

The Donner Summit

Heirlooms



History and stories of the Donner Summit Historical Society and the most historically significant square mile in California.

July, 2023 issue #179

The Maxwell Military Express

The thousands of pictures in the DSHS picture data base (see page two for access) are all slices of life and for each there's a story. The problem is that we only know the stories of a relative few. So you can imagine our editorials staff's interest when Phil Sexton* sent along some links to the story that goes with the picture here on the front page. Just what is the Maxwell Military Express vehicle doing below the snowsheds on Donner Summit?

The story comes from Motor West dated September 15, 1918 in a section titled, "The Car of Commerce" and in a story titled, "Maxwell Light Duty Truck's Great Stunt." It's an intriguing title. The pictures here show a truck at the subway or underpass (see the 3/19, 5/20, and 12/22 Heirlooms) just next to China Wall and between Tunnels 7 and 8. Above the subway are snowsheds, in their wooden incarnation, which protected the tracks from snowfall and avalanche.



Since the truck has "Maxwell Military Express" emblazoned on the side some amateur historians have suggested that it was part of the first Army transcontinental convoy of 1919. One featured member of that convoy was Dwight Eisenhower who said in his memoirs that his memories of the misery of the trip were partially responsible for his development of the Interstate Highway system.

Professional historians know that the pictured truck could not be part of that convoy because the convoy had the very bad taste to go over the So. Lake Tahoe route from Placerville rather than the route over Donner Summit from Auburn. Parenthetically, the official Lincoln Highway route split with both routes going over the Sierra and being part of that first transcontinental highway. It's the only place along the Lincoln Highway where there was an alternative route. Why the army and then Lt.Col.

* Phil Sexton is a retired USFS and California State Park Historical Interpreter who has a long standing interest in the history of transportation across Donner Pass and its connections with California history.

Story Locations in this Issue

picture page 1 & 4 and graffiti page 6 Hotel page 7 Hoyfjellet page 8 Signal Peak page 12 and Sierra Club rope tow

DONNER SUMMIT



railroad complex page 20

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. 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.

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*historical society humor

Find us on 



Ray McNamara Being Greeted by Manager Harry J. De Bear Upon His Arrival in New York City in the Maxwell Military Express

In its extraordinary run across the continent, the Maxwell Military Express, which reached New York at noon August 3d. after a run of 3428.7 miles from San Francisco to New York with 2200 pounds of military supplies, rolled up a record for durability, mechanical reliability and operating economy. The gasoline mileage ran from 9.1 miles per gallon as the lowest average, to 18.8 miles to the gallon as the highest average. The general average for the whole trip figures out to 11½ miles to the gallon. The truck ran 74.25 miles to the quart of oil. or 297 miles to the gallon.

The Commercial Car Journal August 15, 1918

Eisenhower decided to take the Placerville route part of the Lincoln Highway rather than just using the perfectly good Donner Summit route, we don't know, but that's another story for another historical society.

The Maxwell Military Express trip over Donner Summit was a sales gimmick. "Common Belief has insisted that 30 to 80 miles a day is the limit of truck performance." To prove "Common Belief" wrong Maxwell sent a fellow from San Francisco to New York. He averaged 197.8 miles per day. On the first day he did even better, covering 275 miles in just over fifteen hours (that's about 18 mph). He finished the entire trip two and a half days faster than the "fastest freight train time." At the end of the trip the truck "was in as good shape as when it started." The truck had covered 3,426.7 miles in 17 days, 8 hours, 20 minutes. There were other statistics as well for those who are aficionados of old vehicles. The truck used 11.7 miles per gallon of gas and 326 miles per gallon of oil. The truck was a "regular stock model" that carried 2200 pounds of military supplies.

Here we should interject some history beyond the little story of the Maxwell traveling across the country in violation of "Common Belief." 1918 was still at the beginning of the age of motor vehicles as we can see in "Common Belief." So

we should put the Maxwell's trip in perspective. With the coming of automobiles and in this story we can say with the coming of trucks too, people naturally wanted to see how fast and how far their vehicles could go. So endurance runs were common with drivers or "autoists" driving as far as they could, testing their machines and themselves. Auto races were common. Both were reported upon regularly in the newspapers in automotive columns or pages. Then too, there were contests such as the Tahoe Tavern Silver Cup, an annual contest to see who could get their automobile to Tahoe City's Tahoe Tavern resort first. Rather than repeat previous Heirloom articles here we'll just turn your attention to the Heirloom article index. Tahoe Tavern is in the index. So is Arthur Foote whose win is fun to see in pictures and read about. You might also take a look at the book reviews on the article index page. Grace and Grit (Heirloom 9/15), Coast to Coast by Automobile (10/12), and A Reliable Car and a Woman Who Knows It (2/15), are examples of good stories of autos in the early days of automobiles.

If you want to look up Lt. Colonel Eisenhower's trip across the country Phil Sexton sends this link along: <https://www.eisenhowerlibrary.gov/research/online-documents/1919-transcontinental-motor-convoy> You can understand why the Heirloom can't get into it.



Highway Transportation

Official Bulletin of the Motor Truck Club of America, Incorporated, 1790 Broadway, New York City, Telephone Circle 5227

The only publication with 100% circulation for manufacturers and dealers

T. D. PRATT, Editor

SEPTEMBER, 1918



HIGHWAY TRANSPORTATION
 OFFICIAL  BULLETIN
MOTOR TRUCK ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

Vol. VIII

OCTOBER, 1918

No. 4



Bogged!
 This Driver Wouldn't Be
 Jacking Out His Truck If
 He Had on a Set of

Prest-O-Grip

Anti-Skid Chains for Solid Tires

Because Prest-O-Grips would give him the tractive power necessary to pull this heavy truck through the deepest mud or snow. They would also enable him to navigate safely the most slippery roads and streets without skidding. (Thus Prest-O-Grips perform the double function of giving increased traction and preventing skidding.)

Prest-O-Grip Anti-Skid Chains are "different" from ordinary anti-skid devices, and one of the reasons for this difference is the patented Prest-O-Grip Lock-Links used exclusively on Prest-O-Grip

Chains. These lock-links keep the chains securely locked on the tires; they are guaranteed never to open accidentally—never to permit the chains to jump or fall off, as open hooks are likely to do.

Prest-O-Grip Lock-Links are easily snapped on or off. They never rust. Your hands are the only tools you need for lock-links and chains. Chains are attached in a few minutes wherever the truck happens to be—whether in the garage or on the road; whether on a smooth pavement or in deep snow or mud.

We Are Prepared to Furnish Prest-O-Grip Equipment for Disc Wheels

Our No. 25 Clamp is standard equipment for attaching Prest-O-Grips to all disc wheels, except those used on Packard trucks—for which we furnish a special clamp.

For Trucks That Do Not Have the Necessary Clearance Between Brake Drum or Brake Mechanism and Felloe to Permit the Use of the Regular Spoke Clamp—we furnish our No. 33 Clamp, which is attached to the felloe of the wheel instead of the spoke.

NEW PREST-O-GRIP BOOKLET. We have just issued an attractive booklet describing all of the Prest-O-Grip features. Every truck owner, jobber and dealer should have a copy.

Dealers and Jobbers: Ask For Our Co-operative Prest-O-Grip Proposition

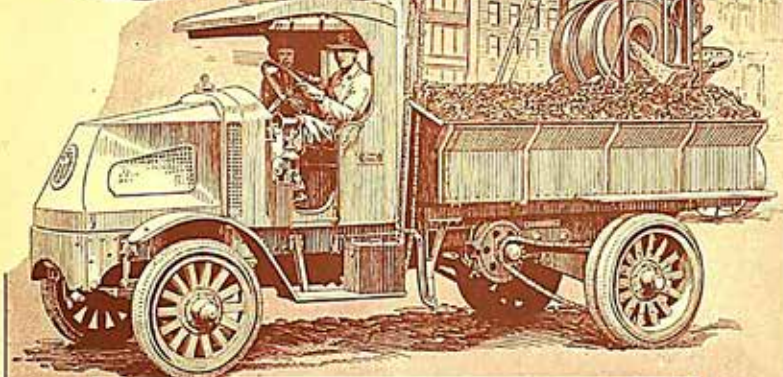


The PATENTED Prest-O-Grip Lock-Links are easy to snap on or off. They never rust. Your hands are the only tools necessary.

Prest-O-Grip Chains are well cross chains, one chain to each alternate spoke, the chains being quickly attached to and detached from the rubber-lined clamps permanently attached to the spokes. The wear comes only on these cross chains.

The Rowe Calk & Chain Company
 Plantsville, Conn.

New York Selling Agents:
 Simpson Sales Co., 16 Nassau Street, Brooklyn, New York.
 Telephone 5985 Main.



The Mack as a Builder

The powerful, hydraulic hoist is one of the MACK features for quick dumping. Operated from the seat, the body is raised to an angle of 50°—and wet concrete or even hot asphalt flows out easily.

MACK stamina, MACK strength and MACK reliability suit this truck to the heavy work of concrete construction. Contractors all over the world are using MACK trucks. We will send you their performance records. Write for Bulletin No. 5—facts and figures.

The MACK is made in sizes from 1 to 7½ tons capacity; with trailers to 15 tons. Special bodies for special needs.

International Motor Company
New York

Performance Counts

When writing advertisers please mention Highway Transportation

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Above left and right: Highway Transportation Magazine September, 1918

—YOU—

Can eliminate the delays, annoyance and unnecessary expense of tire troubles by using

RESILONITE

The Perfect Tire Filler

in your pneumatic tires.

RESILONITE

will withstand the severest kind of a test and the fact that it will not decompose or crumble evokes a great deal of satisfaction from those who are now using it.

The composition is positively free from rubber and obtains its resiliency entirely from the natural tendency of the materials from which it is composed.

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IS GUARANTEED FOR THE AVERAGE LIFE OF STANDARD MOTOR DRIVEN VEHICLES.

Write for further information or call at the address below for a demonstration.

National Synthetic Rubber and Tire Company

1791 Broadway
New York City

Phone Circle 2466

Just for Fun



The picture of the Maxwell Military vehicle on page one has more in it than just the truck, the 1914 underpass, and the snowsheds. Look carefully in front of the truck and see that people in the old days did graffiti too. Mr. Michelini apparently felt it important that drivers passing by know that he had gone through the underpass ahead of them.

Below, some modern graffiti from the underpass.



From the DSHS Archives



1927 traveling across Donner Summit

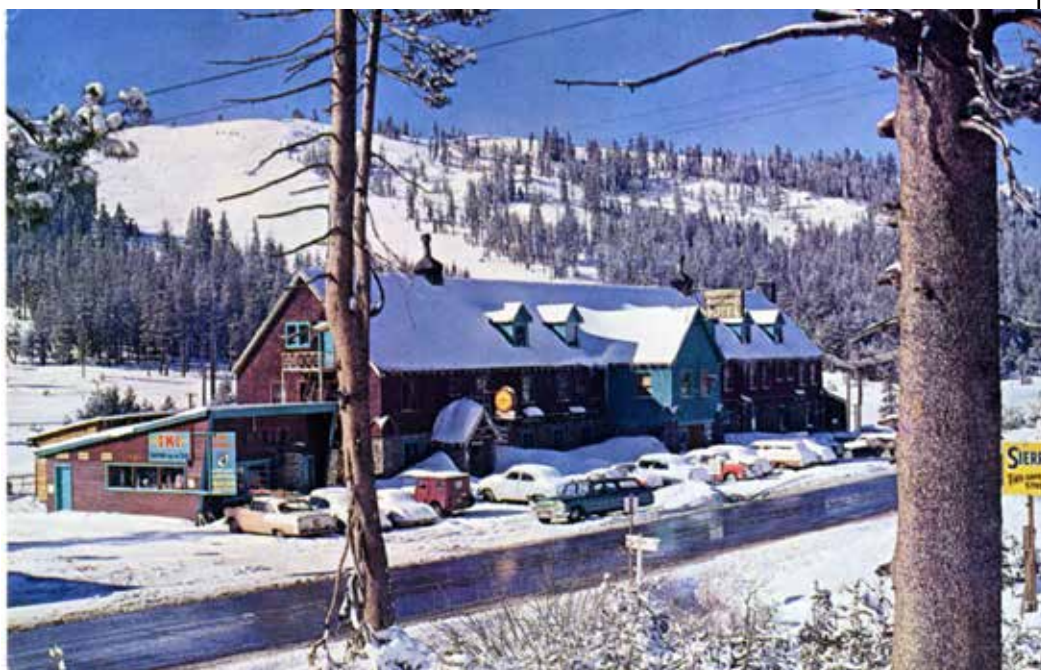
HØYFJELLET

sign over the front door

High Mountain Location
Hidden Mountain Treasure

Traveling Interstate 80 it's impossible to know. Traveling Old Highway 40, Donner Pass Rd., it's difficult to know too, but with some searching you can find historic buildings dating from a different time. Right on Old 40 is the Soda Springs Hotel building but only the outside and location are historic. The inside was turned into condos in the 1980's.

There are other good spots. At the Big Bend exit from I-80, just off Old 40 there is a community of cabins dating from the 30's and 40's along the river. There are more at the Kingvale exit. At Soda Springs there are a number of old ski club buildings with more at Norden and Lake Mary. You have to poke around a bit and we've been intending an article or two because some are really interesting. Some, for example, are built partly or mostly out of old railroad snowshed timbers which is a good story in itself. The ski club cabins reflect a different time. Today people rent or live in separate cabins interacting mostly with friends and family. In the old days life was more communal. At the Sierra Club Lodge, Clair Tappaan, people stayed dormitory style and contributed to the labor that kept the lodge running. The same thing was at the Cal Berkeley Lodge next door and the Nature Friends Lodge nearby. At the ski club lodges like the Oakland Ski Club it was a like arrangement. Of course many of those building are gone now, like Vanderfords or the Beacon Hill Lodge. After skiing people went to the many local spots where there was dancing, singing, story telling, and drinking. It was all good preparation for the next days.



Soda Springs Hotel ca. 1950's

Some months ago we were invited to one of the existing ski lodges, Hoyfjellet which is just up the dirt road at the snow lab turn off from Old 40. Hoyfjellet means, variously, high mountain location or hidden mountain treasure according to the current owners who still cater to groups. It's a classic structure reflecting a time decades ago.

Hoyfjellet Lodge has been owned by the Heckendorns, Gigi and Corky who are local real estate agents, since 1975 and are the third set of owners of the building. It was built in stages starting in the 1930's and going into the 1940's. It was first opened to visitors in 1946-47. Here you must remember that Donner Summit was closed during WWII to protect the transcontinental railroad. You can see the changes in construction over time by the changes in rock work.

The Heckendorns arrived on Donner Summit in 1975 escaping from the San Francisco Bay Area. They bought the lodge as a way to supplement their income. School groups rented the lodge from July through Mid-November. Christmas time was reserved for the family. Then, following Christmas, the lodge saw lots of visitors from January to April, usually with about eighty visitors per weekend. The whole Heckendorn family was pressed into service catering to the visitors cooking meals, cleaning, etc. Like other lodges on the summit, it was communal living with people renting bunks rather than rooms.

The 100 bunk beds were rented to different kinds of groups: Girl Scout, dancing camp, schools, church groups, etc. There were two dormitories, one for males and one for females. Hoyfjellet had a rope tow just outside the door which was taken down as chairlifts became popular.

We'd loved to have talked to the owners previous to the Heckendorns but repeated attempts at contact yielded nothing. So we are left with pictures of a unique Donner Summit structure reflecting a time and life that's mostly gone buy. We also include some advertisements.



Above: Hoyfjellet Lodge - entry side



Part of the dining area and library.



Another part of the dining room.



Hoyfjellet Living Room. Note the timber ceiling.



One of the staircases



Note the differences in rock work due to different masons working on different additions to the building over time.



Rough hewn timbers in the ceiling of the basement.



Tucker Snow Cats parked in front. The right one is 1957 and found in Soda Springs at the Soda Springs ski area. The left one is not as old and was found near Downieville.

From Hoytjellet advertisements.

Accommodations are in heated dormitories. Hot showers are available. Comfortable bunks with mattresses are furnished and guests supply their own bedding, towels etc. Home cooked breakfasts and dinners are served family style in our pleasant dining room. No alcoholic beverages are served.

Donner Summit offers variety in ski terrain for everyone from the novice to the most experienced skier. Only minutes from Hoytjellet Lodge is Sugar Bowl with double chair lifts on Mt. Disney and Lincoln as well as rope tows. Perhaps you prefer Soda Springs with double Chair lift, J Bar, I Bar or rope tows. Donner Ski Ranch has double chair lift and rope tows. If even more variety is desired, only half hour drive is world famous Squaw Valley, site of the 1960 Olympics. Where else in California can you find such variety and unexcelled ski terrain.

HOYFJELLET LODGE is located in the High Sierras on Highway 40 and is close to the various ski areas. It is only a half hour drive to Squaw Valley.

For your convenience our Ski Tow is within fifty feet of the lodge. Just step off the porch, don your skis, and you are on your way up for an 1150 foot trip up the mountainside.

For winter fun there is skiing, dancing, games, folk dancing, moonlight skiing, and just plain relaxing by the fire. Ski classes will be arranged for those wishing instruction.

WINTER RATES

American plan (two meals included) \$ 4.50 per day per person

Weekly Rate

\$30.00 per person for seven days

Special Weekend Rate

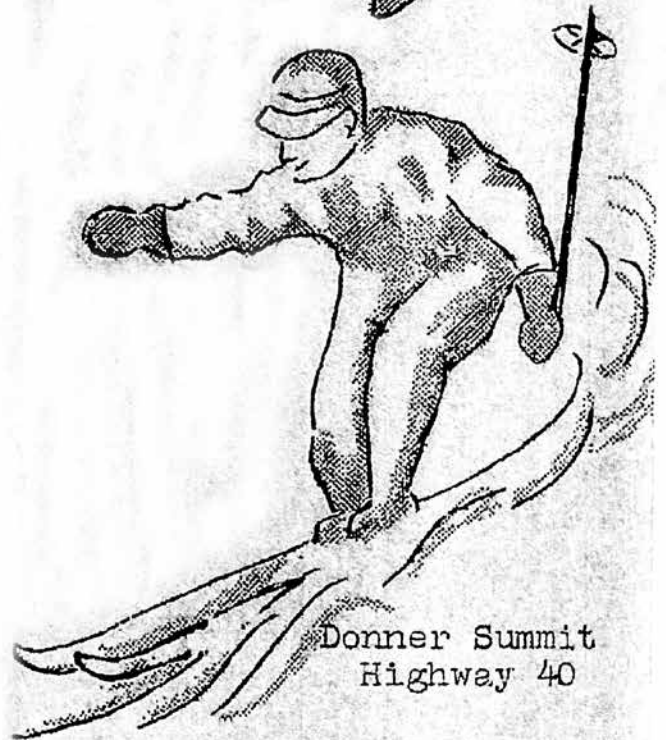
\$ 7.50 per person Friday night lodging through Sunday breakfast.

\$7.50 minimum

New Years Weekend Rate

\$15.00 per person for three days Reservations may be made through:

Hoytjellet Lodge



Donner Summit
Highway 40

FOR REAL SKIING FUN

HOYFJELLET

For Girls 8-17

TAHOE NATIONAL FOREST

Dance, Theater & The Arts. Weekly theatrical performances. Trips, horseback riding, swimming, hiking, sports. 2 week session. \$130. July-August. No poison oak or rattlesnakes.

For brochure write:

CELYA ZAHARA

1550 BRITTAN AVE.

San Carlos, Calif.

LY 3-0350

Jewish News of Northern California, April 24, 1959

Sacramento Pony Express
February 27, 1948

ROSS RECEIVES LETTER ABOUT SKI TOW RATES ON BOREAL RIDGE

The following letter was recently sent to Jack Ross, president of the student body.

Dear Sir:

We believe the following announcement may be of interest to skiers in your organization.

Special rates will be allowed students on Hoyfjellet Ski Tow, located on Boreal Ridge, one-half mile East of Soda Springs Railroad Station on highway 40. The

1100 foot rope tow is about 700 feet off the highway.

Upon presentation of Student Body card, a half-price rate will be allowed on all day ride tickets.

Hoyfjellet Ski Hut has a large fireplace where skiers may warm themselves or bring their lunches and eat by the fire. Also, there are rest rooms for the convenience of our guests.

Very truly yours,

JOHN W. ZAHARA

HOYFJELLET CAMP

For
Girls
8-17

TAHOE NATIONAL FOREST

Dance, Theater & The Arts. Weekly theatrical performances. Trips, horseback riding, swimming, hiking, sports. 2 week session \$130. July-August. No poison oak or rattlesnakes. For brochure write:

CELYA ZAHARA

1550 BRITTAN AVE.

SAN CARLOS, CALIF.

LY 3-0350

San Francisco Examiner April 26, 1959

What's in Your Closet?

Skier on Signal Pk.
with Castle Pk. in
the background.



The Heirloom has subscribers all across the country. Our presence on the web and in FaceBook brings Donner Summit history lots more people. One day we received an email from Jay Kent, a fellow in British Columbia. He had come across some ski photos that his father, Jack A. Kent, took on Donner Summit circa 1944-45. Jay thought the pictures had been taken near the Sierra Club ski tow at Norden. He had scanned the original 4x5 sheet film negatives and wondered if we'd be interested. Well, of course – with alacrity.

Jay had no idea who the people in the pictures are and we don't either. Clearly though, they were taken atop Signal Pk where the Sierra Club's Clair Tappaan Lodge had a rope tow. That was the opposite side of the peak from Donner Ski Ranch.



Two skiers on Signal Pk.

What's in your Closet?

Skiers on Signal Pk.

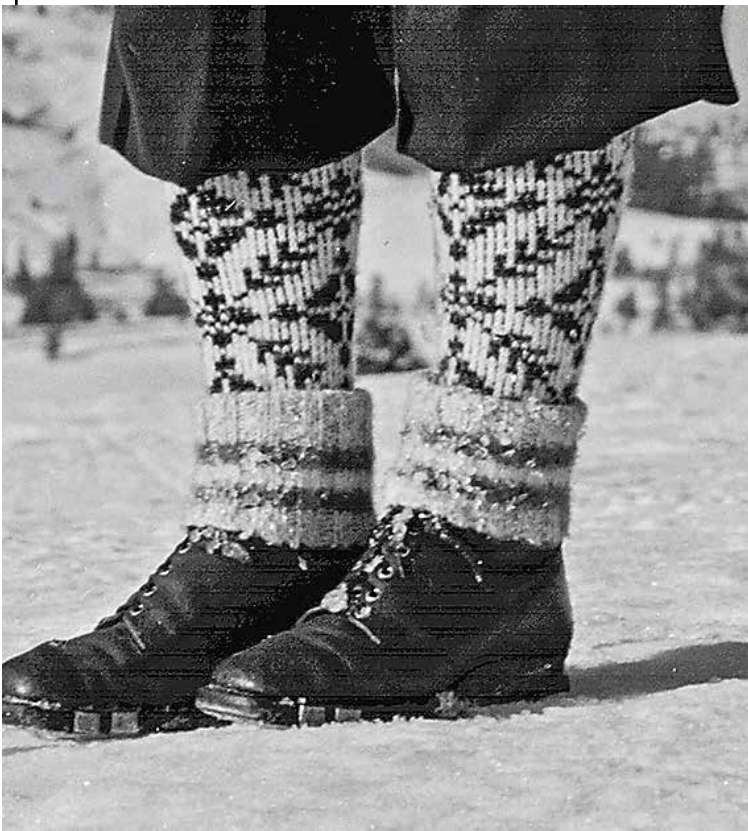
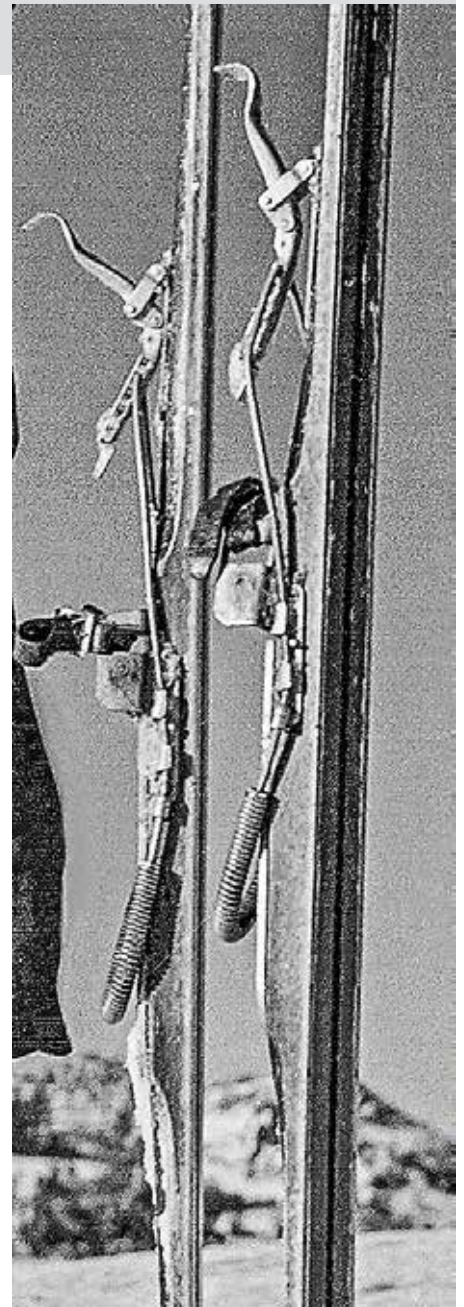


This one is even more interesting. Look at the left side of this photograph. There is one of the transcontinental air route's beacons that used to guide aircraft through Donner Pass. It still sits atop the peak joined now by various other antennae.



Just for Fun

Here are enlargements from the pictures on the previous pages showing the state of equipment in 1944 or so. Jay Kent honed in on the lady on page 4 and enlarged the ski ticket she was wearing. It's hard to enlarge that much but you can read most of it: a Sunday PM ski ticket for the Sierra Club Ski Tow.



Odds & Ends on Donner Summit

The curious reader is going to want to know, after seeing the pictures on the previous three pages, is there anything left of the Sierra Club's ski area behind Clair Tappaan?

There is indeed. There are various bits of rope tow detritus. Most interesting is the picture below right of a defunct outhouse that may not remain standing for much longer. Note that it's built to accommodate the high snows of Donner Summit.



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](#).

From the DSHS Archives



Here, from the archives are pictures showing the Sierra Club ski area in operation - the ski school at top and the people on the rope tow at bottom.

It was quite an exertion to get towed to the top.

Today it is just forest and snow with a Donner Ski Ranch chairlift nearby.



Book Review

The New West or California in 1867-1868

Charles Loring Brace 373 pages 1869

The book is available on the internet, as an antique, as a reprint, or as a free downloadable PDF.

According to the author California in 1869 was “terra incognita” to Americans.

He said California had “a different climate, a changed flora and fauna, a strange scenery, and new outline of landscape, novel productions, and conditions utterly unknown to our branch of the Anglo-Saxon race. Here, under circumstances, in many respects more favorable than the Anglo-American has ever enjoyed, a new and powerful community is springing up, and possibly a new race forming.”

The book presumes to inform Americans of this “New West” and to do that Brace, the author, goes into a lot of detail about every subject imaginable and which will fit in almost 400 pages. As just one example of innumerable details, this quote will give you a good example. I had no idea California even had a silk industry, or ever did, but it is one of the many industries Brace reports on. Regarding the silk worm industry he says,

Each female is expected to lay about 300 eggs, though here she often produces 450. An ounce of eggs can produce 165 pounds of cocoons. It is estimated that an acre of trees will produce any-where from 40 to 500 pounds of silk, at a cost not exceeding \$2.25 a pound. One hundred pounds of leaves are calculated to produce one pound of reeled silk. An acre of trees ought in four years to yield from 50,000 to 60,000 pounds of leaves, which would be 500 pounds of silk, worth some \$3,500 a good profit if it ever be realized.

The descriptions of all the other industries in California have just as much detail which can make the reader nod off, but there is a preventative: skim over the details. Then you can read about what California looked like in 1867-68 and you can read some of Brace’s interesting observations.

The author came to California by ship via the Isthmus of Panama. The trip was so enjoyable especially compared to the Atlantic with its storms, cold, fog, and “reeling state-rooms.” The Atlantic’s ship smells and incessant gales, mist, and chills are a “bore and a burden.” Here we learn about “eructated dinners”

The most interesting thing about California, to an American, is to observe what results the scheming Yankee brain can bring about in the finest climate which the Anglo Saxon race has ever enjoyed, and with soil which is unequaled in the world for variety and wealth of products - the “NEW WEST,” settled by a new race.

THE NEW WEST:

OR,

CALIFORNIA IN 1867-1868.

BY

CHARLES LORING BRACE,

AUTHOR OF

“THE RACES OF THE OLD WORLD;” “HOME LIFE IN GERMANY;”
HUNGARY IN 1851;” ETC., ETC.

NEW YORK:

G. P. PUTNAM & SON.

LONDON: N. TRÜBNER & CO.

1869.

which were part of Atlantic crossings. By comparison the trip to the Isthmus was by “blue sea with ‘the innumerable smiles,’” “the sparkle of spring sunlight by day and the trail of molten silver by night.” He goes on describing various aspects of the sea voyage with flowery words but you get the idea. He was equally descriptive about the Isthmus crossing, “truly a jaunt through a conservatory” and then the Pacific. This is supposed to be about California in 1869 so we’ll skip over the further natural descriptions, ship board life, and the economic and business details (here too there’s a lot of detail such as the amount of coal used by steam ships and the numbers of ships).

From there the author summarizes his visits to many parts of the state starting in San Francisco. He focuses on

flora, fauna, the weather, and lots of economic information (e.g. mint statistics, the numbers of employees in various businesses, schools, etc.). His “visit” becomes more of an investigation. The climate is so good that people only die suddenly in California; there being no lingering illnesses in such a salubrious climate. For some reason there is also a large proportion of insanity in the population. There is good governance though and “high civilization” with lots of well attended churches. There are lots of social clubs, libraries and charities which are the mark of civilization. This of course belies the reputation of San Francisco in those days of the lawlessness and vigilante justice.

As Brace moves out from San Francisco he covers all kinds of subjects:

- The analysis of a bill establishing a college and establishing a university
- Details of mining
- The transcontinental railroad under construction, its wonder and its difficulties
- The Comstock
- Professional robbers and how polite they are while robbing stage coaches
- The Chinese and China Town
- The Geysers and grizzly bears
- Farming
- Wine
- Los Angeles and orange groves and vineyards
- The Sierras [sic] and Foothills
- Oil wells
- Climate
- California for the emigrant

While reading the various subjects there are lots of observations: “The best vine districts of this State will hereafter be the borders and the sides of the Sierras.”

About Los Angeles: Beneath the wide verandas the people sit, and two-thirds of the population seem to spend the day smoking in front of the hotel, and going in for “drinks.”

About the state of California in 1868: Many earlier emigrants to California returned back to their homes in the east after their search for gold. By 1868 that was still a rule because mining had developed a bad name and California was so far from populated areas. But a “new and better” era was opening for California. “She has become an agricultural State – a country of farmers”. That is the basis of prosperity as opposed to large grazing ranches or mining properties which apparently are not as virtuous as farms. The proof of that was that the wheat crop of the state in 1869 would equal the value of gold and silver produced. The state was improving due to the “labors of self-sacrificing men...” The supports for civilization were springing up: schools, academies,

charities, and churches. A new generation was coming of age that did not see the east as “home” and that “this State to be the center and perfection of all good.” Law was becoming supreme. Civilization was exerting her power. The state was becoming more attractive to the immigrant. There were amazing natural resources and a “wonderful richness and bounty of its climate and soil.” With the coming of the Pacific Railroad it would be even more attractive to immigrants. Then, about the people, “Everyone works hard in California. Its climate is the very air of labor...”

There are interesting details in the descriptions too: The future of San Francisco was bright since so much wealth was coming to it from the mines and because so much trade had to go through it. Interestingly, in 1869 there were 500,000 people in the state with 125,000 living in San Francisco. Imagine what the state looked like. “But the citizens are right. Such is the wonderful quality of nature here, and the selected energy of the Americans, that the five hundred thousand are equal to millions elsewhere.”

There are other interesting facts too, like the wages of various occupations. Here the author argues against the need for unions because labor has it so good in California. Many workers even had the eight hour day and they were paid more than elsewhere in the country.

For example the author describes the character of Californians. Servants are of much higher quality than in New York. If not treated well they leave their positions easily. Not being treated well may be a mistress commenting negatively on a beau.

If in my outline sketches of this remarkable region and its vigorous people, I have given anything like my own impressions of the divine climate, the unique and awe-inspiring scenery, the singular and delightfully varied vegetation and productions, the enterprise, and intelligence, and generosity of the population, redeeming even the facts connected with the origin of their civilization, and the opening presented here for the surplus intelligent labor of our crowded communities, I shall have succeeded in my task.

Charles Loring Brace

The social commentary can be interesting. “Venture is on a grand scale, it is true - and speculation, and throwing for [like dice] great chances, will always characterize them [Californians]. Plodding, patient industry will never stand in as high esteem on the Pacific coast, as with us. The same peculiarities reach every department of life. People have a passion for achieving great results at once, and are too often indifferent as to the means.” Brace also says that, “every one lies so!”

Because California began its growth in mining, there is a get rich quick philosophy,

Here are some further examples of commentary. “There is a certain clique of the suddenly-rich, mining speculators, successful stock-gamblers, and others, who indulge in the most unbounded extravagance of living-giving parties costing many thousands of dollars, and displaying all that is possible in equipage and jewelry.’ Connected with these, are various

women of a more or less doubtful position, whose previous history is uncertain, and whose present means of living and display are unknown.

“The general tone estimates [evaluates] each man by money, and I think there is a profound but concealed contempt for any one living mainly for ideas or principles, the results of whose work are not shown by pecuniary rewards. The curse of Californian society is its evil-speaking. It is rare to hear any one well spoken of. There seems to be hardly a name so honored as not to have a shade of scandal on it.”

“Then, no doubt, many men and some women, when they first came here, felt themselves somewhat beyond the restraints of morality and civilization, and gave way to actions of which they would be ashamed now. No American community ever had so many energetic and educated men in proportion to its numbers, and none so many adventurers.”

“It must be remembered that there was never a place of such temptation as California. The prizes for ‘sharp-practice’ are enormous, and public opinion is not strict.”

Brace visited the Big Trees and Yosemite provided interesting details about taking such a journey in 1868. The main point was how to visit and not just “do” as quickly as possible.

Because of the wonders of California: California and its wonders are actually changing the people. “It is especially the land of handsome men. One sees great numbers of fine manly profiles, with full, ruddy cheeks, and tall, vigorous forms. The spare, dry, nervous type of the eastern American is not common in the interior. City residents, of course, are always inferior physically to the rural population;” It’s not just the men. “The young girls of the city show a great deal of beauty, and such rich bloom of complexion as we seldom see in the Atlantic border.”

In the Sierras, especially at Virginia City, there seems no doubt that the rarefied atmosphere has expanded the chests of the people, even in these few years.

There are a few 19th Century prejudices: Digger Indians are The lowest tribe of the human race and “greasers” is “a name given to Spanish-American settlers.”

One would expect then prejudice against the Chinese, especially considering that in just a bit more than a decade the Chinese Exclusionary Act would be passed banning Chinese immigration to the United States. Brace says that about ten percent of the population in California was Chinese. Without it [Chinese labor], it was evident that manufactures and a large part of Californian agriculture and horticulture would cease to exist; railroads could not be constructed, and a vast deal of business must be contracted or given up. The result, both of conscience and of interest, in California, has been a great change of opinion and action toward the Chinese.

People everywhere speak well of them, and agree that they are the most industrious and steady of laborers, not as efficient, perhaps, as the Irish, but more regular and sober, and with a great talent at imitation. In person they are the neatest of creatures. ... They are always neatly and nicely dressed, and are far more agreeable coach-company than the Mexicans or Spaniards here, who are exceedingly odorous.

About mining – on the land
If any of my readers have any lingering romance about the mining country, or the golden sands of California, they should travel through the "Southern Mining Counties." Mining, at the best, is a sort of devil's or ghoul's work, on a landscape. The curse of nature seems to follow it. Even fresh battle-fields are soon covered with grass, and flowers, and grain; but no green thing grows where the miner hath been. The shining meadows, with the gay wild flowers of California, are dug up as if with fresh-made graves; the rounded outline of the hill is broken with heaps of dirt; green slopes are disfigured with unsightly piles of gravel and stones; fields are covered with sand and pebbles, as if from an inundation; the clear mountain streams are muddy with dirt; trees are overthrown, and vineyards and farm-houses undermined; the whole landscape is a picture of roughness, waste, and desolation.

Then of the people resulting from mining:
The saddest relics of the past were, here and there, the young men who had failed in mining and were broken down by drink, and now haunting the old diggings and the taverns for a chance job. They seemed, sometimes, men of education, and perhaps, of former wealth.
What histories of tragic struggle with fortune and of defeat there are unwritten in California! How many young men, for whom still fond hearts of sisters or mothers beat lovingly in vain, have fought the battle of life here unsuccessfully, and have died, as men know how to die, in solitude and desolation, without a murmur or a groan.

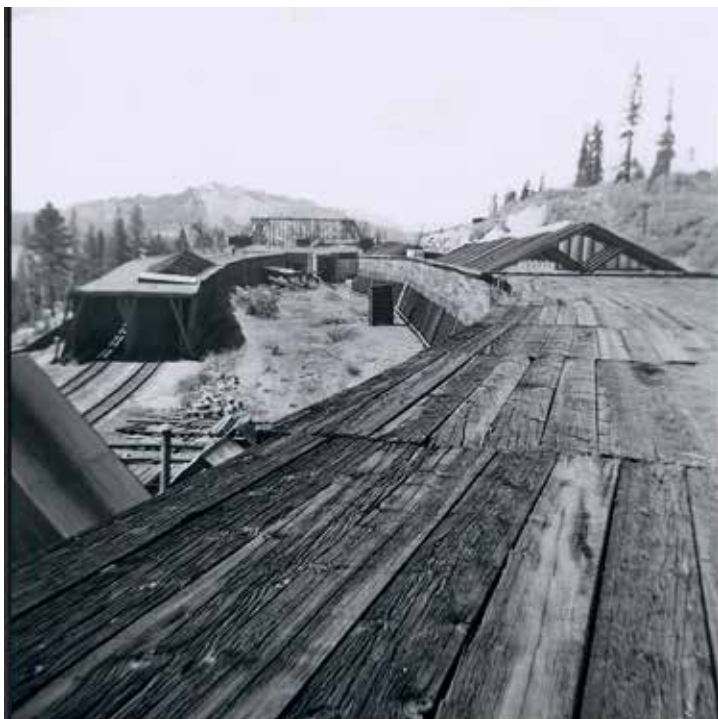
When our pleasure-seekers on the Eastern coast can reach in a week such objects of wonderful grandeur and beauty as the Yosemite, Lake Tahoe, and the high Sierras, there will be crowds taking their summer trip hither. This region will become our American Switzerland.

Making History Colorful



Today, due to advances in computer graphics technology, there may be a solution to the color limitations of our historical black & white images. Computers are remarkably adept at manipulating photographic images. Algorithms developed for Artificial Intelligence (AI) and machine learning have been adapted to image technology to give almost magical results such as the colorization of black & white images. Algorithms are “trained” by looking at millions of color and black & white versions of photos to “learn” how to add back colors to a black & white image. The algorithms learn how to find a sky and make it blue, find a face and make it flesh colored, find a tree and make the leaves green. They develop highly sophisticated models that can do amazing transformations. Amazingly this technology is now available on desktop computers.

George Lamson



railroad complex at Norden. Soda Spring ski hill is in the background.



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- A Slower Pace



Take a look at our guide to Old Highway 40 turn by turn instructions from Beckley to Truckee, broken into four legs and including pictures and history. Available on line on the brochure page of donnersummithistoricalsociety.org, at the DSHS (at the blinking light in "downtown" Soda Springs, or the visitors' centers in Truckee and Auburn.



And while you are at it, check out the 20 Mile Museum - interpretive signs from Nyack to below Donner Summit on Old 40. Information at www.donnersummithistoricalsociety.org



HOYFJELLET (Hoy-fa-let) LODGE



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WINTER (Groups up to 100)

Ski Areas — Donner Summit offers variety in ski terrain for everyone from the novice to the most experienced skier. Only minutes from seven great ski areas, Hoyfjellet, Soda Springs, Donner Ski Ranch, Squaw Valley, Sugar Bowl, Alpine Meadows and Pla-Vada. Where else in California can you find such variety and unexcelled ski terrain?

Meals — Home-cooked *breakfast* and *dinners* are served family style in our pleasant dining room. Groups wishing to arrange for bag lunches may do so when making reservations.

Beds — Accommodations are in heated dormitories. Hot showers are available. Comfortable bunks with mattresses are furnished and guests supply their own bedding, towels, etc.

Marshmallows — FIRE PLACES IN LOUNGE & DINING ROOM



We cater to Churches, Schools, Scouts and Clubs. We are off the highway. We have no bar or liquor facilities. Group rates available on equipment rental. Also on ski lifts.

Ski Lessons — Plan to take ski lessons with Bob Maughan, certified instructor with the FAR WEST SKI INSTRUCTORS ASSOCIATION, and teaching at Soda Springs. All levels, beginning through racing, are taught. Group rates are available through HOYFJELLET

SKIING SEASON RATES

MAKE RESERVATIONS EARLY!

	DEPOSIT REQUIRED
Weekend	\$10.00 (incl. meals)
One Day & Night	\$ 6.00 (incl. meals)
One Night	\$ 3.00 (no meals)
Supper	\$ 2.00
Lunch	\$ 1.00
Breakfast	\$ 1.00
Bag Lunches	\$.75

Family Rates Available

SUMMER (Groups up to 90)

Sleep — Accommodations are in heated dormitories. Hot showers are available. Comfortable bunks with mattresses are furnished and guests supply their own bedding, towels, etc.

Eat — Home-cooked *breakfast* and *dinners* are served family style in pleasant dining room. Lunches are also served in the lodge or outside, depending on location of activities.

Popcorn — FIRE PLACES IN LOUNGE & DINING ROOM

Donner Summit offers a variety in sports and outside activities. There are numerous mountain lakes and streams nearby stocked almost annually. There are challenging hiking trails for both expert and novice. Cookouts on the slopes near the Lodge. Swimming in Grater and Van Norden lakes. Boat rides and water skiing for everyone. Water ski jumping, demonstrations and lessons for all included. *Horses are furnished for riding thru scenic backwoods. Tours thru the Forest Service Snow Lab Experiment Station, Horseback, volleyball, badminton, ping pong, dancing are offered. Ice skating year around at Squaw Valley.

Ask our manager to meet with you to work out your program.



SUMMER SEASON RATES

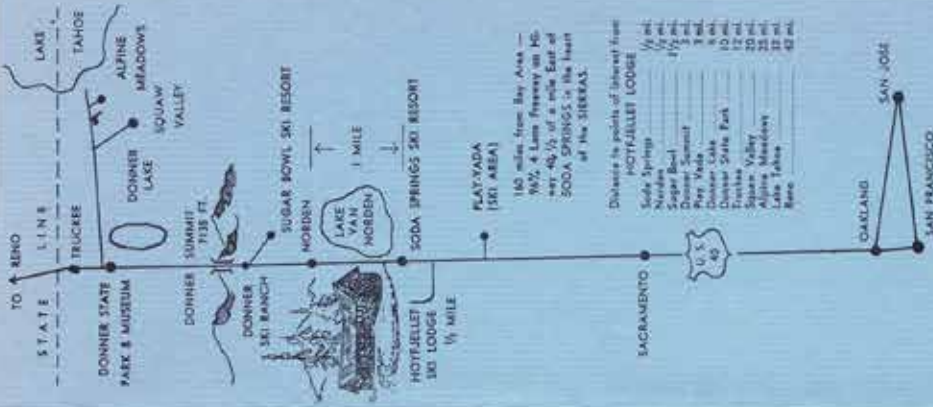
(includes lodging and 3 meals daily)

Per Day	\$ 5.00
Weekly (7 days)	\$30.00
2 Weeks (14 days)	\$60.00
*Horses	\$ 2.00 per hr.

Deposit Required
Family Rates Available

HORSE PACK TRIPS

Inquire about these fun packed, exciting, weekend trips into the rugged and scenic Sierras, 7 mile trip (4 hrs.) and camping near 3 lakes where fishing and picture taking is good. Any one from the inexperienced to the expert rider will enjoy this outing. *Everything* is furnished except sleeping bag. Trip is designed for small groups of 10-20 people. Get your own group together. Cost is only \$10.00. Write for information now...



HUNTING SEASON

1000-1500 birds
have been killed in the mountains of California, one
you lucky enough to get one of them? If so, we
have birds. Write for more information.

Donner Summit Historical Society

www.donnersummithistoricalsociety.org

Membership

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 \$40
- Family Membership \$60
- Friend \$100
- Sponsor \$250
- Patron \$500
- Patron \$500
- Benefactor \$1000

The Donner Summit Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) non-profit

Date _____

Name(s) _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

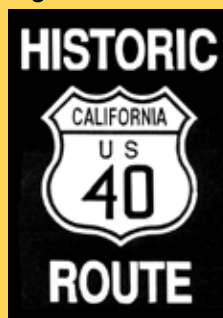
Please mail this card with your check payable to the DSHS to Donner Summit Historical Society P.O. 1 Norden, CA 95724

You can also go to our website and use PayPal or a credit card.

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



Take the Scenic Route: Donner Summit's Old Highway 40



Pick up the brochure at the DSHS or download it at:
<http://www.donnersummithistoricalsociety.org/pages/brochures.html>

50 interpretive signs along Old 40

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