

# The Donner Summit

# Heirloom



History and stories of the Donner Summit Historical Society

November, 2014 issue #75

## Dancing the "Juba" on Donner Summit

For the emigrants coming to California in the mid-19th Century, the Sierra was the most difficult part of the journey, even more harrowing than the 40 mile desert in Nevada.

Emigrant Diaries reflect their feelings. Joseph Hackney in 1849 said steep as the roof of a house. " Edwin Bryant said "formidable and apparently impassable barrier...." in 1846 When we reached Sierra Nevada mountains they looked terrible. " said David Hudson 1845 "As we came up to it the appearance was exactly like marching up some immense wall built directly across our path ... Elisha D. Perkins 1849 and Wm. Todd said the Sierra were "tribulations in the extreme."



"When we struck the main ridge of the mountains, every heart was filled with terror at the awful site [sic]."

William Tustin 1846

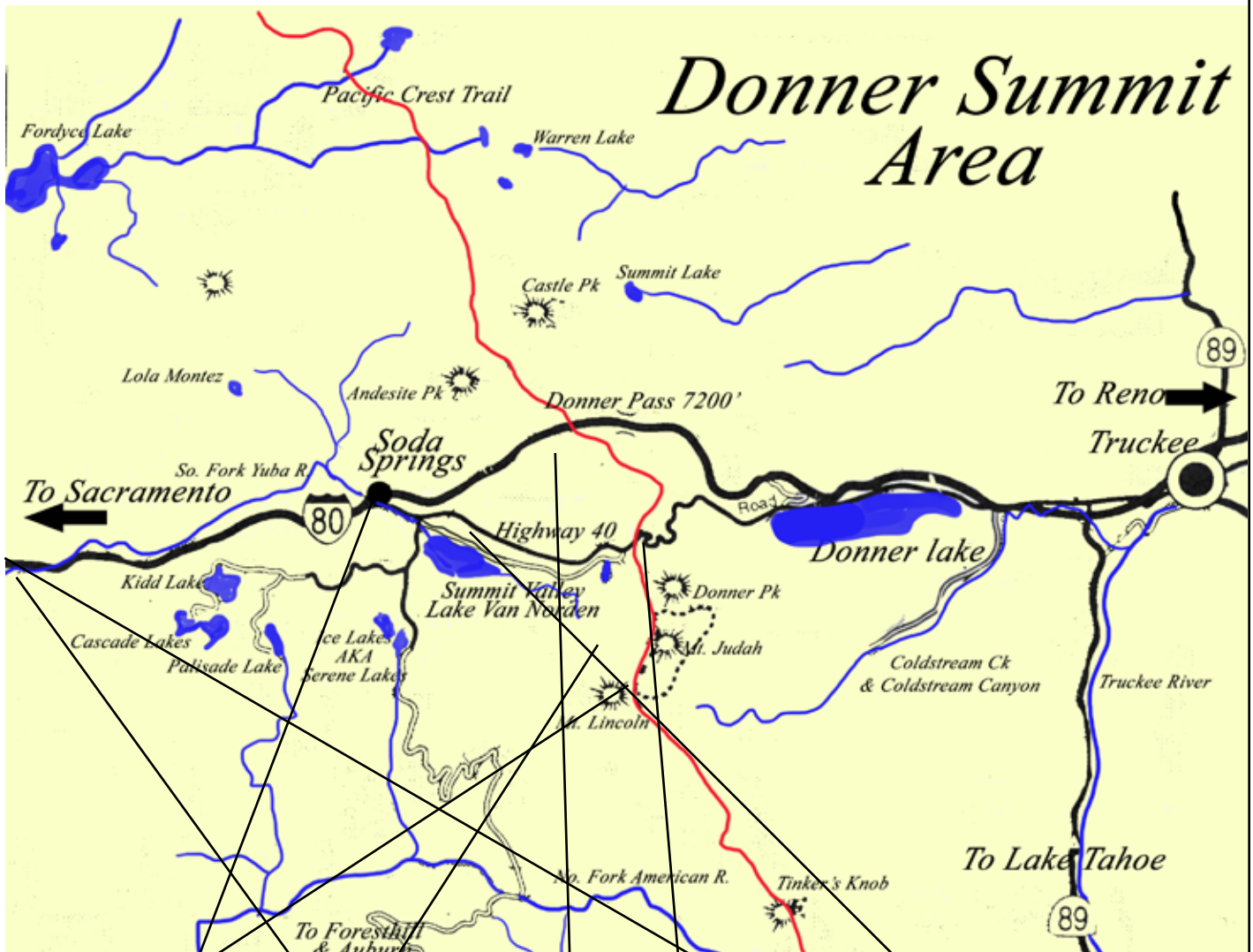
So we can imagine the joy and relief the emigrant felt when they reached the top of whichever or the three Donner Passes (Donner Pass, Roller Pass, and Coldstream Pass) they had conquered. They saw beautiful Summit Valley laid out in front of them with water and grass just waiting. It was all downhill from their to their dreams of new lives in California. Of course it was not all downhill from there. Some really hard stretches were yet to come [Here I was going to list [Heirloom](#) emigrant experience articles but there is a plethora so you'll have to check our on line indices if you are interested - on our newsletter pages on our website].

"we came to a fine prairie [Summit Valley], about three miles long by three fourths of a mile broad, full of springs and excellent water, and at the lower end a find branch, which forms the head of Juba river, and the way we danced "Juba" there, was a caution to all future emigrants.

Wm. Todd, 1845

cont'd to page 5

# Story Locations in this Issue



## In This Issue

- Roller Pass pg 1      Sugar Bowl pg 3      Western Ski Sport Museum pg 6      Cisco Grove pg 8      Norden Station pg 9
- Beacon Hill Lodge pg 10      Half Way House pg 15      Dutch Flat Wagon Rd pg 16

editor:  
 Bill Oudegeest  
 209-606-6859  
 info@donnersummithistoricalsociety.org

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

# Sugar Bowl Hits 75

# Soda Springs Hits 80

This year marks the 75th Anniversary of Sugar Bowl\* and the 80th anniversary of Soda Springs Ski Area. One would think that would occasion some major Heirloom articles in celebration.

The problem is that there is a lot of Donner Summit history still waiting to come out of our [Heirloom](#) computers and we've already covered these subjects. In October, November, and December of 2009 we covered the history and stories of Sugar Bowl. We also made some displays for Hannes Schroll, Sugar Bowl Founder and "Red Devil of Tyrol", which are on the Exhibits page on our website, and Sugar Bowl's 70th, which is on our Poster page. You may also like to see "Starr's Story" about the Silver Belt which is a set of two posters on our Exhibits page.

We covered the history of Soda Springs Ski Area with articles about the "Remarkable Dennis Jones, the Father of Commercial Skiing in the Sierra" in our February, '09 [Heirloom](#). There is also a Dennis Jones exhibit on the Exhibits page of our website.

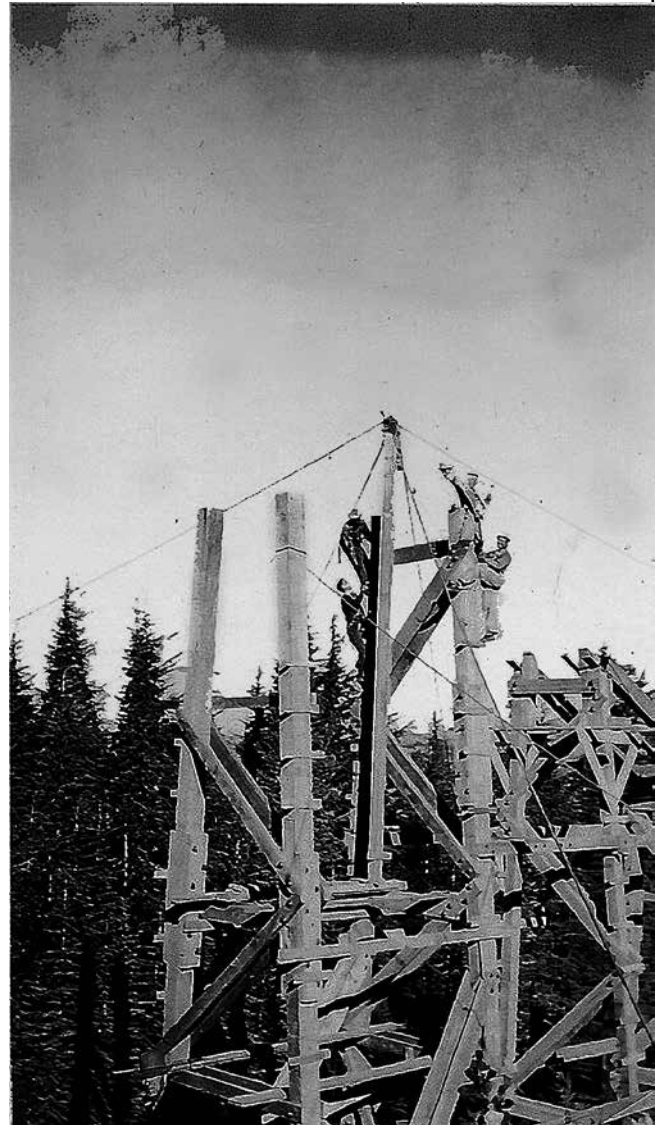
Soda Springs and Sugar Bowl are also the subjects of two of our 20 Mile Museum signs which you can find along Old 40 or on our 20 Mile Museum webpage.

Having given so much attention before, since those sources are readily available to aficionados of Donner Summit history on our website (all of our newsletters are there along with indices for articles and pictures), and since there so much more to tell about Donner Summit history, our editorial staff decided to use our [Heirloom](#) real estate for other purposes in this issue.

So for this month the only new piece of history is the photo to the right sent to us recently by Bruce Matson. The photograph shows the first chair lift in California under construction at Sugar Bowl.

Bruce Matson, who is a relative of Johnny Ellis about whom you can read in the April, July, and August '09 [Heirlooms](#). Johnny Ellis, faithful readers will remember, subdivided Lake Mary, had three rope tows at what is now Donner Ski Ranch and Mt. Judah, and had plans for a resort on Mt. Judah and Donner Pk. that would have had a funicular sort of conveyance to the upper levels. To see what happened you'll have to go into the archives on our website.

\* We should be absolutely correct here so as to maintain our integrity. Sugar Bowl was scheduled to open in December of '39 but there was not enough snow so the opening date was pushed into January.





# Sugar Bowl and Hannes Schroll Spawn Ski Greats

Nick Chickering

Hannes Schroll, the principal founder and original Ski School Director of Sugar Bowl, was in the 1930's the best alpine skier in the World, having won the 1934 famed Marmolada Downhill and 1935 combined U.S. National Downhill and Slalom.

Prior to founding Sugar Bowl, Hannes was Ski School Director at Badger Pass, where with Sugar Bowl later on, Hannes and Sugar Bowl incubated virtually an entire panoply of famous skiers and ski school directors of the best known resorts in the West.

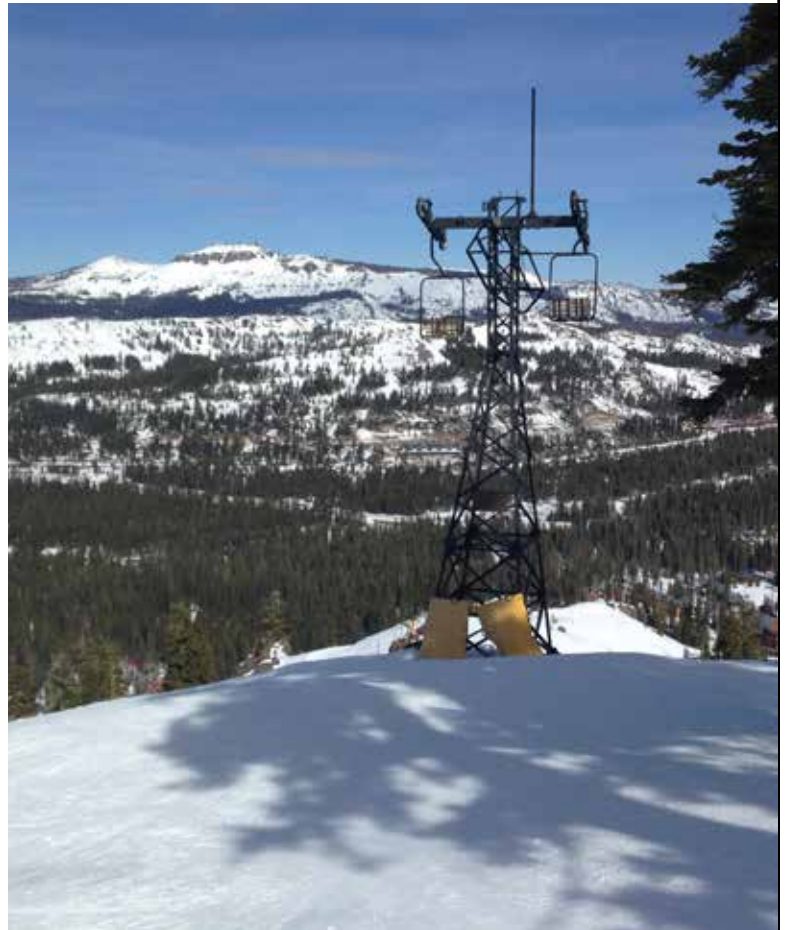
Under Hannes, there was Friedl Pfeiffer, founder of the Aspen Ski School, Alf Engen, founder of the Alta Ski School, and Sigi Engel, founder of the Sun Valley Ski School.

Later came Junior Bounous, founder of the Snowbird Ski School; Emo Heinrich, founder of the Stratton Mountain Ski School; Luggi Foeger, founder of Alpine Meadows and Ski Incline Ski Schools; and Jim McConkey, founder of the Whistler Ski School. Jim married one of the Sugar Bowl householder (Chamberlain) daughters, whose son, Shane McConkey, went on to become the World Extreme Ski Champion before his untimely 2009 death attempting a tragic stunt in the Dolomite Mountains of Italy.

Another notable Sugar Bowl ski instructor was Bill Briggs, the father of Heli and Mountaineering skiing in the U.S. and first person to ever ski the Grand Teton in 1971.

Of course, as famous in his own right as Hannes, was our own Wilhelm "Bill" Klein, who was instrumental in getting Hannes and the other founders interested in buying the land that is now Sugar Bowl, and following him as the long time Ski School Director and beloved co-father of Sugar Bowl.

[Nick Chickering is the son of one of the four founders of Sugar Bowl. Hi family owns the Chickering Estate at the Cedars, which was the old Mark Hopkins Estate. Mark Hopkins was one of the "Big Four" who buiilt the transcontinental railroad. t



If you have Donner Summit History stories you'd like to contribute, we'd be happy to accept.

Just email: [info@donnersummithistoricalcociety.org](mailto:info@donnersummithistoricalcociety.org)

**About the Picture Above:** It is of course what is left of the first chairlift in California. The single seater opened in January, 1940 (there was not enough snow in December, '39) and is today on permanent display on Mt. Disney with a great view of Castle Pk.

## Dancing the "Juba" from page 1

Having reached the top of the passes the emigrants were joyful. They report congratulating themselves, cheering, playing celebratory music, and even dancing the "Juba" (apparently a misspelling of the Yuba River). Elisha Perkins said, "At last the summit was gained & we attempted 3 cheers for our success which unfortunately failed for want of breath," in 1849

John Steele, 1850,

"Having reached the height of the last mountain range, so we could look forward from its summit to the land of our dreams, toil and hope, we gave three long and loud cheers. "

## Dancing the "Juba," 2014

We've covered the emigrant experience on the three Donner Passes, repeated many emigrant quotes, and reviewed books that included emigrant passage over Donner Pass. That's not the point of this article.

The DSHS does more than the Heirloom and the museum. We have much printed material on local history, free for the taking. We have our 20 Mile Museum consisting of 42 interpretive signs along Old 40. We also give public presentations and guide hikes.

One recent hike was for Stephanie Gibbons' class of 3rd Graders at Tahoe Expeditionary Academy in Kings Beach. One October 1st the kids arrived to a very windy Donner Summit. Then they hiked all the way to Roller Pass, proving they had the "grit" to do it. They'd just been to Elko and the pioneer museum there as part of their study of the character the emigrants must have had for them to abandon family, lives, and treasured items back home to head for California.

We ate lunch at the top of Roller Pass and then the kids were game to go down and back up. It is a difficult climb. Then imagine doing it with oxen and wagons or while carrying your baby brother.

Having experienced the pass we headed back, stopping first at the Summit Valley overlook. How happy the emigrants must have been. There, upon hearing about the dancing of the "Juba" the kids broke into dance accompanied by a flute, a harmonica, and a cardboard box whistle three kids had brought to enliven their trip to the emigrant past.



Top: having conquered Roller Pass, 3rd graders pose. Center: posing after lunch. Bottom: on the way down Roller Pass.



# Auburn Ski Club SkiSport Museum

## Western Ski Sport Museum at Boreal

This is a hidden jewel on Donner Summit and since it's about history it's odd that we have not written about it before this. Better late than never though.

The Auburn Ski Club has been instrumental in popularizing skiing. At the beginning skiing was for transportation. Later, as close of most people go to the sport was as spectators to races and ski jumping. Wendell Robie and the Auburn Ski Club thought that should be corrected so they worked hard to publicize the sport and develop opportunities for people to participate. They put on ski jumping exhibitions at Berkeley and Treasure Island

in the 1930's for example. They held ski races and jumping competitions at their ski areas along Highway 40. It was the Club that provided the impetus in 1931 to get Highway 40 plowed in the winter so people could access the snows in automobiles. They had invited the State legislature to a ski exhibition. The traffic jam that resulted when 2,400 more automobiles showed up too convinced the legislature that there was a need for an winter highway. Of course the plowing of 40 opened up all kinds of opportunities not just for snow sport enthusiasts but also businesses. Soon small ski area opened all along the highway.

Thos are all stories for other Heirlooms but they serve as an introduction to the Western Ski Sport Museum at Boreal. Wendell Robie was a ski pioneer and in 1965 he, along with Roy Mikkelson, a local ski jump champion, and Bill Berry, a sports writer with a large collection, decided it was time to built a museum to exhibit the history of skiing. Wendell was the owner of the Auburn Lumber Company and he told his guys to build one of his package houses in the parking lot at Boreal. That was the first museum. In the late 1970's the building was enlarged and the exhibits revamped into their present form.



A stop at the museum is fun and educational. You can learn about:

Mad Dog Dick Buek, a ski local ski pioneer

The first American woman ski champion, Sigrid Stromstad

Laming

Ski doping

Ski jumping in Berkeley

Interesting ski lifts

Snowshoes for horses

Snowshoe Thompson and his mail bag (his statue is out front)

Racing skis from the old days, one pair from 1867 in "mint condition"

12' skis and imagine trying to maneuver them

Dartmouth Outing Club

Famous local skiers

Bill Barry, a famous sports writer built a huge collection of ski and snow sport memorabilia over decades. That has formed the core of the Auburn Ski Club's collection of which about 50% is on displays. He put together the first exhibits in the Auburn Lumber Company's package house. When the building was enlarged Bill Clark stepped in. He'd been a ski coach at Boreal and had graduated from college in recreation and environmental interpretation. He took over the curatorship at the museum and lived above it with his wife and family. He built the current exhibits.

Today Bill runs the Auburn Ski Club and the curating has fallen to Fred Anderegg who will greet you when you visit.

Although the museum has long been at Boreal, the Club has a long term goal to relocate the museum to Highway 89 near Squaw Valley where ski history can get the attention and support it deserves. The move will improve the long-term sustainability of the museum. Currently the Club is working with Placer County to find a suitable site. You can check their progress and ideas by going to their website at <http://www.squawvalleymuseum.org/>

The museum at Boreal is open during the ski season. Check <http://auburnskiclub.com/ski-museum/>



#### LAKE MARY ROPE TOW

*In the early 1930s a crude rope tow pulled skiers up the west side of Mt. Judah near Sugar Bowl. This bull wheel was the main drive pulley. It ran in a vertical position, note the groves for the rope. The ride up was reported to be hard and only a few Ladies ever made it to the top.*





**More pictures from the Auburn Ski Sport Museum at Boreal.**

Clockwise from top left: Auburn Ski Hill sign from Cisco Grove where the Auburn Ski Club had their headquarters until I-80 intruded and they moved to Boreal Ridge. Sled ski tow, Skiers climbing the ski jump hill at Cisco Grove, workers clearing Highway 40. The lower shovelers shoveled up to the middle shovelers who shoveled to the upper shovelers who shoveled the snow away, cars parked along Old 40 at Cisco. The caption says that jumping competitions attracted thousands in the 30's.



# From the DSHS Archives



## "Grats" Powers

Ex-skitrooper "Grats" has made arrangements with Art and Fran Couillard to teach at Beacon Hill Lodge, Soda Springs, California. After leaving many successful seasons and pupils behind him, Powers is expected to be in demand this winter. As part of his equipment he will run a portable rope tow, and may later develop a larger lift.

Western Ski Magazine,  
December, 1945

Beacon Hill was the name of what is now Soda Springs Ski Area. It was called "Beacon Hill" because there was a beacon on it that guided airplanes - see our July '11 [Heirloom](#).

Above are Herb and Lena Frederick, who ran the Norden Store and Lodge for many years (see [Heirlooms](#) October and November, '11). Here they are in the Norden train station which sat below the Norden Store on the train tracks. At times there was a restaurant (see the February, '11 [Heirloom](#) for Fong the Famous Snow Shed Cook by Jimmy White) inside and skis could be rented there. This is a view we have not seen before.

Descending the west side of the Pass was, though very steep nothing compared the Eastern ascent, & we encamped some 2 or 3000 feet below our recent elevation near large train which crossed the day previous...About 8 in the evening some of the Missionary wagons which had made the ascent came down by torch light it being rather uncomfortable lodgings on top, & the Effect of the Blazing pine knots in the dense forest above us, the shouts of the men & rumbling wagons &c. was very picturesque. It reminded me much of Maelzels famous exhibition of the Burning of Moscow, which I saw years ago, where the French baggage trains evacuate the city by torchlight.

Elisha Perkins 1849

This quote comes from Tail of the Elephant reviewed in our August, 2013 [Heirloom](#). Here Perkins is talking about coming down from Roller Pass to Summit Valley.

# From the DSHS Archives



B-7365 collection.



What caught our eyes here were the interior pictures of the Beacon Hill Lodge which sat just west of the Soda Springs Hotel until it burned in the 1970's. It sat opposite Beacon Hill, hence it's name. See the previous page for why Beacon Hill was named Beacon Hill.

We've shown other exterior pictures but never interior ones. Here is the main lobby, above, and the bar.

Also displayed is a key which someone left hanging on the Donner Summit Historical Society's front door one day last summer. So, if you need a room for the night.....





# Fashions and Equipment, 1939

Ski Heilk was a short-lived ski magazine that was published in Modesto, CA. Here, just in time for ski season are some hints for fashionable attire on the slopes. These hints are good for the "retro" look or in case 1939, Sugar Bowl's opening, comes around again.

## Ski Clothes for Women 1939

The author, Mary Tresidder, thought that the coming '39 season would still show Scandinavian influences in the styles women would wear on the slopes although "Italy is sending over gay accessories – sweaters and bonnets with embroideries or flowers of bright appliqué for trimming... A black velveteen hood and mittens with a touch of embroidery will adorn many a fair skier this winter, though probably on her wandering from fireside to fireside rather than on the ski slopes themselves."

Women's magazines say, "The smart skier wears skirts." But Ms Tresidder said that "unless she is one of our better skiers, she will be wiser to stay on the porch when she wears them."



Navy cravenetted all-wool serge. Adjustable suspenders. Swiss style full-bloused trouser legs with all wool knit anklets and elastic strap to go under instep.

cutoff a really first-class pair of ski trousers is akin to that of really first-class riding breeches; to turn out a top-notch article require a certain flair... Materials took, are better. Gone are those fuzzy plaids of a few years ago, bulky snow-catchers that gave the effect of a snow-man after a spill or two.

There is more variety in the color of a well-cut ski suit this year than formerly. The good old dark blue and black are always standard, of course, but gray is very much in evidence, and with beige and some rather dark green and rich browns... Contrasting jackets of tweed and homespun, weather proofed and lined... (often with treated cottons in gay checks and plaids of flowered patterns) are very good. On the ski slopes, separate trousers with flannel shirt and light windbreaker or parka, wind proofed but not water tight, are best...



Navy stream-lined trousers worn with white crew shirt and scarlet poplin vest.

There are enchanting things to add to your costume for the after skiing hours, odd packets and gay sweaters and the like, and... the peasant dirndls that have been so popular are gay and very comfortable for founding around...

In trousers the "kanonen type, cut in and narrowed to the ankle has become the "instructor", and is the most widely worn... With these, ski socks are worn inside, not out, giving a narrower, straighter line...

There is more variety in headgear than a few years ago with the engine--driver type of navy=blue cap with visor was practically uniform. There are many hoods, some knitted, some quilted, and the Italian caps... are high=peaked and often embroidered. ... The Tyrolean hats are smart, and very dashing... but they don't stay on when you are roaring down a steep slope... Many a time I have seen Hannes' hat float back on the snow while he yodeled gaily down a "Schuss."

...the most important single item, both for comfort and control, is your boots. They are more or less standard now; the day of selling hiking boots to the unwary beginner is over, I hope... For leather and general cut, the imported boots still have a little edge on the domestic...

"In your ski suit itself, don't go in for tricky things; they are too meretricious for a sport where clothes are important because of comfort. Shirts or sweaters, scarves and mittens – the can give you all the color you need, but the in the main art of your outfit be severely practical.

American manufacturers are improving the design of their ski clothes year by year, but the problem of the



If you are going on tour, by all means take a knapsack, as Dr. Hildebrand suggests, with the essentials of wax, a roll of adhesive tape, a knife, a shoestring or leather thongs and an extra sweater as well as your lunch...and a bar of chocolate...the little pouches you can get in felt or leather are often most attractive. My favorite one is pigskin.



Hunter's green velveteen jacket with orange zippers. Skirt lined with orange and green and black plaid.

## New Equipment

Jefferson Milam 11/39

Uppermost in the minds of most skiers when they think of ski equipment seems to be the question, "How is the European War affecting ski equipment?" It is really too early to tell...but it seem safe to guess that the only effect will be place the American manufacturers permanently ahead of their European competitors.

This year we have notice a decided improvement in the finish of skis. There is a trend away from ash and maple to low-grade hickory ridge-top models. ...even a hickory of low grade is better than any other wood."

Steel edges are definitely on the up-grade. All shops are featuring them...There is a new laminated edge on the market...and at present it looks very good. It has no exposed screw heads, and the edge is in sections, which permits flexibility.

Cable bindings are here to stay. There are many new ones on the market...from those at \$4.00 to the most expensive.

Steel poles will be sold this year in great quantities... they will take the punishment which hard skiing imposes. [although] If a skier wants something with fine balance and plenty of flexibility, a pair of split bamboo poles should be worth a try.

Since the advent of the cable binding, it has become necessary to place more emphasis on boots. They are now considered the most important feature of the modern ski outfit...Any modern boot must have a rigid shank, strong sole and an upper of good quality leather which will not soften.

# GREGG presents

A SKI HEADLINER

The **BENEDIKTER** Model

A registered, guaranteed ski for the skier who wants the very best. Designed, used, and recommended by SEPP BENEDIKTER, famous Sun Valley ski instructor. Finished in the natural color of white hickory.

Other GREGG models for Slalom, Touring, Racing, and Jumping . . . hand-made from finest air-dried hickory by Scandinavian craftsmen. They're better, skis at better prices.



Write us for new illustrated folder

GREGG MFG. CO.



ST. PAUL, MINN.





# Book Review

## From St. Louis to Sutter's Fort

Heinrich Lienhard

Heinrich Lienhard was one of the emigrants who made the trek across the continent to California in 1846, the same year as the Donner Party. He and his four friends were called the "four German boys" by other travelers even though Heinrich was Swiss. What set Heinrich apart from other emigrants is that he kept an extensive diary rivaled only by Edwin Bryant's *What I Saw in California*. Bryant happened to travel in 1846 as well. Other diarists made much shorter observations about their travels. What is particularly interesting to those reading *The Heirloom* is that Heinrich and friends (as well as Edwin Bryant) went over Roller Pass on Donner Summit.

The group left St. Louis on a steamer for Independence, MO. From Independence they embarked on their journey across the continent initially as part of a train of 26 wagons, enough to be protection against Indians. His diary gives us a view of what it was like on the trail: order of travel, camping each night, daily travel, division of duties, arguments, interactions with Indians, buffalo hunting, adventures with Lucinda, guns, etc. It also gives a view of things as places of note are visited: Ft. Laramie, Independence Rock, and Salt Lake Valley for example.

Because he kept a rather full diary rather than a simple log one gets a good feeling about traveling. Lienhard reports each argument, naturally from his point of view, but in reading about those the reader gets an idea about how the exhaustion and difficulties of travel affected inter-personal relations. The trip was not just about wagons, oxen, looking for water, watching for Indians, gathering food, etc. It was also about human beings and their relationships made harder by the daily travel. At the same time the litany of arguments gets a bit tiring as does the rendition of mundane details. Skimming helps.

Interestingly, Lienhard's party took the Hastings cutoff which he said was better named the "Hastings long trip." They ran into another party that had not taken the cutoff and had left Ft. Bridger "twelve or fourteen days later..." and had gotten just as far when Lienhard's group finished with the cutoff. The Donner Party, coming a bit later in the season also took the cutoff and rued the decision.

We, reading emigrant experiences, are amazed at the trials and tribulations and focus on them as we sit in our easy chairs. But there was more to the journeys than desert crossings, sleeping on wet cold ground, and climbing mountains. One passage is nicely evocative of the beauty of the valley around Salt Lake. "The clear sky-blue surface of the lake, the warm, sunny atmosphere, the high mountains with the beautiful

HEINRICH LIENHARD

## *From St. Louis to Sutter's Fort, 1846*

*Translated and Edited by  
Erwin G. and Elisabeth K. Gudde*



HEINRICH LIENHARD

Photograph taken about 1890.

countryside at their base, through which were traveling on a fine road – al this put me in a very happy mood. All day long I felt like singing and whistling; and if there had been a single white family there, I believe I would have stayed. What a pity that the magnificent country was uninhabited.”

There are the trials and tribulations as well. “Thus far, we had passed twenty-four wagons which had been left behind. Now we stopped because all our oxen were apparently suffering. ...They became hollow-eyed, It was hard to see the animals suffer so. We could not give them any more water because we had only a little left for ourselves, and they would hardly touch the grass we offered them. But we couldn’t stay here. We had to go on and the poor beasts had to drag the wagons along. Soon we came upon some animals that had been left behind. Some were dead already, others were still moving their ears... all was arid without a sign of moisture.... Now we knew that we also had to cross the valley before we could reach water, that indispensable element.” Then they reached a spring and a dog jumped in ecstatic with joy and began drinking. Soon he began rolling around and died. The spring was poison. Travel was not so easy in those days.

Now comes the part people interested in Donner Summit history will like, “Crossing the Sierra Nevada” using Roller Pass. Lienhard’s group got to the pass on October 3. For comparison, the Donner Party began to arrive at Truckee Lake (Donner Lake) on October 31 according to Desperate Passage.

Lienhard’s first viewed the pass with astonishment. It looked like several covered wagons were atop the trees. They later discovered that the pass was so steep that what seemed impossible was an optical illusion. They soon discovered that “we had traveled all kinds of bad road, but we began to believe the worst was yet to come, and in this we certainly were not mistaken.”

Since “no animal could climb up there” pulling a wagon, all of the oxen from the wagon train in front of Lienhard’s were taken to the top and chained together. The chain did not reach the bottom of the incline so trees were tied in. Then ropes were attached to one wagon. “The men took their places at either side of the wagon, then the twenty oxen above were made to start, and the wagon moved up the steep incline, with the men hardly being able to climb along.”

Here Lienhard digresses to the experiences of a party they’d overtaken at the Platte River, the Donner Party. He recounted their misfortunes which ended with half the party at Donner Lake where, with provisions run out, “they boiled old leather and harness straps and ate them.” Lienhard had heard about the Donner Party travails at Sutter’s Fort and got some of the story wrong. He said Mrs. Donner and Mr. Keseberg were the only survivors who did not go with rescuers. That Mrs. Donner purportedly had a lot of money was the reason rescuers worked their ways over the mountains to Donner

Lake. “When the men reached the camp of misery, they found only Keseberg alive, and he was very emaciated, pale, and weak. One might ask how this man was able to stay alive through the long, cold winter. The men found a number of buckets partly filled with segments and limbs of bodies of the dead including Mrs. Donner, ...It was said that he even ate the flesh of his own children, but this too unnatural to be credible.” One cannot say that modern people have a monopoly on the.... Lienhard then reports there were demands on Keseberg for Mrs. Donner’s money and that Keseberg was almost hung when he could not turn the money over.

Digression over, it was back to Roller Pass. The wagons in Lienhard’s party did not have enough chain and rope to do what the previous train had done. They pulled the wagons to the steepest part and there used chains and the trees used before but before hauling the wagons up they carried the contents “up on our own shoulders... IT was necessary to climb with one’s load, because walking was out of the question.”

“Since there was no grass or water at the summit, we had no time to lose in driving down to the next little valley.. The air was refreshing; the sky was clear; and just as the sun disappeared, we were driving down the mountain. The clouds of dust blew into my eyes so that I could hardly see, and in addition we were driving very fast, almost at a trot. ...It seemed to me that were racing rather than driving. ... dusk suddenly came upon us,.. more dust...we continued down, down, down, as though an evil spirit was pursuing us...” and they stopped to camp. The next day, the 5th of October, it began to snow. The next night they camped at the other end of Summit Valley.

It took another two weeks to reach the Central Valley. Four of the five boys then went off to participate in the last phase of California’s fight for independence. Lienhard then went back to Sutter’s Fort and worked for Sutter. In 1849 he went to Switzerland and brought back Sutter’s family. He did not go by wagon however. He went by ship. In 1850 he took his California earning and went back to Switzerland where he bought an estate and married a local girl. America still called though and took his family to Illinois in 1856. There he died in 1903.



# Then & Now with Art Clark



## Half Way House - Thomas Houseworth 1261

This little building was on the road connecting Upper Cisco with the Dutch Flat-Donner Lake Wagon Road. After reaching the end of the railroad at Cisco, goods were loaded on wagons for the trip over the Summit.

The sign on the porch roof is a mystery. Half Way to where? It is about halfway between the railroad and the South Yuba River, and it is roughly halfway between Dutch Flat and Donner Lake, but who knows? It is pretty small, so it could have been just a bar.

The location for this photograph had eluded me, so I enlisted the aid of Bill Oudegeest, who just walked up, pulled back the brush from the front of the prominent rock, and said "Here it is!" Thanks, Bill!

The old Juniper on the left side is still there, and doesn't look a lot different than it did in the 1860's.  
Photo location 39° 18.316'N 120° 32.821'W

Note: I really should have stood further back for the photo, but the trees and bushes which have grown there hid the entire scene.



Teaming from the CPRR, at Cisco  
Compare to Thomas Houseworth 1261



Teaming from the CPRR, at Cisco  
Compare to Thomas Houseworth 1261

Art and Janet



# Then & Now with Art Clark

## Dutch Flat Donner Lake Wagon Road

This view of Donner Lake is from just north of Tunnel Six, and shows an old car stopped along a section of the road that was abandoned around 1913. The realignment eliminated driving through the snowshed and the risk of being hit by trains. The new route rejoined the old near the curve in the lower right.



Notable is the change in vegetation, like the brush in the lower left, and the trees further down the road.

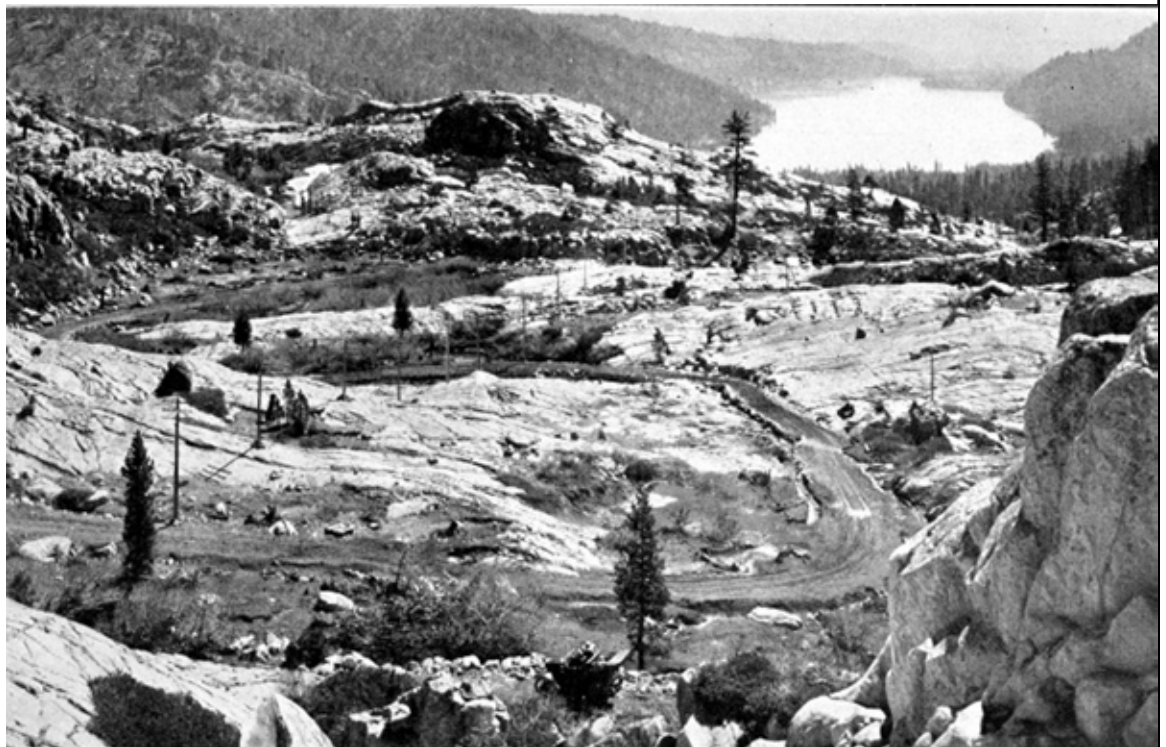
Shot from 39° 18.994'N 120° 19.459'W Dutch Flat Donner Lake Wagon Road

This view of Donner Lake is from just north of Tunnel Six, and shows an old car stopped along a section of the road that was abandoned around 1913.

The realignment eliminated driving through the snowshed and the risk of being hit by trains. The new route rejoined the old near the curve in the lower right.

Notable is the change in vegetation, like the brush in the lower left, and the trees further down the road.

Shot from 39° 18.994'N 120° 19.459'W





DONNER SUMMIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
[www.donnersummithistricalsociety.org](http://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.

\_\_\_\_\_