

The Donner Summit

Heirloom

History and stories of the Donner Summit Historical Society



December, 2015 issue #88

Snowsheds – the end (Part V)

Today Donner Summit snowsheds are not used for protecting trains and tracks from snow. Most of the snowsheds cover railbed where the rail has been removed. Snowsheds are not unused however. Read on.

The snowsheds on Donner Summit are iconic. At one time they stretched for forty miles protecting the trains and the tracks from heavy “Sierra Cement” snowfalls and avalanches. They did their job admirably despite their being “...a... convenient arrangement for a long bonfire...” ([Hawke’s Bay Herald](#), New Zealand, January 28, 1870) and “Esthetically [sic] they are a great nuisance. Again and again, as one is enjoying the grandest scenery upon the continent, the train plunges into a long, dark chamber, and the view is broken.” ([NY Tribune](#), 1869). They also collapsed from time to time and required the services of many workers: snow shovelers to keep the flat roofs from collapsing, carpenters, track walkers, etc.

Most people familiar with Donner Summit know the general outlines of the above and readers of the [Heirloom](#) have been able to dive into the specifics given that our February – May, 2015 [Heirlooms](#) have had major articles about the different aspects of snowsheds. Any readers who get on quiz shows and win because of snowshed questions should remember the DSHS fondly.

Snowsheds were and are not just used to snow protection for trains. Today they are “canvases” for graffiti artists both inside and out, host amazing ice sculptures in winter, provide interesting and different walking routes, and are mountain bike routes. One can start on Donner Summit at Tunnel 6 and walk or bike east all the way to Coldstream Canyon where the actual tracks and trains are. Since railroad routes have easy grades, walking or biking either way is easy.

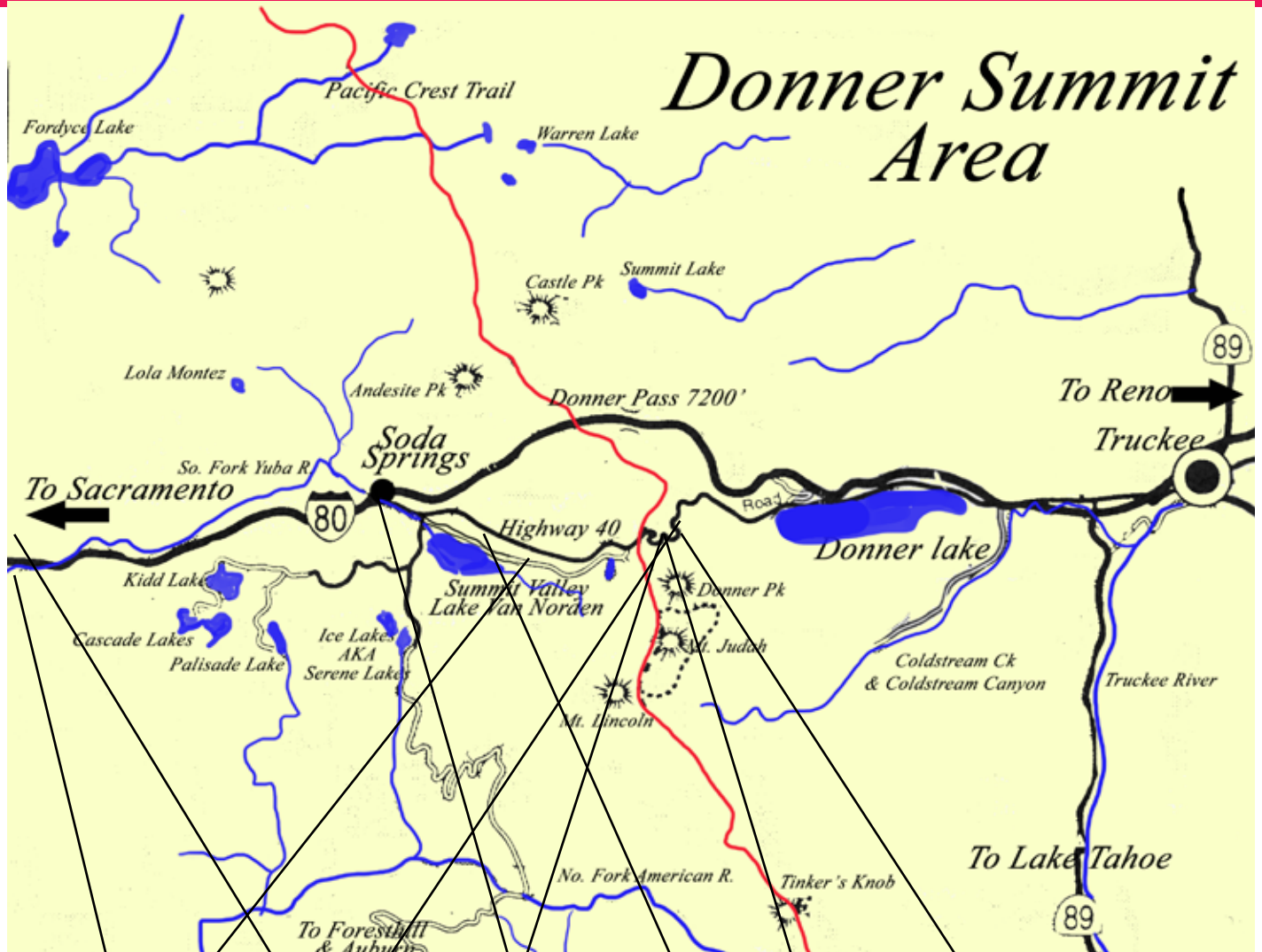
That’s today though. In the old days snowsheds were not just used by trains. A careful perusal of the sources, as the DSHS’ [Heirloom](#) editorial staff always does, delivers some interesting stories.

Thomas Stevens had a dream which did not include snowsheds but they became an important part of that dream. He decided he wanted to bicycle around the world in 1884. He then learned to ride a “high wheeler” in Golden Gate Park in San Francisco

The end of the Snowshed Story

In our February, March, April, and May (2015) “we covered just about everything having to do with the snowsheds on Donner Summit. There was just a little left which we thought would get into the June [Heirloom](#). We were too excited about other things and the end of the snowsheds got put off month after month until we finally got tough with ourselves. How could we leave the story incomplete and how could we torment our readers (even though they didn’t know they were missing anything). If you missed the previous parts I-IV, check out our indices or just go the requisite months on the website’s pages.

Story Locations in this Issue



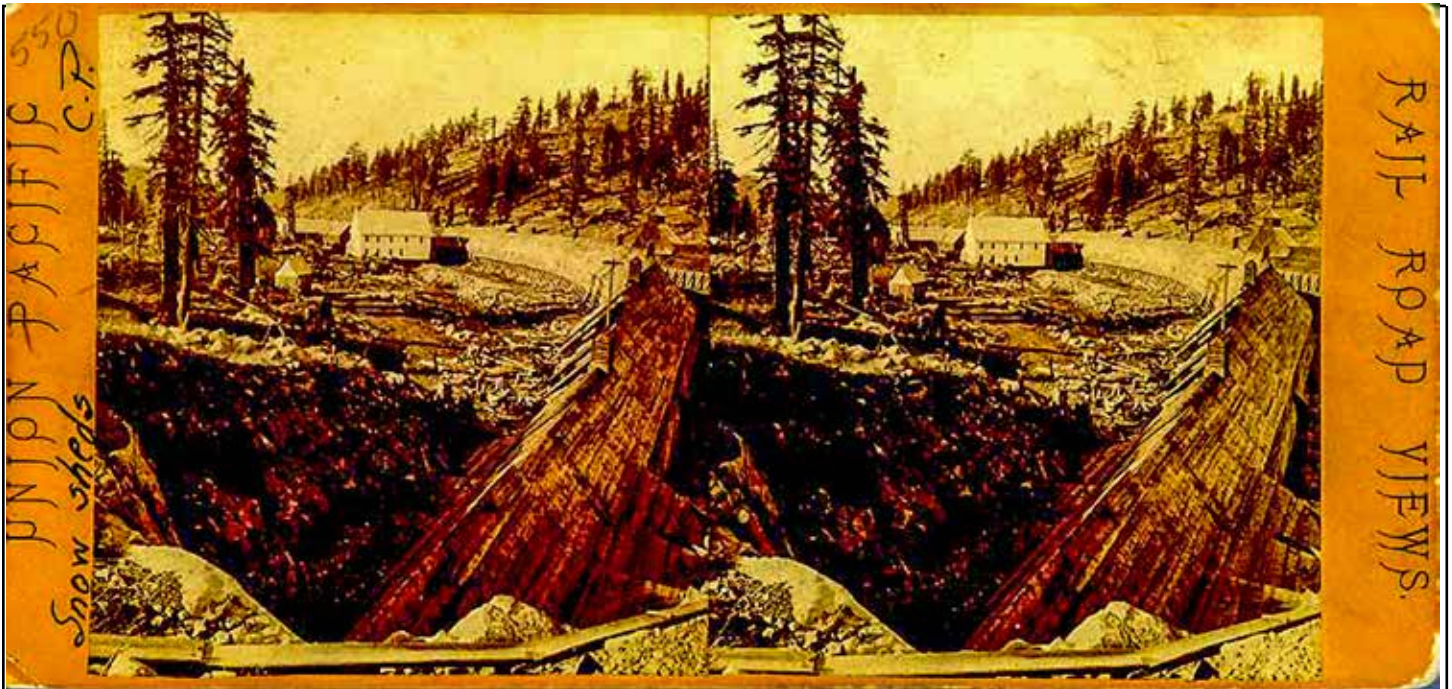
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editor:
 Bill Oudegeest
 209-606-6859
 info@donnersummithistoricalsociety.org

Proofread by Pat Malberg, Lake Mary, Donner Summit

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



Very early picture of Donner Summit Snowsheds at "Summit." The building is the first version of the Summit Hotel without additions. The snowshed in the foreground is leading to Tunnel 6.

after two hours of practice. He was then ready to set off but he did not realize that there would still be snow in the Sierra in April. As he approached the mountains people who knew better began to ask him how he would navigate the snow. He replied, "snowsheds." Stevens was probably not the first non-train to use the snowsheds; he was early in the list though. Eventually, when a school was built on Donner Summit the kids would walk through the snowsheds to get to class and most of the houses and buildings on the summit near the tracks were connected to the sheds. Those are all prosaic uses. Stevens was the first in a line of adventurous uses.

Stevens traveled with his bike (on this portion of the trip Steven estimated he pushed the bike half to two-thirds of the way) up the mountains and when he encountered the snow he went into the sheds. There was little room for him since snow blew in through the cracks in the boards and took up space. Travel in the sheds was gloomy, dark and smoky. Naturally he encountered trains and when he did, he would "proceed to occupy as small an amount of space as possible against the side, and wait for the "smoke-emitting monsters" to pass. The engines "fill every nook and corner of the tunnel with dense smoke, which creates a darkness by the side of which the natural darkness of the tunnel is daylight in comparison. Here is a darkness that can be felt ; [sic] I have to grope my way forward, inch by inch ; afraid to set my foot down until I have felt the place, for fear of blundering into a culvert..." "I pause every few steps to listen" for an approaching train.

Stevens got over the Sierra and went on to cross the continent and then go around the world with his bike. He was not the last though. (see Thomas Stevens' story in the book review [Around the World on a Bicycle in the March, '15 Heirloom](#)).



Before the underpass was built so the road went under the railroad tracks in 1914, traffic on the road over the summit required vehicles to travel through the snowsheds for about fifty yards hoping no trains would sneak up.

There were accidents.

Above shows an auto leaving the barn door opening in the snowshed side just east of Tunnel 6.

In 1895 the Wilson Family returned to San Francisco on a steamer after having biked to Los Angeles. They found that the railroad was on strike so they took a steamer to Sacramento and there hopped on their bikes for the trip over the Sierra to Reno where Nathaniel Wilson was a professor. Their three-year-old rode on Dad's handlebars "without a murmur." (That's a story we'll tell in a future [Heirloom](#) so stay tuned.)

The family also used the snowsheds when they ran into snow but had a better experience than Mr. Stevens had. There were no trains to worry about since there was a strike and "The



Winter ice formation in Tunnel 6. Ice formations like this can be found in many spots in the snowsheds.

temperature in the sheds was a delightful change from that prevailing outside." They had just traveled up the Sierra from Sacramento in July, the hottest time of the year. The family alternated walking and riding between the rails and on the narrow path to the side. They got to drink the "finest, purest water on earth" as it trickled down in the tunnels between the sheds. Then they came upon a cook car and got some "railroad pie." They did hear a rumble coming at them in the dark and just got off the track to avoid a hand car as it flashed by.

In 1903 George Wyman had a dream to cross the Sierra on his motor-bicycle. He also did not think of snow when he started out in the spring also from San Francisco. He met the snow and went into the snowsheds. In spring the sheds are covered still with snow which is beginning to melt and Wyman discovered that the sheds were dripping and gloomy. He said the sheds were still covered with 15 feet of snow. He pushed his motor-bicycle through miles of sheds. He spent the night at the top and discovered in the morning that he'd lost his oil can so he had to trek back through the sheds

until he found it. With little light that must have been a feat. Then, after pushing the cycle through Tunnel 6 he gave up and went out into the snow. He said he floundered, waded, walked, slipped, and slid down to Donner Lake. Apparently that was better than the sheds. (See George Wyman's story in our 3/14 [Heirloom](#)).

Merchants were in a rush each year for the snow to melt and the roads to open. The Tahoe Tavern held an annual contest for a few years awarding a silver cup to the first auto to cross Donner Summit and get to Lake Tahoe. In 1911 Arthur Foote decided he wanted the cup and with some friends, started from Nevada City in his Model T in June. It must have been a horrid trip since at one point they covered only 23 miles in seven days, but that included a trip back to Nevada City for some business. An article in the San Francisco Call says the snow was fifteen feet deep on the summit and "the snowsheds were utilized for a short distance."

After crossing the summit Foote and friends were confronted with the drop to Donner Lake. The road was buried under drifts of snow. They realized they'd never be able to keep the car from tumbling down the steep slopes but the adjacent snowshed's roof was free of snow. They used their block and tackle to hoist the car to the roof and then rode three miles downhill on the snowshed roofs. When they got to usable road they used the block and tackle again to lower the car off the snowshed roof. Driving the Sierra was not so easy in the old days. (We'll be telling Mr. Foote's interesting story in a future [Heirloom](#) as well so again, stay tuned, there's so much of Donner Summit history still to come.)

Amanda Preuss set a record driving across the country in the summer of 1916. She too used the snowsheds, "Passing over the Sierras, I negotiated three snow-sheds, the last one at the summit, over 7,000 feet above the sea. Coming out of this shed, the road drops 1,800 feet in less than a mile, curving wickedly toward Donner Lake, in the heart of the mountains, Thanks to the car, I negotiated it safely."

In [Automobile Magazine](#) dated May 25, 1916 there is an article about a record transcontinental automobile trip set by Robert Hammond. He bested the old record of 7 days, 11 hours, 52 minutes by going 3485 miles in 6 days, 10 hours, 59 minutes. The old record had been set, ironically, on the day that Hammond left San Francisco. He averaged 22.5 mph on the Lincoln Highway and drove from "Frisco" to Ogden in 36 hours. So we can't expect he'd have any good descriptions of 1916 Donner Summit. The important part for this article is:

"At the start Hammond ran into a deep coat of snow on the roads over the Sierras [sic], but overcame this obstacle by following a train through a snowshed for about 40 miles. Owing to this maneuver, he was able to make his long turn to Ogden in 36 hours." We cannot imagine that Mr. Hammond



The black line across the face of the mountains above is the line of the current snowsheds between tunnels on Donner Summit. There are no tracks in the sheds anymore. The train goes through a long tunnel about a half mile south of the route above.

was the first to do this death-defying trick. As you'll see next it *was* death defying. First, though, a few details of Mr. Hammond's trip are fun to list. He hit a "thank you ma'am" (depression dug across a road to drain water – like a water bar today on a hiking trail) at 45 mph which threw his passenger out of the car and 25 feet away. The passenger had to be replaced. Hammond's tires developed 70 punctures during the trip, he used a gallon of oil each 150 miles, and he got 10-13 mpg.

The [San Francisco Call](#) in the July 1, 1910 edition reported on an "Elaborate Tour Arranged to Start Next Saturday for Pleasure Place." The San Francisco Motor Club was scheduled to head for Lake Tahoe. They would average 17 mph on the trip leaving S.F. by ferry to Oakland. Then they'd overnight in Auburn. The directions told drivers to "Use care going through snowsheds.... A steady climb through snowsheds again.... To Summit house [sic] Follow main road through the snowsheds again [how people crossed the tracks before the underpass], then very rough and steep, two mile grade to sawmill [at the base of Summit Canyon] Cross under mill track bear to the right. Good level road to Truckee..."

The shortcuts through the snowsheds did not always work out. In an article in the [San Francisco Call](#) entitled, "Auto Struck by Train in 3 Mile Snowshed," it was reported that "B.J. Maupin and R.L. Douglas of Fallon, Nev, took a chance in short cutting with their machine through a three mile snowshed on the Southern Pacific at the summit of the Sierras last night and as a result were struck by a freight train. Maupin was probably fatally injured but Douglas escaped with a few minor bruises."

Then from [Overland Monthly and Outwest Magazine](#) in February of 1874 Benjamin Avery gave advice to tourists

on Donner Summit in an article called, "Summering in the Sierra."

"The tourist who stops a few days at Summit Valley, will find a walk along the railroad, through the snowsheds, peculiarly entertaining. These sheds, covering the track for thirty-five miles, are massive arched galleries of large timbers, shady and cool, blackened with the smoke of engines, sinuous, and full of strange sounds. Through the vents in the roof the interstices between the roof-boards, the sunlight falls in countless narrow bars, pallid as moonshine. Standing in a curve, the effect is precisely that of the interior of some of Gothic cloister or abbey hall, the light streaking through narrow side-windows. The footstep awakes echoes, and the tones of the voice are full and resounding. A coming train announces itself miles away by the tinkling crepitation communicated along the rails, which gradually swells into a metallic ring, followed by a thunderous roar that shakes the ground; then the shriek of the engine-valve, and, in a flash, the engine itself bursts into view, the bars of sunlight playing across its dark front with kaleidoscopic effect. There is ample space on either side of the track for pedestrians to stand as the train rushes past, but it looks as if it must crush everything before it, and burst through every shed. The approach of a train at night is heralded by a sound like the distant roar of surf, half an hour before the train itself arrives; and when the locomotive dashes into view, the dazzling glare of its head-light in the black cavern, shooting like a meteor from the Plutonic abyss, is wild and awful. The warning whistle, prolonged in strange diminuendo notes that sound like groans and sighs from Inferno, is echoed far and long among the rocky crags and forests."

From the DSHS Archives

Apparently we are not done with the Wiggins Family Album (see last month's [Heirloom](#)).

This time, instead of the general Cisco Grove pictures we have pictures of a wider variety.

Have you checked your closet for any lost photo albums?



Red Mountain sits overlooking I-80 at Cisco Grove. It was a railroad lookout to keep an eye out for snowshed fires (see the 7/ '10 [Heirloom](#).) It was also, 65 million years ago, an island in the Pacific. The rock that makes it up is entirely different from anything around.

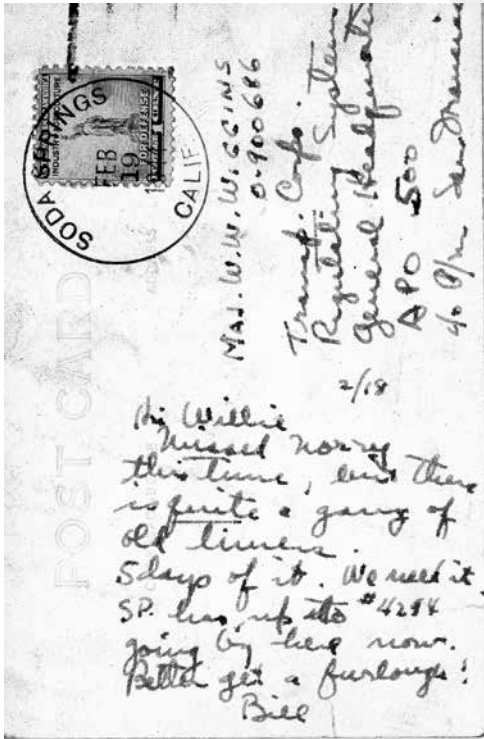
One day we'll feature some Red Mountain pictures from the State archives in Sacramento but not for awhile. There's just too much other history competing to get into the [Heirloom](#).

Here is Soda Springs in the winter. That date, judging from the other dates on some other pictures in the album, must be about 1913.

This is a very tiny picture in the album and it's not of very good quality but some people might like to see what things looked like when it used to snow on Donner Summit.



From the DSHS Archives



Above is a postcard mailed to Major W.W. Wiggins at General Headquarters in San Francisco in 1911. "Hi Willie, Missed Norrie this time, but there is quite a gang of old timers. 5 days of it.[hard to read]... Better get a furlough! Bill



This is the only picture out of area and it's smaller than most. It's a shot of San Francisco after the 1906 earthquake. Why it found its way into the album and from exactly when we don't know.



Because there's room, here's a picture of Crystal Lake. It's west of Cisco a little bit. There used to be a railroad stop there and a hotel. There are petroglyphs on rocks at one side of the lake. The Lincoln Highway route went through there. Today there is a private dwelling there.

Christmas Memories: Norden, 1952

Christmas 1952, my father relented, and I could spend the two weeks of vacation at Norden, with Lena and Herbert, my aunt and uncle, and Papa, my grandfather. It was a rare winter occasion since starting high school. The bus ran overnight from Los Angeles, up the Eastern Sierras to Lone Pine, Big Pine, Independence, Bishop, Rock Creek, Mammoth, Carson City, and Reno. I could picture them and the mountains even in the dark, my beloved snow-clad Sierra.

Herbert rose early, to put up the mail, before leaving for Reno. After all, he was Postmaster of Norden. He met me at the Greyhound bus station in Reno. Lena had to stay home to open the store. We stopped at Harold's Club for breakfast then on to pick up meat at Sierra Meats, ice cream at Chism's, and other groceries from wholesalers that Lena had requested. Then it was on to Highway 40 and the hour drive to Norden, pausing only at the California check station. They knew Herbert and let us right through. It was snowing.

At Norden I helped in the store, and when homeowners at Sugar Bowl called in grocery orders, helped to pile the requests on the store's counter, and then pack it all into boxes so it would safely survive the Magic Carpet and weasel ride to the homes. The eggs had to be well packed. Sugar Bowl homeowners loved the meats and fresh vegetables that Lena carried. Lena wrote the orders neatly in the little receipt book, and then she and I would race to see who could add the columns of prices the fastest. She usually won.

Herbert cut a beautiful white fir tree that Lena had decorated and it stood in the living room. The smell of that tree went through the whole house. That and coffee are the aromas I remember. Lena always had a pot of coffee on the big electric stove in the kitchen. She and Herbert both drank coffee all day long. Hers was black and Herb's always with a bit of sugar. On the 22rd of December a Pineapple Express rolled in, with very high winds and warm temperatures. Snowfall turned to rain. The winds were furious. There would be flooding in Marysville. It was no weather for skiing, best to stay home. Lena always had things for me to do. Early morning of the 24th the power went out. That meant no heat, no hot water, and no light. Then it turned cold, and the rain became snow. Lena took a package of shrimp out of the freezer for dinner that night. We used candles and Coleman Lanterns for light. Herbert stoked the fireplace, keeping it going to give us some heat in the living room. The bedrooms upstairs were freezing cold as was the store and the rest of the house. We bundled into our warm ski clothes. Papa was content to stay by the fire and read the papers. The 3 burner Coleman stove was set up, so Lena could keep the coffee pot going. When Lena went to check on the shrimp that evening, they were still frozen. We ate sandwiches for Christmas Eve.

In the German tradition, we opened our gifts Christmas Eve, sitting around that wonderful fire. Lena, Herbert and Papa enjoyed a glass of eggnog. I had some without the rum. The Coleman lanterns gave us just enough light. Papa got cigars and a huge bottle of rum. And I got a new pair of skis, Heads, with my name printed at the tops! I was thrilled!! I could see myself stem christying down Mt. Disney at Sugar Bowl. What a wonderful gift. Now, if we would just get the power back. We thought about the PG&E crews that were out working in this awful storm, giving up their time with family, to hopefully restore the electricity. It could not be easy.

"Herbert, bring up the cots from the basement. Milli, you take the lantern and help him." And so we set up 4 cots by the fireplace in the living room. Lena had stacks of blankets and with those we fixed up the cots, so we could sleep in front of that wonderful fire that Herbert had banked. It was certainly different, on the cots, kind of like camping only indoors, and much colder than in the summer. And so, we fell asleep on that Christmas Eve of 1952, wishing Santa might come and turn the power back on.

Sometime after midnight, we all woke, to lights, the sound of the furnace, the refrigerators both in the kitchen and in the store, running! The hum of electricity. They had done it. The PG&E crews were our Santas, whoever they were. We had power again. And the furnace would soon heat the house. It was such an incredible sensation to wake up and realize all would be back to normal. We could move from the cots to our bedrooms. That was the best Christmas present of all and the best Christmas.

PS Skiing was fantastic on those new Heads.

Milli Martin
Homer, Alaska

Milli has previously written for the Heirloom - see our indices on the Heirloom web pages, in particular, 2/ '10 see a picture of the Norden Store in winter on page 14

Book Review

The Opening of the California Trail

Moses Schallenger and friends.*

Typically our reviews are about books having to do with Donner Summit or having interesting portions having to do with Donner Summit. They are longish because we really don't expect people to go and search out the books, some of which are hard to find. So the reviews become history stories of Donner Summit.

In this case the book is related to Donner Summit because many of the wagon train emigrants came over one of the Donner Passes and because Moses Schallenger was part of the very first group and he was on Donner Summit a few times. Once he was there helping get the wagons of the Stephens Party (1844) over the pass, then he was there again when he and two friends, who had been left at Donner Lake with him to guard the wagons that did not go to California, decided to walk out. Moses didn't make it out and had to go back to the lake. Finally, Moses was on Donner Summit when he finally did walk out in February, 1845 after having spent three months alone at Donner Lake.

The first 46 pages cover the Stephens Party route, dates, leadership, equipment, party members and ages, who went with each wagon, and a biography of Moses Schallenger.*

After the long introduction the book moves to the journey across the continent with the first few pages apparently written by one of the Murphys waxing rhapsodically about the heroism of the Murphys: People have gone in quest of glory but "This proposition of the Murphy family to cross pathless plains and trackless desert, and scale inaccessible mountains, with uncertainty as to food supplies and the certainty of meeting tribes of Indians, almost sure to be hostile and to do this with half a dozen men and boys, with a larger number of helpless women and children, meets no parallel in history. The voyage of Columbus..." did not rise to this level of heroism nor did the expedition of Fremont across the continent.

Then the story moves on to the actual journey, a series of episodes recounted by Schallenger when he was in middle age. There are hunting results, buffalo, a bear, runaway cattle, Indians, and the split where most of the party went to Oregon. The trip across most of the continent was hard but uneventful.

More time is spent when the party heading to California approaches the Sierra and that's what readers here would be most interested in so that's fortuitous. The Party met up with the local Native Americans and Moses passes on his 19th Century prejudices, "The Indians seemed to be the

THE OPENING OF THE CALIFORNIA TRAIL

Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1953

*The story of the Stevens Party
from the reminiscences of
MOSES SCHALLENGER
as set down for H. H. Bancroft
about 1885, edited and expanded
by Horace S. Foote in 1888, and
now edited with Introduction,
notes, maps, and illustrations by
GEORGE R. STEWART*

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS

most indolent and degraded of any that the party had yet encountered. They were totally without energy.” They were friendly however, and visited the camp by the “hundreds.” They did have to be watched to prevent theft and at one point Moses almost shot an Indian who had stolen a harness. A chief of the tribe, whom they called Truckee, gave them instructions for crossing the Sierra and Schallenger notes that they named the nearby river the Truckee. Schallenger’s rendition of the Party’s crossing of the Nevada Desert shows they had nowhere near the troubles later parties did.

Approaching the Sierra the Stephens Party traveled along the Truckee River crossing and recrossing and the reader begins to get an idea of the rigors of the journey to California. The oxen hooves softened from the water and were so worn by rocks that travel was torture to the animals. Then the train had to travel in the water continually and men had to walk next to the oxen to encourage them. The wagons had to be triple teamed the going was so hard. Then it began to snow and the foot of new fallen snow covered the grass. “The poor foot-sore oxen, after toiling all day, would stand and bawl for food all night, in so piteous a manner that the emigrants would forget their own misery in their pity for their cattle. But there was nothing to offer them except a few pine leaves...Still the party toiled on, hoping soon to pass the summit and reach the plains beyond.” Pg 67

On reaching the bottom of the pass. Some oxen were so worn out some wagons had to be abandoned. The “snow...was now about two feet deep.” The wagons were unloaded and all the goods were carried “up the hill” [meaning up the pass]. The ox teams had to be doubled just to get the empty wagons up. Then they came to a ten-foot cliff and could go no farther. They were stuck. Finally a cleft was found in the rocks to allow the oxen to go up one at a time. The oxen were chained to the wagons and the men lifted from below and so got the wagons up over the cliff.

Moses ended up remaining at Donner Lake with two others. “There seemed to me no danger in undertaking this. Game seemed to be abundant. We had seen a number of deer, and one of our party had killed a bear, so I had no fears of starvation.” The Indians in the area also did not bother him. “I did not suppose the snow would at any time be more than two feet deep, nor that it would be on the ground continually.”

The rest of the party went on but six, including Moses’ sister, had already left going up the Truckee River to Lake Tahoe and then over the Sierra there. Moses and his friends built a small cabin, “we determined to make ourselves as comfortable as possible.” The cabin was about 12x14 feet and covered by rawhides and pine brush. There was a chimney ten feet tall. There were no windows. The house was not “chinked or daubed” but the logs were notched and fit together pretty well. There was also a hole for a door but nothing to close.

Just as they finished the house it began to snow and three feet fell that night. Then it snowed more. The remaining cattle had



Moses Schallenger, about 60 years old

to be killed so they would not starve. They were “nothing but skin and bones” anyway.

It kept on snowing and the three began to fear they would “perish in the snow.” The snow was so light they could not walk on it. There was no game. The snow got to be ten feet deep and they began to feel depressed. There was no hope. Half their meat was gone. Death by starvation “stared us in the face.”

So they decided to head for California on foot. They got to the top of the pass and into Summit Valley and Moses was exhausted. He was just a boy. Then he developed cramps. He could not walk “more than fifty yards without stopping to rest.” They cut down a tree and built a large fire on the snow. Sleep was hard. They worried about the rest of the party and they worried about their own fates. They kept the fire going and when morning came the fire had melted the snow and sunk to the ground 15 feet below. “The fire was so far down that we could not get to it” but they had nothing to cook anyway.

Moses realized he had to go back to the lake, alone. “We did not say much at parting. Our hearts were too full for that. There was simply a warm clasp of the hand accompanied by the familiar word, ‘Good-by.’ They might never see each other again.

17 year old Moses Schallenger went back to Donner Lake alone. He was so exhausted, upon reaching the cabin, that even though the door sill was only 9 inches high, he had to lift each leg with his hands.

HIGHWAY ROBBERY

Moses stayed at the lake for more than two months alone. He found some traps the party had left and he trapped coyote and fox. Fox was delicious. He spent a lot of time reading. Moses had saved enough coffee for one cup and that was his Christmas celebration. "My life was more miserable than I can describe." The daily struggle and uncertainty was wearing. "I longed for some sound to break the oppressive stillness.... I would talk aloud to myself. At night I built large fires and read by the light...as late as possible, in order that I might sleep late in the next morning, and thus cause the days to seem shorter."

"One evening, a little before sunset, about the last of February, as I was standing a short distance from my cabin, I thought I could distinguish the form of a man moving towards me ...My feeling can be better imagined than described." The rest of the party had survived. His sister had begged Dennis Martin to go to the lake and see about Moses, which he had. Moses was saved.

There are a few more pages of Schallenberger's text, then some pictures, and finally the notes, the short text end with the arrival in California.

The notes are interesting as they enlarge or explain. There is a discussion of why the men left for the revolution in California rather than heading back immediately to save the women and children at Big Bend. They had been reduced to surviving on gruel made from boiling hides. There is a discussion of Chief "Truckee" and his name. There is a discussion of why the horseback party split from the main party at the Truckee River and headed for what they would find was Lake Tahoe. There are also little details described such as that the party made about two miles a day from what is now Wadsworth to the fork in the Truckee River. It must have been incredibly hard going and in fact, further emigrants would not go up the Truckee River all the way to what is now Truckee. I found myself paging back and forth from the text to the notes and back.

*Moses Schallenberger told his story to H.H. Bancroft in 1885 and that story was edited by H.S. Foote and some inclusions by the editor of others' writing. Finally, this edition was edited and given a new introduction and notes by George Stewart. According to Stewart about 60% of the text is Schallenberger's.

HIGHWAY ROBBERY –The Virginia Enterprise of August 30th says;

Day before yesterday morning Josh Romelli, the man who a short time since stabbed and killed in cold blood a Swiss named Wm. Lombard, in this city, stopped a German teamster on the Dutch Flat and Donner Lake road, about half a mile this side of Ingraham's Station, and robbed him of \$63 in coin. Romelli had a handkerchief over his face as a mask, yet was recognized by the teamster, at whose head he presented a pistol. The German being unarmed was forced to "shell out." After getting what he wanted Romelli told him he was at liberty to travel. The German gave the alarm as soon as he reached the station, and a number of persons started in pursuit of the robber, but failed to find him. It is reported that Romelli is harboring with the Indians in the vicinity of Summit Valley. A reward of \$500 is offered in this city by the friends of Lombard for the arrest of Romelli, and we hope to hear of his being caught.

Marysville Daily Appeal September 2, 1865

The Daily Alta California on September 6 reprinted the above article adding that Mr. Romelli "is a desperate villain." He had apparently not been caught and was still with the Summit Valley Indians.

This was originally in the September, '12 issue of the Heirloom but we've repeated it here because Art Clark did a little research on Ingraham's so our readers have a better knowledge of the 1865 events. There was no follow up on this article, however, so we don't know what happened to Mr. Romelli and the \$500 reward. The reward might still be active so keep your eyes open and "ears to the ground."

Ingraham's Station was east of what is now the Tahoe Donner marina at the eastern end of Donner Lake and where Donner Creek is.

Then & Now with Art Clark

Donner Pass Underpass or Subway

The underpass under the railroad was a big improvement for motorists when it was inaugurated in 1914. Before the underpass motorists coming from the west drove up to the snow shed, turned off their engines so they could hear, opened a sliding door in the shed's side, listened for

oncoming trains, went through the shed a fifty yards or so, then crossed the tracks, and opened the sliding door on the other side. Back to the car the driver restarted the engine and drove into the snowshed, across the tracks and out the other side.

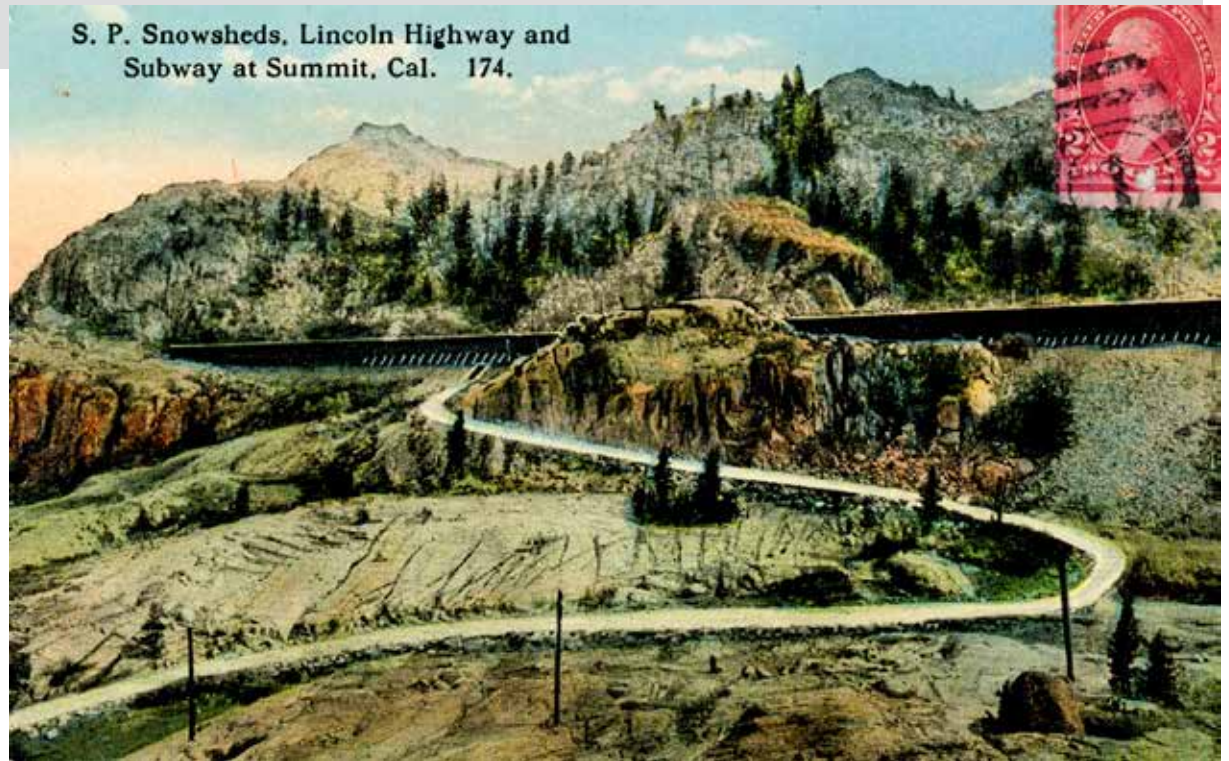
There were accidents.

Here Art Clark has taken a hand-colored postcard (imagine the tedious labor involved in hand coloring postcards in the old days) of the underpass and then photographed today's view from the same vantage point.

The photo must date between 1914 (underpass completion) and 1926 (re-alignment of the road with the construction of Donner Summit Bridge).

Art is always looking for projects. Maybe you have an old "then" photo that needs a "now?"

N39° 19.060' W120° 19.364'



Then & Now with Art Clark

O'Sullivan Chinese Wall

Timothy H. O'Sullivan was a photographer for the Geological Exploration of the Fortieth Parallel, the first governmental survey of the American West. It was also called the King Survey, for Clarence King, U. S. geologist.

This view is shot from just above the petroglyphs near Old Highway 40.

Photo location N39° 18.989'
W120° 19.236'



DONNER SUMMIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

www.donnersummithistricalsociety.org

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



Not wanting to leave any valuable Heirloom real estate unclaimed, here is a picture of the Norden Store in winter. Date undetermined. This goes with "Christmas Memories..." on page 8