

America's first transcontinental highway and to be the first national memorial to Abraham Lincoln. With the new highway, independent travelers could more easily explore the Sierra and travel the country.



Until the overpass (pictured here) was built, autos approached the snowsheds, opened the door, listened for approaching trains, and then hurried across the tracks through the door on the opposite side. There were collisions in Summit Canyon.



You can see sections of the highway, and hike them, on Donner Summit and down Summit Canyon to Donner Lake. Along the way, look for old advertisements painted on the rocks, for old bridge abutments, and other evidence of the highway.

First Transcontinental Air Route

The first transcontinental air route used Donner Pass too. Beacons, ground markings, and arrows guided flyers through the Pass in the days before radar and high altitude flying. A beacon and a little house housing a weather station sat at the head of Donner Pass overlooking Summit Canyon. It sat above today's Donner Ski Ranch, on Signal Hill. It was airway station 15. On one side of the roof "Donner" was painted and on the other, "SL - SF" (Salt Lake-



San Francisco) so pilots knew where they were and where to go next.

To Take the Historical Walk

To take this historical walk, start at the Pacific Crest Trailhead on Donner Summit. The PCT is just off Old 40 on Donner Summit. Take the Sugar Bowl Rd. turnoff to the Old Donner Summit Rd. Drive up to the PCT trailhead. Parking is just below it. The walk is 3.5 miles downhill with lots of photo and picnic opportunities.

Traveling Summit Canyon 1845

"You can form no idea, nor can I give you any description of the evils which best us. From the time we left the [Donner] lake ...until we reached the top it was one continued jumping from one rocky cliff to another. We would have to roll over this big rock, then over that; then there was bridging a branch; then we had to lift our wagons by main force up to the top of a ledge of rocks...Three days... found ourselves six miles from the lake...you never saw a set of fellows more happy than when we reached the summit."

William Todd 1845

Summit Canyon Acquisition

The Truckee Donner Land Trust has been acquiring private property and turning it over to public access for two decades. The TDLT has added about 2500 acres to the Donner Memorial State Park including all of Schallenburger Ridge, the ridge on the south side of Donner Lake.

The 2011 purchase of the 260 acres in Summit Canyon will be a boon to hikers, bikers, and history buffs who will enjoy it in perpetuity. This purchase is part what the Land Trust sees as its important duty, expanding recreational opportunities, preserving historical sites and viewsheds, and protecting watersheds

Currently the land is open to public use for non-motorized activities like hiking, biking, and picnicking.



Truckee Donner Land Trust

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Donner Summit Historical Society

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DONNER

PASS

&

Summit Canyon

Explore California's Richest Historical Area

