



# Hwy 40 Scenic Bypass

## Soda Springs Hotel ●

### History

Before the coming of the hotels and ski areas, the only Summit industry was the railroad. There had been a few dairies, two ice houses, sheep, and

some lumbering, even a still on the hill, but the railroad was the key to the Summit.

After the Summit Hotel burned along with a few hundred feet of snowsheds in 1892, there were few accommodations for travelers from Colfax to Donner Lake. That didn't much matter because most people, traveling over the Summit, came by train and were headed elsewhere. With the coming of the automobile, people wanted to travel and they wanted to travel freely. Hotels began springing up along popular routes.

Oscar Jones saw what was coming and took advantage. In 1924 he bought the land for the Soda Springs Hotel for \$5,000. On December 10, 1927 the hotel opened to the public (top picture). Oscar's brother, Herste, opened the Rainbow Tavern (Lodge) at the same time (and he would later open Nyack Lodge). With a railroad stop in Soda Springs, the popularization of skiing and the coming of ski resorts (Beacon Hill, Clair Tappaan, Lake Mary/Signal Hill) Highway 40 would be packed with fun seekers (see right) and the Soda Springs Hotel would do a good business. The railroad was no longer the chief Summit industry.

### A Good Story

The coming of I-80 in 1960 took traffic away. People could go faster and farther. There was less need for Summit lodgings.

Maggie and Marvin Littenstein owned the Soda Springs Hotel and

they had a daughter. Their daughter, like most daughters, wanted a pony. Unlike most daughters, she got a pony. The pony had a small corral out back. With Fall and Winter coming, the question arose: what to do with the pony? The pony moved to the basement and lived there for three winters.

During prohibition there was also gambling in the basement. Liquor was served upstairs except when news spread that the sheriff was on patrol. The various establishments that might have sold liquor along Highway 40 would call one another when the sheriff was on the prowl. Teamwork and intelligence helped business.

### Things to do right here

Stop in at the museum and meet our artifacts both living and dead.

Sign sponsored by the Leathers Family.



Soda Springs Hotel

