

The Donner Summit

Heirloom

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ROUTE

History and stories of the Donner Summit Historical Society

May, 2014 issue #69



Donner Pass Poetry, 1871

"Still we continue our long ascent, leaving Donner Lake like a lost diamond in the depths below us ; we enter the long line of snow-sheds which leads to the first tunnel ; we plunge through the gathering shadows of the tunnel, and finally emerge at Summit (1671 m.), 7017 feet above the sea, the highest point of the railway, the highest point, except Sherman, reached as yet by the iron horse and the iron road in any quarter of the world. We are not, however, at the summit of the Sierra Nevada range, but only the elevation of the mountain-pass which the railroad closely follows.

"The prospect is one, nevertheless, unequalled for extent and grandeur. We stand on the watershed of several mountain-torrents which, after taking the most irregular and capricious fancies, and winding by rock and valley, pour their tribute at last into the one great receptacle of the Sacramento River. Towering mountain-peaks are all around, their brightness contrasting with the mysterious shadows of profound ravines; while the murmur of falling waters is on the ear, and ever and anon comes the flash of a mountain lake, like that of a diamond, set in an emerald ring.

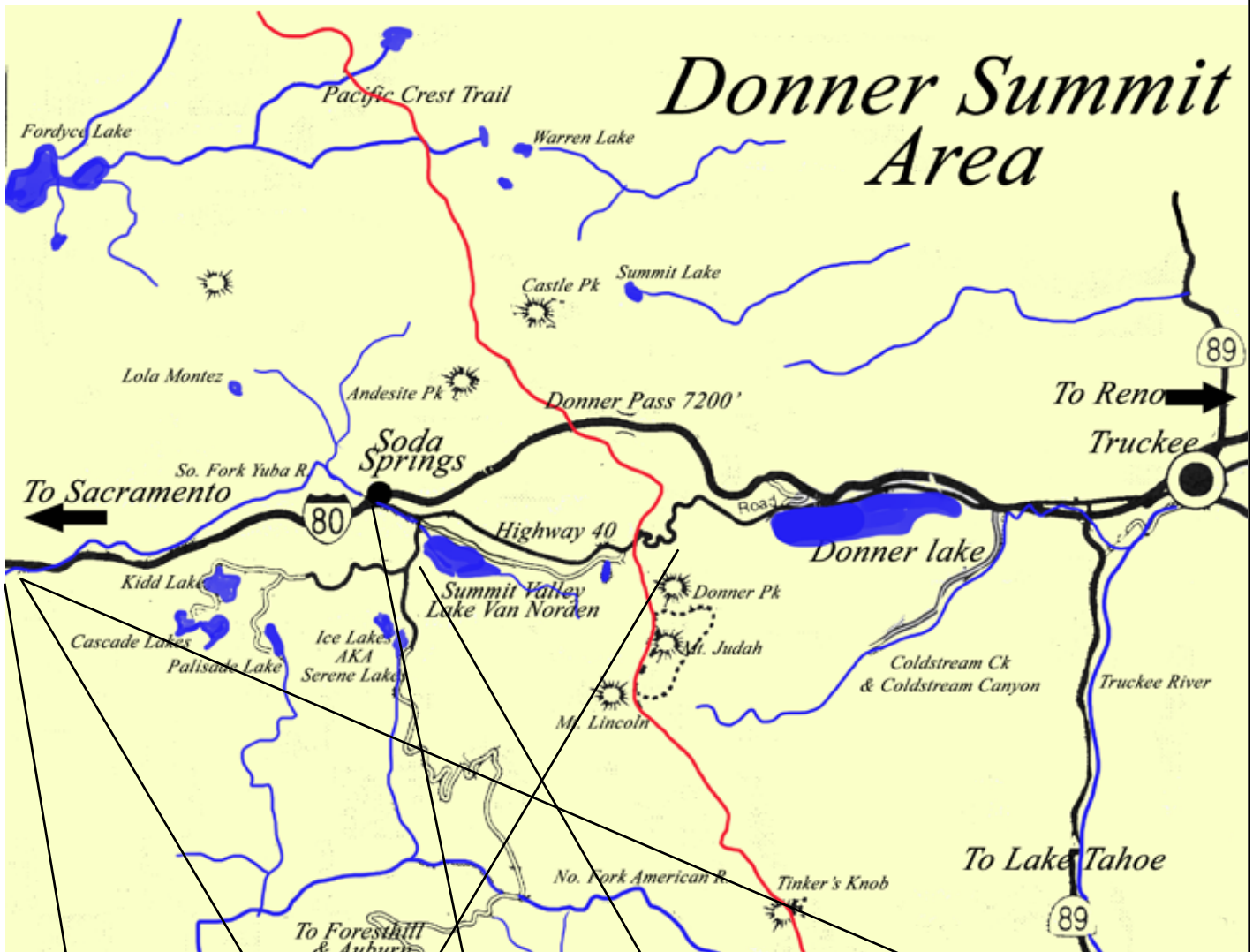
"From the moment we reach the high ground of the Summit, the railroad strikes through a succession of tunnels and snow-sheds, so closely connected that for miles it seems all tunnel. The longest of these measures 1700 feet."



Nelson's Pictorial Guidebooks Central Pacific Railroad A Trip Across the North American Continent from Ogden to San Francisco 1871. In those days they did put ;'s a space away from the preceding word.

photos by George Lamson

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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

Anticipation of Stories to Come

We thought we'd do something different this month since the book review is long and serves as an article about Donner Summit history. Its length required that we send some waiting articles into future issues. Below are teasers for three stories coming soon in [The Heirloom](#).

Donner Summit is an area of firsts, the most important historical square mile in California and maybe the entire Western U.S. Native Americans crossed the Pass for thousands of years. The wagon train to reach California with wagons came across Donner Summit. There followed the first transcontinental railroad, the first transcontinental highway, the first transcontinental telephone line, and the first transcontinental air route. We've covered all those but there were other firsts too, though smaller. Below are teasers for the first motorized crossing of Donner Summit and the first motorized crossing of the continent, excluding the railroad. The first obviously went over Donner Summit but so did the second. The third teaser is about Mark Twain and Donner Summit.

We spare no expense or effort to discover the very best of history about Donner Summit, no matter how obscure the sources.

The First Motorized Crossing of the Continent

"The oil, however was not of immediate aid. It did not help me get through the dark, damp, dismal tunnel, 1,700 feet long, that afforded the only means of egress from Summit. I walked through that, of course, and emerging, continued to walk, or rather, I tried to walk. Where the road should have been was a wide expanse of snow - deep snow. As there was nothing else to do, I plunged into it and floundered, waded, walked, slipped, and slid to the head of Donner Lake. It took me an hour to cover the short distance. At the Lake the road cleared and to Truckee, 10 miles down the canyon, was in excellent condition for this season of the year. The grade drops 2,400 feet in the 10 miles, and but for the intelligent Truckee citizens I would have bidden good-bye to the Golden State long before I finally did so."

George Wyman on going over summit as part of the first motorized crossing of the continent, 1903

The First Automobile Over Donner Summit

Automobiles Snowbound

"TRUCKEE, May 25. - Alexander Winton and Charles B. Shanks, the Cleveland, Ohio automobilists en route from San Francisco to New York in an automobile, are reported to have left Summit last evening. As they have not arrived here yet, it is supposed they are stalled in the huge snow drifts above Donner Lake."

The first attempt to cross the continent by automobile and the first successful crossing of Donner Summit by automobile, 1901. This is a reproduction of the actual newspaper article. The original quality was not good enough for the [Heirloom](#).

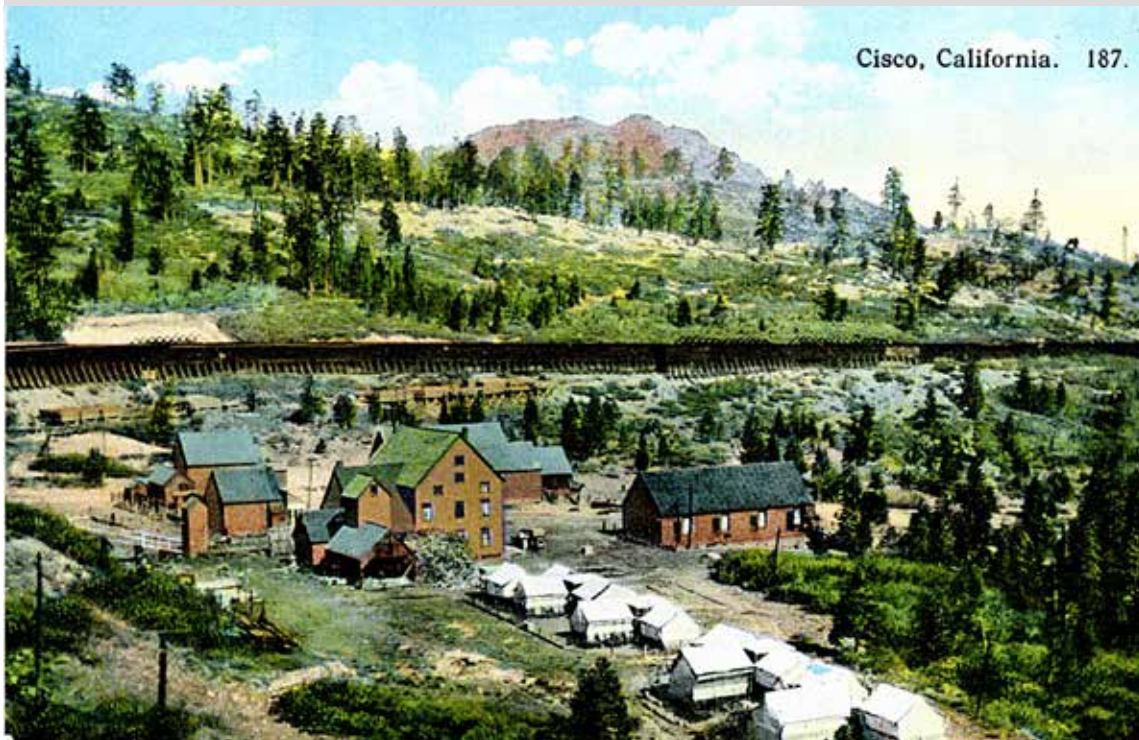
Mark Twain on Donner Summit

"At the end of a week we adjourned to the Sierras on a fishing excursion, and spent several days in camp under snowy Castle Peak, and fished successfully for trout in a bright, miniature lake whose surface was between ten and eleven thousand feet above the level of the sea; cooling ourselves during the hot August noons by sitting on snow banks ten feet deep, under whose sheltering edges fine grass and dainty flowers flourished luxuriously; and at night entertaining ourselves by almost freezing to death."

from [Roughing It](#) by Mark Twain. Actually our research staff does not think the Castle Peak in the quote above is on Donner Summit. It's likely a different Castle Peak. For one thing, our Castle Peak was called Mt. Stanford in those days (which is another story to come someday). Mark Twain did visit Donner Summit though, see below, and we'll soon have some articles about what he saw, how he traveled, and some good places for you to visit.

"Within a period of six years I crossed and recrossed the Sierras between Nevada and California thirteen times by stage" [some of those trips using the Dutch Flat Wagon Rd. and others the Placerville route.]

From the DSHS Archives



Two views of Cisco Grove. Above, long ago, the old Cisco south of the freeway and up the hill past the current gas station. With the advent of modern snow removal equipment the railroad had dispensed with the snowsheds. The town is long gone. One thousands of people lived at the end of the track while the tunnels on the summit were being finished. Now, not a building remains. With the coming of Highway 40 Cisco Grove moved to what is today north of the freeway, below. Most of those buildings are gone now too, torn down to save on taxes. There were once a souvenir store, the Auburn Ski Club, the Cisco Hotel, a restaurant, and gas station. With the coming of the Interstate, traffic shifted and no one today, except a few locals and some adventurous and discerning tourists, travels old 40, taking the "scenic route" over Donner Summit. Take a look at our brochure page for our "Historic Route 40" brochure telling you how to take Old 40 from Rocklin to Truckee.



From the DSHS Archives

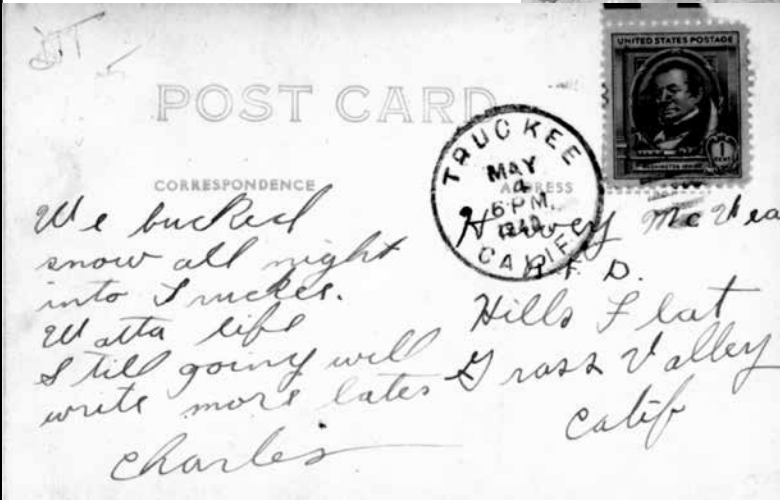


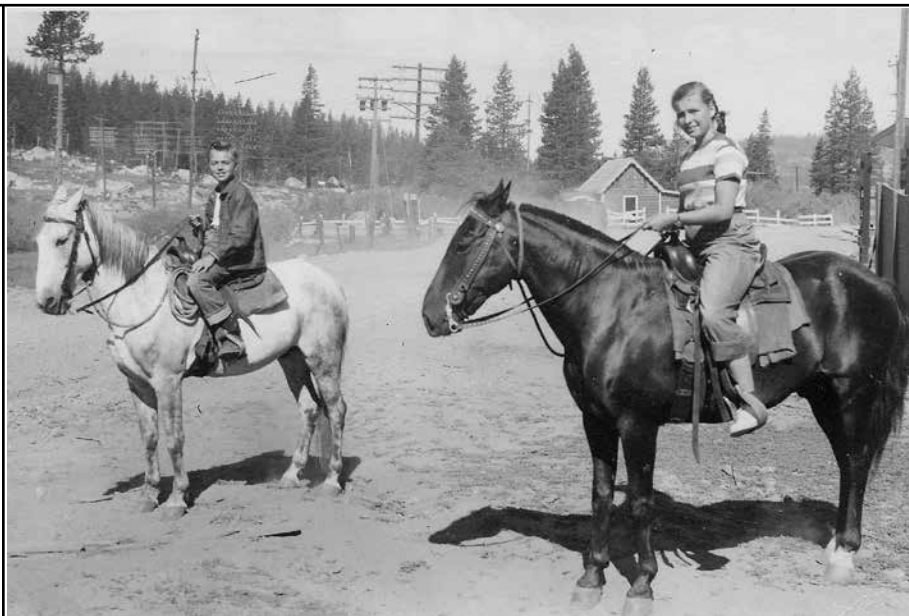
Postcard of Soda Springs in the Norm Sayler Collection at the DSHS. Front is above and the back is to the left.

May 4, 1940

"We bucked snow all night into Truckee. Watta life. Still going well. Write more Later. Charles"

Below: Donner Summit, ca. 1930's on Old 40.





Milli Martin is a good friend of the DSHS. Although she lives in Homer, Alaska she spent summers when she was young on Donner Summit at her aunt and uncle's Norden Store (check out our newsletter indices for the stories about Norden Store or Herb and Lena Fredericks). Milli says the pictures above are:

"Me, Milli, and a friend, Norman Grag. Norman later moved to Nevada City, where he followed in his father's footsteps and became a well-known silver smith. We both spent summers at the Norden Store during our teen years. I was 12 in that picture; he was 13." Summit Valley was a good spot for equestrian activities in the old days. The pictures above are near the Van Norden dam at the bottom of the Soda Springs ski hill.

TO DONNER LAKE

Placer County Wants Highway to Run From Roseville Over Mountains to Tahoe

[Special Dispatch to The Call]

AUBURN, June 6.—Placer county proposes to build a road from the Sacramento county line below Roseville through the various railroad towns to Emigrant Gap and thence over the Sierra to Donner lake and on to Lake Tahoe.

The proposed road would traverse one of the most picturesque sections of the state and would prove a great thing for automobile owners, as it would give a route from Sacramento and valley points through the pretty sections of the Sierra to Lake Tahoe.

There is a state highway from Sacramento through El Dorado county to the lake, and this proposed highway would make it possible to go one way and come back the other.

A section of the road 32 miles long from Donner lake to Emigrant Gap is under construction, and it is proposed to extend the work on to Tahoe. The road from Roseville to Emigrant Gap will be improved.

As often happens, one thing leads to another and a search for one thing then turned up this article, left, from the June, 7, 1910 edition of the [San Francisco Call](#).

Motorists were traveling the Sierra in the early days of automobiles. Here Placer County is proposing a road over "one of the most picturesque sections of the State."

By 1913 the demand for good roads had built and the private Lincoln Highway Association put together existing sections of roads to develop the first transcontinental highway which went over Donner Summit using the road Placer County wanted to build in 1910.

Book Review

Desperate Passage The Donner Party's Perilous Journey West Ethan Rarick 249 pages c 2008

The Chamber of Commerce hosts the Donner Party Hikes each Autumn on Donner Summit. After the hikes and lunch there is always a speaker. The 2013 speaker was Ethan Rarick, author of Desperate Passage The Perilous Journey of the Donner Party.

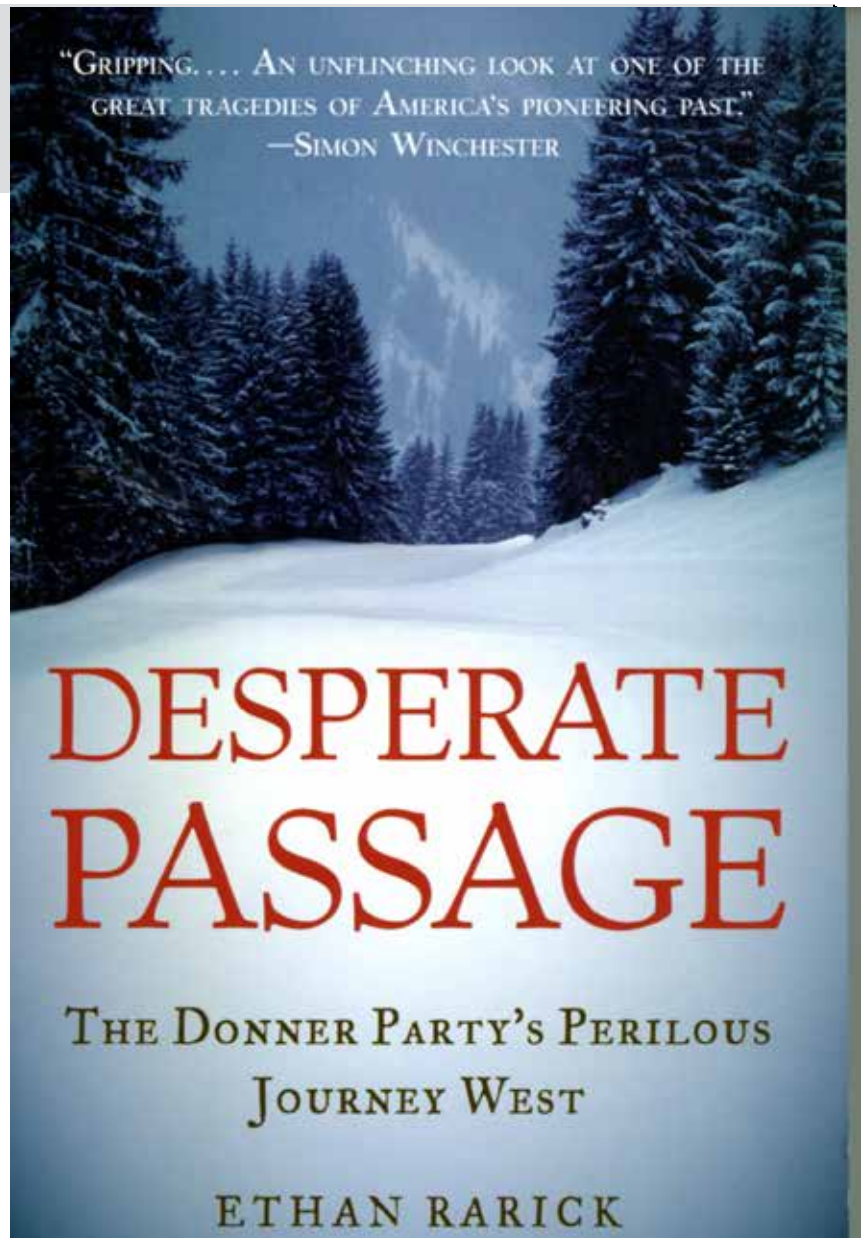
Over almost 170 years, ever since the first gruesome accounts appeared in newspapers, the travails of the Donner Party has been covered in magazines, books, movies or videos, and talks. What could Mr. Rarick offer that would be new?

Ethan Rarick has written a good book, worthy of reading even if you have read other Donner Party books or seen Donner Party videos. He set out not to re-relate what happened but to delve into the human equation and the fateful decisions they made. He relies on new archeological evidence as well as research on starvation, snowfall, and primary sources. Rarick's story telling skills add to the new treatment, making this a good read.

Rarick starts with a brief discussion to put the Donner Party in context: the 19th Century and a brief history of pre-1846 westward movement. The Donner Party was part of an optimistic group moving west for better lives as Charles Stanton, a member of the larger party and a later rescuer of the Donner Party said, "I have seen the Rocky Mountains – have crossed the Rubicon, and am now on the waters that flow to the Pacific! It seems as if I had left the old world behind, and that a new one is dawning upon me." (pg 44)

The Donner Party left Independence, MO in May of 1846. They were part of a much larger group of emigrants all heading either to California or Oregon. Rarick describes the wagons and wagon travel. The Donner part of the group was toward the end of the migration choosing intentionally to go slow to protect their livestock. It was just one of their fateful choices. The fateful choice they are most known for came next when they took the untried Hastings Cutoff while other wagons went right, following the established route. The Donner Party went left, into the unknown, despite warnings, advice, and doubts. They went without a guide and of course rued the choice. "We take a new rout to California, never travelled before this season; consequently our tour is over a new and interesting region." (pg 61) Rarick's descriptions of the route and the work needed to traverse it make one realize they were a lot tougher in the old days and makes one wonder why they just did not turn back.

The Donner Party experienced bad luck along with the consequences of bad decisions. There was a gunshot accident; a member was abandoned, an argument resulted in a stabbing, death and banishment; and a member of the party disappeared. Then, after having traveled 2,000 miles and being only 100 miles from their destination, winter came just a bit early. Snow fell and prevented the party from crossing the pass that would soon be named for them. Unfamiliar with Sierra snow they expected the first snows to melt and in any case never get too deep. They settled in at Truckee Lake (soon to become Donner Lake) and at



Alder Creek, some miles away from the lake. They never considered going back to the Truckee Meadows (Reno today) where conditions would not have been so harsh.

It is at this point that Rarick's skill as a story-teller enriches his telling of the "Desperate Passage" of the Donner Party. Rarick spends time on the human condition. There is a discussion of cannibalism in the 19th Century context from stories about shipwrecks. Rarick says cannibalism was the "custom of the sea" – a horror defensible under the circumstance, much as men's behavior might be different in wartime than in peace, Surviving cannibals could go on to distinguished careers." (pg 132) That's foreshadowing for people who don't know the story. Then he describes the living conditions in the cabins and tents at the lake and Alder Creek. Just living in those conditions was a horror and maybe set the stage for what was to come.

Relating the various escape attempts and then the rescue expeditions, Rarick does not tell the tales linearly. He breaks them up, switching subjects, and so the reader wants to keep reading to see what will happen next, even if the reader knows the story. For example, Rarick describes the Starving Camp of the 3rd relief party, somewhere on Donner Summit, after a severe blizzard. 13 of the party were too weak to go on. They were mostly children. The rescuers set off to continue taking only three children. Would the 4th relief party, supposed to be en route, get there in time to save those not taken? Will the 13 die exposed to the elements in the snow without food? Rarick does not answer immediately. He switches subjects to talk about the 4th relief party, then comes back to Starving Camp, and then to the 3rd relief party that had just left Starving Camp and James Reed who had contracted snow blindness again. If you don't know the fate of the people at Starving Camp this review is not going to spoil it in this paragraph.

Rarick enlivens the story with the pathos too. At Starving Camp Peggy Breen's son become unresponsive and may be dead. She rubs him and shakes him. We can feel the mother's desperation. She pushes some sugar into his mouth and.... you'll have to read the book. James Reed ends up carrying his daughter through the snow and feels her dying. He scrapes the very last crumbs from the inside of a food bag and puts them in his mouth to warm them before putting them in Patty's mouth. That is drama.

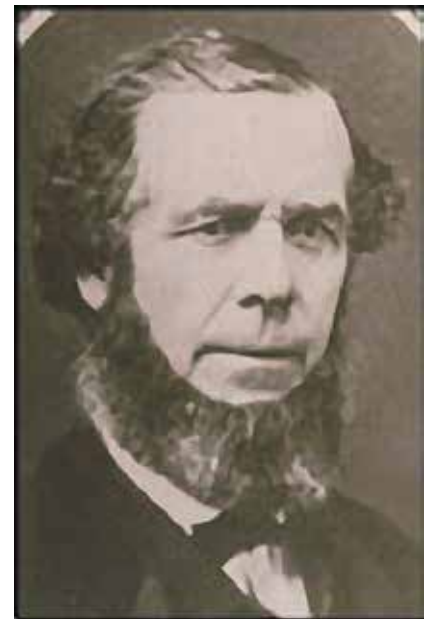
Then there are the decisions the people had to make. The Forlorn Hope was a group of the Donner Party that left the lake, most on snowshoes. They knew how bad the conditions were at the lake and how little food was left. They knew they might never see their loved ones again. They hoped they would make California and get help. Who was to be allowed to go? Who would stay? Families were split. Seven of seventeen would reach Johnson's Ranch. The seven included seven women; the oldest was 23 years old.

cont'd to page 8

Heroism on Donner Summit

The story of the Donner Party is one of pathos coming from a combination of bad luck and bad decisions made in ignorance. It is also the story of heroism as people made fateful decisions and put themselves at risk. The Forlorn Hope left the lake taking a huge risk. They would go to California and send help back. To get to California they would have to slog through the snow on Donner Summit and risk new storms without shelter. They would have to go without food and bear hardships unimaginable to us sitting in front of a warm fire reading this. What is it like to sleep in the snow in soggy and sodden clothing? What is it like to hike through the snow, sinking into it with each step, and to do it to exhaustion with no food at the end of the exertion? What is it like to starve slowly and be forced to each leather shoelaces?

Then there are the heroes of the rescue parties. The rescuers could have stayed in California, comfortably, but instead they chose to head into the Sierra carrying heavy packs to try to bring relief to the starving Donner Party. One of those rescuers particularly stands out, John Stark, right.



Let's set the stage. A fourth rescue party had gone into the mountains to see whom they could rescue at soon to be called Donner Lake. It was led by William Eddy and William Foster who had left the lake three months before on snowshoes. They

came across the third rescue party, Surviving Reed family, led by James Reed, who had been banished by the wagon train after a knifing. He had been to California and come back to rescue his family. The 3rd rescue party had just left Starving Camp on Donner Summit. The rescue party was without food itself.

The fourth rescue party decided to continue on to Starving Camp and see whom they could rescue. Eddy and Foster at that point paid two of the other men \$50 each to accompany

cont'd to page 10

When the rescue parties arrived, who would get to go and who would stay? They were agonizing choices for parents. Which children would be saved? Which would wait? Should the parents go with the rescuers and leave children behind? With whom would they leave the children? The relief parties took mostly children to California since it was mostly children who were still alive. Imagine Margret Reed, somewhere on Donner Summit, when it was apparent that two of her children could not continue to California with the rescue party. What to do? Should she go back to the lake with those two or continue on with the other two? If she went back might she make the two who went on orphans? Worse, her husband had been banished from the wagon train and was in California – maybe.

John Denton could not go on with the relief party. He also could not go back three days to the lake. He asked to be abandoned by the rescue party. Should the party, whose members could scarcely carry themselves, refuse Denton's request?

Tamzene Donner, at Alder Creek, faced a like choice. Should she go with the rescue party and her three children or stay with her husband? Would another rescue party be coming? Should she chance it? Was she sending her children on to die of exposure and cold if a blizzard came upon the rescue party?

Then, too, Rarick uses evocative language, "human skeletons...in every variety of mutilation. A more revolting and appalling spectacle I never witnessed." (pg 229)

The book becomes an exciting story and the reader rushes through to see what happens at the end. It is so much better than dry recitations or history. Buy the book.

From Charles McGlashan, History of the Donner Party, more on John Stark

By every means in his power, Stark would cheer and encourage the poor sufferers. Frequently he would carry one or two ahead a little way, put them down, and return for the others. James F. Breen says: "I distinctly remember that myself and Jonathan Graves were both carried by Stark, on his back, the greater part of the journey." Others speak similarly.

Regarding this brave man, Dr. J. C. Leonard has contributed much valuable information, from which is selected the following:

"John Stark was born in 1817, in Wayne County, Indiana. His father, William Stark, came from Virginia, and was one of the first settlers of Kentucky, arriving there about the same time as Daniel Boone. He married a cousin of Daniel Boone, and they had a family of eight children. T. J. Stark, the oldest son, now lives at French Corral, Nevada County, California. John Stark, the younger brother, started from Monmouth County, Illinois, in the spring of 1846, but taking the Fort Hall road, reached California in safety. He was a powerfully built man, weighing two hundred and twenty pounds. He was sheriff of Napa County for six years, and in 1852 represented that county in the State Legislature. He died near Calistoga, in 1875, of heart disease. His death was instantaneous, and occurred while pitching hay from a wagon. He was the father of eleven children, six of whom, with his wife, are now living."

Each one of the persons who were taken from Starved Camp by this man and his two companions, reached Sutter's Fort in safety. James F. Breen had his feet badly frozen, and afterwards burned while at the camp. No one had any hope that they could be saved, and when the party reached the fort, a doctor was sought to amputate them. None could be found, and kind nature effected a cure which a physician would have pronounced impossible.

In concluding this chapter, it is quite appropriate to quote the following, written by J. F. Breen: "No one can attach blame to those who voted to leave part of the emigrants. It was a desperate case. Their idea was to save as many as possible, and they honestly believed that by attempting to save all, all would be lost. But this consideration - and the further one that Stark was an entire stranger to every one in the camps, not bound to them by any tie of blood or kindred, nor having any hope of reward, except the grand consciousness of doing a noble act - makes his conduct shine more lustrously in the eyes of every person who admires nature's true and only nobility."

Heroism cont'd

them. They were desperate to save their children. John Stark also continued on but without pay. "I will go without any reward beyond that derived from the consciousness of doing a good act."

The rescuers then found Starving Camp, on Donner Summit somewhere in Summit Valley. The location has never been ascertained. There eleven people were in a deep snow pit formed by their fire melting the snow down perhaps twenty feet to bare ground. Steps had been cut into the walls of the pit. There were dead bodies in the pit as well as the eleven alive. The dead had been partially eaten. The survivors had been there for days and it was amazing any were alive. William Eddy, describing that they'd found said, "The picture of distress was shocking indeed." Eddy and Foster continued on to Donner Lake to save their own children. When they arrived they discovered their children were dead and had been partly eaten.

The remaining rescuers discussed what to do and took a vote to save only two of the children in Starving Camp. That might have been all they could manage. The others would have to stay behind.

John Stark could not stand that. That meant that nine people, mostly children, would die on the mountain, exposed to the elements down in a very deep hole in the snow. John Stark decided he would save all nine, "Already shouldering a backpack with provisions, blankets, and an axe, he picked up one or two of the smaller children, carried them a little ways, then went back for the others. Then he repeated the whole process. Again and again. To galvanize morale, he laughed and told the youngsters they were so light from months of mouse-sized rations that he could carry them all simultaneously, if only his back were broad enough." Once they were out of the snow he would eat and rest he said, but not before. He saved all nine. That is extraordinary and that is heroism. It was also heroism he never got contemporary credit for.

James Breen later said, "To his great bodily strength, and unexcelled courage, myself and others owe our lives. There was probably no other man in California at that time, who had the intelligence, determination, and what was absolutely necessary to have in that emergency."

According to H. H. Bancroft's History of California, Stark was county judge of Napa Co. 1850-51; a member of the legislature in 1851 and 1855-56; 1851-68 lived near Calistoga; lived in or near Guenoc, Lake Co., from 1868 till his death.

Charles McGlashan, History of the Donner Party, said that Stark was sheriff of Napa Co. for six years and that he died instantaneously of a heart attack while pitching hay from a wagon. John and Mary Jane Stark had 11 children, six of whom were alive in 1879.

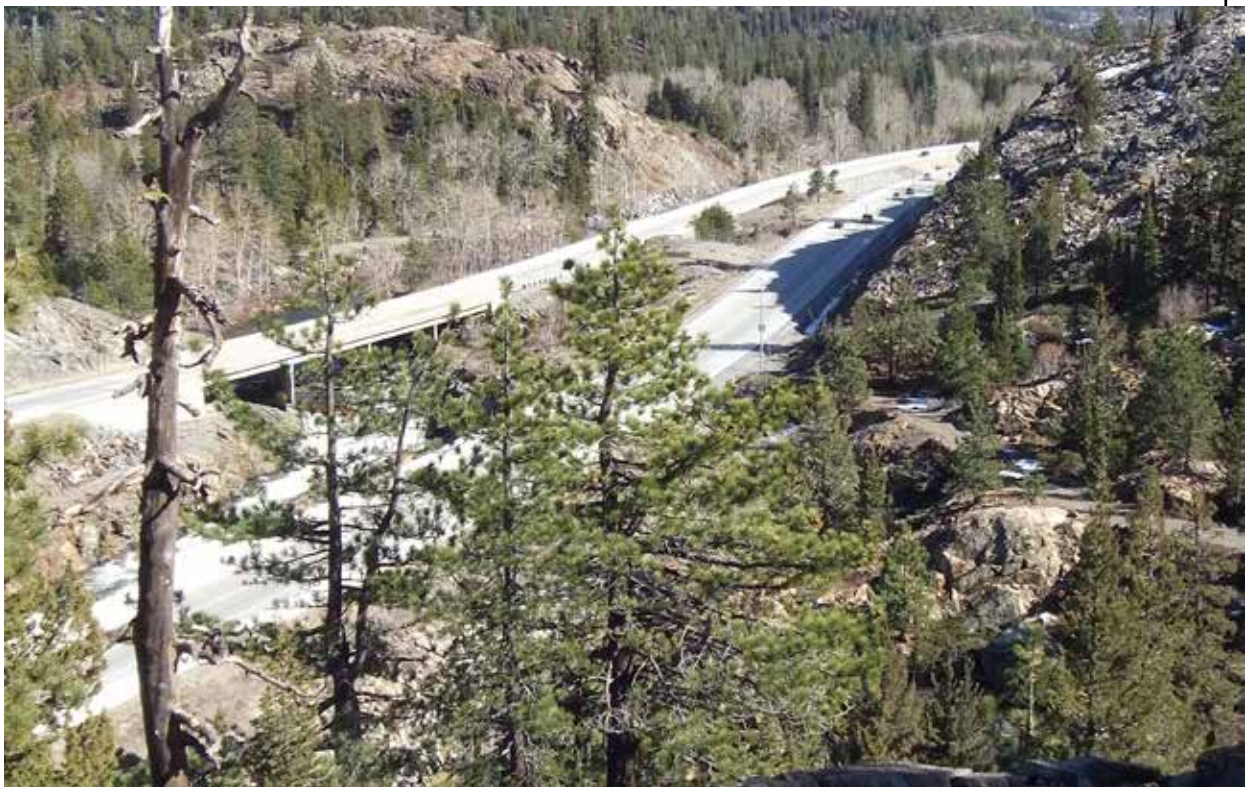
Then & Now with Art Clark



Wohlbruck postcard above: "Yuba River at Cisco -Auburn Rd."

This view of the Dutch Flat Donner Lake Wagon Road changed a lot after the construction of Interstate 80. The riverbed was shifted north, and the valley was widened to accommodate the dual roads. One can still walk this section of the old road starting from the Eagle Lakes exit.

Photo location 39° 18.934' 120° 33.512'



Then & Now with Art Clark



Alfred A Hart 176 - Black Butte (now Cisco Butte)

As the glaciers melted after the last Ice Age, many granite boulders like the one in the foreground were left behind. The railroad can be seen descending left to right and crossing a ravine. Above this spot there are twin tracks, but within the snowshed it switches to a single line, and continues this way down to Emigrant Gap, where it becomes two again. Out of sight between the rock and the railroad is the Dutch Flat Donner Lake Wagon Road. Inset: Original stereograph

Photo location 39° 18.924'N 120° 33.515'W



Dennis Jones - to the Hall of Fame

Dan Rossovich was "stunned" when he realized that Dennis Jones had not been inducted into the Ski and Snowboard Hall of Fame. He decided to do something about it.

Dennis Jones was a skiing pioneer who did most of his pioneering on Donner Summit and was one of the fathers of modern skiing. You can read more about him in "The Remarkable Dennis Jones" in our February, '09 Heirloom. Dan Rossovich grew up across the street from Dennis and his wife, Muriel, in Grass Valley. He and his brother worked for the Jones family and "spent much of the time listening to Dennis' stories of life on Donner Summit." Here and on page 14 are two sections of the application to the Hall of Fame. The two magazine covers here show Dennis Jones and were part of the submission package prepared by Dan.

State why the candidate merits election to the U.S. National Ski & Snowboard Hall of Fame (limit this statement to 250 words):

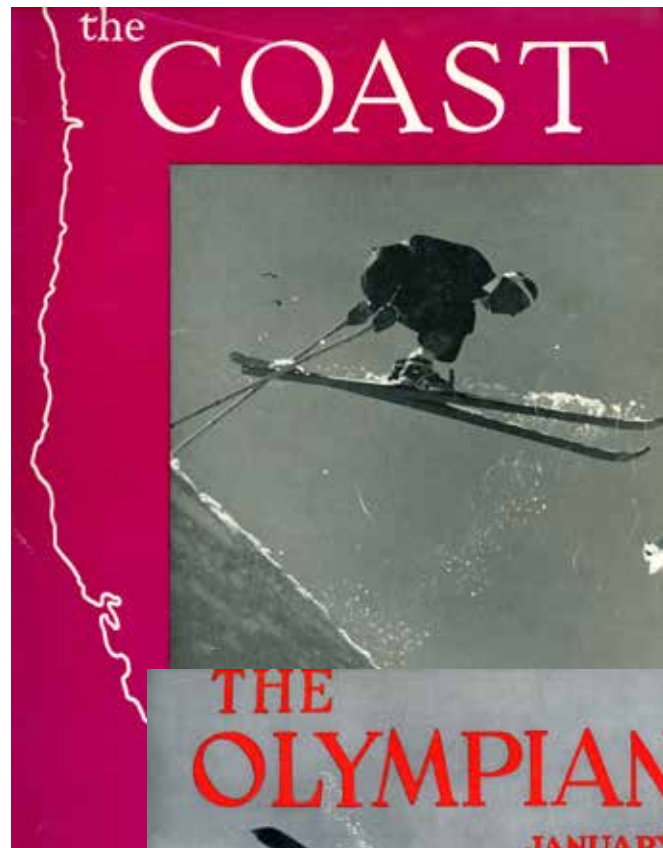
Dennis Jones must be the most worthy inductee to the Hall of Fame who was never inducted. Dennis Jones was a Sierra skiing and winter sports pioneer long before skiing and winter sports became popular. Dennis Jones wanted to be a "ski bum" before there was ski bums, which was not a viable career opportunity; he turned his attention to the hill behind his father's hotel in Soda Springs on Donner Summit. He cleared trees in 1929 opening Beacon Hill, a small ski area. There he opened a rental shop with 25 pairs of skis becoming the first ski school in California. Soda Springs Ski Area, or Beacon Hill, was on the train route and soon became a popular ski area, the "St. Mortiz of America" where he taught famous movie stars to ski.

Dennis was not just an entrepreneur. He was also an accomplished skier and was the first, perhaps, to ski to Yosemite over the mountains from the east. He was known as the "Sierra Skiing Marvel." That familiarity with skiing led him to develop a new skiing technique, the reverse shoulder parallel turn, the forerunner of modern skiing.

Knowing that in order to make skiing popular with ordinary people it had to be made easier, Dennis installed one of the first ski lifts, an Up Ski which consisted to two toboggans on which skiers sat. One toboggan went up, the other went down. It did not work well, and Dennis later installed the first rope tow on Donner Summit.

If a heart condition did not force Dennis off of the mountain at the age of 40, there is no telling where he may have taken the sport, and the industry.

Dan Rossovich is a business owner in Grass Valley. He's married and has two daughters, ages 17 and 12. He also lives part-time in Carnelian Bay at Lake Tahoe.



DONNER SUMMIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

www.donnersummithistricalsociety.org

Membership

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.

Dennis Jones - to the Hall of Fame - cont'd.

In chronological order by year, list the candidate's achievements:

1929 First Recognized Ski Resort on the Summit called Beacon Hill (Later to be named Soda Springs)

1929 Opened First Ski Rental on Summit

1931 First recognized Ski School on the Summit (Possibly the USA)

1931 Performed in the movie "Rivers End" as a stunt double for Charles Bickford

1931 Dennis Placed 1st in the Olympic Trials for X-Country Skiing

1932 Placed 2nd in the International Downhill Ski Competition held in Switzerland

1932 Top Seed for the 1932 Olympic Downhill Team

1932 Ruled a Professional Skier for his part in "Rivers End" disqualifying Dennis from participating in the 1932 Olympics

1932 Along with Milana Jank, Dennis Skied the from Bridgeport, CA over Tioga Pass, and through Yosemite Valley, a feat of 130 miles in 36 hours

1933 Dennis developed parallel skiing as it is know now and started teaching at his Ski School the "California Ski School"

1934 Built the first motorized lift in the USA called the "Up-Ski"

1935 Built the Snow Flake Lodge at Beacon Hill Resort.

1935 Built the first Rope Tow on the Summit

1945 Built the first modern ski lift at Soda Springs

1985 Dennis received the Charles Proctor Award for his contributions to the Ski Industry

On one page provide additional data, anecdotes, etc. that you feel are pertinent to this nomination:

First American to Place at an International ski competition- 2nd Place in Switzerland 1931

Operator of the first "Ski Resort" Beacon Hill 1929

Owner of the first ski school in the U.S. California Ski School 1929

Father of Free Style Skiing

Father of Commercial Ski Industry in U.S.

Innovator of the Up-Ski first motorized transportation to the top of a ski run

First rope tow on summit (Dennis claimed to have the first in the Western U.S.)

Passed over for the 1932 Olympics for being deemed a Professional for being a stunt double in a Movie "Rivers End"

Called "The Sierra Skiing Marvel"

Developed, perfected and taught what is known today as modern parallel skiing

First to known for "Free Dogging" later to be called "Hot Dogging" on skis

2014 Margie Powell History Hike

Margie Powell was one of the founders of the Donner Summit Historical Society. She loved the local history.

She passed away three years ago. In her memory the community began the Margie Powell History Hikes which have proved really popular.

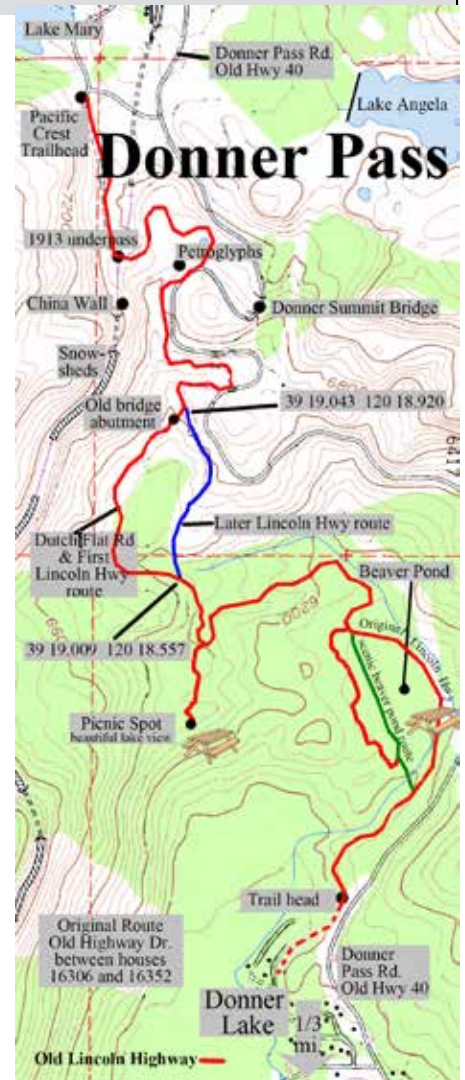
The 2014 hike will go downhill from the PCT on Donner Summit to the Land Trust kiosks on Old 40 (trailhead in the map to the right). Along the way we'll tell the stories of the local history: the Emigrant Trail, the Stephens and Donner Parties, The Lincoln Highway, China Wall, 1913 underpass, Old 40, Rainbow Bridge, petroglyphs, and turkeys. We'll see old signs painted on rocks, wonderful scenery, and historic sites. We'll eat lunch at a beautiful view site.

Best of all, we'll organize so car shuttle back to the top so the most interesting and historic hike on the summit will also be the easiest and most fun.

There will be two hikes: **August 2 and August 3**. Meet at the PCT trailhead* at 10 A.M. Download the brochure with the map to the right it on our brochure page at the DSHS website.

The 2015 Margie Powell Hike will be at Big Bend: Stephens Party, first white baby born in California, Emigrant Trail (rust marks on the rocks), Lincoln Highway (we'll walk pristine sections, and then end up at Rainbow Lodge, an historic old time lodge. Dates still to be decided.

*The PCT is just off Old 40 on Donner Summit. Take the Sugar Bowl Rd. turnoff to the Old Donner Summit Rd. Drive up to the PCT trailhead. Parking is just below it or uphill towards Sugar Bowl Academy. The Academy has also given permission for people to park there for the Margie Powell Hike (white buildings at the top).



When you are out walking this coming summer and are near the Emigrant Trail, look for signs that mark it like the ones at left put up by Peter Wedell in the 1920's.

These are on Mt. Judah. Text:
Emigrant Trail
Placed by P. Wedell

