

The Donner Summit

Heirloom

History and stories of the Donner Summit Historical Society

June, 2021 issue #154



DUXBURY LOWERS THE RECORD The Time From Ocean to Ocean by Bicycle Is Cut Down Ten Days And Seventeen Hours

Headline in San Francisco Examiner September 15, 1895

Last month we covered the McIlraths who bicycled across the U.S. and around the world for H. Darwin McIlrath's Chicago newspaper. The book the McIlraths wrote about their trip was interesting but contained nothing about their Sierra crossing even though they went over Donner Summit using the railroad snowsheds. That set the Heirloom staff off to read the newspapers in hopes of turning up something that could go into the Heirloom. We met our readers' expectations, finding quite a few articles.

During their trip across the country the McIlraths came across a number of cyclists including some who have appeared in the Heirloom (see the September, '17 Heirloom for the Wilson Family story for example). One of the McIlraths' encounters was with Merton Duxbury who was doing a leisurely ride across the continent. They rode together for about three hundred miles. Duxbury arrived in San Francisco on July 9, 1895, just ahead of the McIlraths. The McIlraths arrived on July 29th, the day after Duxbury hopped on his "wheel" and headed back across the country in a quest to set the record for trans-continental bicycle riding. He thought he could break the record which was fifty-nine days, eleven hours (Los Angeles Herald 9/17/95). Duxbury did break the record by crossing in forty-eight days, eighteen hours (Champaign Daily News Oct. 14, 1895), ten days faster than the record holder, T. R. Lillie (who appeared in the Heirloom in the August, '20 issue and who accompanied Duxbury to Sacramento). In addition to the new cross-country record, Duxbury broke a number of other distance records on the return trip. Duxbury became, the San Francisco Call said (July 10, 1895), the first wheelman to go coast to coast and return. Naturally, since this is in the Heirloom, you know Mr. Duxbury went over Donner Summit on the railroad tracks and through the snowsheds both ways. So there's another Donner Summit first to add to the collection.

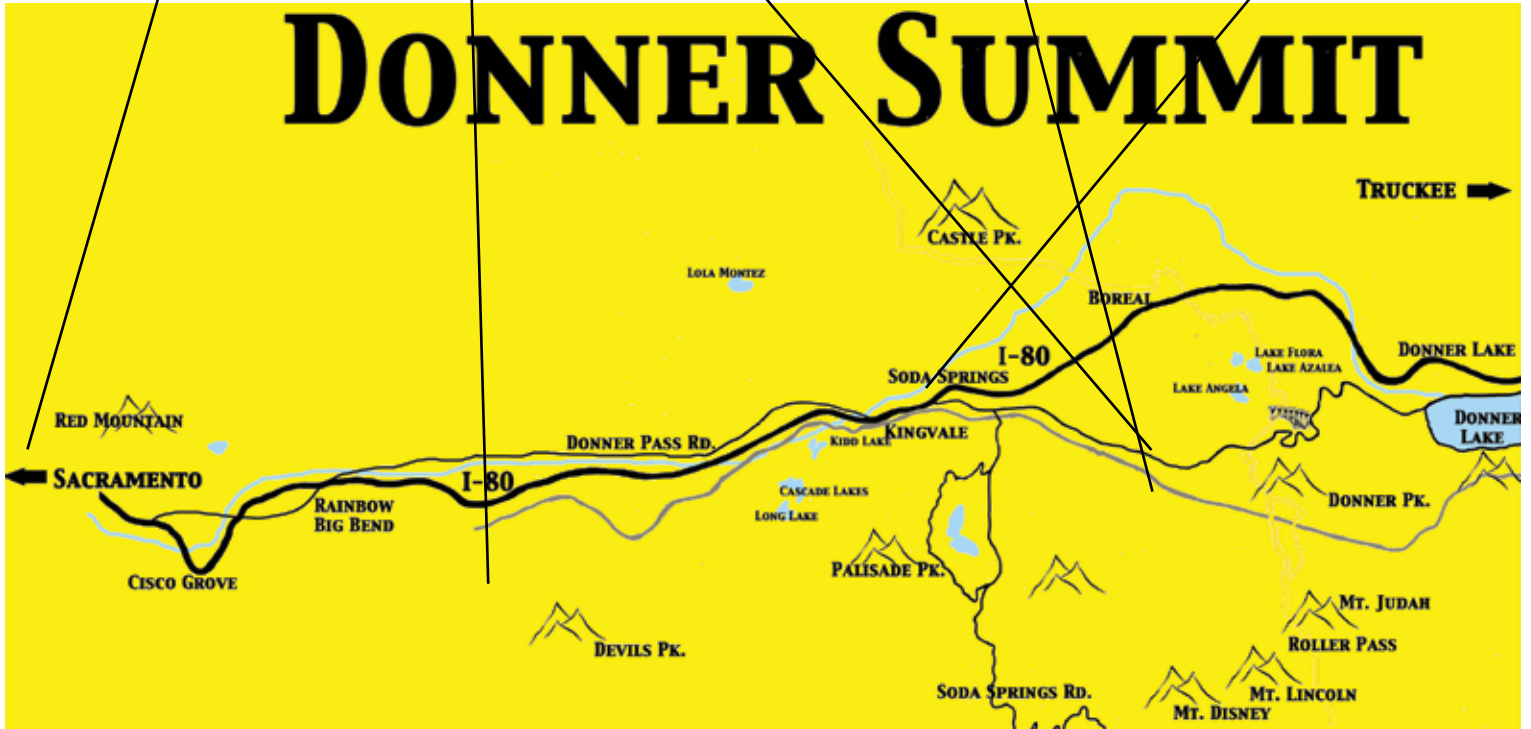
You'd think that such an endeavor would be reported in the newspapers with lots



Champaign Daily News October 14, 1895

Story Locations in this Issue

Nyack Lodge pg 7 Loch Leven Lakes pg 10 Clair Tappaan Lodge pg 16 Oakland Ski Club pg 5 Soda Springs Hotel pg 9



Finding Your Way Through Donner Summit History

We've now passed 150 issues of the Heirloom: thousands of pages, thousands of pictures, and hundreds of subjects. You've probably begun to realize that you cannot keep all the history in your head. Even if you remember it all, retrieval is difficult.

Fortunately John Albert Index invented the index* and one of the choices we made back at the birth of the DSHS was to index all our Heirloom articles and pictures. We've diligently kept up the indices so that they are many pages long, full of alphabetized titles and subjects. Go to our website and to any of the Heirloom pages (one for each year) and you'll find links to the Heirloom indices.

One of the strengths of the DSHS is the incomparable historical photograph collection of Norm Saylor, our president. The collection is thousands of pictures and again the sheer number makes finding anything in particular, difficult. Avoid the long URL by going to our website and clicking on the "photographs" link and then to the "historic photo collection link." A third link, to the Flickr URL will take you to those thousands of searchable historical photographs of Donner Summit. Have fun.

*historical society humor

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

Proofread by Pat Malberg, Lake Mary, Donner Summit

Find us on 

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

of details. There were a number of reports but few details. Perhaps it was because Mr. Duxbury didn't have a newspaper sponsoring him. Perhaps too, Mr. Duxbury was not much of a writer or diarist. Maybe he just liked to ride. One article got a lot of currency, being reprinted months after the event in many newspapers (for example, Champaign Daily News Oct. 14, 1895). It shows how Mr. Duxbury's ride could have been a good story, book length like the McIlraths' or Thomas Stevens' 1884 trip (March, '15 Heirloom). Riding mostly by himself the Champaign article said, "It was in many respects a lonely ride." "He fell in with a number of harmless Indians, and on one occasion taught one of the red men to ride the wheel, the brave proving a very apt pupil." He spent a night at Buffalo Bill's ranch. He fell from a railroad trestle but was not badly hurt, "though badly shaken." He crossed two deserts, rode rough railroad beds, slept in Italian and Chinese camps, "at one time living in the lap of luxury, and at another subsisting on the commonest of fares (San Francisco Call 7/10/95). As further proof that there was a good story here, The San Francisco Examiner (as well as other newspapers) said, "He had a number of notable adventures on his way here, and at one time came very near losing his life" (September 15, 1895). Unfortunately we are just tantalized with what could have been reported. Although it's noted that he used the snowsheds, there are no details at all.

If you're interested in simple details, Duxbury wore a bicycle suit of corduroy with a sweater that had the "winged emblem of the Olympic A. C. [San Francisco Athletic Club] on the front, and a cloth cap..." Duxbury got to wear the emblem of the San Francisco Club because of his unassuming manner and pleasant disposition. He'd made a lot of friends among wheelmen in California during his three-week stay, in contrast to others who claimed to have ridden across the continent and imposed themselves on the local wheelmen clubs. The San Francisco Examiner (July 27, 1895) said, "Duxbury is such a contrast to the average long-distance tourist that the clubs have received him with open arms." The San Francisco Chronicle (July 29, 1895) said "...Duxbury has been the most popular" "of all the wheeling visitors who have come to the Pacific Coast."

Record Breaker at Home
PROVIDENCE, R. I., Sept. 17.—Morton Duxbury, who started from the city hall on April 2d to ride to San Francisco, has returned, having lowered the trans-continental record from 59 days 11 hours to 48 days 18 hours. Duxbury is the first wheelman to make the trip to the coast to coast and return, and the only one to cross the great desert, a feat attempted by Thomas Stevens several years ago.

Los Angeles Herald September 18, 1895

ACROSS THE CONTINENT

Call and see the
LOVELL DIAMOND
BICYCLE (25 lbs)
 Ridden by Merten Duxbury
 from Providence, R. I.,
 across the Continent, and as
 sound as when it started.
SMITH'S CASH STORE,
 414-418 Front St., S. F.

THIS WEEK ONLY!

**500 CAPES, 200 SILK WAISTS,
 AT HALF-PRICE.**

ARMAND CAILLEAU,
46-48 GEARY STREET,
Corner Grant Avenue.

San Francisco Call July 11, 1895

STARTING FOR A LONG RIDE

After Cycling Out Here From New York, Merton Duxbury Again Takes to the Road

THE EPIDEMIC OF BLOOMER DANCES

McIlrath to Arrive To-Morrow-Road Racing Over the High Street to Haywards Course

[sic- formatted as in the original]
San Francisco Examiner July 27, 1895

Of all the possible stories there must have been, only one is reported in detail. It's a bit amusing. In a town named Hornellsville a storekeeper gave Duxbury \$5 and new pants in return for Duxbury's "bicycle trousers" which the storekeeper then displayed in his store window. The trousers attracted interest and perhaps business.

Unfortunately for Mr. Duxbury it was not many months before his cross-country record was broken by D. L. Blakeslee by twenty-three hours (San Francisco Call November 18, 1895)

There is an interesting aside to Mr. Duxbury's story. The San Francisco Examiner story, explaining why Duxbury got to wear the Athletic Club's logo on his sweater, said Duxbury was "in contrast to other who claimed to have ridden..." We can suppose that people in the past were just like us and at least some of them were dishonestly embellishing their resumé's. Bicycling was a craze just before the advent of the automobile. Newspapers carried bicycling sections with advertisements, race reports, stories about famous "wheelmen," and even stories about women trying out the sport. We can imagine there must have been some who came up with fictional accounts hoping for fame. Note the Buffalo Courier report in the next column about the "fakir" [sic] T. R. Lillie, who was actually a famous and accomplished "wheelman" and not a "fakir." Later there were "autoists" who did the same thing (see our June, '17 Heirloom for the story about the Ghost Car).

Mr. Duxbury's story led into T. R. Lillie's story. It was his cross-country record that Mr. Duxbury broke. (See the August, '20 issue of the Heirloom where T. R. took the leg of the transcontinental race from Dutch Flat to Truckee through the snowsheds.) Parenthetically T. R. Lillie had broken Frank Beedleson's record (66 days, 9 hours, 45 minutes - Buffalo Enquirer 8/14/93), set just one month earlier in 1893. The only reason to mention that is that Mr. Beedleson had only one leg (His story is chronicled in Extraordinary Crossings - available on the "Store" page of the DSHS website.) Mr. Beedleson crossed the continent on his bicycle powered by his one leg in 66 days, 9 hours, 45 minutes (Buffalo Enquirer 8/14/93)

Lillie went over Donner Summit too in setting his record of 57 days 11 hours day (the days vary depending on the source) which the San Francisco Call (7/31/95) said was the first official San Francisco to New York record. Here was another opportunity for some details. Sadly they are missing. We only know that Mr. Lillie rode a Cleveland Wheel, carried 30 lbs. of luggage, carried a camera (Sacramento Record Union 6/24/93), had thirteen flats, and went forty-four miles through the snowsheds (San Francisco Call 9/2/93). Lillie had had no idea of setting a record; he just wanted to ride to the World's

Fair in Chicago (or visit friends, depending on the source) and ended up with the record. Lillie claimed to be the first person to ride through the snowsheds. We must remember that Thomas Stevens (March, '15 Heirloom), in 1884, walked through the sheds with his high wheeler and the Wilsons would not report doing that until the next year (September, '17 Heirloom). Frank Beedleson also claimed to have ridden through some the snowsheds (San Francisco Chronicle 7/21/93) but not all of them.

Bicycling was such a rage before the automobile succeeded it that everyone wanted to be part of the new sport. Not only were there many athletes, bicycle clubs and spectators, there were also those who wished to be as this article suggests.

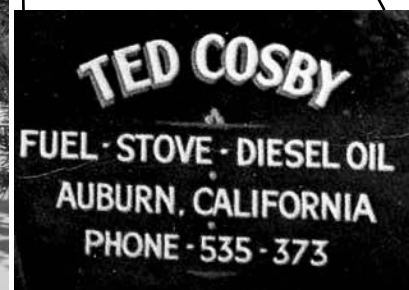
"A wheelman calling himself T. R. Lillie of the Oak Leaf Wheelmen, Stockton, Cal., passed through here the other day on an alleged record ride from San Francisco to New York. He claimed to be several days ahead of the record at this point. Undoubtedly the fellow is a 'fakir,' as the wheel press has made no mention of his trip up to date." Buffalo Courier August 15, 1893

The August 25, 1893 Stockton Evening Mail reported though, that Lillie had indeed left San Francisco on June 20 (or June 22 depending on the source) and arrived in New York on August 18 setting a record of 57 days or 59 days, 11 hours, and 30 minutes (depending on the source).


Lillie said that in the desert he carried one gallon of water and had difficulty getting three meals a day. Stockton Evening Mail 8/14/93. Lillie was no "fakir."

From the DSHS Archives

Here is a little story in pictures highlighting the idea that a lot of snow falls on Donner Summit in at least average winters. That average is thirty-four feet and causes all kinds of problems from simple road clearing to houses collapsing. At the end of a hard winter when there were no plowed roads the heating oil people were called in to refuel oil tanks (today most people use propane). Here are pictures of Ted Cosby arriving to fill the tanks at the Oakland Ski Club. He needed a bulldozer to get in to the tanks. The railroad snowsheds are in the background still made of wood in those days. The date is after WWII - note the "USN" and "Surplus" on the bulldozer. By 1955 Ted Cosby had been succeeded by another company according to an ad in the [Auburn Journal](#) (6/16/55)







RAIN OR SHINE — —
 We stand ready to serve you
 regardless of the weather—

TED COSBY
FUEL OIL

890 High Phone 535

Auburn Temperatures
 September 29th to October 5th

	Max.	Min.
Thursday	89	44
Friday	70	44
Saturday	73	42
Sunday	74	42
Monday	79	48
Tuesday	86	61
Wednesday	83	54



Parentetically Ted
 Cosby installed the
 fuel oil burner and
 the fuel oil for the
 "Beautiful Nyack
 Lodge" and con-
 gratulated Herstle
 Jones on the open-
 ing Auburn Journal
 4/10/47.

Ad above right:
Placer Herald
 10/6/50

A DREAM COME TRUE

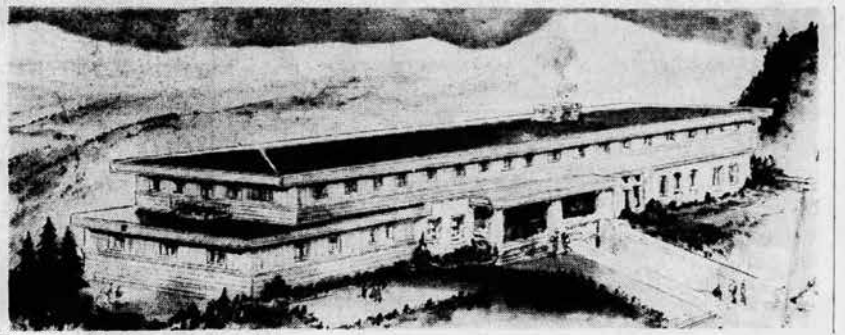


Nyack Lodge Was Opened to Public Last Saturday

Herstle Jones and Associates Have Provided One of the Outstanding Attractions of the West at Emigrant Gap

BEAUTY BEYOND DESCRIPTION

Panoramic View of Unsurpassed Grandeur Is Provided from Dining Room and Cocktail Lounge

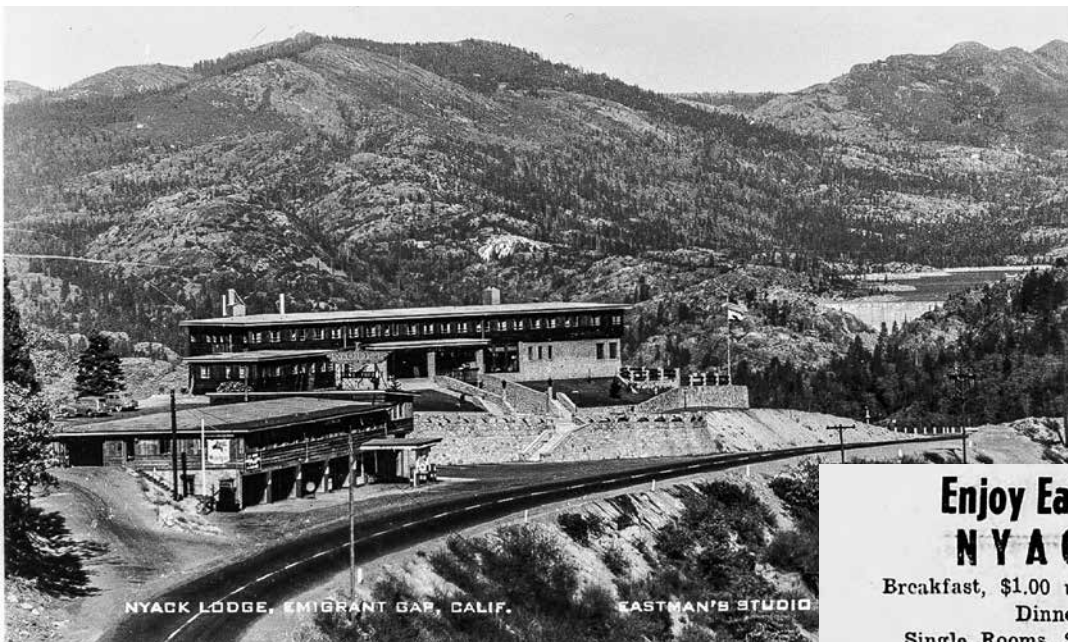


Historical Serendipity

Sometimes doing the Heirloom it comes down to serendipity. The set of pictures on the two previous pages made a little story about life on Donner Summit. There were no dates on the pictures so our Heirloom Date Verification Committee (HDVC) had to look for clues. There is the U.S. Navy surplus bulldozer. Ted Cosby got out of the fuel business in 1955. You'll note the phone number has only six digits. We next thought to find some ads for Ted Cosby fuel which we did (previous page). Then a whole page in the Auburn Journal turned up (4/10/47) celebrating the opening of Herstle Jones' Nyack Lodge (pictures of which we've had in previous Heirlooms and one of which is below.) Herstle Jones, of course, built the current version of Rainbow Lodge and was the brother of Oscar Jones who built the Soda Springs Hotel. He was also the uncle of one of our DSHS board members, Starr Walton.

In the full page about the opening of Nyack Lodge, besides learning a little history, design elements, and construction problems, we also learn that Nyack is Algonquian (Native Americans on the East Coast) for "at the point." So here just for fun we'll include the whole page along with a picture showing the "unsurpassed" panoramic views below. That's Lake Spaulding in the background. Highway 40, in the foreground, has been replaced by four lane I-80.

Nyack Lodge lost its place with the coming of the freeway. Now there is a view point at the lodge's former location. Most of the building was put on wheels and moved a short distance to where the Nyack Lodge (with the same logo) is today.



Enjoy Eating at Beautiful NYACK LODGE

Breakfast, \$1.00 up; Luncheon, \$1.50 to \$2.00
 Dinner, \$2.00 to \$3.00
 Single Rooms, \$5.00; Double Rooms, \$7.50
 American Plan, \$10.00 Per Day Per Person

A DREAM COME TRUE



Overlooking Bear Valley

Nyack Lodge Was Opened to Public Last Saturday

Herstle Jones and Associates Have Provided One of the Outstanding Attractions of the West at Emigrant Gap

BEAUTY BEYOND DESCRIPTION

Panoramic View of Unsurpassed Grandeur Is Provided from Dining Room and Cocktail Lounge

Completion of Nyack Lodge and its opening to the general public on last Saturday marks the realization of a "Dream Come True" to Herstle Jones. The principal owner who selected the site and started the construction, during times of shortages and general gloom which would have meant failure to one less determined. Many a time during the construction of Nyack Lodge it appeared that work would have to cease, but Jones always found the essential workmen and building materials to keep the project going ahead.

Today, beautiful Nyack Lodge stands as a completed testimonial of the foresight and determination of Herstle Jones and those associated with him to give the area what is certain to become one of the outstanding attractions of the kind in the entire West.

The exterior construction was designed to harmonize with the atmosphere of stability and permanence of the mountains, an objective which has been achieved through the use of natural rock work.

The interior was planned to take advantage of the marvelous view of the surrounding country and to provide a fitting framework which is distinctive without being intrusive in other words, just a cozy and comfortable place to enjoy the relaxation associated with a visit to Nyack.

The rooms are decorated attractively and individually, with modern appointments and furniture and each room provides a vista of the mountain area. The lobby is so artistically furnished, with a fireplace reflecting heat as well as hospitality. The dining room protrudes from the building in such a manner as to provide a view from each of the tables. From



AT
EMIGRANT
GAP
PLACER
COUNTY
CALIFORNIA

Auburn Business Firms Aided In Nyack Building

Many firms of Auburn aided in the building of Nyack Lodge by furnishing materials and equipment. Manufacture and installation of most of the sheet metal work of Nyack Lodge was furnished jointly by the Auburn Sheet Metal Works and the Lowell Sheet Metal Works, both well known Auburn firms. Ted Cosby was in charge of the all burner installations at Nyack and this same firm will supply the fuel oil to operate the heating equipment at Nyack.

Liquor and soft drink establishments of Auburn who will have an important part in keeping Nyack supplied with the correct refreshment ingredients include: The Jacobs Distributing Company, The A. W. Kenison Company, Sonny's, and George Haward.

Oil Burner Installation and Fuel Oil FOR BEAUTIFUL NYACK LODGE

Furnished by
TED COSBY

809 High St. AUBURN Phone 533
Who Joins Others in Extending Congratulations and Best Wishes to
Herstle Jones and Associates

LARDNER & LARDNER

MILL WORK AND FIXTURES
200 Linden Ave.—AUBURN—Phone 666-B

In Charge of Building and Installation of the
COCKTAIL ROOM FIXTURES
AT NYACK LODGE

Extend Congratulations and Best Wishes for Success to
Herstle Jones and Associates

Frigidaire Refrigeration Installations AT NYACK LODGE

BY
BOSWELL'S, INC.

601 High Street — AUBURN — Phone 800

Who Join in Extending Congratulations and Best Wishes to
Herstle Jones and Associates

NYACK LODGE

One of the Outstanding Attractions of Placer County Is Now a Reality . . .

THANKS TO HERSTLE JONES AND ASSOCIATES

W. A. REYNOLDS

INSURANCE AGENCY

State Theatre Bldg. — AUBURN — Phone 294

Congratulations to Herstle Jones on the completion of NYACK LODGE. May every traveler on Highway 40 enjoy your genial hospitality. We are proud to have supplied materials for your building.

AUBURN LUMBER COMPANY

AUBURN, CALIFORNIA

CONGRATULATIONS TO HERSTLE JONES AND ASSOCIATES
AT NYACK LODGE
FROM
Lowell's Metal Shop — Auburn, California

Congratulations Herstle Jones

and those associated with you on the completion and opening of
NYACK LODGE

SONNY'S
DISTRIBUTORS OF
Regal Pale Beer and Ritz Wines

It was our pleasure to assist in the Building of
NYACK LODGE

By Furnishing Part of the Sheet Metal Work We congratulate Herstle Jones and Associates and extend our best wishes for success.

AUBURN SHEET METAL WORKS
W. J. WALKER J. A. WARD
120 Elm St. — AUBURN — Phone 214-B

George Haward

Distributor of
PABST BLUE RIBBON
and SIERRA BEERS

Extends Congratulations and Best Wishes For Success to
HERSTLE JONES & ASSOCIATES
ON THE OPENING LAST SATURDAY OF
NYACK LODGE

Congratulations and Best Wishes For Success to
Herstle Jones and Associates
On the Grand Opening Last Saturday of
NYACK LODGE

A. W. KENISON CO.
Bob Jacobs
ACME BEER 7-UP
145 Lewis St.—AUBURN—Phone 21

Enjoy Eating at Beautiful NYACK LODGE
Breakfast, \$1.00 up; Luncheon, \$1.50 to \$2.00
Dinner, \$2.00 to \$3.00
Single Rooms, \$3.00; Double Rooms, \$7.50
American Plan, \$10.00 Per Day Per Person

Congratulations to
Herstle Jones AND ASSOCIATES

on the completion of
NYACK LODGE
LOCATED AT EMIGRANT GAP
OVERLOOKING BEAR VALLEY

It is certain to become one of the most popular Summer and Winter resorts of the West!

Placer County Bank
874 Lincoln Way — Auburn — Phone 2105

A SWELL JOB WELL DONE!
NYACK LODGE

Congratulations to
Herstle Jones and Associates

For Giving Placer County Such an Outstanding Mountain Resort
Jacobs Distributing Co.
Jim Jacobs
LUCKY LAGER BEER — GRAPE GOLD WINE

Soda Springs Hotel Re-opens

As long as we were looking around in old newspapers we came across the page, below, from the July 12, 1951 Auburn Journal. Dennis and Muriel Jones, the son and daughter-in-law of Oscar Jones who built the Soda Springs Hotel in 1927, sold it to the Chaplins who were completing renovations and being congratulated by suppliers.

The hotel had been "completely "re-done for your pleasure" with a remodeled lobby, "Teen-age Rumpus Room, Dining Room and beautiful New Cocktail Lounge." It would be a "boon to the hordes of winter sports enthusiasts, who flock to the Summit in winter, to the sportsmen, who take over in summer and fall, or to the always welcome overnight guest." A complete new facade was being installed and the "entire interior is being re-done." Upstairs two dormitories for ninety people were being finished. The Chaplins' venture "is evidence that they expect a big future for the Donner Summit area and its environs." The grand opening included free cocktails and buffet supper. The Chaplins already owned Rainbow Lodge.

The Soda Springs Hotel was a marvelous classic from the 1920's but times and tastes changed. In the 1980's the building was converted to condominiums and all the historic details are gone.

Chaplins To Hold Open House On Saturday July 14

Major Renovation Project Nears Completion at Soda Springs Hotel

A number of business and winter sports enthusiasts who have been looking for a major change in the Soda Springs Hotel project, the final will be a boon to the business and winter sports enthusiasts, who flock to the Summit in winter, to the sportsmen, who take over in summer and fall, or to the always welcome overnight guest. The project will be a boon to the business and winter sports enthusiasts, who flock to the Summit in winter, to the sportsmen, who take over in summer and fall, or to the always welcome overnight guest.

Major renovation project... The new owners, Dennis and Muriel Jones, are completing the hotel... The project will be a boon to the business and winter sports enthusiasts, who flock to the Summit in winter, to the sportsmen, who take over in summer and fall, or to the always welcome overnight guest.

Major renovation project... The project will be a boon to the business and winter sports enthusiasts, who flock to the Summit in winter, to the sportsmen, who take over in summer and fall, or to the always welcome overnight guest.



Congratulations
Doris and Brant Chaplin
It was our Pleasure
To Be in Charge of all
Plumbing for the Remodeled
SODA SPRINGS HOTEL
Which Holds The
GRAND RE-OPENING
Saturday, July 14th
Auburn Plumbing Co.
695 Lincoln Way —Auburn— Phone 1145

Congratulations
Doris and Brant Chaplin
It Was a Pleasure
To Be in Charge of all
Tile Installations
For the Remodeled
Soda Springs Hotel
Which Holds the
GRAND RE-OPENING

SATURDAY, JULY 14TH

HARRISON THE TILE MAN
100 Skyridge Drive —Auburn— Phone 1167-W

Congratulations
And Best Wishes
To
Mr. and Mrs. Brant Chaplin
On The
GRAND RE-OPENING
Saturday, July 14th
of the
Soda Springs Hotel
TED COSBY
Port Ore — Stone Ore — Elwell Ore
899 High St. — Auburn — Phone 520

A Fine Improvement
To This Area
— Remodeled —
Soda Springs Hotel
Our Congratulations
And Best Wishes for Success to
Mr. and Mrs. Brant Chaplin
PLACER COUNTY BANK
216 Lincoln Way — Auburn — Phone 1181

Don't Forget--
SATURDAY, JULY 14th
You are Cordially Invited to Attend the
RE-OPENING
Of The
SODA SPRINGS HOTEL
Come in and see our new remodeled
Main Floor . . . Including the Lobby,
"Teen - age Rumpus Room, Dining
Room and beautiful New Cocktail
Lounge.
Completely
re-done for your pleasure
Buffet Served From 4 p.m. 'till 2 a.m.

Congratulations To
Doris and Brant Chaplin
On The
RE-OPENING
Of The
SODA SPRINGS HOTEL
Saturday, July 14th
* * *
All Draperies
And
Floor Coverings
By
TRAIN & CO.

From the DSHS Archives

Dynamite aids the angler

Article headline from
the *Explosives Engineer*,
December, 1936

**HIGH EXPLOSIVES CLEAR CALIFORNIA LAKES
OF PREDATORY FISH IN ANTICIPATION OF STOCKING**

BY A. F. GEGAN*

Art Clark* was perusing the thousands of DSHS historical photographs that are now on-line thanks to George Lamson** (see page 2 for how to access them) and he came across pictures labeled for example, “Blasting Loch Leven Lake...” That intrigued him and knowing that Loch Leven Lakes are on Donner Summit (up the trail from the Big Bend USFS parking area – see the map on page 13) and that the [Heirloom](#) is the premier source for Donner Summit history, he went looking through the [Heirloom](#) indices (which can be found on each [Heirloom](#) page on our website). He found nothing about blasting or anything related.

That set Art off on a search which ended up with the December, 1936 issue of [The Explosives Engineer](#) periodical. There he found the story, “Dynamite aids the angler” (original headline above). That then sent Art to the [Heirloom](#) staff with his “find.” Of course the editorial department was interested especially because the subject and pictures looked familiar. Surely we’d written about dynamite at Loch Leven. There’s been nothing in the [Heirloom](#) though, so why are there DSHS pictures on the DSHS website showing dynamite being used at Loch Leven?

Jimmy Schull was a long-time resident on Donner Summit. Before he died he donated his collection of Donner Summit photographs to the DSHS. Readers will remember a story in our July, '09 [Heirloom](#) about a battering ram having to be used on Lake Angela (we won't spoil the story by telling you the details here). Those pictures, the dynamiting pictures, and others come from the same Jimmy Schull collection.



So, back to Loch Leven and the [Explosives Engineer](#). Why were they dynamiting Loch Leven lakes? The story starts off saying that dynamite has been used for many “strange feats.” One of the strangest was at the behest of the Cisco (Grove) Sports Club.

The president of the club thought dynamite could improve fishing. Obviously dynamite could deliver a lot of fish quickly but that wouldn't be sporting and was not what he had in mind, at least not long-term.

The article went on saying that the lakes are off the beaten path surrounded by virgin timber. The cold mountain streams feed the lakes and the lakes should be full of desirable fish. That was not the case though. Somehow a lot of "coarse" fish, such as chubs and white fish" had come to "infest" the lakes making annual planting of desirable trout for naught. The "coarse fish" devoured the trout fingerlings. The Cisco Sports Club, working with the Donner Trail Association conferred with the Forest Service and got permission to dynamite the lakes to get rid of the "coarse" fish.



The first experiment was tried in the lower lake, about ten acres in size. Log floats were built (see

the next page) and salvaged telephone wire was used to connect the floats to the shore. Bombs were made of five to ten pounds of dynamite with blasting caps. They were connected in series and lowered to within five feet of the lake bottom (about fifteen feet deep). The bombs were placed thirty-five to fifty feet apart (as you can see in the pictures here). The entire lake area was covered and then the explosives were set off. Fifteen to twenty thousand fish were killed. Next they moved on to the upper lake, about four acres in size.

The results were satisfactory from the Sports Club's point of view, "A great number of predatory fish were destroyed and the lake made fit for restocking with trout." There must have been a lot of explosions since they discovered that each blast affected about fifty square feet. Fourteen acres of lakes is 616,000 square feet.



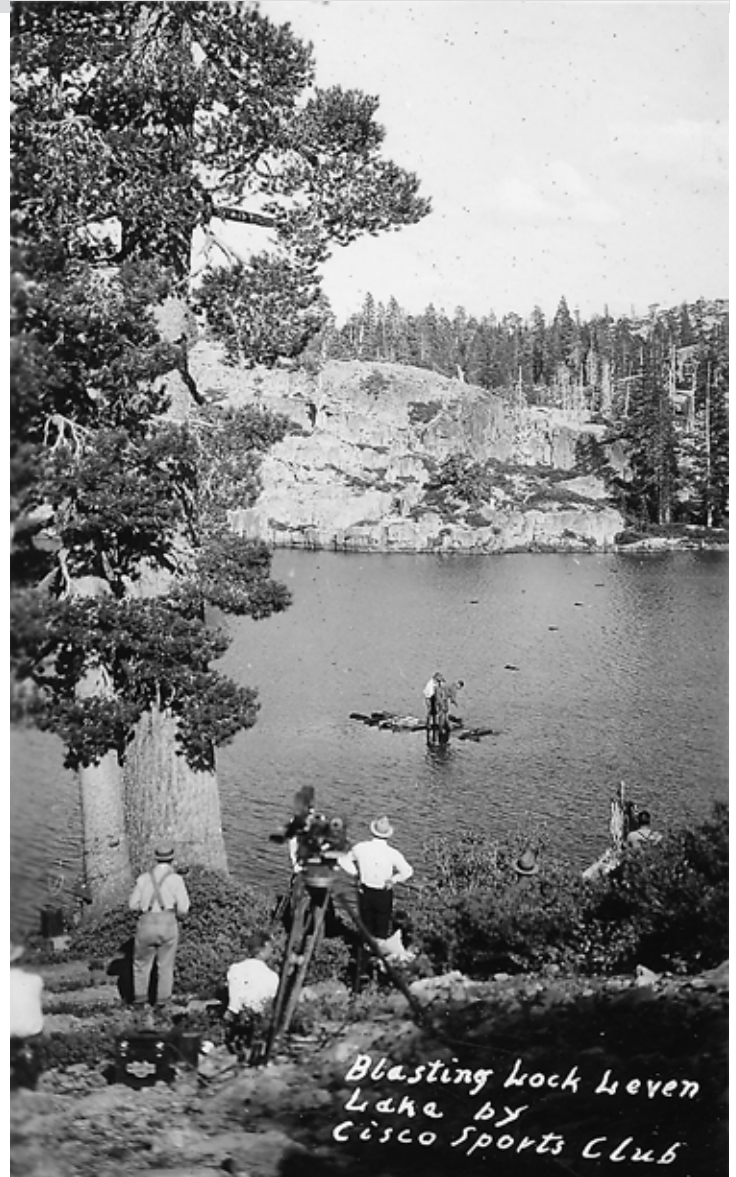
Art also found a video of the operation. It's less than a minute long but shows the floats, detonators, explosions, and resulting fish stocking: https://youtu.be/Eq6os9J_b20

*DSHS MHRT*** member
** Emeritus member of the DSHS MHRT
***Mobile Historical Research Team

Although Jimmy did not tell us when he donated his collection, we can guess that his father was part of the dynamiting because he was able to get so many pictures of such high quality. His father also arrived on Donner Summit in 1936.

From the DSHS Archives

More on Dynamiting Loch Leven



Above note the log raft used in the lower lake to set the charges and note the string of charges



Left is the only picture we used from the magazine article. Note the low quality.

The sign in the background says, "Big Bend Ranger Station Big Bend Public Camp"

The vehicle was used to transport dynamite

The Schull Family on Donner Summit

Before he died Jimmy Schull donated his collection of historic Donner Summit pictures to the DSHS. He had lived on the summit since the 1940's and so he knew lots of stories.

Asking Jimmy about Summit changes over his lifetime, he rattled off the lodging on the Summit in the old days, west to east: DSL, Beacon Hill Lodge, Soda Springs Hotel, Crest Garage and Lodge, Norden Store and cabins, Aro's Chalet, Partell's, Heidelbergman Lodge, Cal Lodge, Ski Inn, Sierra Club lodge, Kiski Lodge and the House of Vandervord's (later Ski Hi and still later Talisman's). All had rooms, provided food and had bars. The establishments were kept full by the constant traffic on Old 40. There was also an active community club covering Cisco to the Summit with many community activities.

Jimmy arrived on Donner Summit shortly after his birth. His parents, Kirby and Lola Schull came to Donner Summit in 1936 with the railroad, which was the major Summit industry. At first Kirby worked in a B and B gang (bridges and buildings crew). Hundreds of workers were divided into iron crews, train crews, B and B gangs, etc. as they managed the country's major source of transportation over the Sierra. Trucks would not become prominent until reliability arrived and interstates were built.

Kirby had entrepreneurial spirit. He and his wife, Lola, built the first lodge at the Donner Ski Ranch called Donner Trail Ski Lodge in 1938. The land under the Donner Trail Lodge was leased and when the land was sold the Schulls moved the building up the road to what is now just west of the Sugar Bowl gondola. There they built the Kiski Lodge. The Kiski was done in 1940-41 and included rooms and dormitory accommodations for 65 guests.

Kiski Lodge burned in 1984.

To read more about Jimmy Schull's reminiscences of Donner Summit life see our July, '09 [Heirloom](#).

Loch Leven

It's hiking season so a map to Loch Leven Lakes is in order. Going east on I-80, take the Big Bend exit and go east past the fire station. You'll find a parking area with pit toilets opposite the trailhead. Going west, take the Rainbow exit and go west past Rainbow Lodge until you get to the parking area with the pit toilets before you get to the fire station. The Loch Leven Lakes trail is almost all uphill on the way to the lakes, but then it's all downhill on the way back.

There is a restroom and parking at the Loch Leven Lakes trailhead. From the trailhead it's 1.1 miles to the railroad crossing and 2.5 miles to the first lake, 2.8 miles to the second, and 3.6 miles to Upper Loch Leven Lake. The trail rises about 1200 feet overall, more steeply after the railroad crossing.

You can fish in the lakes and you can camp in the area. Fire permits are required.

The lakes are bowls carved into the granite by glaciers.

Down at the parking area it's also a good place to see the original emigrant wagon train route and a portion of the first trans-continental highway, the Lincoln Highway. The wagon train route is north of the parking area. You'll find a Trails West marker there and west of that a hundred yards look for rust marks on the granite slabs from emigrant wagon train wheels. To see Lincoln Highway remains go behind the garage across the street from the fire station. There you will find Lincoln Highway markers and a nice stretch of original Lincoln Highway. Go east a hundred yards to find an old building.



Book Review

Hellacious California!

Tales of Rascality, Depravity!
and the Birth of the Golden State

Gary Noy, 2020 223 pages

The title was enough to attract the Heirloom book reviewing staff. It sounds like a collection of fun stories but it's not. It's really more a social history of some of the more colorful elements of 19th Century California rather than a few discreet stories.

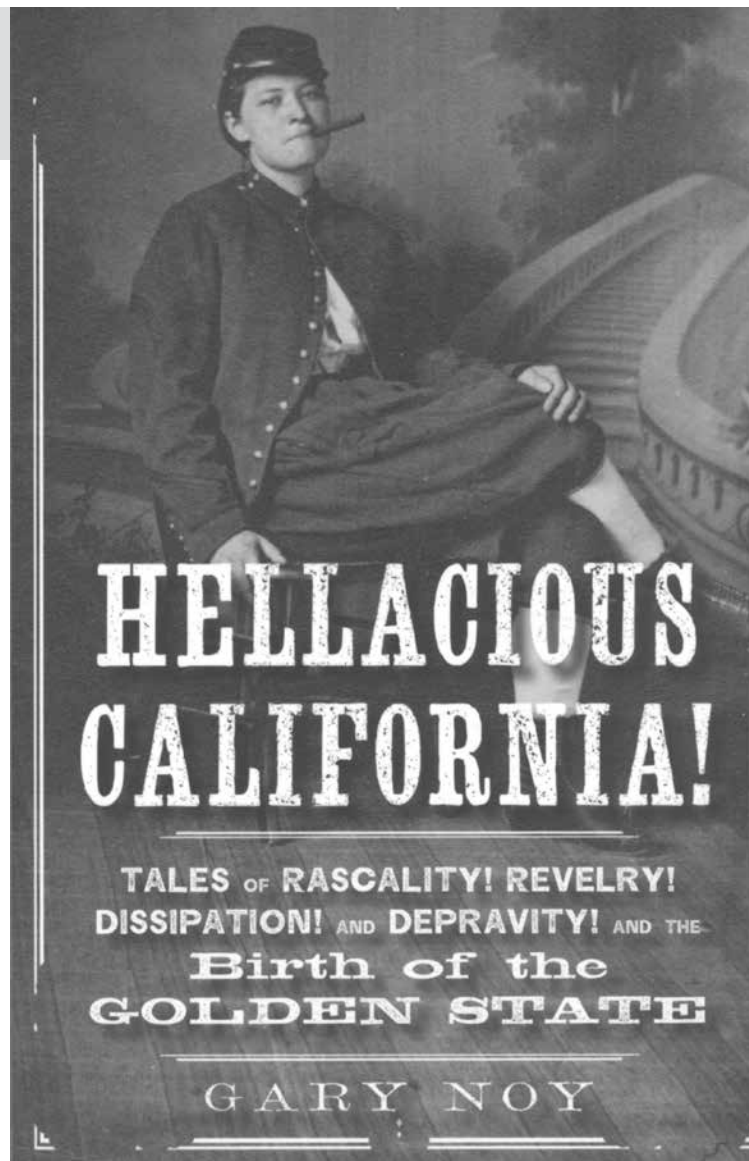
The title was attractive but that's not the only requirement to enter the list of books reviewed by the Heirloom. Books have to be at least tangentially related to Donner Summit and that's getting harder after more than one hundred book reviews (and more than a dozen video reviews).

So, the first order of business was eligibility for the Heirloom and serendipity took care of that factor in the very first story. The first chapter is about games of chance and the very first example is about Augustinus Josephus Fey, the inventor of the slot machine. Augustinus' grandson, Marshall, lives in Reno where he is an author and emigrant trails expert. We've reviewed a couple of his books in the Heirloom (check out the indices) and he's written a couple of articles for the Heirloom (check out the article indices for those too). The Mobile Historical Research Team (MHRT) accompanied him on his 90th birthday wish to paint the emigrant trail marker at the top of Coldstream Pass. We should note too that Marshall was instrumental in saving a number of emigrant markers from being removed by "new" research.

So, there was the connection. The book review team could review Hellacious... and that's good because it's a fun book. The title is irresistible, Hellacious being a combination of astonishing and appalling according to Noy.

The book is divided into a number of chapters on general topics with clever titles. For example the chapter covering violence is titled, "Demanding Satisfaction, Frogstickers, and the Slogging Fraternity: Dueling, Knife Fights, Fisticuffs, and Animal Baiting." It must have taken hours to come up with the title. A typical book of this type would then follow with a couple of stories, pages long. Noy follows with the social history from newspapers and contemporaneous books, and a lot of little stories and examples to show the state of society. He talks about shanghaiing, criminals' careers, criminal acts, beatings, shootings, knifings, murders, the infamous, criminal organizations, the vigilance committee, duels and dueling, settling scores, prize fighting, and animal baiting. It's a rich litany of examples showing how violent California was and what the residents did for entertainment. Each chapter is just as rich.

Another chapter sub-topic is gluttony, the various aspects of eating in 19th Century California including harvesting sea bird eggs in the Farallones. The details are wonderful. For example, about harvested sea bird eggs, "... the eggs, when fresh, have no distinctive odor, but when they get to be several days old, they develop a noticeably fishy smell and taste. The yoke is deep red, and the white remains clear and gelatinous.... This unappetizing meal looks like a bloody eyeball surrounded by a slimy halo... but a fresh egg is a fresh egg. And customers craved them."



Noy effectively uses lots of quotes from magazines, books, and newspapers to illustrate his stories. For example, he quotes Hinton Rowan Helper, who wrote Land of Gold, many times. One quote describing a gold seeker's cooking habits says, "His cooking utensils consist of a frying-pan and a pot, neither of which, except in rare instances, is ever washed. The pot is mostly used for boiling pork and beans, and the old scum and scales that accumulate on the inside from one ebullition serve as seasoning to the next.... [The miner] will probably keep a bottle of molasses, which may be seen by the side of the frying-pan, unstopped, and containing an amount of flies and ants nearly equal to that of the saccharine juice." (Hinton Rowan Helper Land of Gold)

There is a wonderful quote from The Daily Alta California (1/6/51) about theater behavior: crying babies, patrons in shirt sleeves, catcalling, laughing during dramatic scenes and chewing tobacco:

" the odious, nauseous, abominable habit of creating Aral seas of 'ambier', " that villainous spittal crushed from the foul weed by masticating grinders as constant in their milling as an over-shot water wheel, and squirted from discolored lips, which seem made only to act as a spouting horn for the emission of a nasty semi-liquid which would disgust the very herd of swine that swallowed the devils..."

Eliza Farnham (1856) is quoted, "at that period in the history of San Francisco, it was so rare to see a female, that those whose misfortune it was to be obliged to be abroad felt themselves uncomfortably stared at. Doorways filled instantly and little islands in the street were thronged with them who seemed to gather in a moment, and who remained immovable till the spectacle passed from their incredulous gaze." Another quote by contemporaries about women says, "We remember that day, when a woman walking along the streets of San Francisco was more of a sight than an elephant or giraffe would be today." (Theodore Barry and Benjamin Patten , 1856)

"Next to gambling, drinking was the Golden State's favorite pastime throughout the nineteenth century..."

Then there's a descriptive quote about eating habits in public establishments, "... the 'savage' approach of the diner in seven memorable words: 'Dab, dab, peck, peck, grunt, growl, snort!'"

Beyond the stories there are lots of interesting facts such as, "by the mid-nineteenth century, Northern California was the most ethnically and socially diverse spot on Earth..."

The end of the book has an extensive bibliography so you can go off exploring California social history more in depth. In that regard it's clear Noy did an amazing amount of reading gathering his stories.

"Hellacious California presents but a snapshot of the questionable undertaking and, by turn, colorful and disreputable personalities of Old California."

Xiv

Note:

You have noticed our monthly book reviews. You might want to do some reading of your own.

Stop in at the DSHS. Norm Sayler has a large collection of books for perusing, buying, or checking out.

You might even want to do a review for us.

Odds & Ends on Donner Summit

As you've perused the Heirloom every month you've seen the monthly "Odds and & Ends of Donner Summit" column. There are a lot of "Odds & Ends" on Donner Summit given its rich history as the most historically significant square mile in California and maybe the entire Western United States. There are petroglyphs and mortars thousands of years old; remnants of the Emigrant Trail along with lost ox shoes and other artifacts; old buildings and other structures; monuments; the remnants of the first transcontinental highway, air route, and telephone line, etc. Last fall the Mobile Historic Research Team (MHRT) was scouting around the route from Clair Tappaan to Crater Lake (there are Crater Lake pictures in various issues of the Heirloom - check out the picture index), and realized that one rich area for seeing "Odds & Ends" is behind Clair Tappaan Lodge (see the April and May, '17 Heirlooms among others for stories about the lodge) and Donner Ski Ranch. Here on the next couple of pages we expand our normal one page "Odds & Ends" section in favor of more: pictures of what you can find if you look closely as you travel the "Main Drag" Trail from the front of Clair Tappaan Lodge.

You might want to stop in at the lodge and say hi so you can admire the classic 1920's structure. Park across Donner Pass Rd. and walk up the driveway and then along the dirt road to the front entrance of the lodge.

The "Main Drag" is the very obvious wide ski trail that goes uphill from the front door of the lodge. Use the map on page 18 to guide you and walk around through the forest on the "Donner Pass" side of the trail. There's a lot to explore.



Left: The Sierra Club ran a rope tow up to Signal Pk. (Donner Ski Ranch). This building was the lower end.

Below: one of the rope tow wheels sitting in the forest ready for re-use



Hwy 40 Scenic Bypass Clair Tappaan Lodge

History

Clair Tappaan Lodge was hand-built by a hearty group of Sierra Club volunteers in 1934 as a retreat for hikers, skiers and mountain climbers. This rustic building, consisting of post and beam construction, was designed by Walter Rastell, a noted Berkeley architect and member of the Sierra Club. The superstructure of the lodge consists of large vertical logs with a rough-sawn beam roof structure from timber felled on the site. Volunteers expanded the building several times and maintain it today.

The lodge is named after Sierra Club President and Superior Court Judge Clair Tappaan.

A Good Story

Neil Robinson was seven years old when Clair Tappaan Lodge was built. His job was to stand on the running board of an old Ford truck (right) and relay requests for the vehicle to move in order to raise the beams. There is a video of the bare-chested young men building the lodge with hand saws and hammers which can be viewed on the lodge website <http://clt.sierraclub.org>

Things to do right here

You can enter the building and view the enormous timbers (above) used in the initial construction. The cozy library has a display of historic photos, books of Donner Summit history, and early-day visitor's logs.

The friendly, casual atmosphere and affordable nightly rates (including family-style meals) make the lodge the perfect rustic getaway and a charming spot from which to explore the riches of the Sierra Nevada.

In summer, the recreational opportunities are unlimited. A network of nearby trails offers miles of hiking and provides access to remote meadows and peaks, crystal clear lakes and numerous fishing streams. The well-known Pacific Crest Trail is only a mile away. The Donner Summit area is great for both road and mountain biking. It is also widely known as a rock-climbers' mecca.

The area receives the highest average snowfall of the entire Sierra Nevada range, making the lodge a favorite with cross-country ski and snowshoe enthusiasts. In winter you can rent skis or snowshoes to explore the many groomed trails, take weekend classes, or sled on the hill behind the lodge.

This sign sponsored by Clair Tappaan Lodge and the Sierra Club

Images here are contemporary photos of the main building. Right and below images represent construction photos and other photos in front of Crater Lake. The text and other photographs are from the Clair Tappaan website. Copyright 2018 Donner Summit Historical Society. www.donnersummithistoricalsociety.org

20 Mile Museum sign for Clair Tappaan. It now sits, in summers, across Donner Pass Rd. at the fire hydrant. It's also on our website.



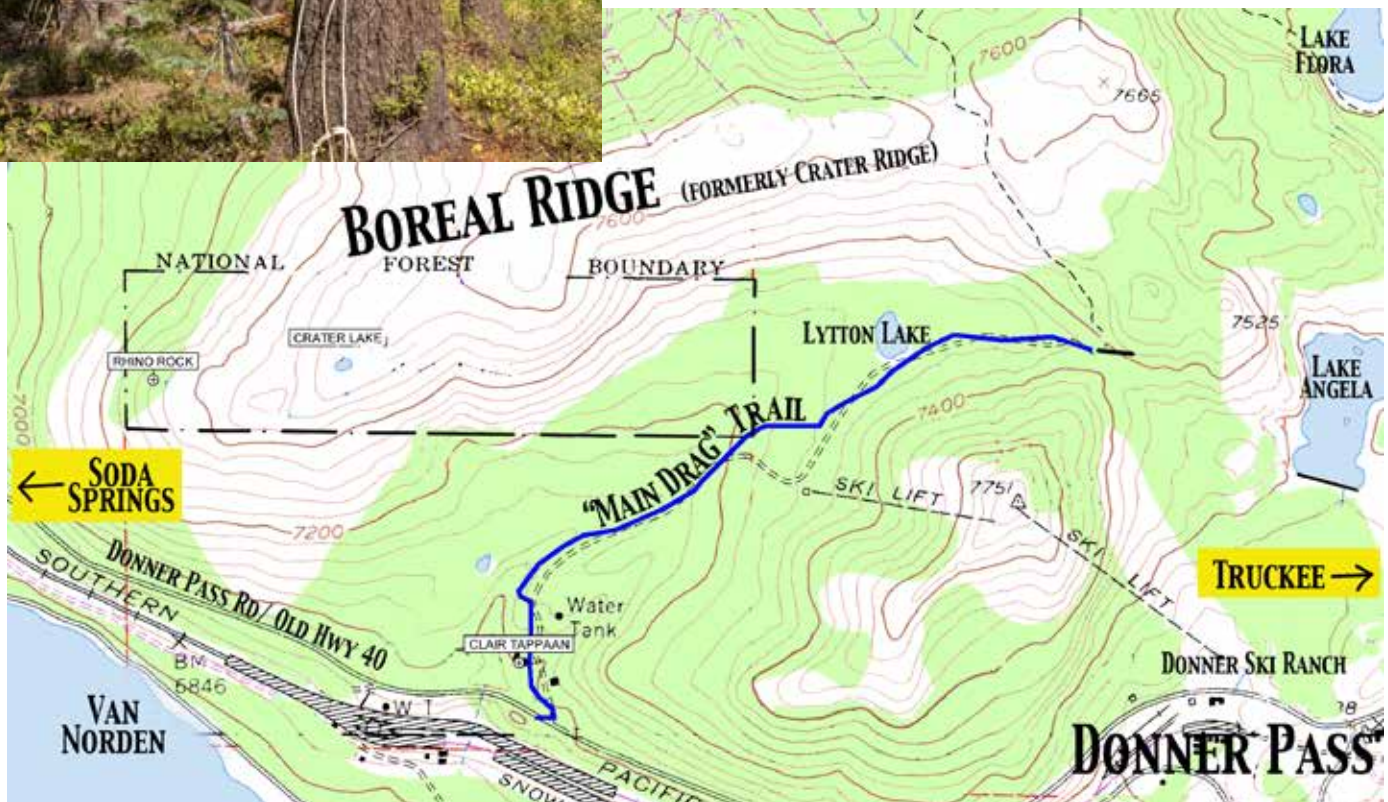
Throughout the forest on the Donner Pass side of "Main Drag" there are marker signs on the trees. They date from the 1930's and 40's and were put up by the Forest Service to mark the Sierra Crest Trail and Sierra Skiways. Trails were ungroomed in those days and the markers guided people back to Old Highway 40, today's Donner Pass Rd. You will note that some have been re-used by the Sierra Club to mark Clair Tappaan Trails (CTL). You can read more about those markers in our December, '10 and January, '12 [Heirlooms](#) or by consulting our article and picture indices for Sierra Ski Way and Sierra Crest.



Right: just below the lower end of the Sierra Club rope tow. Perhaps some of the rope?



Left: an old platform on the route of the Sierra Club rope tow. Below, some structure near the building on page 16.



This is part of a series of miscellaneous history, “Odds & Ends” of Donner Summit. There are a lot of big stories on Donner Summit making it the most important historical square mile in California. All of those episodes* left behind obvious traces. As one explores Donner Summit, though, one comes across a lot of other things related to the rich history. All of those things have stories too and we’ve been collecting them. Now they’re making appearances in the [Heirloom](#).

If you find any "Odds & Ends" you'd like to share pass them on to the editor - see page 2

*Native Americans; first wagon trains to California; the first transcontinental railroad, highway, air route, and telephone line, etc.



Clair Tappaan/Sierra Club ski school on the back of Signal Pk. some time in the 30's. Picture from the Milli Martin Collection at the DSHS

DONNER SUMMIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Donner Summit Historical Society.org

I/we would like to join The Donner Summit Historical Society and share in the Summit's rich history.

- New Membership
- Renewing Membership
- Individual Membership - \$30
- Family Membership - \$50
- Patron - \$500

DATE _____

NAME(S) _____

MAILING ADDRESS _____

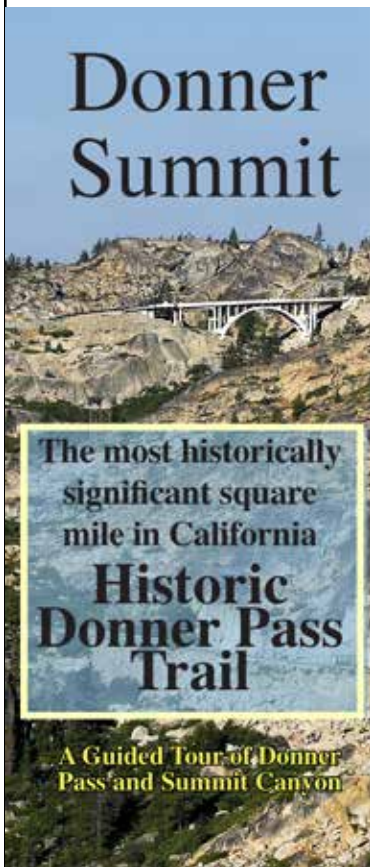
CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

(Please mail this card with your check payable to DSHS to Donner Summit Historical Society, P.O. Box 1, Norden, CA 95724)

- Friend Membership - \$100
 - Sponsor - \$250
 - 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.

New Brochure Touts Summit Adventure



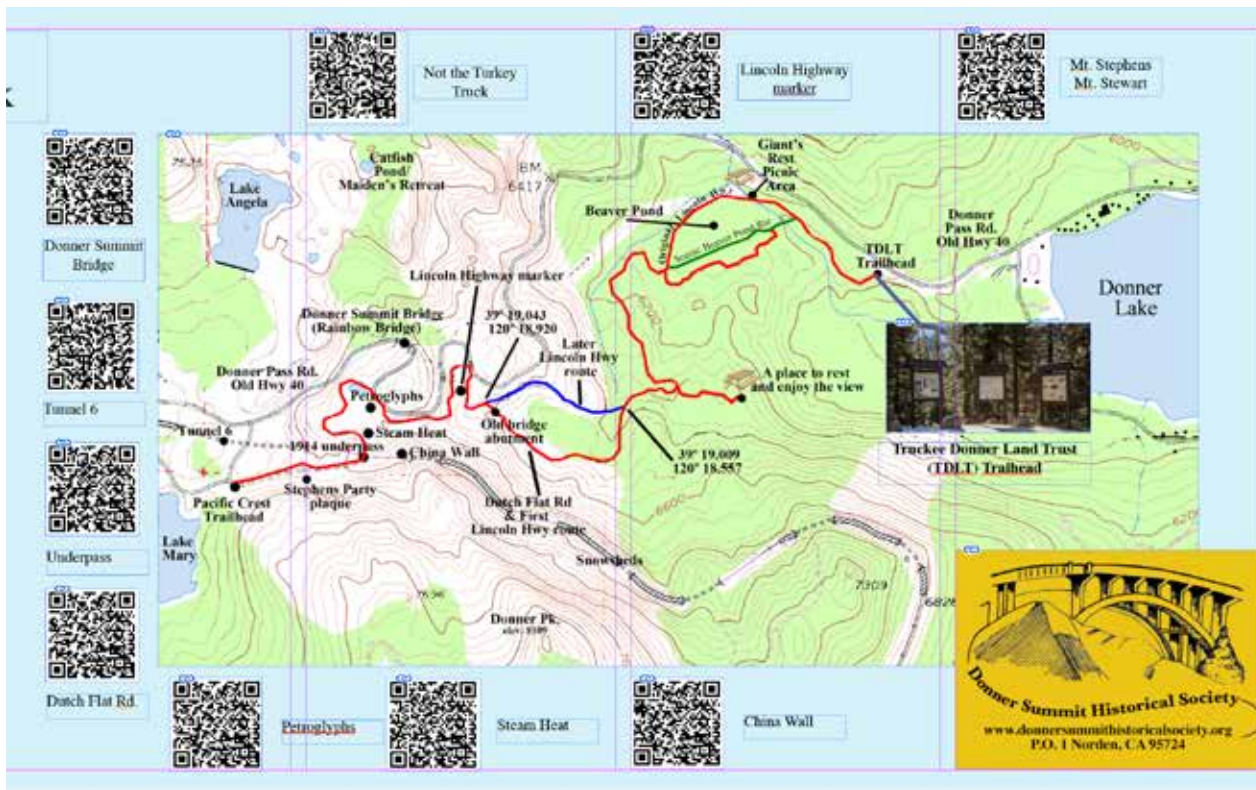
Summer is coming and along with it all the opportunities to go out exploring Donner Summit. The Donner Summit Historical Society has been printing brochures about Donner Summit for years. The most popular has been the Mt. Judah Loop brochure when takes you on a scenic and historic trek. As you walk the PCT with the brochure in hand you point your cell phone at the QR codes to read about the many stories. That brochure proved so popular we can hardly keep in stock at the PCT trailhead. We've given out thousands.

Working on the Donner Summit Association's Lamson/Cashion Donner Summit Hub at the top of the pass on Old 40 we had a continual stream of people asking for information (which the hub is supposed to solve with its exhibits, maps, etc.) including how to get to the Historic Donner Trail.

Well there is no such thing, or wasn't, but that showed a need. So the DSHS brochure production team (BPT) developed a brochure which gives an overview about why Donner Summit is the most historically significant square mile in California and then uses QR codes to tell stories as you hike down Summit Canyon. So, here we have the "Historic Donner Pass Trail." It's also got a nice map and pictures.

The new brochure is available for download from our website (donnersummithistoricalsociety.org), at the DSHS at the blinking light in "downtown" Soda Springs, at other sources of fine exploring literature, and in the new brochure racks at the shed at the Lamson/Cashion Hub as soon as they go up.

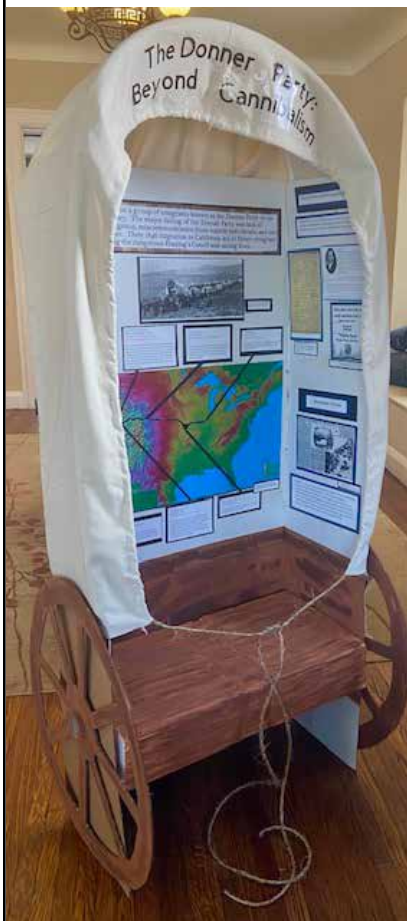
To whet your appetite, there's the cover panel, left and part of the inside below.



The Donner Party - Beyond Cannibalism

Regular Heirloom readers know that the Heirloom is a rich repository of Donner Summit history of which there is lots. Readers might also know that the Donner Summit Historical Society runs the DSHS museum and the 20 Mile Museum; is a purveyor of fine pamphlets and brochures delving into local history; has Norm Saylor's incomparable collection of historic photographs, numbering the thousands; and puts on the Donner Party Hike event and leads hikes.

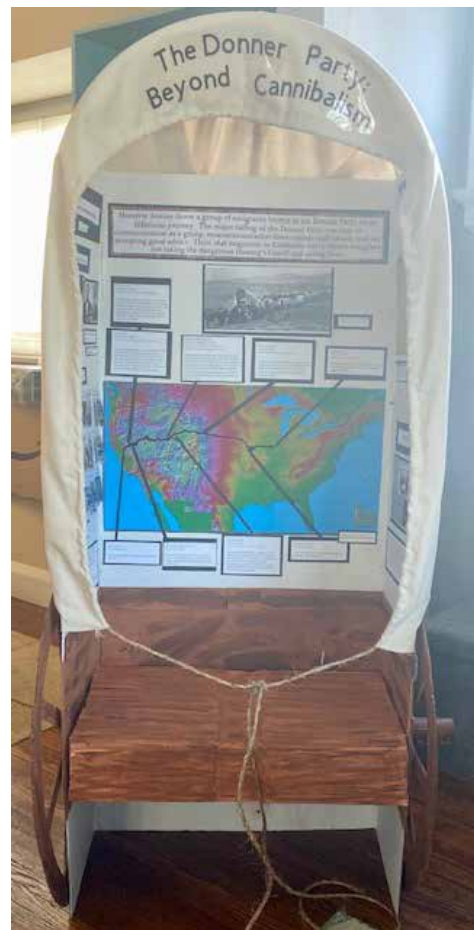
You will probably not know that the DSHS gets questions and comments about local history from many sources. People are taken by photographs in the Heirloom. They have questions about relatives who had something to do with Donner Summit. They want copies of old photographs. They want to know more about things. Then there is also the category of correspondents who are students doing projects for class. The Donner Party is a topic of interest for various reasons and because the Donner Summit Historical Society has Donner in its name and young researchers don't know we are miles away from where the Donner Party spent the winter in 1846, we get questions about that tragedy. We suppose they go their way with their answers and complete their projects. Seldom do we ever see the final product.



There was an exception in 2020. Elijah Madanski, a fifteen year-old freshman at the Toledo Technology Academy in Toledo, Ohio, enrolled in Honors Social Studies, was embarked on a project about the Donner Party for the National History Day competition. Because it was an honors class, Elijah's teacher had assigned entries to the National History Day competition.

There ensued, over the following months, our assistance to Elijah answering questions, giving him sources, and making suggestions. Elijah put all that, along with a prodigious amount of work into his authorship of *The Party: Beyond Cannibalism*. It's pretty impressive and you can find it on our website at the URL below. Here you can see two pictures of his project showing Elijah's creativity.

Link to Elijah Madanski's project [../PDFs/tempPDFs/TheDonnerPartyBeyondCannibalism-Madanski.pdf](https://www.dshs.org/PDFs/tempPDFs/TheDonnerPartyBeyondCannibalism-Madanski.pdf) (there is also a link on the "Newsletters2021" page in the June issue.



National History Day is a way for students to explore history by doing research on the annual historical theme. Students can present their research in any of a number of ways: web page design, video, prose, plays, and art. More than half a million students participate worldwide from grade six on up.

Critical thinking, analysis, research, analyze sources, contextualize and then not just learn but share with a wider audience.

<https://www.nhd.org>





P.O. 1 Norden, CA 95724 530-426-3376
www.donnersummithistoricalsociety.org
info@donnersummithistoricalsociety.org
June 1, 2021

Board of Directors

Norm Saylor
Bill Oudegeest
Starr Hurley
Cheryl Paduano
Pat Malberg

Associates

Sharon Ruffner
Art Clark
John Loll
Judy Lieb

Pledge Break.

Other high quality organizations interrupt their regular programming for quarterly pledge breaks. The DSHS doesn't do that. We don't ever interrupt regular programming. The Heirloom comes out once a month full of Donner Summit history. Now we're up to issue #154. That's thousands of pages of high quality historical journalism.

Besides the regular Heirloom programming our robust publications wing just completed a new brochure to guide you down Summit Canyon with QR codes so you can have stories the whole way. Brochures are available on-line, on our website, or at various purveyors of fine literature (such as the State Park, the Welcome Center in Truckee, the Soda Springs General Store, Colfax visitors' center, etc.). We finished the digitization of Norm Saylor's incomparable collection of historic Donner Summit photographs (instructions for access are on page 2 of the current Heirloom). We've published a number of articles in local periodicals. Our DSHS website is robust with hundreds of pages.

Although the virus put a crimp in activities, things are opening up like the DSHS museum in "downtown" Soda Springs and the Donner Party Hike event will be a "go" on September 18/19 (donnerpartyhike.com).

We've also been working with the Donner Summit Association on the Lamson-Cashion Donner Summit Hub at the top of Old 40. There are twelve exhibits, each four feet square, touting the most historically significant square mile in California and other things. You can get DSHS brochures there too.

To continue our work we need your annual help. We have rent and insurance to pay, brochures to print and we have some maintenance for our 20 Mile Museum signs. Some of those signs are twelve years old and colors are fading so we're beginning a replacement program for the fifty signs at \$315 each.

To renew your membership or send a donation you can go to our website membership page or simply use the U.S. Mail (see the address above).

Thank you for your help,

Norm Saylor, President