

With the coming of the automobile human nature devised new challenges. Car races are one example. Another natural idea would be to press the limits of where automobiles could go. Each year before the trans Sierra routes were plowed adventurers pressed the limits – who could cross the Sierra first in the Spring? Business groups were interested of course, so that commercial activity could resume after a winter's isolation. Sometimes they encouraged the competitions (like the Tahoe Tavern). Business groups even organized snow shoveling bees transporting people to the Summit to shovel snow so tourists could get to Sierra towns. In researching "first" trips over the Summit our research staff came across this article

How did they do that in the old days?

in the <u>San Francisco Call</u> (a defunct daily newspaper) about a planned trip to Lake Tahoe from San Francisco. It gives us a good view on travel in the old days, when automobiles were new.

The Lincoln Highway route was designated in 1913 but that was just local routes strung together into a transcontinental highway. The route up to Donner Summit would become a State highway and later U.S. Highway 40. At the time of this "scenic trip" there was no paving outside of towns. Note the average speed expected (17 MPH), the time to go from San Francisco to Tahoe (2 days) and the time from Stockton to Sacramento (2 hours). Note too that sometimes the route specifies "good roads" which leaves one to wonder about the conditions on the other roads. If you're feeling energetic you might want to make the trip yourself. If you do, be careful going through the snowsheds.



SCHEDULE FIXED FOR SCENIC TRIP

Elaborate Tour, Arranged-, to Start Next Saturday for Lake Tahoe

R. R. L'HOMMEDIEU

San Francisco Call October 1, 1910

Considerable interest is being displayed in the run of the San Francisco motor club to Lake Tahoe [that] starts a week from today. The following is the schedule for the event, which will be carried through on an average of 17 miles per hour: Leave San Francisco via creek boat at 7 a.m.; leave Oakland via boulevard Hayward; turn left on Dublin Road direct to Livermore; turn left on main road toward Tracy, via Mountain house to within one mile of Tracy; turn left on Stockton Road direct to Banta then to Lathrop and on to Stockton, where the first car is scheduled to arrive at 12:30 o'clock. Forty-five minutes will be allowed at this control for luncheon. Leave Stockton at 2 o'clock for Sacramento via Galt (all



good roads) 52 miles. Arrive Sacramento hotel, corner Tenth and X streets, at 4:15 p. m. Leave this hotel at 4:30 p. m. out Twelfth street, under railroad, across Long bridge; take first main road to right direct to Auburn, through Roseville. Rocklin, Loomls, Penryn and Newcastle. Arrive in Auburn at 6:30 (Garage Placer Auto and Machine Company).

Sunday — Leave Auburn 7 a. m., via lower road, turn to right, go under railroad, turn left direct to Colfax. Cross railroad, turn- to right, follow main road through Gold Run and Emigrant Gap; keep to right bend in canyon. up grade and rough it until you strike the state road; then good roads.



editor: Bill Oudegeest 209-606-6859 info@donnersummithistoricalsociety.com Use care going through snowsheds and down hill some short turns, follow main road through woods and rocks to signboard there take left road leading to Summtt. A steady climb through snowsheds, to the left good road to Summit House [Summit Hotel next to the tracks across from where Donner Ski Ranch is today). Follow main road through snowsheds again, then very rough and steep, two mile grade to sawmill. cross under mill track: bear to the right. Good level road to Truckee for seven miles: Arrive in Truckee at 1:30 p. m. Leave Truckee at 3p. m. Direct to . Tahoe Tavern. I8 miles: due 4:30 p. m. Allow one hour for all contestants to arrive: no penalization between 4:30 and 5:30 o'clock.

Leave Tavern at 7 a. m. Monday - over same route. Arrive in Colfax at 12:30 p.m.; leave Colfax at 1:30. Arrive in Sacramento at 5 o'clock, leave at 7 a. m. Tuesday. Arrive in Stockton at 3:13: leave at 10:00. Arrive in Livermore at 12 noon; leave at 1 p. m. Arrive In Oakland in time for 4 o'clock creek boat. Check in on boat: assemble at motor club rooms, corner Van Ness and Golden Gate Avenues San Francisco for photograph.

The following week was reported:

...The scenery is grander and more rugged. It is awe inspiring, especially at the Summit. The road leads up to the highest point which is readied just before the snow sheds are entered. It is a sharp decline, and as the car comes out of the sheds there is one of the grandest pictures that one could imagine. The road skirts one side of the Dormer Lake on the way to Truckee. The lake, with its tragic

history, made an impression on the motorists who had never seen It before. The roads from Auburn are splendid for mountain thoroughfares.

To see some ads from 1910 to go with the above, go to page 10

Lena & Herb Frederick and the Norden Store - 1930's

The sister of a dear friend, said she met someone interested in the history of Donner Summit, would I mind if he called? Norm Saylor. Gosh, that name was familiar. I dug out the old, old address book, and sure enough, there it was; Norm Saylor.

On my next trip "outside" I took a couple days to revisit Donner Summit and meet Norm. We talked about my uncle and aunt Lena and Herb Frederick the owners of the Norden Store. There Norm showed me the postcard which was in the October '08 issue of DSHS [pg 2 & 4] newsletter with the note about hoping to build a 200 room hotel on Donner Summit. I wish I could ask them about it, but they are both gone now. And never once in all the years did I ever hear mention of a 200 room hotel or Hotel Julius. Was it perhaps a joke of some sort? Who knows?



I am grateful to Norm for his interest and energy in behalf of the history of Donner Pass, and also the opportunity he afforded me to explore once more Boreal Ridge, where I hiked so many summers of my youth. There have been many changes: loss of forest on the top, the chair lifts and obvious tremendous winter use. But Castle Peak is as she always was, and to my relief, so was Crater Lake.

Lena and Herbert Frederick, of the Norden Store and Post Office were my aunt and uncle. I spent every summer from the age of 3 to my 20's at Norden. I Learned to swim at Donner Lake, satisfied my love of riding horses thanks to Betty and Jergy Jorgenson's stables at Soda Springs, and learned to ski from Bill Klein [11/09 newsletter]. But it is the story of Lena and Herb I would like to share, because they were an integral part of the Donner Summit community for 35 years. In 1991 and '92 I was able to record some of their recollections of coming to Norden. That, documents inherited, and my memories are what follows.

Lena and Herbert were married March 12, 1927 in Hamburg, Germany. Six weeks later they emigrated to the United States. They spent two years in the Chicago area, hiring out as cook and butler. Herbert had to teach himself to drive as part of the job. They left Chicago in 1930 to spend a winter in California, going by way of the National parks: Grand Canyon, Painted Desert, Glacier, Yellowstone, Estes, Banff, etc. They arrived in California broke and had to wire my Dad for funds. They were only planning to spend that one winter, but after seeing California



Top: Norden Store as it looked in the 1930's-40's; picture comes from a painting on one of Milli's grandfather's cigar boxes painted by Kurt Holtzhauser who was known for his interior murals. Herb and Lina skating on the "professors'" catfish pond (Hutchinson Lodge - see story) behind the store 1940 they loved it so much, they never left. Lena said that first winter was a long, ongoing winter!!!

They worked in Burlingame until buying Norden in 1938. While in Burlingame, Lena was cited in a news article as the "Best cook of Burlingame." I have that article, as well as handwritten notes of recommendation from their early employers.

For years Lena would tell me, do not ever form a partnership with a friend, you will lose that friend. She based that on their experience buying Norden with their then best friends Katie and Ernest Danzger. (October, '09 issue of DSHS, page 7, is the ad for the Store and Ski Lodge with Ernest as contact.)

When they purchased Norden, there was a large house and the cabins to the rear, and the front building which had been built in the early 1930's housing a store, restaurant and bedrooms. The owners slept in the back house. Lena and Herb hired a young man, Quentin Queen, as all around helper. Neither Lena nor Herb could pronounce Quentin Queen, so he became forever, "King". In 1939 Lena's Dad, Johannes Utermark joined them from Germany, coming on a visitors visa and later becoming a citizen. He wrote a wonderful diary starting on the day he set sail from Hamburg on a tramp steamer through the Panama Canal to San Diego. That

is another project to tackle, as it is beautifully written and also has a lot of the Norden history. Another day.

Lena and Herb hired King and a Swiss émigré, Emile, to construct a kitchen and room for King adjoining the house in the back . That also became Pappa's room. The cabins were off a long hallway. Two "big" rooms had double decker beds and shower-rooms in the middle. Each room had a separate toilet room. One room had 5 double deckers and the other had 4. These were old, metal, military style bunkbeds. (One set served



my boys in their youth.) Between the big house, cabins and lodge, the Fredericks could put up 38 a night. They charged \$3.50 a night with breakfast, lunch and dinner included. A single dinner was \$.85, lunch \$.65, and breakfast .25 to .65. Some guests came on the early train and would eat breakfast before going skiing. One Saturday meals were served with just Lena, Katie, with King doing the dishes, in a very small kitchen.

Because they slept in the big house in back, Herb and Lena would have to come down early to fix up and light the fireplace, stoke up the coal furnace in the basement, and dump coal ashes to heat the house.

It all worked fine, but there was clearly conflict growing between friends and in late 1941 Lena and Herbert bought out Danzgers' interest. Paperwork was signed in January, 1942, just as the war started and with the war the ski places were closed. You couldn't get in to the Sugar Bowl, that was before the Magic Carpet, because access was from Soda Springs, along the railroad right of way, which had guards on it.



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STORE AND SKI LODGE

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February, 2010

issue 18

Protecting the transcontinental railroad was a national security issue.

It was then Lena and Herbert closed the dinning room and lodge because they knew they couldn't run it all by themselves, and they didn't want to hire help. Lena fixed up the cabins with little hot plates and dishes, and if people wanted to stay overnight they could fix their own meals. Business in the store during the war years was very successful. Customers were locals, from Soda Springs to the Summit, the railroad workers who lived at Norden, and the maintenance workers for the railroad many of whom were at that time, were Mexican immigrants. Lena said their most profitable years were the war years.

Herbert was officially commissioned as a Fourth Class Postmaster on September 30, 1938. In the letter of confirmation, he was advised to appoint an assistant. The assistant was Lena. On January 24. 1948 Herbert took his exams to advance to Postmaster Third Class which he passed. On May 15, 1950 President Harry S. Truman signed his commission. Both documents hang in my office. He took tremendous pride in the position, and performed his duties until forced to retire at the age of 70! I would venture to guess there was never a morning he failed to raise the U.S. flag, nor an evening when he failed bring it safely back down folded in proper military style!

The property on which the Norden Store and Post Office are located belonged to James Hutchinson, who owned a sizable parcel including a lovely lodge and wall tent platforms. It was all part of the Sierra Ski Club, not to be confused with the Sierra Club, their close neighbor. In 1938 they made Lena and Herbert caretakers of the lodge, as the access road went between the store and garage. Lena and Herbert referred to Sierra Ski Club members fondly as the Professors, and looking at the 1938 membership roster, many were. That roster also includes founding fathers of the Sierra Club. Several doors of the lodge were equipped with alarms that sounded at the Post Office. Over the years there were one or two attempts at break-ins, which Herbert was able to deftly deal with. Beyond the lodge and platforms was a beautiful pond they used for swimming and which was stocked with catfish. We often hiked up there in the evening to catch our dinner and just enjoy the area. Sometime late in the 1940's, after a particularly hard winter, the catfish were gone. A friend and I went to Lake Van Norden, and netted a school of catfish, pollywogs and frogs to restock the pond. Catfish stay with their young, so it was a challenge. But we did it, hauling them from Lake Van Norden to the pond in buckets! In the winter, before the deep snows, the pond was great for ice skating. One of my favorite pictures of Lena and Herb is of them skating on the Catfish Pond.

In 1942, Lena and Herbert were the proud the sole owner/operators of the Norden Store and Post Office. King had been drafted early on. Lena and Herb made it through that first war summer and into winter, and then Herbert's draft notice came. That left only Lena and her aged father to run the operation.

To be continued.

By Mildred "Milli" Hicke Martin Homer, Alaska 99603



AMPLE ACCOMMODATIONS

We have ample and suitable accommodations for both men and women. Our dormitories are equipped with comfortable beds; well heated and ventilated; hot and cold running water; showers and all the comforts of home. Comfortable, heated sitting-room for guests.

SNOW AT ITS BEST

With always from 8 to 12 feet of snow on the ground, skiers need not worry about conditions.

IN THE HEART OF ACTIVITIES

Within a radius of two miles, numerous up-ski facilities are maintained. A mile and a half away lies the renowned Sugar Bowl with its elaborate appointments for the winter sports enthusiast. Tractor-propelled enclosed sleds run regularly from Norden Station to the Sugar Bowl. There are seven up-skis within a mile's radius. In all directions are found marvelous slopes for the amateur and expert.

EXPERT SKI INSTRUCTIONS

Here the Klein Brothers School for Skiers is maintained. These expert teachers conduct private or class instructions at pleasing rates. Other wellknown teachers of the fine art of skiing, including the Hannes Schroll Ski School, are available in this locality.

pictures page 4: Norden Store and Ski Lodge brochure cover, Norden Store 1940's with cars parked along 40, Hannes Schroll (Sugar Bowl founder) comes for a visit.

Page 5: King shoveling snow, part of inside of Norden Store brochure.

Life and Times of Richard L.P. Bigelow First National Forest Supervisor on Donner Summit 1902-1936

David Africa

Mr. Bigelow had a long and successful career as the first national forest supervisor in what was to become Tahoe National forest. His personal work diary, kept religiously from 1902 to 1936, gives us much information about life in the area and on Donner Summit. (The complete diary has been donated to the Historical Society by Mr. and Mrs. Ken Dolan of Nevada City, CA. Mrs. Dolan is the granddaughter of Richard Bigelow. The diary can be viewed at the Donner Summit Historical Museum).

Born in Oakland, CA in 1874 he lived in San Francisco and Sonoma County. He worked for a short time as a map maker, road builder, and engineer before becoming a forest ranger in Fresno County in 1902.

His early responsibilities included a vast area of forest lands ranging from Fresno to Weaverville to the Klamath and Trinity National Forests as a fire fighter manager.

In 1908 Bigelow moved to Grass Valley to become the Supervisor of Tahoe National Forest at sixteen hundred dollars per year. By then his territory was reduced to "just" the area including Colfax, Nevada City, Downieville, Sierra City, Truckee, Squaw Valley, Soda Springs, and Donner Summit.

According to Bigelow's diary he must have been a tireless, work driven, conscientious man. His many duties in the beginning of his career included supervising the installation of telephone lines, putting out fires and arresting arsonists, dealing with sanitation, and enforcing the law (personal attacks for example). He also acted as an arbitrator resolving disputes about sheep and cattle



ranchers' grazing rights; disputes about property rights and wood cutting. "My whole thought in life was the Forest Service and to get ahead of it." (pg. 146) He anxiously accepted every assignment given him always wanting to "go to the new conditions and new organization."

As he ranged the territory, on horseback and by stagecoach, he often stopped at Soda Springs, (August 1, 1911) "Went to the summit and met McIntosh at Soda Springs and went on to the Cedars and Soda Springs, camping at Hopkins place on the North Fork of the American River" (pg. 177). In September of that year he arrived in Verdi by train and was met by an "auto," and taken to view the area near Truckee. Later that month Bigelow went to Colfax to "see aviator Fowler fly in his biplane. That was the first time

I had seen an airplane try to fly over the mountains had to land at Emigrant Gap." (pg.180) Supervisor Bigelow was not quite ready for using an airplane for his surveillance, but on June 17, 1913 he did make the giant transition from "riding a saddle horse to a team and spring wagon." (pg. 198) In May of 1915 he started using an automobile for transportation, "got across the bridge and machine (he calls a tin lizzie) went on the blink." (pg. 218) He would always refer to his auto as the "machine" but later states that he "had vision of my Ford being a burnt wreck" (in a forest fire). The only reference in his 677 page journal to the cost of gas and oil came in August of 1915 with "gas at 45 cents and oil at 75 cents" in Auburn. (pg. 220). On October 17 he left Nevada City at 7:20 AM for San Francisco "in my machine to attend a convention of Society of American Foresters. Arrived there at 6:30 that night." Getting to the Bay Area must have been tough in those days too, not from traffic delays, but road conditions and lack of speed. It took Supervisor Bigelow eleven hours that trip!

On June 1, 1919 open range management took a big turn for the Supervisor.

This was the day that he actually used an airplane and pilot to oversee part of his territory. The following week Bigelow flew in a Curtis plane from Mather Field in Sacramento and flew over a fire patrol route up to Oroville and back. (pg. 283/284) He had now progressed from horseback to wagon to "auto" to airplane in pursuit of doing his job - all within a matter of eleven years.



He was, however, not finished with the horse. July 25, "left camp at 7:35 and went to Soda Springs and up the creek to summit. Crossed the summit into Squaw Valley watershed." (pg. 288)

His experiences with his auto continued to perplex him. "With Hurst went to Soda Springs to meet Mr. Hunt. At Ice Lakes sheared a hind hub on the wheel of my machine and telegraphed to Sweeley to bring me a new one. Got a truck to pull me in to Soda Springs station. Ate dinner at Soda Springs." Mr. Bigelow was a frequent visitor to the summit in the summer of 1921, as he was during the years following. In 1928 he met with the Airway Extension Superintendent of the Department of Commerce who was "stopping at Soda Springs/Norden Hotel." The Airway Extension refers to the development of the air strip at Blue Canyon. At the same time Bigelow met at ithe North Fork Association at The Cedars "to discuss building a bridge or ford across the river." (pg. 471) He continued in the Cedars area, "went to Tim Hopkins' stone mansion now owned by Mr. Chickering of San Francisco and took two pictures of the house and view in back of it. Returned to Hotel Norden and saw Jones Bros." (pg 471)

Supervisor Bigelow's responsibilities were not always related to forests and fires; sheep and cattle grazing, and property disputes. He was also the arbitrator in wood cutting boundaries; sanitation; and personal attacks. He dealt with commerce on the summit - "Stopped at Soda Spring Hotel and saw the Jones Bros. and talked to them. Feed conditions on Summit Range not so good." (pg.492) 1929. He dealt with road

and water problems - "went to summit and went over special use application for pipe line, applied by the Ski Club (Auburn?) for waters of Zero Springs. Went over road matters with two of the Highway men on way up." On June 26 1929 his diary read "Met Leland Smith and Nelson at Soda Springs and went over some of the work they were doing in marking out the North Fork Association's land. Returned to Soda Springs Hotel and stopped for the night." (pg. 495) On another trip to Soda Springs on August 3 - "Stopped at Soda Springs Hotel and discussed the removal of Jones Bros. store at Bowman. Told Jones that if they would start immediately on this building I would allow them to remove it." (pg.500)

There were more meetings at the ever popular Soda Springs Hotel, which had become a meeting place in the 20s and 30s. "Chickering showed us the corners in Sec. 9 and the land his father wants. We then returned for lunch at the Cedars." (pg.526)

May 15, 1932, Bigelow once again used the Soda Springs Hotel for conducting his business on the Summit. "Stopped at the Soda Springs Hotel. Told Mrs. Jones that we would not consider an exchange in Sec. 16... on account of scenic attraction of the Memorial Bridge and



the Highway Commission and the Forest Service did not want a store near the bridge." (pg. 545)

We canít really say that Supervisor Bigelow was a pioneer in the ski business on Donner Summit but he was instrumental in the founding of the Auburn Ski Club. On Aug. 1, 1934 he and Wendall Robie "left for Big Bend to look over a club site for the Auburn Ski Club." (pg 633) In that same month there was this note in his diary while he and Robie were trying to find the traces of the Emigrant Trail "we climbed out over a rocky point across the special use area we are laying out for the Ski Club up over another steep point past a small pond and came into Cisco Flat which is now (1934) the Auburn Ski Club's headquarters." (Bigelow's search for traces of the Emigrant Trail will be revealed in a future article, ed.).

It was at about this time that Forest Supervisor Richard Bigelow became interested in state government, politics and public service. He had been attending state and national meetings for the U.S. Forest Service but now he wanted to do more for his state and for his local areas. In March 1935 attended a session of the state legislature. "I am to act as observer and report to the Regional Forester and take necessary action when necessary or called upon." He was active in the State Chamber of Commerce as advisor on matters regarding the national forests and his area of coverage.

Bigelow was also very involved in civic functions, especially in Nevada City and Grass Valley making presentations to various service organizations, clubs, and Cattlemen's Associations. On July 4, 1935 he Pictured here: Page 6 Bigelow in 1935 Page 7: at work Page 8: Bigelow 1923 with the "machine" even played a part in the annual parade and met with former President Hebert Hoover who was from the area.

Towards the end of his career he was still covering more territory than most ordinary men could imagine. His diary starting Oct. 19, 1935 shows that he was a busy traveler.

Oct. 19 "Went to S.F.," Oct. 20 "Returned to Berkeley,"

Oct. 21-27 "in Pacific Grove," Oct. 29 "In Fresno. Still on leave," Oct. "Porterville," Oct. 31 "Went up the Kaweah River via Lemon Cove to the Sequoia Park and then to the General National Park. Then over new Kings River Canyon road to Kings River and then to Hume then to Pinehurst."

April, 1936 was the last month of this man's illustrious career spanning thirty-four years.

Right up until the end he was faithfully making entries in his diary. "April 10 - Returned to duty at 9a.m. In office (Nevada City) general office work, going over mail, etc. In evening dinner at Bret Harte Hotel in my honor as a retiring Forest Supervisor. It was the grandest dinner I ever attended. I received a beautiful gold Hamilton watch as a retiring gift. Forest Service officers from all over California were there (stag affair)." And his final entry in the diary April 30, 1936 - "Completed my work as Supervisor of the Tahoe National Forest and thirty-four years of service in the

Mystery Solved

Faithful Donner Summit history aficionados and readers of this heirloom quality newsletter will remember that in our September '09 newsletter we printed pictures of two mysteries sitting next to Old 40 just up the hill from Rainbow Lodge. Those with carefully archived copies of the newsletter can go back aand remind yourselves (or you can just go to our newsletter archive.) We'd noted that some yards away from the "chimney" which is not a chiney, there is a cement marker with a "C" incised in it (pictured to the right."

Our research staff recently received email correspondence from Joel Windmiller. In the ensuing email conversation he identified the mysterious marker saying that "The "C" monument is a right-a-way marker between State owned properity & private owned properity.

"I have seen 'C" monuments along old US 40 in the Sierra in Placer County they have a B/W R/W sign beside them.

"The 'C" stands for California... started in 1927 along State



Highways. They are still in use along current & former highways/roads/streets. I hope this helps."

It turns out the markers are 3 1/2 feet tall so there's a lot more to the thing than what you see in the picture to the right. If you'd like to see more about



the markers go to: http://home.pacbell.net/hywaymn/c_block_california.htm

Now, who knows what the "chimney" is? Just for fun, it's reprinted to the left. No it's definitely NOT a chimney

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