



# Hwy 40 Scenic Bypass

## Sugar Bowl Academy.

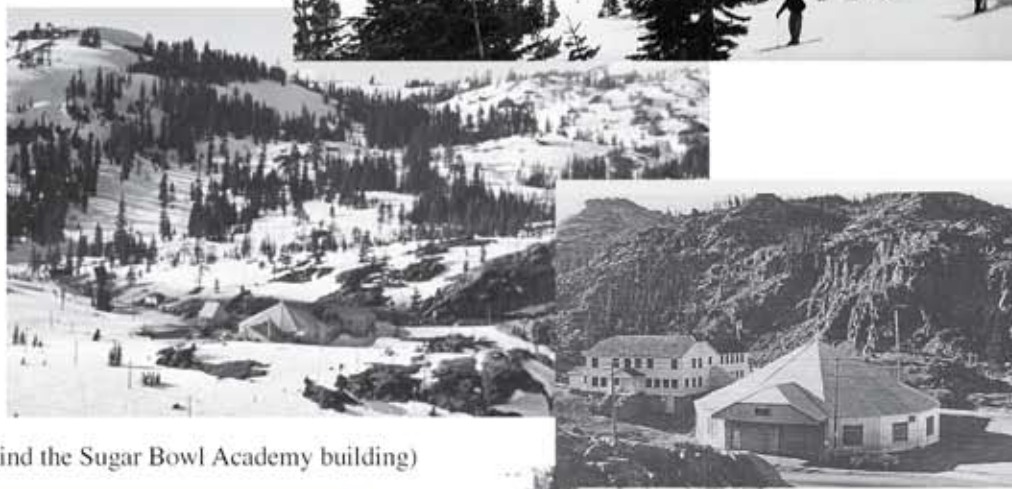
### History

The current building at the head of Donner Pass on Old 40 was built for the Division of Highways in 1931 to serve as a dormitory for highway workers. That was the first winter the road was plowed and on-call workers needed accommodations. The idea to plow the road had been pursued by the Auburn Ski Club. When they finally took a train load of legislators to the snow the need was seen and the State began plowing the road. The building went up for auction in 1965 when Cal Trans moved to I-80 at Kingvale and became the Donner Spitz Inn with dormitories, bar, and a restaurant. By the early 70's the inn became the Alpine Skills Institute, a center for telemark ski instruction. Now it is the Sugar Bowl Academy a private school. Pictured here: the building (1930's) and its octagonal garage (collapsed by snow in 1983), the very first snow removal equipment (except trains) on Donner Summit, and signs at the top of Donner Summit (1930's).



### A Good Story

"Skiing on the 4th of July ...the... average snow depth around Donner Pass that 1937-38 winter was 29 feet above the ground. I took a girl from San Francisco skiing – for her first time on skis – on part of the rope tow slope – by moonlight on the Fourth of July, 1938." Johnny Ellis (built the first rope tow on Donner Summit on the mountain behind the Sugar Bowl Academy building)



### Things to do right here

The Pacific Crest Trail takes off for the south a couple of hundred yards down the dirt road to the side of the Sugar Bowl Academy. Hike up the trail to the first left hand turn and follow the trail to the saddle between Donner Peak and Mt. Judah. Then scramble over the granite that takes you to the top of Donner Peak. What a view: a thousand feet straight down to Donner Lake. It's only a mile or so – uphill but then it's all down hill on the way back. If you are hiking before August you will probably come across some snowfields on the north side of Judah – great for sliding on, making snow cones with, or using to cool off.



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