



First Permanent Emigrant Trail Markers

Two monuments were erected in 1929 by the Native Sons of the Golden West to mark the abrupt and very significant changes in direction of the 1846 Emigrant Trail Near Present Day Truckee

Placed in 1929, the trail marker above was located on old Highway 40 (Donner Pass Rd.), near the foot of today's Northwoods Blvd. Weddell added the wooden sign to the right of the monument to point out the direction of the trail that came down the mountain.

The monument at the right is pictured above at its original site. It was pulled from this location and taken to the Truckee Donner Historical Society for storage. About fifty years later it was placed near its original site, in front of the present day Truckee High School. This monument refers to wagons coming from the pass at the north and then heading west a half mile to the companion marker.



The companion monument at the left was originally located on Hwy. 40 at the entrance to Coldstream Canyon. The trail then headed up the canyon to Roller and Coldstream Passes. When the freeway was constructed in 1964 it was relocated further up the same road.

The two monuments above were envisioned in 1929 by C.F. McGlashan, Truckee's foremost resident 1872-1931 and author of the 1880 classic, *History of the Donner Party*; P. M. Weddell, who placed wooden signs on the Donner Trail from Verdi, Nevada over Coldstream Pass to Lake Mary from 1924 until he died in 1951; and W. F. Knowland, U.S. Senator (1945-1959) and the chairman of the Native Sons of the Golden West's Landmark Commission.

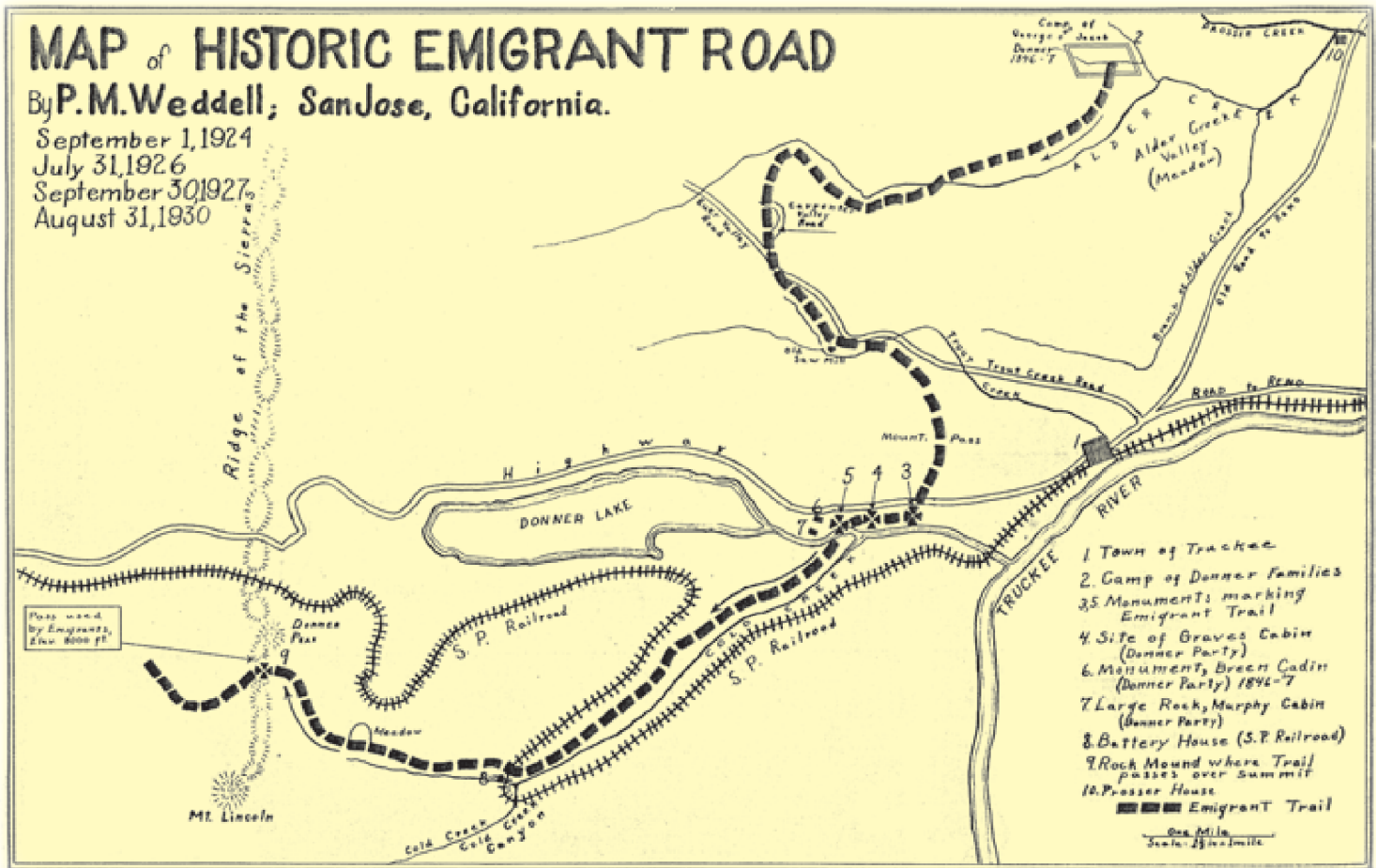


The diary of Edwin Bryant, traveling the same year as the Donners, verifies the steep route down the mountain to the monument in front of Truckee High School

About one o'clock P.M., we descended a steep declivity [vicinity of Northwoods Blvd.] and struck a stream [Donner Creek], which I first conjectured might be one of the tributaries of the Sacramento; but after an examination of its current, I discovered that it ran the wrong way, and was compelled, reluctantly, to believe that we had not reached the summit of the Sierra Nevada; and that the stream was a tributary of, or the main Truckee River. The trail runs along this stream a short distance ... until it strikes again the same watercourse in the distance of a few miles. About two o'clock, we suddenly and unexpectedly came in sight of a small lake [Donner]....

Edwin Bryant 1846

The Emigrant Trail From Donner Family Campsite to Coldstream Pass



The 1930 map above drawn by Peter Weddell shows the emigrant trail that extended west from the Donner family campsite to Coldstream Pass. He noted and numbered ten historical sites that he had researched.

Plaques Define Key Intersections of the Trail

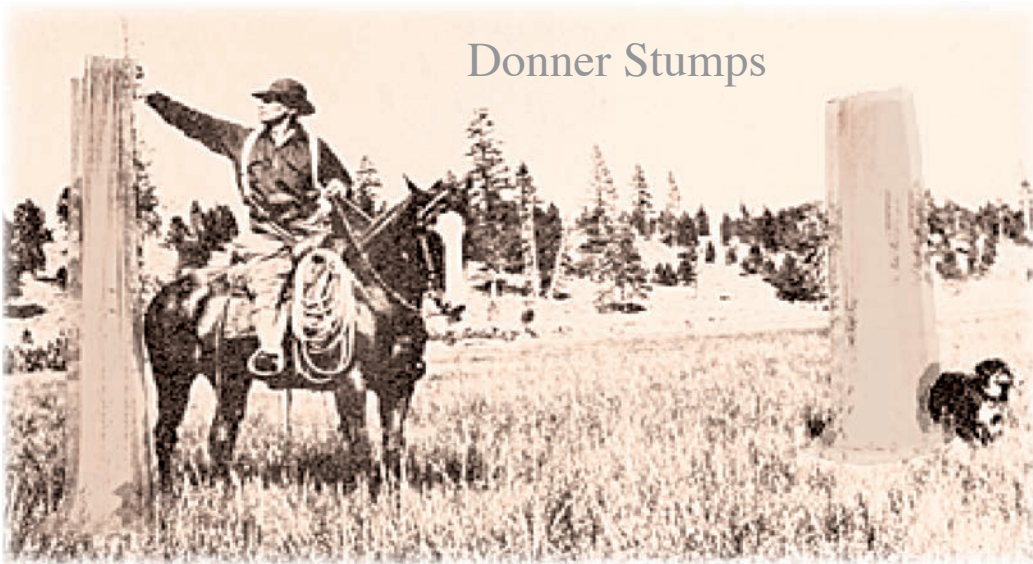
The plaque below is marked on the map above as point ((3)). This is where the trail came off the mountain, near today's Northwood Blvd, and proceeded a half-mile west to point (5), the designation number for the plaque at the right. At this site the trail turned south and headed up Coldstream Canyon to Coldstream Pass (9).



The Patriarch of Emigrant Trail Marking

Peter Weddell marked the trail along the Truckee River route from Verdi, Nevada to ColdStream Pass with wooden signs from 1924 until his passing in 1951. His principle trail source was C.F. McGlashan who settled in Truckee in 1871 and nine year later wrote the classic, *The History of the Donner Party*.

Donner Stumps



In this 1929 photo Peter Weddell points to a stump at the Donner family campsite that shows the depth of snow by the height of the cut on this tree. In 1963 the two stumps were moved to the Donner Memorial State Park Museum.



The sign on the tree above at the Donner campsite was placed by Weddell. He kept their site marked until his death in 1951.

The Alder Creek Trail Alongside The Donner Family Campsite



The top arrow points to small piece of a Weddell wooden sign that still remains today. The person to the right of the tree points to a faded white blaze painted on it in the 1950's by Dr. Rhoads to save Weddell's disappearing trail signs. The T.R.R. 20 emigrant trail marker in the foreground, circa 1970, was placed to permanently save this Donner Trail site. Note the old wooden trail signpost on the left of the photo.

A number of unknown trail buffs have also saved a section of Weddell's route along the Alder Creek Trail by placing home-made trail markers.

Using the green button shown, one of these trail enthusiasts placed one on a tree alongside Highway 89 on the tree at the right.

This tree is located west of the trail marker shown above.



The hand points to a green emigrant trail button. The former emigrant trail signpost below indicates the direction of the Alder Creek Trail.

Trail from Donner campsite to Alder Creek



California Historical Landmark No. 799

The state marker, one of five, placed along the Truckee River Route from Donner Summit to Johnson's Ranch in 1976. The above one is located just before the trail crossed Alder Creek.



Two of the Well Marked Sections of the Alder Creek Trail Leading From Donner Campsite to Historical Landmark 779

The hand at the left on the tree in the photo above points to a green emigrant trail button. The right hand points to a diamond shaped trail marker. There are many of these two markers along the emigrant trail from Highway 89 to where the trail crossed Alder Creek.

The hand at the left in the photo below points to a probable emigrant trail signpost and the hand at the right to the green trail button. Note a definite swale on the photo above and a slight one in the photo below, which has a noticeable different appearance than the surrounding area.



The faded remains of Weddell's wooden Donner Trail sign and Dr. Earl Rhoad's white painted blaze are on a tree about 100 yards east of the state marker above.



Emigrant Trail - Truckee River Route
 Marker No. T.R.R. 21 - Alder Creek -
 Trout Creek Trail between Donner
 Camps at Alder Creek and Donner Lake.



Both photos of Tahoe Donner's sections of trail, lost 50 years ago, are courtesy of the Nevada Historical Society.

The hand in both above photos point to Weddell signs on pieces of the trail that were destroyed when a large section of the Alder Creek Trail was erased due to the 700 acre development of the Tahoe Donner Subdivision.



Emigrant trail marker, T.R.R. 21, marks a large swale that remains today. This approximate 100 yard section of trail, located a short distance below the golf course, parallels Northwoods Boulevard.



In the left foreground is a 1927 Native Sons of the Golden West's plaque placed on a boulder in on the site of the 1846-47 Graves Cabin. The large wooden Donner Cross replaced the original that dated back to 1887. These two Donner Trail markers are located on Donner Pass Road a short distance west of the 1929 NSGW monument that is located in front of the Truckee High School.

P. M. Weddell Here For Yearly Visit

P. M. Weddell of San Jose, whose appearance in our town has become a matter of course for a number of years, arrived on Wednesday afternoon for his annual visit. Mr. Weddell for a number of years has spent his vacation marking the old Emigrant Trail.

In an interview with a representative of the Sierra Sun, Mr. Weddell said: "It is about thirteen years since I began marking the Emigrant Trail on the eastern slope of the Sierra from Alder Creek Meadows to the Summit and down the west slope to Mary Lake.

Sierra Sun, circa 1937