 Coldstream Pass detour that connects with the earlier route on the north shore of Lake Mary. L Because the Coldstream Pass was far easier for wagons than Roller Pass, the latter was abandoned by the time the gold rush started. Roller Pass trail headed due west at a point where the road first entered Section 28, See our Roller Pass articles in November, '11 and April, '12 issues



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Author of [Emigrant Trails](#) reviewed in April, '11 issue and has written occasionally for [The Heirloom](#)

Hiking the Emigrant Passes



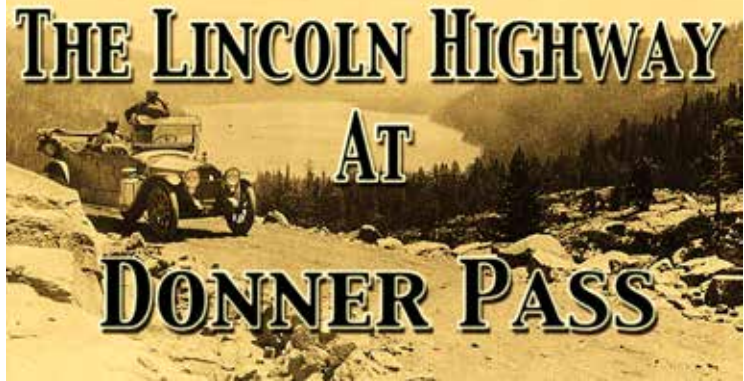
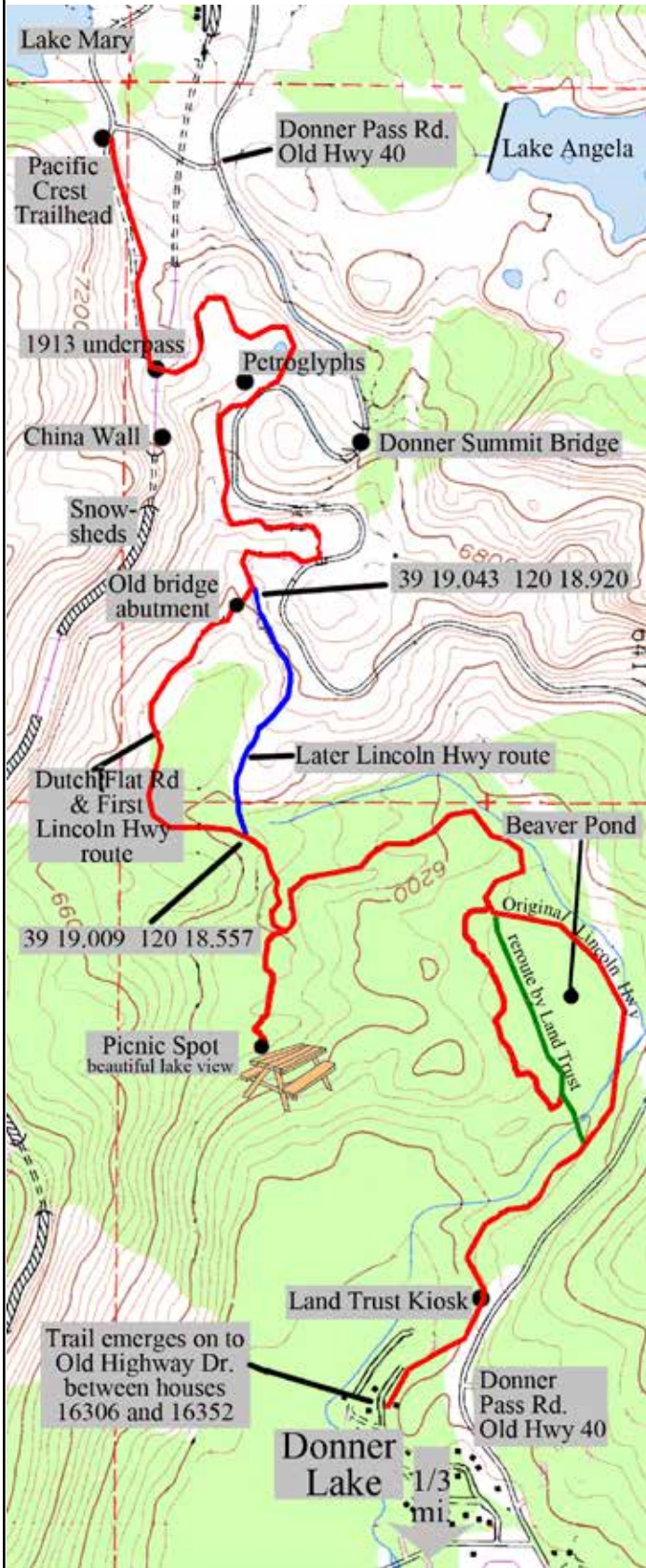
To get to Roller Pass take the Pacific Crest Trail . Hike a short distance east to see the unbelievable steep climb the wagons endured to reach the summit.



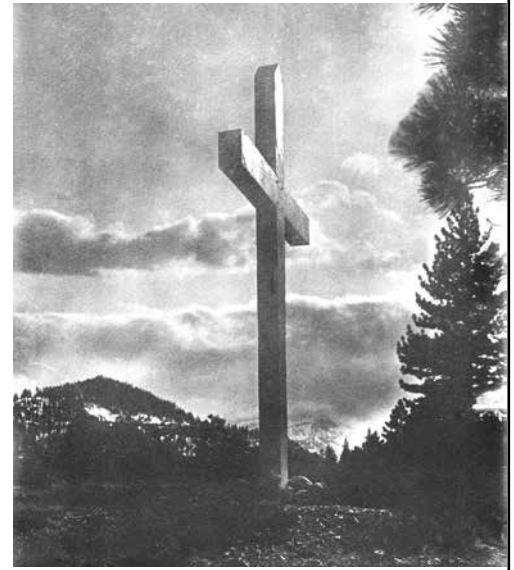
To visit ColdStream Pass, above, return about a quarter mile on the Pacific Crest Trail and take the trail that circles around the east side of Mount Judah. To get to Donner Peak use the steep trail north of the emigrant trail "T" marker. It is only about 300 yards to this lookout. Witness the same spectacular views of the surrounding mountains and valleys, just as some of the emigrants did.



Hike the Road Used from 1864-1926



First Emigrant trail marker on Donner Summit
 This large wooden cross would have stood very close to the location of the Pacific Crest Trailhead.



I believe the state emigrant trail marker with the cement post and the missing sign is within eyeball range of the Pacific Crest Trail Head. Looking east, one views an obvious section of road used by the emigrants, Dutch Flat and Lincoln Highway roads.

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From the DSHS Archives

Right: Soda Springs Station which sat across the river from the old hotel. Date unknown. Thanks to the Placer County Archives.

The sign says, "
Soda Springs Station
Rooms & Meals
General Merchandise

and Under that,
"SHELL
GASOLINE"



Left: were run weekly in the Sacramento Daily Union in Spring of 1867

The station on the Central Pacific heretofore known as the Summit Valley Station will be known as the Soda Springs Station hereafter, to prevent confusion of names between Summit and Summit valley stations.

Summit Valley Station Name Change

From the Sacramento Daily Union April 23, 1875

The Station on the Central Pacific heretofore known as the Summit Valley Station will be known as the Soda Springs Station hereafter, to prevent confusion of names between Summit and Summit Valley stations.

GRAND EXCURSION



TO THE SNOWY MOUNTAINS!

THE CENTRAL PACIFIC RAILROAD COMPANY, having been earnestly solicited by many citizens to run an Excursion Train to the Mountains while the snow is still at its greatest height, and thus afford an opportunity for ALL to see the Sierras clad in wintry garb, will,

On Sunday, April 14th,

Run an Excursion Train from Sacramento to Cisco and return, One Hundred and Eighty-six Miles,

At the Low Fare of Three Dollars!

Tickets from Auburn and all Stations west at \$3; from Colfax and Stations east at \$2.

This will probably be the only opportunity this season to enjoy, at so cheap a rate, the "swift transition" from the flowers of the valley to the "Arctic realm of the Sierras."

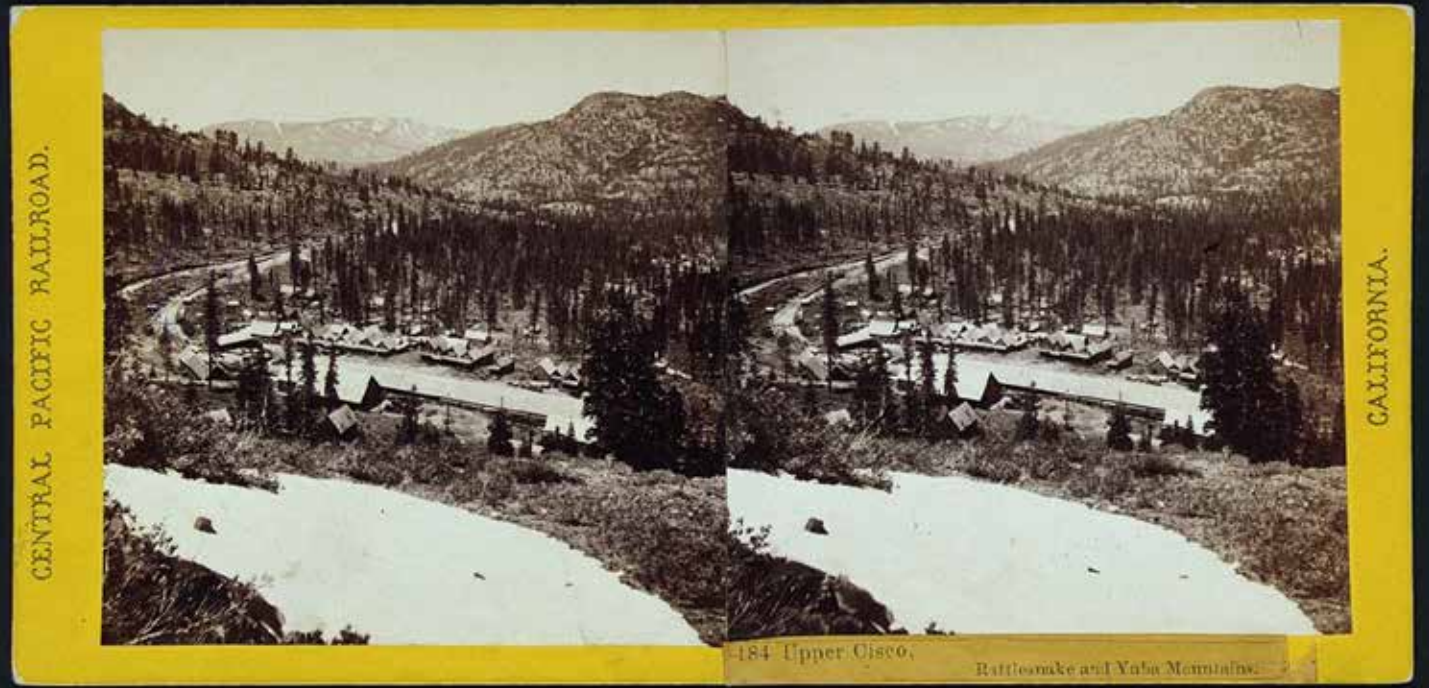
Cisco is 5,960 feet above the level of Sacramento, or 680 feet over a mile in perpendicular height, and there is now a greater depth of snow than was ever before known, and the Scenery between Colfax and Cisco is grand beyond conception.

The Tickets will be ready for sale on and after Thursday—number limited to 2,000. Passengers not provided with Tickets will be charged \$4.

Cars will leave Sacramento at 8 A. M.; Junction, 8:45; Rocklyn, 9; Pino, 9:15; Newcastle, 9:50; Auburn, 10:05; Clipper Gap, 10:20; Colfax, 10:50; Gold Run, 11:20; Dutch Flat, 11:30; Alta, 11:40; arrive at Cisco at 1:20. Returning, leave Cisco at 2:30.

a9-td C. CROCKER, Superintendent.

From the DSHS Archives



Above: a stereopticon slide of Upper Cisco about 1864. Upper Cisco was the RR town of Cisco that sat up above where the gas station is now. There was a huge turn table for turning engines there. After the "end of track moved up the line following the completion of Tunnel 6 and the track to Truckee, the town depopulated. There is nothing but nails there now.



Left from Ron Rettig of the Truckee Donner Historical Society.

This is the "Big Hook" owned and operated by Tony Girard who had a garage/blacksmith shop next to the old jail in downtown Truckee. Here he is plowing Old 40 up to the Summit assisted by an older snow removal technology.

We'll Build an Elevator



Doctor Strong of Dutch Flat told Theodore Judah about the general location of the route for transcontinental railroad which Judah was planning. Eventually Judah would lay out the route of the railroad over Donner Summit. While Judah was in Washington D.C. and after the CPRR had been formed, Doc Strong led three of the Big 4, Collis P. Huntington, Leland Stanford, and Charles Crocker to the summit to see the route.

They looked down from the summit where Judah said the track would go. It was a thousand feet down to Donner Lake. It was impossible.

"I'll tell you what we'll do Crocker said to Huntington after a thoughtful silence. We will build an enormous elevator right here and run the trains up and down it. "



Oh Lord moaned Crocker, It cannot be done."

pg 111 Empire Express

Parenthetically, a hike up to Donner Peak to the cleft in the rocks, see left, is a marvelous experience and well worth the visit. Sitting atop the rocks is great lunch spot and one can really appreciate the impossibility of running a train up Donner Pass. It could not be done but they did it.

Book Review - What I Saw in California

What I Saw in California – 1846 Book Review
Though written in 1847 the book is still readily available in book stores.

Some decades ago I came across What I Saw in California by Edwin Bryant and was immediately intrigued with the opportunity to see what California was like in 1846, before the Gold Rush started filling the state with people. Since reading I've used Bryant's quote about Donner Summit (you'll have to keep reading to find it) in presentations, brochures, and newsletters. He sometimes had a way with language. I also wrote a review many years ago for another publication but with changes in computers, operating systems, and software, I cannot find it. So I found myself re-reading the book for The Heirloom.

By 1846 people had been exploring the West for some time and wagon trains had been coming to California for a few years. By 1846 Roller Pass was in use (see our 11/11, 4/12, and 2/12 Heirlooms). The U.S was at war with Mexico. California was a foreign country but would become officially part of the U.S. in two years at the treaty signing. 1846 was the year of the Donners.

Bryant left Independence, Missouri as part of a wagon train but a month later left the train with some friends and mules. By the end of August they had reached California, way ahead of the wagon train.

In California he joined the volunteers in the revolt against Mexico. In 1847 he was appointed alcalde of San Francisco by General Kearney. He returned east in 1847.

The book comes from Bryant's journal and describes the overland journey with interesting descriptions and sometimes advice "ox teams seem to be esteemed as preferable" in case you might want to make the trip. A yoke of oxen (two oxen) cost \$21.67 so you can see the cost is negligible.

The reader learns the politics and prejudices of the times like why one would want to go to California two years before the Gold Rush. To convey that Bryant tells the story about a man living in California. He shortened the story and I'll shorten it more.

The man was 250 years old but because the climate was good in California he was in perfect health. Having had so much life he was ready for a new experience but no matter how hard he tried and prayed he could not die. He wanted to commit suicide but the padres told him that was the road to damnation. Someone suggested that he make his will and leave California. The man took up the suggestion, went away, got sick, and died.

What I Saw in California

By Edwin Bryant

Introduction by Thomas D. Clark



The man's will required that the body be returned to California for burial which it was. You can guess the rest: the man was restored to life – such is the salubrious climate of California.

Bryant describes travel across the continent: the food, frustrations of travel, oxen, Indian villages and interactions with Indians, trappers, people returning from Oregon and California, other emigrant groups, medicine on the trail, buffalo, scenery, and storms. Bryant's group was actually joined by the Donners.

The book is much like a diary and in that is the weakness. The telling can be tedious as it reports from day-to-day. Today life moves at a faster pace and we want things to happen faster than 19th century readers wanted.

That said, even though relating day-to-day activities is tedious, the more flowery 19th Century language can be a treat.

"The white topped wagons, and the men and animals belonging to them, winding slowly over the hill-tops and through the hollows, are the only relief to the motionless torpor and tomblike stillness of the landscape. A lovelier scene was never gazed upon, nor one of more profound solitude." pg 38

"The perfume exhaled from its petals and enriching the "desert air," addressed a language to the heart more thrilling than the plaintive and impassioned accents from the inspire voice of music or poesy." pg 48

After Bryant and his friends gave up the wagon by adopting mule travel they left the

train and made much faster progress. They could often 30 miles a day while the wagon trains could make 8-10 miles a day. So at the end of August Bryant and his friends reached California and Donner Lake. There they found Moses Schallenburger's cabin. Moses was the 17 year old boy who'd spent the winter at Donner Lake two years before. He was from the first wagon train to reach California with wagons, The Stephens Murphy Townsend Party. It is for him that Schallenburger Ridge, the ridge on the south side of Donner Lake is named. Of course the cabin would used in a few months by part of the Donner Party. By the time the group reached Sacramento and Sutter's Fort Bryant reckoned he'd traveled 2091 miles.

Bryant arrived in California in time for the Bear Flag Revolt and the second half of his book describes his travels in California. He met the famous personages of the Day: John Sutter (and we see a typical dinner menu), General Kearney, General Vallejo, John Marsh, Livermore, and people for whom San Francisco streets are named:

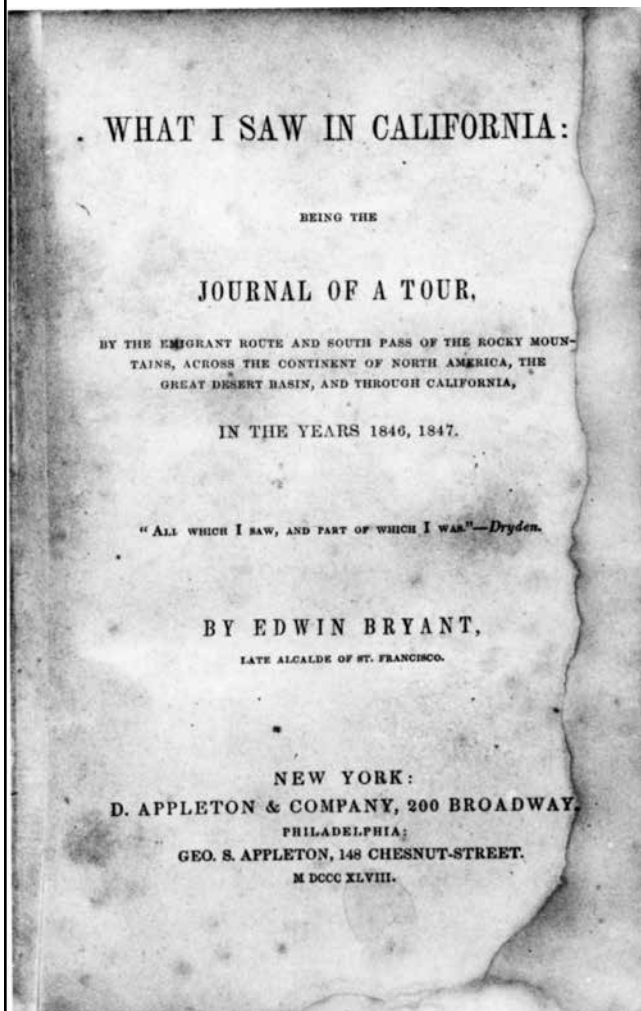
California Climate

"For salubrity I do not think there is an climate in the world superior to that of the coast of California. I was in the country nearly a y ear, exposed much of the time to great hardships and privation, sleeping, for the most part, in the open air, and never felt while there the first pang of disease, or the slightest indication of bad health." pg 451-2

The Sierra at Donner Lake and Donner Summit

The Alps, so celebrated in history, and by all traveler and admirers of mountain landscape, cannot, I am satisfied, present scenery more wild, more rugged more grand, more romantic, and more enchantingly picturesque and beautiful, than that which surround this lake [Donner Lake], of which the lake itself composes a part." pg 228

"The Sublime altitude of the mountains, their granite and barren heads piercing the sky; the umbrageous foliage of the tall pines and cedars deepening in verdure and density as the forest approaches the more gentle and grass slopes along the banks of the lake, the limpid and tranquil surface of which daguerreotypes distinctly every object, from the moss-covered rocks laved by its waves to the bald and inaccessible summit of the Sierra – the scenic object." pg 230



Larkin, Stockton, and Leidesdorff for example. He also met Caleb Greenwood, by then 83, the man who'd guided the Stephens Party to California.

Bryant signed up with the California Battalion and traveled with the army to Los Angeles. In his travels he learned about California and he relates information about the geography, Indians, whites, political and military structure, the Spanish, etc. In his travels he covered a good part of the state.

Interesting asides are pages of contemporary reports about the Donner Party tragedy in the report of "A suffering emigrant on the California Mountains," proclamations, the peace decree, and military reports about the Bear Flag Revolt.

At the end Bryant enumerates the virtues of California that will make it prosperous: minerals, agriculture, husbandry, climate, water, power, and timber. He was right.

What I Saw in California

Edwin Bryant Returns to California

Edwin Bryant traveled to California in 1846 and published his book, What I Saw in California, in 1848 just in time for the Argonauts to go hunting gold. It became very popular not just with emigrants but with the stay-at-homes who experienced California vicariously.

He went back to Kentucky in 1847 and came back to California in 1849 leading other gold seekers. He sold some previously purchased San Francisco waterfront property for \$100,000. He had purchased the property on his previous trip for \$4,000.

This time when he returned to Kentucky he went by way of Panama and returned rich.

In 1869 he returned again to California this time on the transcontinental railroad. He traveled at the amazing speed of 20 miles per hour - incredibly faster than his previous trips.

Contemplating getting up to Donner Pass

Standing at the bottom and looking upwards at the perpendicular, and in some places, impending granite cliff, the observer, without any further knowledge on the subject, would doubt if man or beast had ever made good a passage over them. But we knew that man and horse, oxen and wagon, women and children, had crossed this formidable and apparently impassable barrier erected by Nature between the desert and the fertile districts of the coast of the Pacific. pg 230

In good heart, therefore, we commenced the steep ascent, leaping our animals from crag to crag, and climbing in places nearly perpendicular precipices of smooth granite rocks. One of our mules in this ascent, heavily packed, fell backwards twice, and rolled downwards, until her descent was interrupted by a projecting rock. We thought, each time, that her career of duty and usefulness had terminated; and that her bones would bleach among the barren rocks of the mountains. But she revived from the stunning and bruising effects of her backward somersets; and with great exertions on our own part in assisting her, she reached with us the summit of the Pass." pg. 231

Summit Valley

"Descending the rocky ravine a few miles, we emerged from it and entered a beautiful level valley, some four or five miles in length from east to west, and about two miles in breadth. A narrow, sluggish stream runs through this valley, the water of which are of considerable depth, and the banks steep and miry. A luxuriant growth of grasses, of excellent quality, covered the entire valley with the richest verdure. Flowers were in bloom; and although late in August, the vegetation presented all the tenderness and freshness of May. This valley has been named by emigrants "Uber Valley;" and the stream which runs through it, ... sometimes pronounced Juba..." pg 232

View from the Top of Donner Pass

"The view from the crest of the Sierra to the east, is inexpressibly comprehensive, grand and picturesque. After congratulating ourselves upon the safe achievement of our morning feat, and breathing our mules a few minutes, we proceeded on our journey. A mile brought us to a small dimple on the top of the mountain, in the centre of which is a miniature lake, surrounded by green grass." pg 231

Traveling Along the Route from Donner Pass

"As we left the valley we crossed a high undulating country, timbered with pines, firs, and cedars, whose symmetrical proportions and rich foliage, with the bright green moss clothing their branches, would baffle the skill and coloring of the most artistical painter, to represent them faithful on canvass. This country is watered by a connected chain of seven small lakes, between which, and surrounded by the beautiful and fair-like groves I have mentioned, there are several green grassy lawns and openings, which lend to the scenery a charm and a fascination more like that which the imagination ascribes to the effete of enchantment, or the creations of a beautiful dream, than the presentation of reality...." pg 232

Then & Now with Art Clark



Lakeview Canyon Workcenter

This location seems to have been a staging area for the building of the railroad snowsheds. It is located between Eder and Tunnel 12 near the head of Lakeview Canyon. Below here, the railroad traversed the north side of Schallenberger Ridge, and above here it entered a series of tunnels on the way to the summit.

In the lower left corner of the original photo the laundry can be seen hanging off the back of the car. Must have been wash day.

Photo location 39° 18.379'N 120° 17.806'W



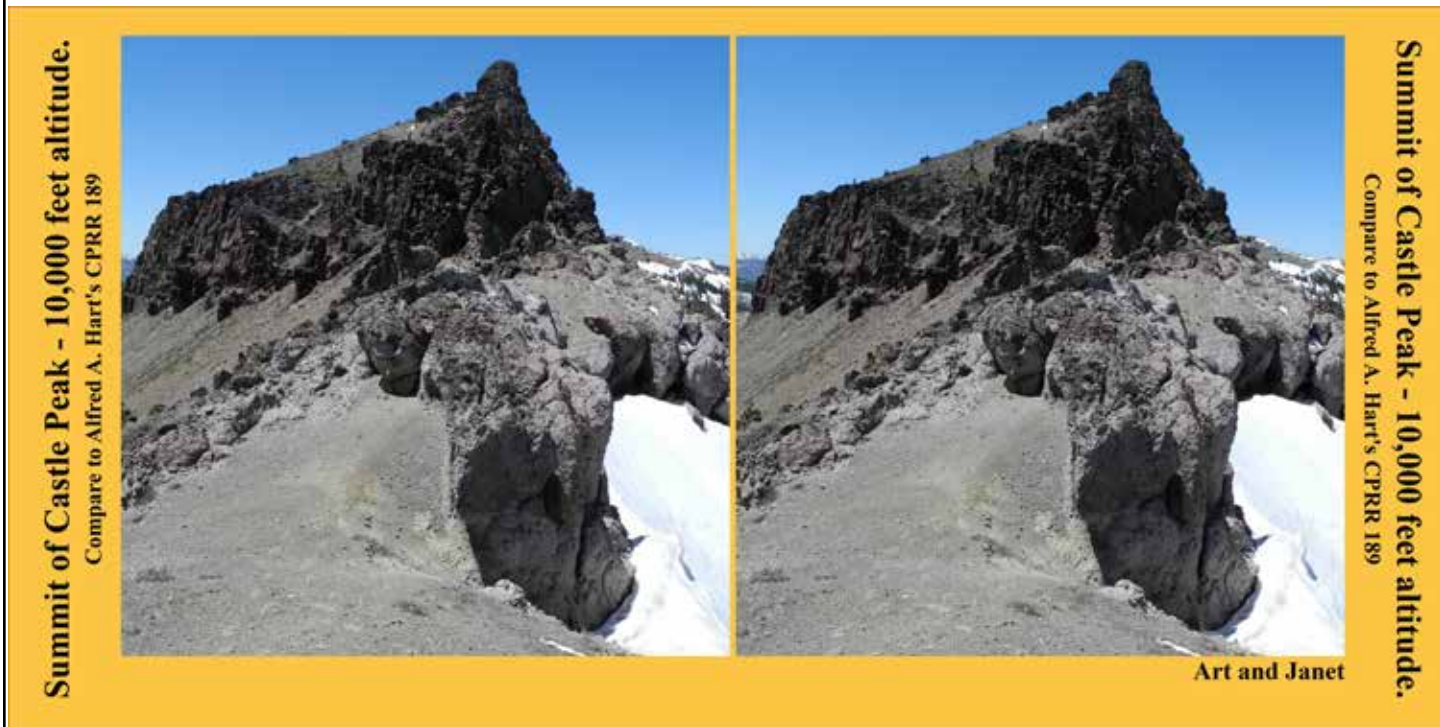
Then & Now with Art Clark



Alfred A. Hart was employed as a photographer by the Central Pacific Railroad. His job was to document construction and promote the route. While some photographers were satisfied with just pulling off the road for a shot, Hart would seek out unique views, even if that meant transporting his camera and equipment for miles and climbing, in this case, over 1,700 feet. This view is from the southeast ridge of Castle Peak at an altitude of 8785 ft.

Photo location 39° 21.793'N 120° 20.771'W

Note: Actual altitude of Castle Peak is now listed as 9,103 - not 10,000 as shown on the original.



DONNER SUMMIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY
www.donnersummithistoricalociety.org

Membership 2012

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

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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.

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FEBRUARY, 1947

Please say you saw it in Western

western skiing ads from folder in 2013

Query Does anyone know how Estelle Lake in Apline Meadows got its name? If so, please contact Fern Elufson: fernelufson@sbcglobal.net

More 20 Mile Museum Signs

As you know from our last two issues we will be installing some new 20 Mile Museum signs in Summit Valley now that the public will have access due to the Land Trust's purchase.

Last month we displayed the Native American Mortars sign and the Sheep sign. Both of those have been sponsored, the first by Ernie Malamut and Olivia Diaz and the second by Milli Martin.

Since then we have had another sponsor step forward, Ed and Kathy Bubnis of Serene Lakes, sponsoring the Dutch Flat Donner Lake Wagon Rd. sign. With the Land Trust's agreement to sponsor any sign, which in this case will be the Summit Hotel, that makes four.

A fifth sign has been sponsored by George Lamson and Linda Cashion and you'll see that in the next issue of The Heirloom - if you don't let your subscription lapse.

Here you can see the Dutch Flat Donner Lake Wagon Rd. sign and the Summit Hotel sign.

Separately we are working on a McIver Dairy sign for down in Truckee at the dairy site with Julie Brisbin's 4-5th grade class. That sign is sponsored by the Truckee Rotary.

The signs went for manufacture in Mid-March and the sign stands' welding was completed about then by BJ Pierce of Rio Linda.

Sign sponsorships are \$500 which is tax-deductible. You get your name or message at the bottom of the sign.

Hwy 40 Scenic Bypass
Dutch Flat Donner Lake Wagon Road ●

History
Only 17 hours from Sacramento to Virginia City, "Safety and comfort can't be beat." "By far the best road constructed across the mountains." "Half the maximum grade" of other roads. "Constructed in the best possible manner." "While enough for teams to pass each other without difficulty." "Conspicuous hotels have been erected along the route." So said the ads for the Dutch Flat Donner Lake Wagon Rd. when it opened in 1864.

But beginning in 1862, the road went through Summit Valley here. It was built to carry freight and to supply the construction of the railroad. Today you can clearly see the route through the valley where it sits higher than the surrounding meadows. So much traffic packed the earth; that may be why, as the forest encroached on the meadows, trees did not grow on the route.

The railroad started the new toll road as a big improvement over the Placerville Rd. and it saw very heavy usage. In 1867, 85 train car loads of freight a day were unloaded at Cisco onto freight wagons to travel over the Summit on the Dutch Flat Rd.

The railroad made travel faster and cheaper so the road fell into disrepair. By 1873 The Sacramento Daily Union said, "Along the route were the remains of many buildings which had been erected years ago, before the railroad was completed, but damaged as soon as travel was transferred to the great passage-way. Large barns and hotels still stood as wrecks, their roofs crushed by the weight of snow, and in some cases only the blackened remains of large hotels... that had been consumed by fire..."

A Good Story
The first locomotive in California, the Sacramento, was hauled on wagons from Gold Run to the Summit to work as a derrick engine at the central shaft of the great sawmill Tunnel in 1867. Missouri Hill hitched 10 yoke of oxen (20 oxen) to his logging wagon which had two feet wide wheels so it would not sink into the mud. The huge wagon load was such a scary sight to oncoming traffic that it caused one stampede and "ruined hell on the trail." "There was trouble every day" and "stage horses would balk at the sight of her." "Eventually oncoming travelers intimidated their oxen so they would not run off when they saw the engine coming. It took six weeks for the locomotive to get to Donner Summit on the Dutch Flat Rd."

Things to do right here
Walk the remnants of the Dutch Flat Rd. here in Summit Valley. The remnants are clear about 100 yards south of this spot. There are Native American mortars to find, wildflowers to see, a view to admire, clean air to breathe, and lots to photograph.

This sign sponsored by Ed and Kathy Bubnis, Serene Lakes.

Hwy 40 Scenic Bypass
Summit Hotel ●

History
The coming of the railroad made it easy for well-heeled tourists to visit Donner Summit and with the building of a large hotel, they came. Whole families came to enjoy the summit and stayed for weeks at a time.

The first Summit Hotel was built in 1870, the year after the railroad was completed, and was called the Cardwell House. It sat right next to the railroad and not far from Tunnel 6. It burned in 1892 and a new hotel was immediately built a little west on the Dutch Flat Donner Lake Wagon Rd.

The original Cardwell House had 78 bedrooms, sitting rooms, ladies parlor, a dining room, and saloon. The new Summit Hotel had 87 rooms, a very nice ballroom, and could accommodate 320 guests at one time on the dining room. In addition to the hotel, it had a grocery store, meat market, post office, postal telegraph office, and a dry goods store. It had one bathroom and a two-story red painted carriage (bath on the second floor and gentlemen on the first). It took one man, full-time, to deal with all of the oil lamps and wood stoves. The hotel had its own sawmill to keep it supplied with wood for heating and cooking. Eventually the hotel got its own Delco Electric Plant when it switched to electricity.

Summit Hotel
The hotel employed dozens of workers: chambermaids, bartenders, a stable man, a roost-bow, waiters, waitresses, a blacksmith, cooks, kitchen helpers, a man in the harness shop, servers, and two stage drivers.

To bring more guests special trains ran from Sacramento bringing revelers to regular dances.

That hotel burned in 1925 and was not rebuilt.

Things to do right here
"Last Wednesday... a party... united in a picnic expedition to Donner peak... 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 shed... lunch was served out under pine trees which added the mountain air as an excellent tonic for sharpening appetites. The party then proceeded up the mountain 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 far Donner reminds one of a mirror spread out beneath amid the mountains."

This sign sponsored by the Truckee Donner Land Trust which was previously owned by the 2013 acquisition of 3,000 Donner Summit acres for public use.

New Bird Book Soon

This notice strictly has no place in our historical newsletter but it may be that some of our readers are outdoor enthusiasts or "birders" and so would be interested.

Ted Beedy is a local biologist and expert on Sierra birds. His new book, *Birds of the Sierra Nevada* will be available for purchase from Amazon and U.C. Press in April.

The book presents our Sierra birds: information, natural history, name origins, habitats, how they communicate and interact, abundance, and conservation. The book is rich in illustrations, contains maps, and includes more than 160 rare species.

Ted Beedy will be speaking at Serene Lakes August 17. You can email us for information if you'd like to attend - it's free.

You can pre-order the book at Amazon, just search for the title. The U.C. Press page is <http://www.ucpress.edu/book.php?isbn=9780520274945> or:

to order on line from UCPress: ucpress.edu/9780520274945
use source code 13M4225 for 20% discount enter code in the discount box
phone orders: 1-800-777-4726 They will ship after April 8
(All dates tentative as of February - we work way ahead).

