

# The Donner Summit

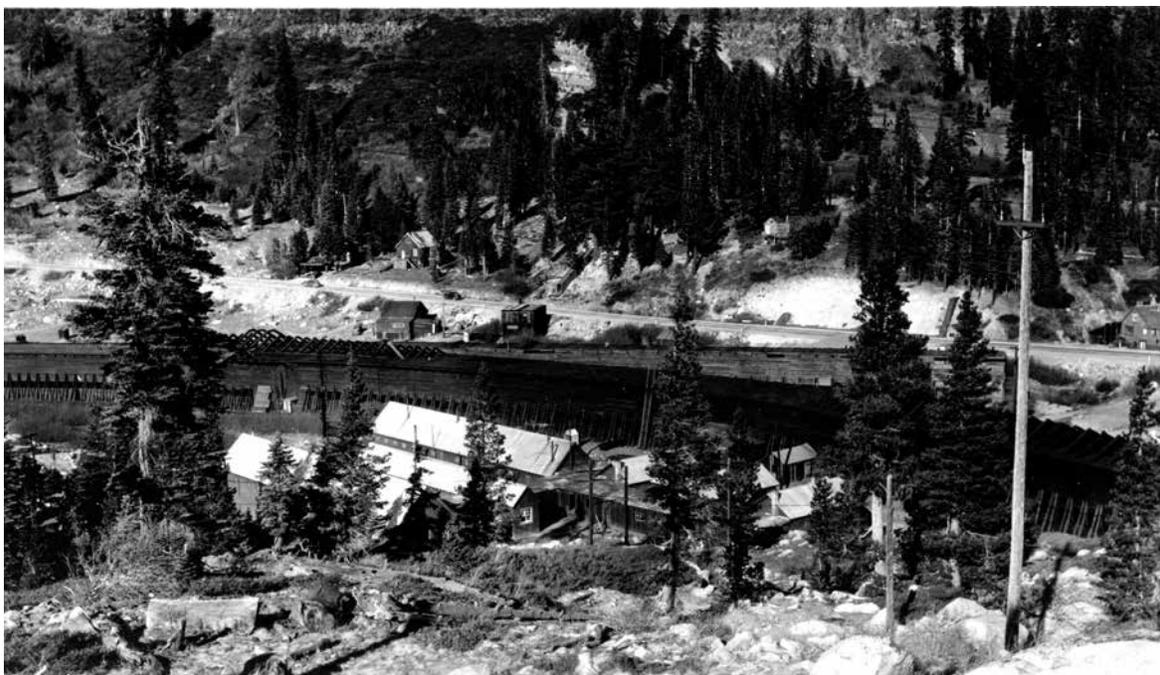
# Heirloom



History and stories of the Donner Summit Historical Society

December, 2018 issue #124

## One Picture – A Lot of Stories



Norm Saylor (president of the DSHS) was trawling through eBay as he does most days in search of historic Donner Summit photographs. He came across the photograph above and on page 3. It's a beautiful photograph of the railroad complex on Donner Summit as well as the area across Highway 40. There was so much detail and, hard to believe, he did not think he had that particular photograph. It was part of a collection of 15 photographs but the other fourteen were nothing terribly interesting. Norm snapped up the collection and awaited delivery.

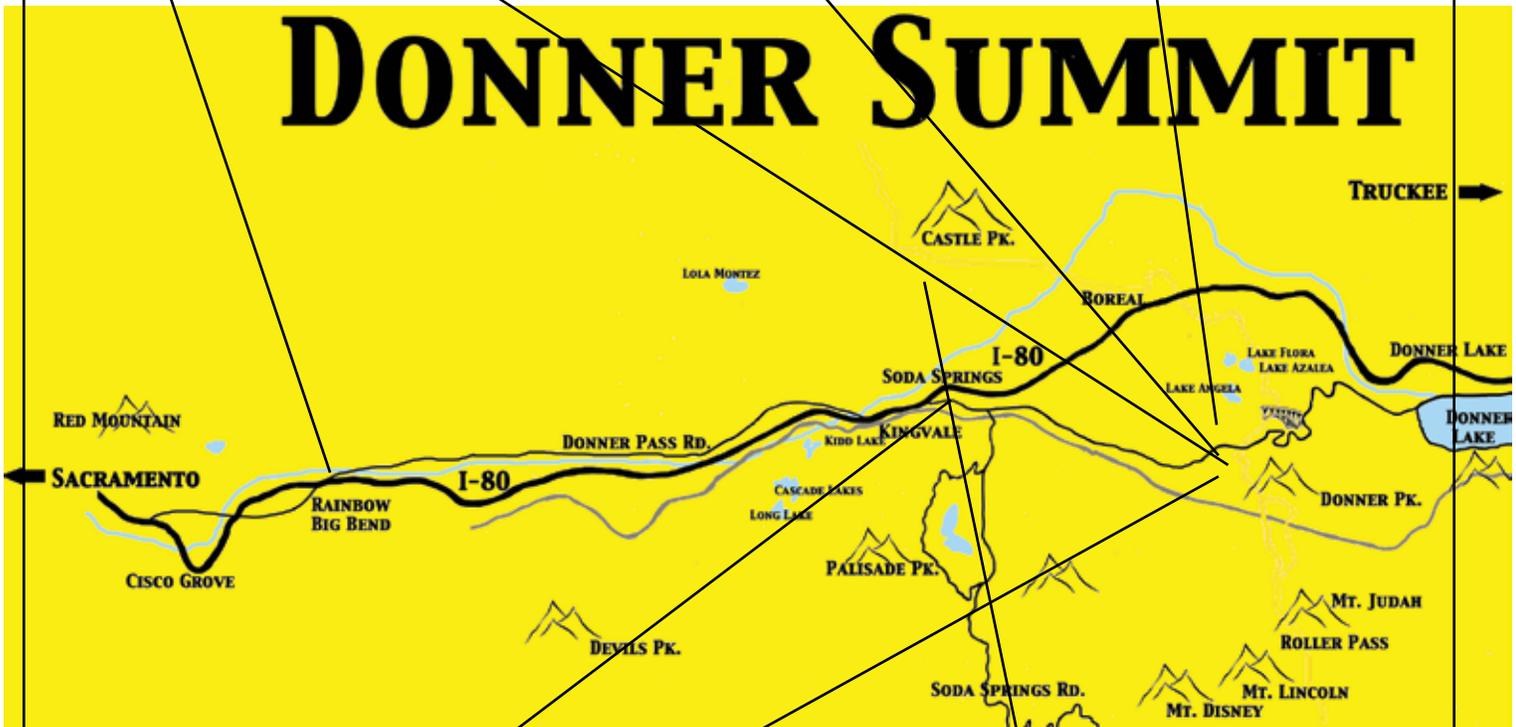
When the pictures arrived the photograph that had piqued Norm's interest was better than he'd thought. On the computer screen it's one thing but this picture had so much detail. Clearly the photographer had used a fine film (a method for capturing pictures prior to digital cameras and cell phones and a tripod requiring camera loading and unloading of "film" and development or developing pictures using chemicals). Clearly the lens had been a good one too. Norm marveled over the detail and that grew into a story for the [Heirloom](#): analyze the picture and then throw in some other pictures of Donner Summit. Readers would enjoy that. Norm then decided to throw in so many pictures that this has to be continued to next issue - so stay tuned and keep up your [Heirloom](#) subscription.

The picture above is the introduction. We've got a larger version on page three and we go from there.

cont'd on page 4

# Story Locations in this Issue

Cramptons Location pg 10   Picture pgs. 1 & 3   Donner Trail Ski Lodge Location pg. 4   A Morning with Kayle pg. 8



Soda Springs Station pg. 13   Summit Hotel pg. 14   Castle Valley pg 18

“To me, the Donner Summit, with its winter sports, activities, as well as its excellent hunting and fishing grounds, is the Utopia of the West.”

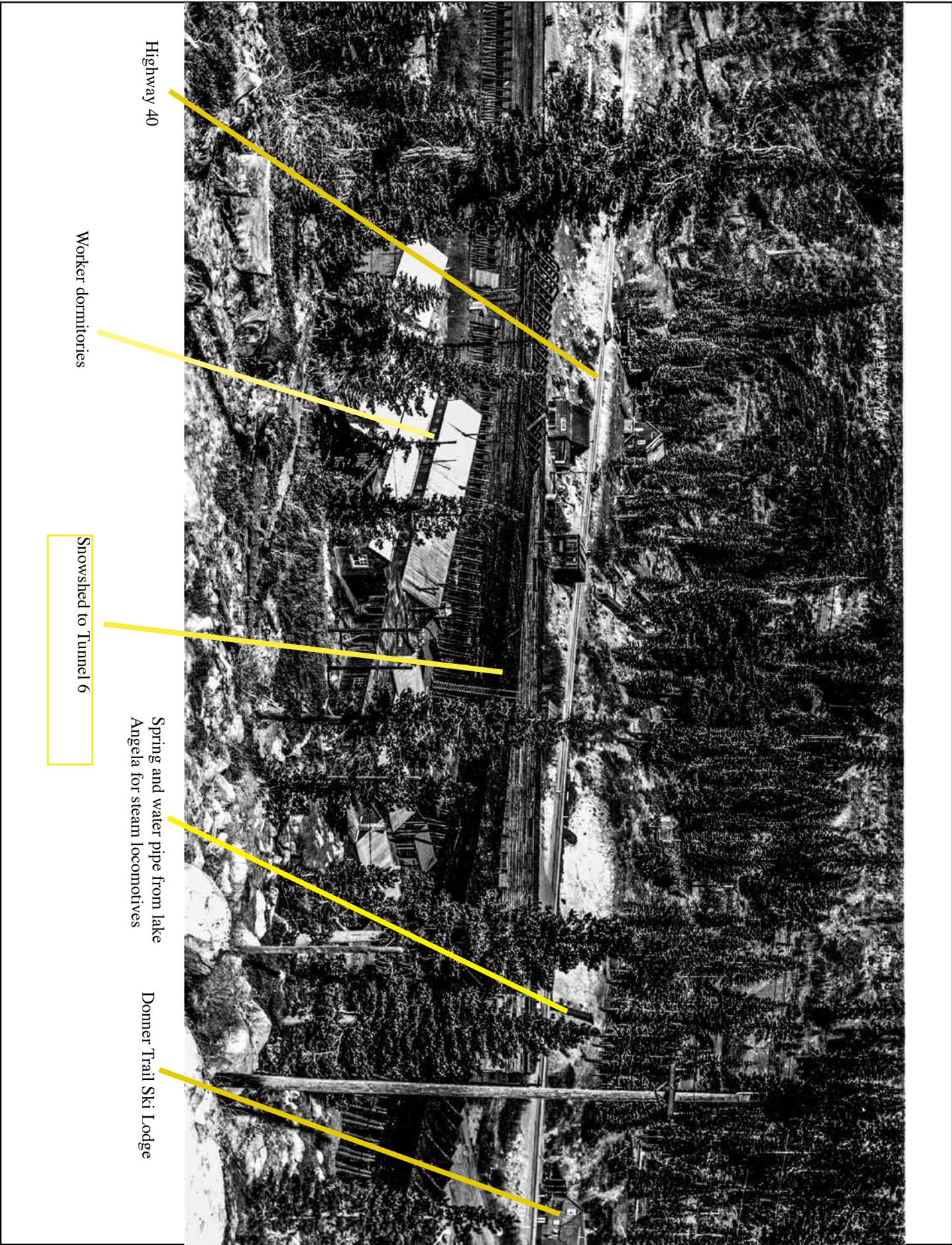
December 20, 1950  
Bud Zorich

Find us on 

editor:  
Bill Oudegeest  
209-606-6859  
info@donnersummithistoricalsociety.org

Proofread by Pat Malberg, Lake Mary, Donner Summit

Unless otherwise noted, the photographs and other historical ephemera in The Heirloom's pages come from the Norm Saylor collection at the Donner Summit Historical Society



Highway 40

Worker dormitories

Snowshed to Tunnel 6

Spring and water pipe from lake  
Angela for steam locomotives

Donner Trail Ski Lodge

The first thing to do with Norm's "find" is to date the picture. The building at the right hand side does that. That is the Donner Trail Ski Lodge built by Kirby and Lola Schull in 1937-38. That spot is today the left hand side of the Donner Ski Ranch parking lot. In 1939 Oscar Jones (builder of the Soda Springs Hotel) bought what is now the Donner Ski Ranch property with Mrs. Jessie Vanderford from the railroad. All the leases on the land were cancelled with the sale which included Johnny Ellis' rope tows (April, July, and August, '09 [Heirlooms](#) see also page 7 in this issue) on the east side of Signal Hill and the Sierra Club's rope tow on the west side. As part of the sale from the railroad the Sierra Club got 22 acres and Oscar and Jessie got 460 acres. That 460 acres would become Donner Ski Ranch some years later.

That sale left Kirby and Lola Schull with a building on land they had no lease to. So they cut the Donner Trail Ski Lodge into parts and moved it up the road next to where the former Ski Inn (September, '18 [Heirloom](#)) and the gondola to Sugar Bowl are today. There it became the Kiski Lodge in 1941. The lodge burned in 1984. (for more about the Schulls see "Our Longest Full Time Resident" page 3 of the July, '09 [Heirloom](#)).

The Donner Trail Ski Lodge dates the photograph but there is a lot more. There are little buildings all along Highway 40. There is a spring, railroad snowsheds, worker housing (dormitories for workers and small houses for supervisors and families) with snowsheds leading to each (giving rise to the "Mole People of Donner Summit" (December, '10 [Heirloom](#)) because some workers seldom saw the sun during winter. Many of the buildings along Highway 40 were made of snowshed timber taken from dismantled wooden snowsheds (see below). You can see ladders on the snowshed that goes into Tunnel 6 so workers could get on top and shovel snow. The automobile on Highway 40 dates the picture too, as does the concrete on the highway. Highway 40 was "concreted" in 1937.

# Donner Trail Ski Lodge



IN THE HEART OF THE SIERRA,  
ONE - HALF MILE FROM  
DONNER SUMMIT

Donner Trail Ski Lodge sat in what is today the left hand corner (west side) of the Donner Ski Ranch parking lot.

Above: Donner Trail Ski Lodge under construction using snowshed timbers, as were many buildings on Donner Summit after the railroad reconstructed snowsheds using concrete.

Right: The Donner Trail Ski Lodge.



## ● DONNER TRAIL SKI LODGE ●

... located (on the left side of road going east) one-half mile west of Donner Summit on U. S. Highway (40) offers some of the best skiing in the Sierra. Practice slopes start from the door of the Lodge, leading to Mt. Lincoln, Sugar Bowl, and many other interesting points, offering a variety of runs for the novice, and thrills for the most experienced skier.

Four ski lifts operate within the immediate vicinity (including Sugar Bowl chair lift only fifteen minutes from the lodge) providing plenty of down hill runs.

Lessons arranged for with The Klein Ski School or any Ski instructor located near Donner Summit.

Special cross country runs with guide for mid-week guests.

Beginners may ski under supervision at all times.

Autos—drive to the door of Lodge, with direct service by Greyhound Bus (buy tickets to Donner Summit and get off at Lodge) or come by train to Norden (we meet you at station by advance request with no extra charge).

Donner Trail Ski Lodge operates under American Plan \$3.50 per day—includes board and lodging (comfortable well-heated dormitories). The Lodge has an enviable reputation for its excellent food. Meals served family style.

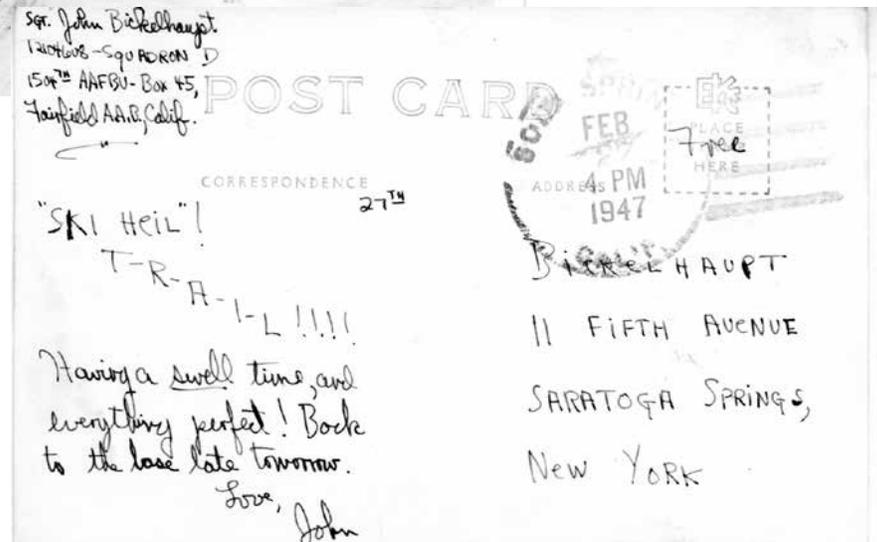
Skis, poles and boots rented at popular prices.

Skis with Poles \$1.00 per day. Boots 75c per day, with cheaper rates for those using equipment over a longer period of time.

Donner Trail Ski Lodge ad



Above: postcard showing the Donner Trail Ski Lodge and right, the back of the 1947 postcard.





AT DONNER TRAIL SKI LODGE

Left: Donner Trail Ski Lodge.

After it was disassembled and moved up the street the Donner Trail Ski Lodge became Kiski Lodge. Right: matchbook for Kiski's and below, the lodge itself. It burned in 1984.

Monarch Match  San Jose, Calif.

*Kirby*  
*Snuffy*  
*Lola*

MEET YOUR FRIENDS HERE

PHONE  
Soda Springs 2271

**KISKI LODGE**  
LODGING  
MEALS

•  
On Highway 40  
Donner Summit  
**NORDEN, CALIF.**

CLOSE COVER BEFORE STRIKING

# Kiski Lodge





Above: 1936 photo, Johnny Ellis' two rope tows on what is now Donner Ski Ranch. The building above the bottom left-hand building is the Donner Trail Ski Lodge. The white building at the bottom center is Mrs. Vanderford's. The building burned down.



Left: Kiski Lodge, 1947.

# A Morning with Kayle



In the June, '18 [Heirloom](#), after highlighting the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Emigrant Monument at Donner Lake, we reported on John Grebenkemper and his dog, Kayle. Kayle, a Border Collie, is a special dog. She can detect the scent of human remains in the ground. Grebenkemper and Kayle, along with a few other historic human remains detection dogs (HHRD) explored the Alder Creek area where about half of the Donner Party, including the Donners, wintered in 1846. Using old photographs, diary excerpts, maps, and then Kayle's extraordinary talents, Grebenkemper was able to pinpoint three possible Donner Party campsites (one for each Donner family and one for their hired helpers).

Then Kayle "alerted", indicating human remains, at the Donner Monument itself, which is supposed to be the site of the Donner Party Breen Cabin at the State Park. Parenthetically that cabin had also been Moses Schallenberger's cabin two years before the Donner Party. Also parenthetically, in June of 1846, Steven Kearney led an Army troop into the area, gathered up the Donner Party remains and burned them along with the Breen Cabin. So Kayle's detecting human scent there is logical.

For an encore Grebenkemper headed for Donner Pass to try and discover the location of the Donner Party's Starved Camp. Using Trails West analysis he focused on the area north of Highway 40 and Kayle "alerted" on human scent in a group of trees. Dr. Grebenkemper is the first to say that finding human scent does not mean he's found Starved Camp (see the June, '18, May, '14, and March, '17 [Heirlooms](#)) but analyzing the information he had, he thought it a good likelihood.

In our June [Heirloom](#) we analyzed the analysis and our own MHRT's (Mobile Historical Research Team) explorations of

the area and you can read about that online on our website (unless you've carefully printed and bound your [Heirlooms](#) for coffee table display and reference).

In short we at the Donner Summit Historical Society had our doubts. We thought it much more likely that the four rescue parties coming from California, and then the rescuers and the rescuees, along with the Forlorn Hope, all used the generally accepted route up Donner Pass. That is on the south side, the lower side, of the pass and comes out at the PCT trailhead. If that was the case Starved Camp would have to be on the line from the top of the pass to Summit Valley.

We invited Dr. Grebenkemper and Kayle for a visit and started exploring. Using Kayle's nose we surveyed Lake Mary and then west to the forest of the second Summit Hotel site (see the July, '13 [Heirloom](#)). Kayle did a lot of sniffing, but no "alerting." There are a variety of reasons for the lack of alerts, including that the MHRT is wrong in its analysis. A good exploration would include more than one dog. The soil may have been too warm too. High soil temperatures over 100° can be a problem and we had some of those.

"While we had issues with high ground temperature at the China camp (I measured 110° F)," Grebenkemper says, "it wasn't a problem in the forested areas. When I checked I was getting a ground temperature in the 70's." If Starved Camp was in the area it could have been covered by the highway, the railroad, or buildings, also making it hard to find.

We also took Kayle to the Chinese workers' camp, Summit Camp (see the August, '16 [Heirloom](#)). There Kayle did "alert" for human scent in two places (see the next page). The camp was the longest lasting and maybe the largest during the construction of the railroad. It was occupied from 1865-

One of the most common questions we get is how old a burial can the dogs detect. Kayle found one Native American burial that was radiocarbon dated as 9,000 years.

Dr. John Grebenkemper



Institute for Canine Forensics ([www.hhrdd.org](http://www.hhrdd.org)) And has been on a number of what sound like fascinating explorations. One, during the last year, was in search of Amelia Earhardt’s remains in the Pacific. That will be part of a National Geographic program coming up so stay tuned. One search, besides the Donner Party, that has a slight relevance to Donner Summit is the search for John Snyder’s grave in the desert. Snyder was the fellow knifed by Donner Party member James Reed. Reed was banished from the group and made his way to California ahead of the Donner Party. There he organized the second relief party and saved his family. It was his daughter who wrote her good advice learned from her Donner Party experiences, “Remember don’t take no cut offs and hurry along as fast as you can.” Kayle “alerted” on human scent just about exactly where it would have been expected given contemporaneous accounts of

the knifing.

Kayle is ten years old and has only been getting better with age. Even so, HHRD dogs are recertified every year. For some of that testing dogs are set to find human teeth which have very little human scent attached. It’s not just Kayle’s skills that are needed. The owner too has to monitor progress slowing down the dog so that scents are not missed. Given that “alerts” are not frequent, searches can be sometimes like “watching paint dry,” says Dr. Grebenkemper. Going out with Kayle was a lot better than “watching paint dry.”

1869. At times life must have been miserable (see the August, ’16 [Heirloom](#)) and it certainly was dangerous. It would be remarkable if no one had died there. Had someone died in winter and because the soil over the granite is minimal, we can imagine that a body was left, perhaps covered with rocks, until spring like the partial rock pile that Kayle “alerted” on. Of course human scent does not necessarily mean a whole body. We can imagine that amputations were sometimes the results of the dangerous work on the tunnels and Kayle may have alerted upon the scent of an amputated limb.

In general Chinese workers, who died working on the transcontinental railroad, were buried until their flesh decomposed and then the bones were sent back to China. There are newspaper articles reporting on bones transiting back.

[The Daily Alta California](#), for example, dated December 15, 1868 reported,

“Strange Consignment – Yesterday the schooner Emily Howard landed thirty-nine boxes containing the bones of deceased Chinamen, which are to be transported hence to the Celestial Empire. The Chinese are very superstitious in matters of this kind, and will not bury their dead elsewhere than at home, unless it is a case of emergency...”

The [Sacramento Daily Union](#), on June 30, 1870, said, “The religious customs of the Celestial Empire require that, wherever possible, the bones of its subjects shall be interred upon its own soil and the strictness with which this custom is observed is something remarkable.”

Kayle is John Grebenkemper’s second dog trained in finding human scent. Grebenkemper works extensively with the

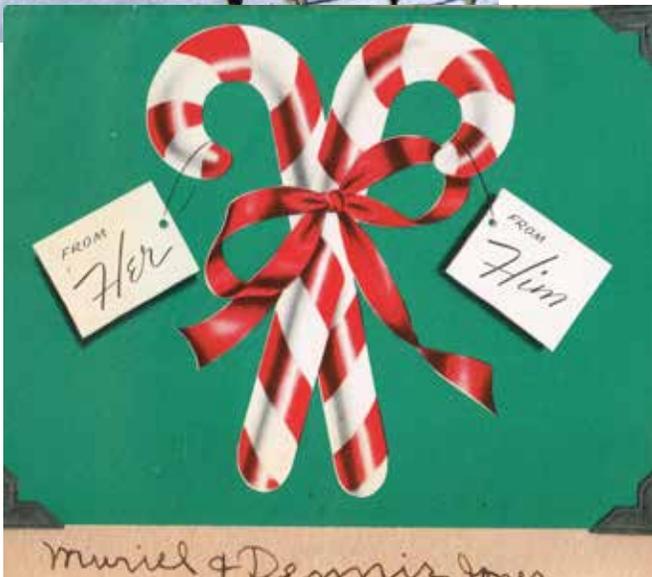
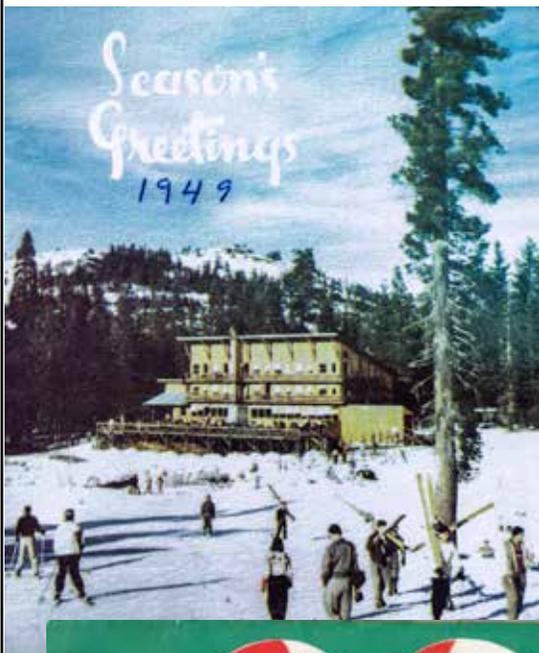


# Merry Christmas from 1950

In our May and June, 2016 Heirlooms we ran stories about the Crampton Lodge and the scrapbook of pictures that was donated to the DSHS by the Crampton family.

In the scrapbook there were Christmas cards from the old days on Donner Summit. We attempted to run them in December, '16 and December, '17 but the cards got pushed out by other stories.

Here we are in December, '18 and this time we're pushing other things out of the way to make room for 1950 Christmas wishes. The Christmas cards are a slice of life from 1949 and 1950, from when there were businesses all along Highway 40 serving travelers. The owners of those businesses formed the Donner Summit community and sent their best wishes to their friends and neighbors. Except for the Sugar Bowl card immediately below, the businesses and way of life are all gone.



From clockwise, top left: Sugar Bowl, Nyack Lodge, Kingvale "Snotel", Big Bend Inn, Muriel and Dennis Jones (Soda Springs Ski Area).

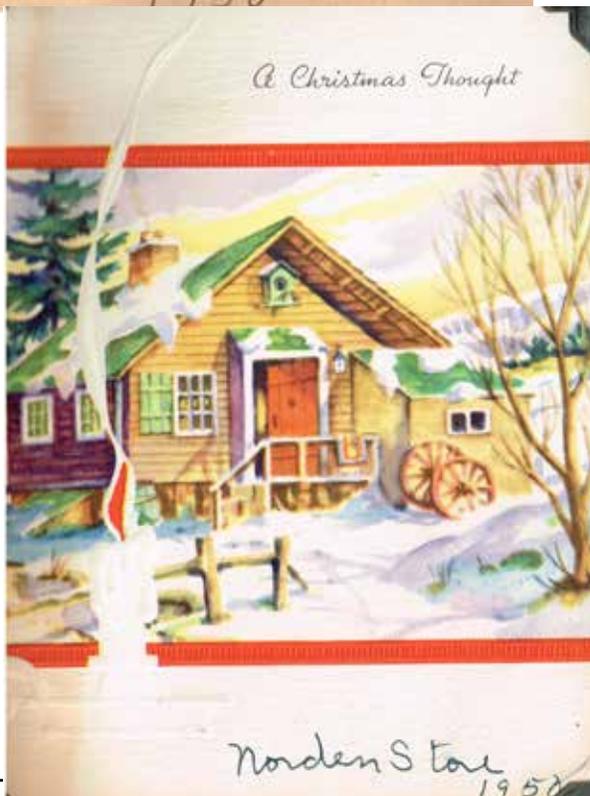
# From the DSHS Archives



Glen + Velda of  
Trailside Lodge  
1950



The Rogina's at the  
Ranger Station Big Bend



Norden Store  
1950

Clockwise from top left: Trailside Lodge, Big Bend, ranger station at Big Bend, and Norden Store.



The Rogina's at the



Ski instructors on the Hill  
The Aros + their Wives + Baby.



Top left: ranger station at Big Bend, The Aros (ski instructors - see the June, '17 Heirloom), the Cramptons' own Christmas Card, Donner Summit Lodge, Cisco Grove Lodge, and the Donner Summit Lodge

# More from the DSHS Archives

There must be a story here



"Don't exaggerate" is a mantra for those who prize accuracy but there may really be a million old photographs in Norm's (Saylor, president of the DSHS) amazing collection. Norm also knows them intimately. Here's a case in point. While going through the Donner Summit pictures for the lead article in this [Heirloom](#), Norm got sidetracked by the picture on the next page.

He ran over to another binder and pulled out the two pictures on this page. In these two you can see that the license plate is the same as are the two guys. Then Norm went back to the first picture and pointed at the license plate on the truck.

Normal people need magnifying glasses as does the editorial staff of the [Heirloom](#). We have a reputation to protect and cannot just make unfounded determinations. Our readers expect diligence and truth in our reporting.



Magnifying glass in hand, the license plate became visible. Indeed, it's the same truck miles up the road from the Soda Springs Station (see the November, '18 [Heirloom](#)). Here, on the next page, is the truck parked beside the Summit Hotel (the second one - see the July '13; February, '11; April, '11; and May, '11 [Heirlooms](#)) at Summit Station (see

the pictures on page 1 and 3.

Now if only Norm's collection had some text along with the pictures. That is, if only the people in the old days had properly captioned their photographs so we'd know who the guys with the truck were and what the truck did. Who are the people on the hotel porch? Are they residents? Are they visitors? It would be nice too, to have access to California DMV records to see who owned #973 512 in about 1923.

Meanwhile, although there's a story to be told it's not one we know so you can let your imaginations run while you study the pictures. Note the locomotive in the background of the bottom picture on the previous page. Note the porch covering at Soda Springs Station says, "Soda Springs Saloon."



The sign on the building on the left says, "Summit Hotel General Merchandise" Note that it's misspelled twice - right. Note too, in the center of the picture behind the fellow bent over. That's a bear. How did it get there and why? Might it be the bear who starred in Charlie Chaplin's Gold Rush? (August, '11 [Heirloom](#).)



Since there's room, here's another photograph of the Summit Hotel on a different day - no truck.

# Book Review

## A Baggage Car with Lace Curtains

Kay Fisher 1979 176 pages

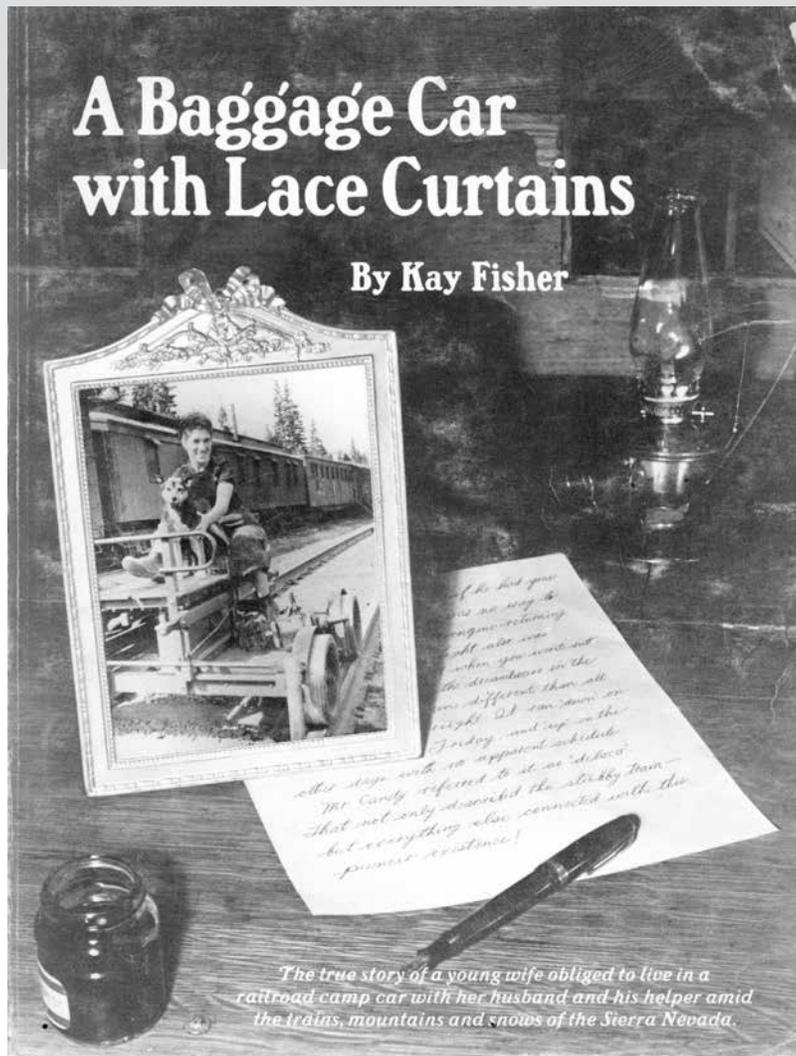
Here is one of those books that appeal differently to males and females. Kay Fisher was a newlywed in 1940. Her husband had found a job on the railroad during the depression. Being separated during the week was difficult so Kay moved in to the “outfit car” her husband and his helper lived in. As assignments changed Kay and her husband, Bill, had to move around Donner Summit. It was very hard to begin with – see below – but after a year Kay was well experienced and accepting of life on the railroad. She even initiates a new wife into the life. The book might be subtitled, A winter on Donner Summit in an “Outfit” car.

On the way to Kay’s change in outlook every mundane detail of life on the railroad is reported via conversations and observations decades after the fact. Readers of the female persuasion may sympathize with the problems of the new life into which Kay was thrown and enjoy reading about what that entailed. Many male readers may have different expectations. An insert in the book says, “If you are a rail buff, this is the inside of railroading in steam days over famous Donner summit route”. It’s not. You’ll get a lot about life along the railroad but not much about trains.

That said, there are some good descriptions of the various locations the “outfit” was parked.

Kay, Bill and Bill’s helper lived in car 713 and kept their tools in attached boxcar 787. When Kay first met 713 it was somewhere above Cisco. It was an old baggage car with some windows, a door, and a stovepipe. It was “faded, dirty, chipped mud-red color.... Ungainly, ragged, tilted, [and] lonely baggage car, with railroad ties for roses.” It wasn’t a honeymoon cottage. There was a kitchen, a big room, and a bedroom. There was only a thin partition that did not reach the ceiling between the living room where the helper slept and the bedroom of Kay and Bill. That was an embarrassing problem for newlywed Kay. It was bad but there were lace curtains on the bedroom windows that Bill had bought at the dime store. Outside was the “dream house” (outhouse).

The condition of the living quarters was just the first negative. The noise of passing trains took some getting used to, “The roar shook the very marrow of my bones as the headlight crept



abreast of us with the cab seemingly an arm’s length away... A column of black smoke blotted out the stars. The hulking shape of the tender following the stomping beat of its leader. .... Wheels screaming against the curve. The pounding of the engine...” Then as the helper engine approached, “The frightening crescendo had started over again, roaring through the room without mercy.”

After the introduction to the “outfit” one thinks there must have been some great incentive to move to Cisco and Kay tells about the backstory, getting married, job prospects in the Depression, and some family histories.

With Kay firmly settled in to railroad life the book turns to daily life for a woman on the railroad and some of that gets tedious. From time to time the “outfit” had to move as Bill’s assignments changed. Each time required closing up the “outfit” and getting it ready to move. One move details a ripped sleeve, a kinked back, carrying Bucky the geranium, a special coffee pot, tripping twice, picking up an upside down

tea kettle, and getting ash blown in her face.

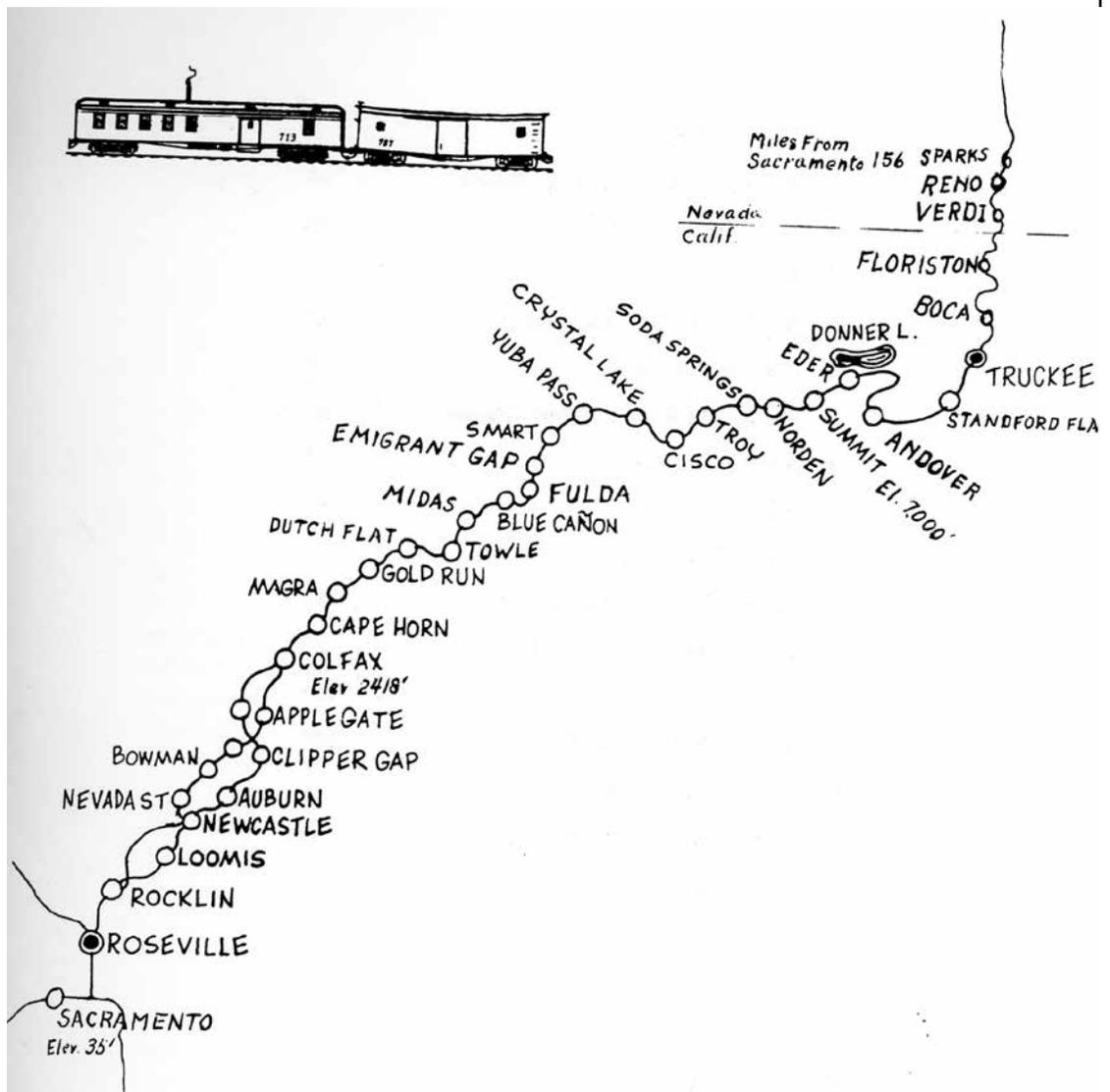
When not dealing with daily life issues there are interesting descriptions such as that of driving along the highway to Truckee and of Truckee. Here Kay admires the magnificence of Donner Summit just like her predecessors and successors. "The highway curved beautifully on its way through the craggy hills. Ahead, the peaks of the Sierra Nevada rose like a great stone barricade across the top of the world... I passed some ski lodges... I saw a long row of railroad houses... connected together by wooden tunnels... This must be Norden and the famous snowsheds. What a forbidding place." "At 7,000 feet I was met by a spectacular view, a panorama of mountains, Donner Lake far below, and the highway twisting downward like a rope thrown against the cliffs." "Truckee was a smudge in all this beauty." Truckee had a main street where the railroad took up one whole side. Streets were dusty and crowded. There were two grocery stores and a movie theater.

There are other descriptions too: a reminiscence of a drunk acquaintance, blue flags, carrying her canary in the cold, taking off boots, being caught between needing the restroom and cold weather and so turning on the radio full blast so the helper would not hear Kay use her "red can" instead of the "dream house." There's a good description of walking through the snowsheds, the steady downpour from the roof was worse than rain. "...reaching the end of the sheds was like finding the world again." There are also vignettes like running out of coal, walking through the snow, not being able to wash clothes, unexpected reassignments, high prices at the store and everything there "but what you went down there for..." One particularly memorable incident for Kay was visiting the "dream house" in a storm and having the roof blow off. Bill's helper came

to the rescue holding down the roof.

Troy was a railway stop between Kingvale and Cisco, just west on Old Highway 40 of what is now the Donner Trail School and then south. The "outfit" was based there for a short period and Kay said Troy was "A forgotten hole in a forgotten section of creation." There her geranium died. Then the canary died.

Norden sounds miserable. It was also "Like Siberia" and there the "outfit" was parked in the snowsheds so it was always dark. Bill would come home from work while at Norden, tired and dirty. For Kay "it had been like a day in jail, with lights burning all day because the snowsheds were like a wet dark tunnel. I couldn't go outside for fear of the trains that clattered past only a few feet away. Some stopped for long periods while helpers [locomotives that were added to trains to help them get up hill] were being uncoupled. Then the snowsheds would be completely blocked off and I couldn't even see daylight sifting through the cracks of the timbers. I could get only a few weak



programs on the radio. With all this I was fit to be tied in about three days. By the end of a week I was definitely getting stir-crazy.”

Room temperature “varied from a hundred degrees near the stove to thirty above in the bedrooms.”

That brings up a question never answered in the book. Loneliness was clearly a problem and one wonders how the housewife left at “home” in the “outfit” managed that while the husband was off with other people all day. Kay visited the few other women and had her radio programs. There were chores too but one can’t imagine there was a total cure.

Another question unanswered is Kay’s change. The quarters, the loneliness, the weather, disappointments, etc. were all problems Kay identified. At the end they’ve moved into a house at Emigrant Gap. The daffodils and manzanitas blossomed and the “fir trees had bright green growth at the tips of the limbs” and suddenly her whole attitude changed.

December 7, 1941 was during Kay’s first year with the railroad and there is interesting detail about the arrival of the war and the railroad. Trains were searched at Truckee and Colfax to protect the trains going over the summit. The National Guard was called out to patrol railroad facilities. Railroad workers guarded bridges and tunnels “against fifth columnists.”

One interesting aside was the reason this book got onto our list for reviewing. In 2018 Jessica Morse is running for Congress. One of her advertisements talks about her grandmother working the telegraph on Donner Summit with a pistol strapped to her waist. I met Jessica Morse one evening and she mentioned that grandma was in A Baggage Car with Lace Curtains. The names have been changed according to Kay Fisher, the author, but there on page 137 begins a description of Kay meeting “Mrs. Merrithew” who had been wonderful company. “The motherly operator” told Kay a lot about the workings of the railroad. “Her chattering instruments carried a constant stream of orders to trains, instructions to various officials, reports of troubles, etc.” There follows a list of her duties. Mrs. Merrithew also told Kay about a lot of the history which Kay does not relate. Kay does explain that Mrs. Merrithew started carrying a pistol after her husband was killed by a snake. It gave her a “comfortable feeling.”

The book has weaknesses but if you want to read about a wife’s first year on the railroad and what was mostly not such a good experience, then pick up this short book.

## Note:

You have noticed our monthly book reviews. You might want to do some reading of your own.

Stop in at the DSHS. Norm Sayler has a large collection of books for perusing, buying, or checking out.

You might even want to do a review for us.

# Exploring with Art Clark

Art Clark is an inveterate explorer and integral member of the DSHS Mobile Historical Research Team (MHRT). For an example note his exploration and cataloging of Sierra Ski Ways and Sierra Crest signs in the December, '10 and January, '12 Heirlooms. In the summer of 2018 Art went exploring in Castle Valley, just below Castle Pk. He found wildflowers of course. The one at top right, says Art, "is a type of Rein Orchid commonly called Scentbottle." Since the Heirloom is not a wildflower periodical we'll pass on it and the others Art found.



Of historic interest Art found another kind of ski trail marker from what he'd cataloged before (see the reference above). These were made out of old highway signs and follow a long list of people who have marked various things on Donner Summit starting with the Native Americans and their petroglyphs. He contacted Dick Simpson, who regularly travels the area by foot and ski and manages the Sierra Club huts in the area. Dick put Art in contact with Jim Macrander who explained the origin of the markers.

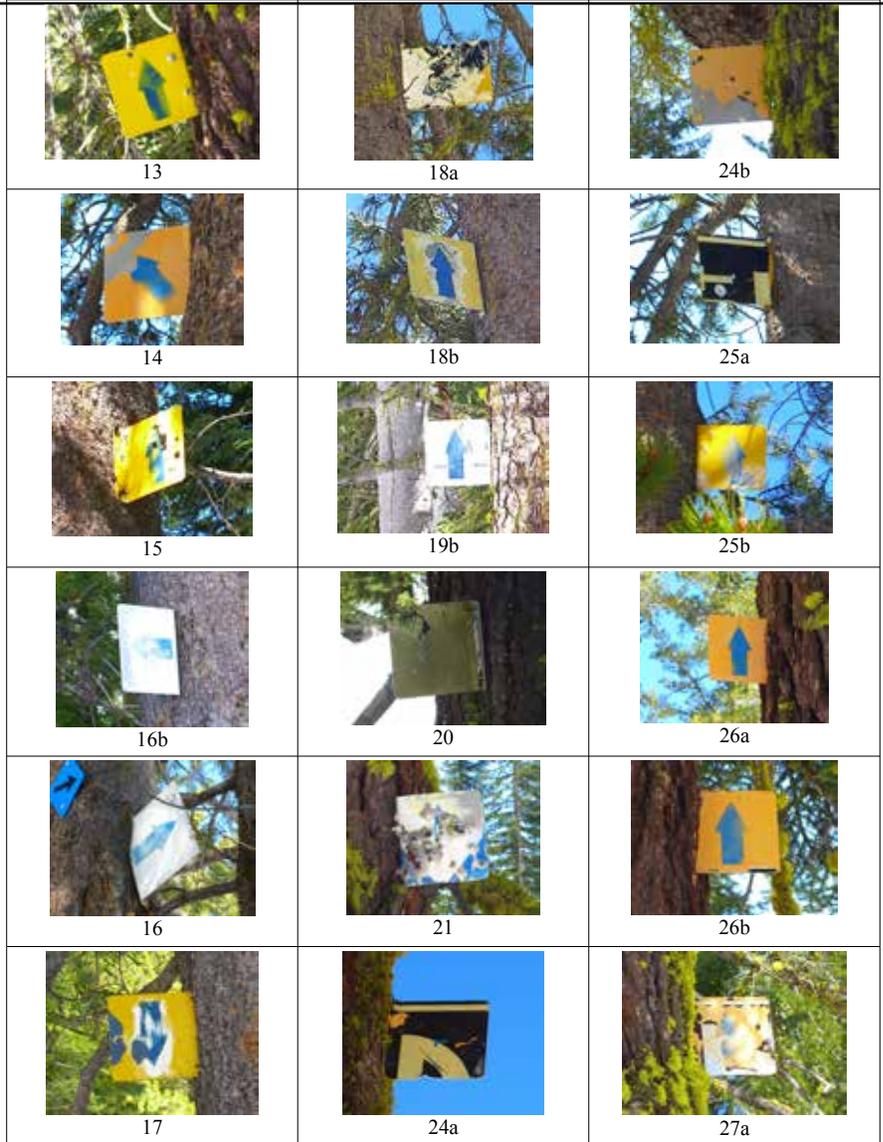
"The trail sign in the photograph was one of a great many which had been fabricated by the original leader/founder of a volunteer cross-country/Nordic Ski Patrol.

The patrol founder and leader was Ray (his surname escapes me at present). Ray was a resident of Red Wood City, CA in the S.F. Bay Area and was employed in the San Mateo County Maintenance Shops. He had access to scrap aluminum which had been salvaged when no longer usable as traffic sign forms... He and a friend recruited potential patrollers from Sierra Club members, Student Outdoor Recreation Clubs, etc. and proposed an affiliation with the Truckee Ranger District of the USFS. The signs were installed over the course of the fall months [in the late 70's]... Ladders were carried to place many of the signs in the fall prior to the first snow storms in locations surrounding Truckee as well as the trails to Peter Grubb Hut and to Bradley Hut. In later seasons, trails were marked to the west of Serene Lakes. Occasionally during mid-season, U.S. Forest Service snow mobiles were driven by the Forest Service employee assigned as patrol advisor to move some of the nearly obscured signs to locations above head height of skiers for better continuity of route designations...





Above: the marker Art found in 2018.  
 Right: some of Art's other finds of this kind of marker.



"I was involved along with many other folks of the Patrol in placing quite a few of the Pole Creek signs, as well as those into Bradley Hut and the trail to the west down to Whiskey Creek cabin [see the October, '13 Heirloom], originally built by persons tending sheep in summers many years prior.

"My internship activities came some years later after I retired from the U.S. Air Force in Sunnyvale, CA, and continued college studies full time, eventually at San Jose State University, where one of my instructors offered a Grad level workshop course in Environmental Field Studies Report Preparation. I captured his imagination with my proposed project, and my Forest Service Advisor was enthusiastic to have a field study report for his own use in showing his management people what was being evaluated for public lands use. At the time there was the usual tug-of-war between back country skiers and snowmobile trail users. Much to my surprise one weekend while I was ski-patrolling into Peter Grub Hut and back, my Instructor from San Jose State University had brought his wife with him on a cross-country ski outing and were enjoying themselves immensely. Another time, I was on the same trail, when low and behold, I met the Tahoe National Forest Supervisor and his party out enjoying the trail as well. I like to think he may have read the trail plan outline I had passed back to his employee at the Truckee Ranger Station.

"I hope this limited bit of information will be of use in some way."

Then Art says about the map he compiled of sign locations here on the previous page, "The map is a connect-the-dots between the signs, compiled after a number of trips. We kept finding more signs.... But, yes, one could just follow the signs with a GPS, though there are some long stretches between signs where none are visible. I wonder how many other ones have already fallen?"

Suppose you'd like to follow the map on the previous page. The GPS coordinates for a clockwise trip are on page 21.

# Odds & Ends on Donner Summit

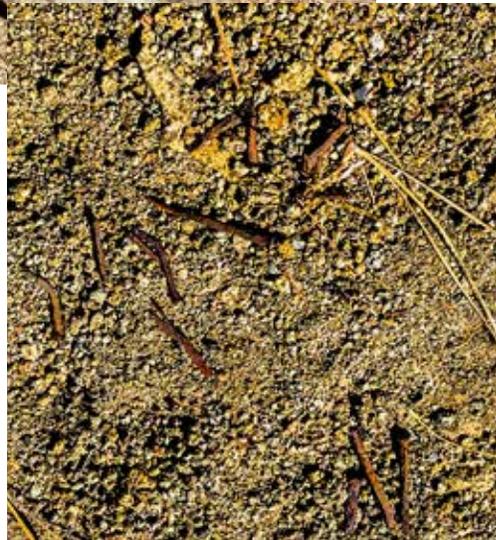
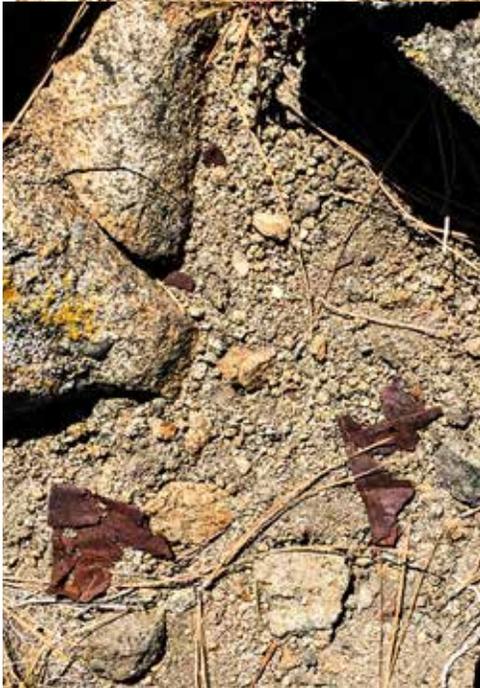


When we were out with Kayle - see page 8 - we also went to the Summit Hotel's second location and the Chinese railroad workers' camp just below the pass.

Left: hearth remains at the Chinese camp. Below that, metal shards in the same area.

Left and right below, pottery shards and square nails at the Summit Hotel's site.

There are all kinds of things left from the previous occupants of Donner Summit, some thousands of years old. They are not hard to find but please leave them in place.



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](#).

If you find any "Odds & Ends" you'd like to share pass the on to the editor - see page 2

\*Native Americans; first wagon trains to California; the first transcontinental railroad, highway, air route, and telephone line, etc.

DONNER SUMMIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

[www.donnersummithistoricalsociety.org](http://www.donnersummithistoricalsociety.org)

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 - \$30

\_\_\_\_\_ Family Membership - \$50

\_\_\_\_\_ Patron - \$500

\_\_\_\_\_ Benefactor - \$1000

\_\_\_\_\_ Business - \$250

\_\_\_\_\_ Business Sponsor - \$1000

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

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

NAME(S) \_\_\_\_\_

MAILING ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_ Friend Membership - \$100

\_\_\_\_\_ Sponsor - \$250

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

**Old Time Sunday Drive**

**Next Time  
Take Scenic  
Old Hwy 40  
instead of I-80**



- Historic Towns
- Interesting Scenery
- Fascinating History
- Picnic Spots
- A Slower Pace

Take a look at our guide to Old Highway 40: turn by turn instructions from Rocklin to Truckee, broken into four legs and including pictures and history. Available on line on the brochure page of [donnersummithistoricalsociety.org](http://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](http://www.donnersummithistoricalsociety.org)

Datum,WGS 84

- 1 CVSQ013,39,20.523,-120,20.913
- 2 CVSQ014,39,20.626,-120,21.017
- 3 CVSQ015,39,20.660,-120,21.054
- 4 CVSQ016,39,20.677,-120,21.084
- 5 CVSQ024,39,20.663,-120,21.105
- 6 CVSQ025,39,20.738,-120,21.252
- 7 CVSQ026,39,20.895,-120,21.383
- 8 CVSQ027,39,20.943,-120,21.445
- 9 CVSQ028,39,21.003,-120,21.512
- 10 CVSQ037,39,21.037,-120,21.547
- 11 CVSQ029,39,21.257,-120,21.777
- 12 CVSQ021,39,21.444,-120,21.828
- 13 CVSQ020,39,21.481,-120,21.812
- 14 CVSQ019,39,21.500,-120,21.793
- 15 CVSQ018,39,21.567,-120,21.684
- 16 CVSQ303,39,21.598,120,21.648
- 17 CVSQ302,39,21.599,-120,21.595
- 18 CVSQ301,39,21.593,120,21.509
- 19 CVSQ300,39,21.581,-120,21.430
- 20 CVSQ298,39,21.505,-120,21.329
- 21 CVSQ299,39,21.489,-120,21.327
- 22 CVSQ295,39,21.348,-120,21.266
- 23 CVSQ294,39,21.306,-120,21.250
- 24 CVSQ297,39,21.262,-120,21.222
- 25 CVSQ091,39,21.200,-120,21.208
- 26 CVSQ089,39,21.184,-120,21.205
- 27 CVSQ092,39,21.074,-120,21.227
- 28 CVSQ093,39,21.040,-120,21.210
- 29 CVSQ094,39,20.997,-120,21.146
- 30 CVSQ095,39,20.967,-120,21.145
- 31 CVSQ096,39,20.947,-120,21.140
- 32 CVSQ097,39,20.932,-120,21.150

- 33 CVSQ098,39,20.928,-120,21.143
- 34 CVSQ099,39,20.905,-120,21.129
- 35 CVSQ100,39,20.884,-120,21.140
- 36 CVSQ101,39,20.841,-120,21.135
- 37 CVSQ017,39,20.840,-120,21.137
- 38 CVSQ016B,39,20.762,-120,21.078
- xx CVSQ782,39,21.705,-120,21.788