

# The Donner Summit

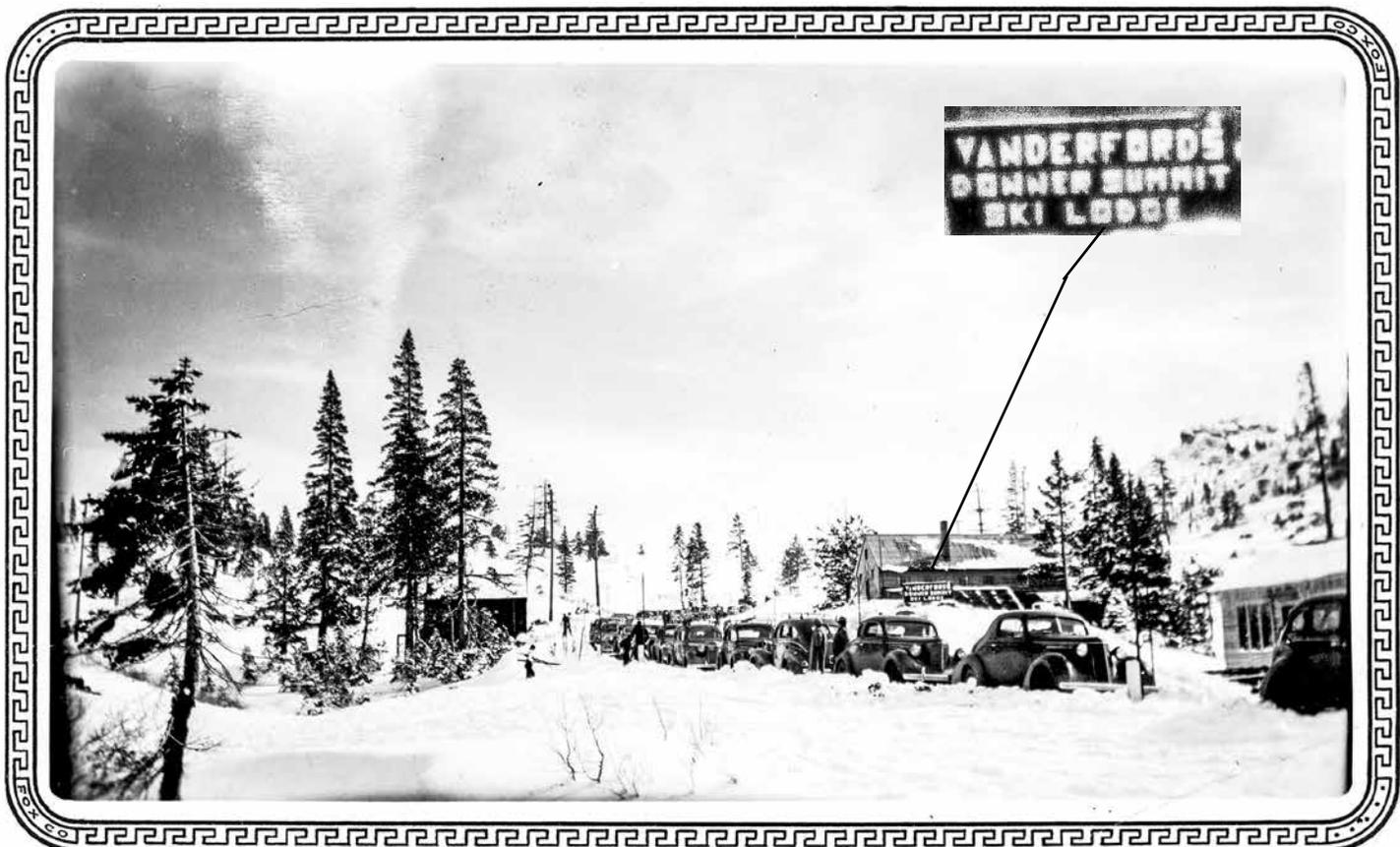
# Heirloom



History and stories of the Donner Summit Historical Society

January, 2019 issue #125

## One Picture... Cont'd



In Last December's [Heirloom](#) the lead story was about one picture Norm Saylor (president of the DSHS) acquired from Ebay. He had great fun delving into it looking for and finding details that no one without his "eagle eye" could find. That led to a couple of stories such as The Donner Trail Ski Lodge, built from railroad timbers and later cut up to go up the street and become Kiski Lodge.

While enjoying his new Ebay find Norm also started going through his binders pulling out more pictures of the same spot on Donner Summit. There was other stuff waiting to go into last month's [Heirloom](#) and we have to be sensitive about not jumping in line. So a bunch of what Norm pulled out were set aside for future [Heirlooms](#) of which this is one. So rather than a story in words, we have here a slice of Donner Summit history in pictures.

# Story Locations in this Issue

Pictures pg 1, 3, 4, 8 Soda Springs Station and Soda Springs Ski Area pg 5 weather station pg 6 Summit Hotel pg 7

## DONNER SUMMIT



"C" markers Cisco Rainbow Kingvale pg 10 Sugar Bowl pg 11 Lake Mary cabin pg 12 Norden pg 15 Truckee pg 19

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Find us on 

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

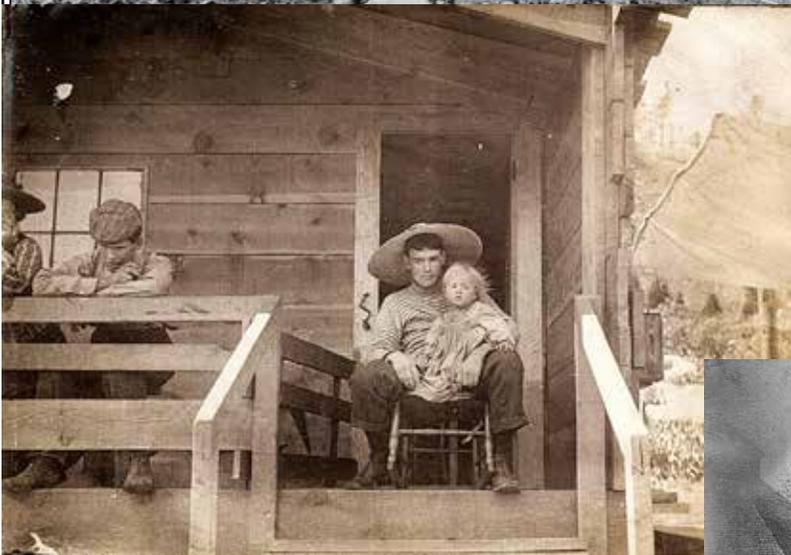
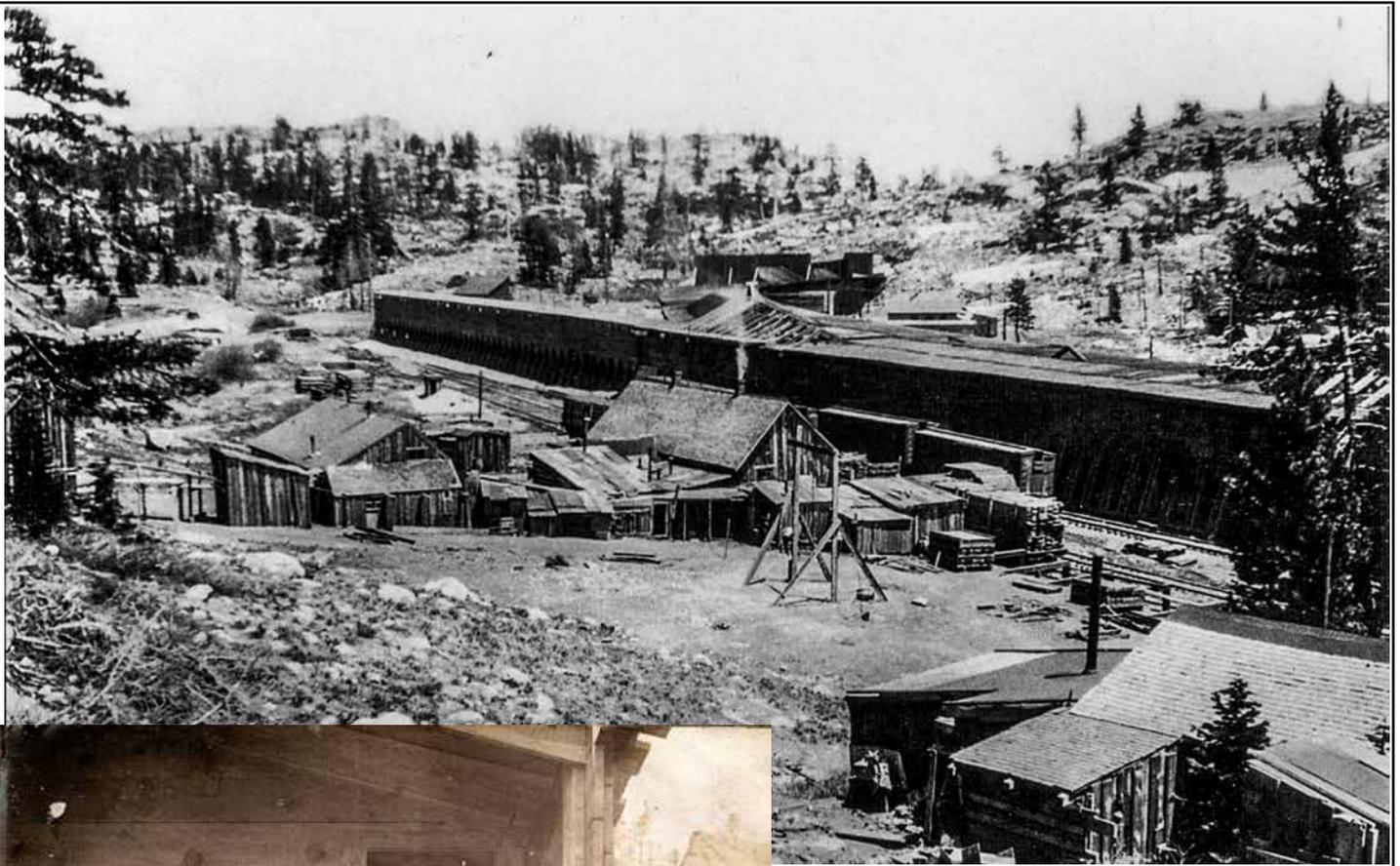
You really ought to come in and see Norm's photograph collection. It's huge and we won't have gotten even a majority of his pictures into the Heirloom by 2100.

The picture on page 1 is Donner Summit, across from today's Donner Ski Ranch. The sign on the building in the background says "Vanderford's Donner Summit Ski Lodge." Mrs. Vanderford ran it. Note all the cars parked on highway 40. The picture is circa 1939.



Here's a rare view of about the same place on Highway 40. In the upper right you can see the transcontinental air route beacon that helped guide planes over the summit (July, '11 Heirloom.) There still is a beacon on Signal Hill (Donner Ski Ranch, and there was one on Beacon Hill (Soda Springs Ski Area). The road to Sugar Bowl goes off to the right between the two telephone poles today. Below is another picture in about the same place captioned "Ski Hi" and dated 1949. One of the signs says "Dancing" at the Ski Hi lodge - right side of the picture.





The top picture here is another view of the railroad complex featured in last month's [Heirloom on page 1](#). That view was from the east looking west. This one is from across the complex looking east. Tunnel 6 is in the upper center. On the near side of the snowsheds are workers' housing.

Having this picture the [Heirloom](#) editorial staff thought it would be good to get close ups. So we went to an album from the Truckee Donner Historical Society for the other two pictures. On the left side of the one to the right you can see the top of the Donner Summit roundhouse.



Soda Springs Station above. This might be about 1923 and taken about the same time as the two in the last issue with the mystery truck. In the blow up of the sign to the right, note they sold Shell gasoline.



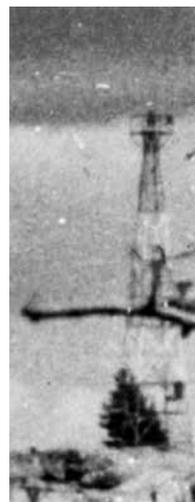
Aerial  
Chair Lift  
Purchase ticket for  
JBar or Chair Lift  
at bottom terminal of  
JBar of Chair #1

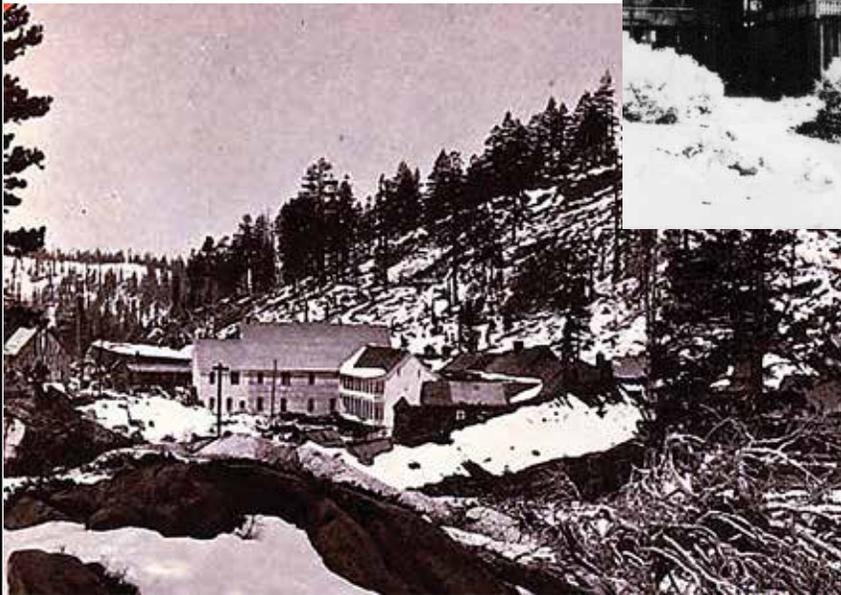
Here is Soda Springs Ski Area. The sign above the two vehicles in the center of the picture is blown up at right with the text below.



We were having fun scanning Norm's pictures that looked really clear at really hi resolution as you can see from the previous one. Here we have a nice view looking east on Highway 40. Looking closely there is some good detail: the weather station for the transcontinental air route and the beacon on Donner Pk. The foundation of the weather station is still there with a spectacular view just off the PCT.

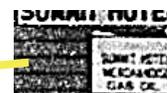
We should note for mystery buffs that the solution in some mysteries revolving around enlarging the date on a newspaper doesn't work unless the newspaper is only a few feet away.





Here are views of the second Summit Hotel (top two and bottom one) and the first Summit Hotel (left).

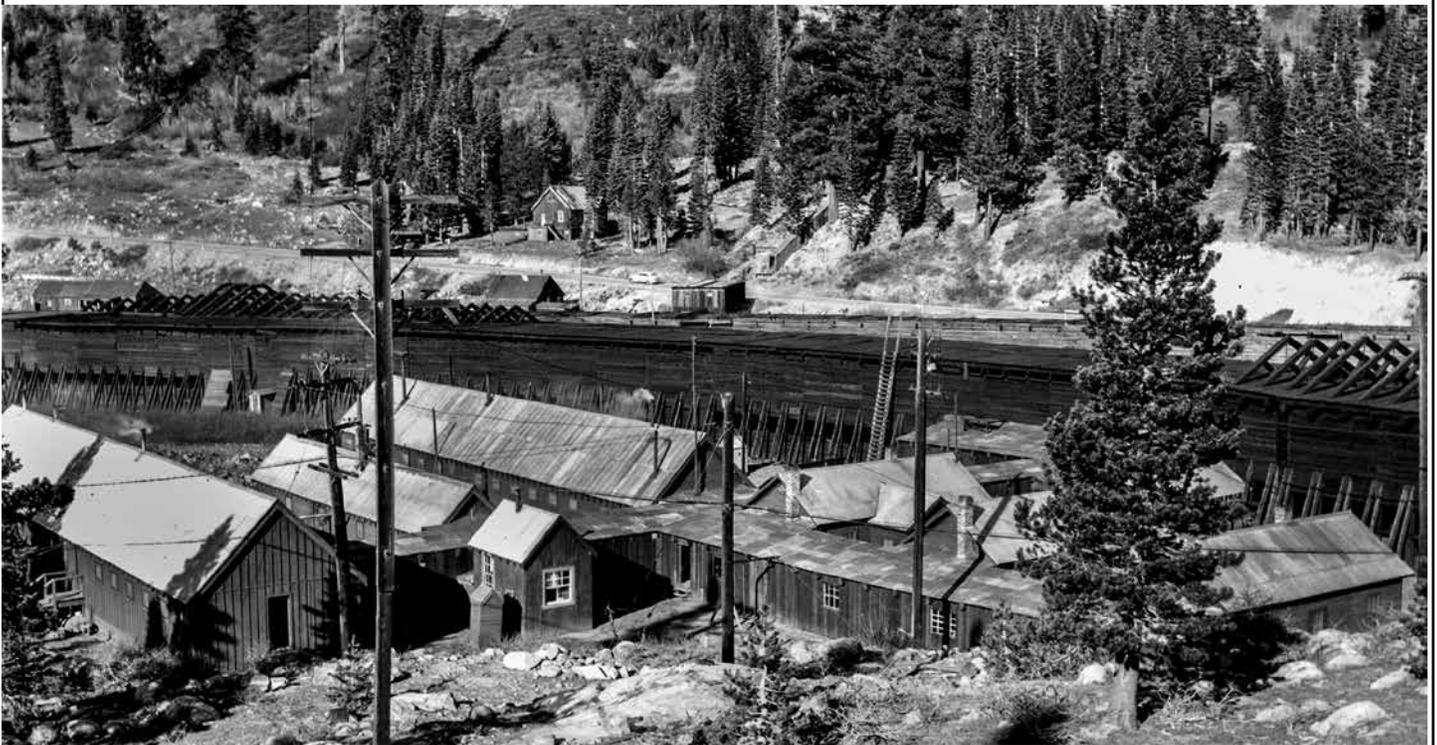
The hotels sat in the vicinity of the railroad complex on Donner Summit. The first one sat where the concrete block building across from Donner Ski Ranch is today. The second one, after the first burned, sat in what is now forest a few hundred yards south and just off the Lincoln Highway.



Summit Hotel  
Summit Hotel  
Merchandise  
Gas Oil



Here are two more views of the railroad complex. Above, the second Summit Hotel sits in the background. The picture is before 1925 (when the hotel burned) and after 1892 (hotel II replaced hotel I). The rest of the picture shows the results of a fire that has bent the rails and taken a number of the wooden buildings in the picture on page 4 with it. Below is about the same view as last month's lead picture. Zoom in on the car on Highway 40 and we can guess the picture is from the 30's. None of the buildings or the snowsheds are there today. Railroad operations moved as equipment improved and automation was added. Powerful snow removal machines obviated the need for snowsheds in most places and besides that, the track was relocated. Today the spot is barren except for tourists parking who are aiming to go in Tunnel 6.



# A Happy Story

## Showing Relevance of the DSHS to Modern Life

### Part II

A little background first. In November, 2008 we ran a story about Kingvale in the 1930's and 1940's, "School's Out It's Time to Go to Kingvale" written by Lois Shane of Kingvale. The story came from an Interview with Virginia Pritchard and Bobbie Butler. Here we'll repeat a paragraph to give you the flavor of the story along with a key sentence for later in this story (keeping in mind that you can read the whole story in our [Heirloom](#) archives – November, 2008).

"Among these activities was enjoying the South Yuba River while the Van Norden Dam was still in place. The river flowed all summer and several deep pools provided great swimming and diving opportunities within Kingvale. One handsome youth could make the girls swoon with his gorgeous swan dive off 'The Rock.' 'The Beach' was where children and their parents spent hours each day enjoying the sun and water. Virginia's mother was one of the very few women who actually wore a real bathing suit out in public and went swimming in the river. Before the bridge was built, PG&E had a trolley across the river in order to service power lines on the other side. This trolley would hold about 3 Kingvale kids—one of whom would have to use the hand-over-hand technique to pull the trolley across the river on its cable. It was also possible to use small boats on the river."

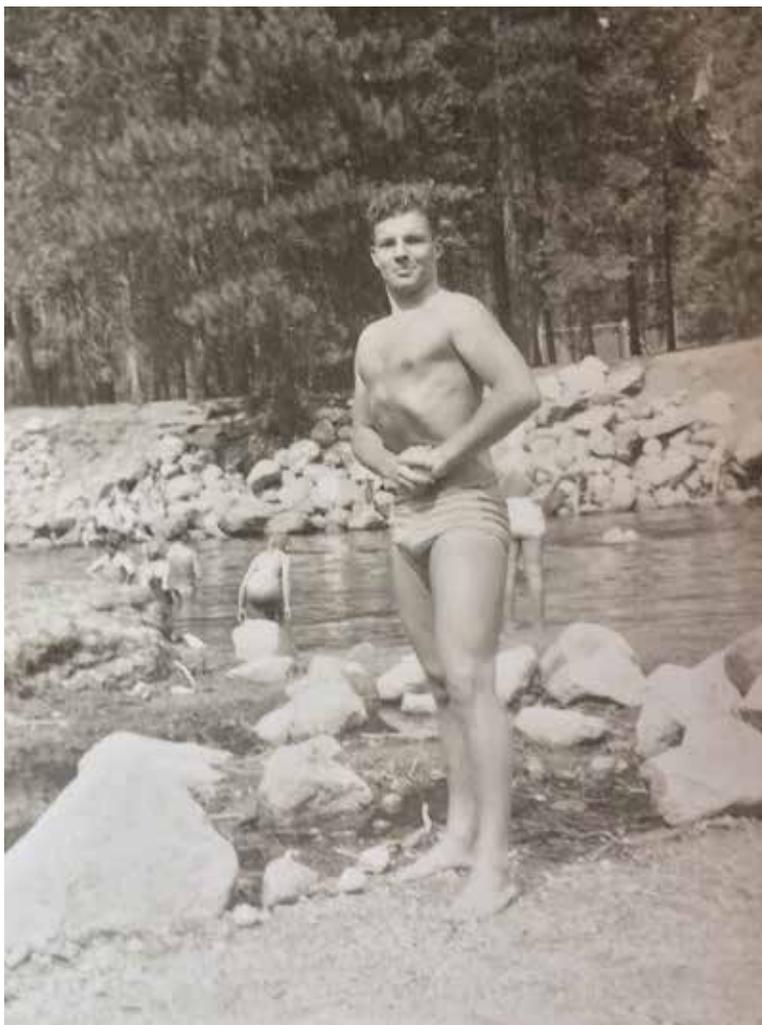
Then in September, 2018 we ran a story, "A Happy Story Showing the Relevance of the DSHS in Modern Life" or the "Daniel David Story." Daniel David of New York City had come across the 2008 article in our archives and that spurred him to go looking for the cabin his father had built in 1939 in Kingvale. Daniel found the cabin and took his family to go visit in Kingvale, meeting the current owners. You can read that article in our online [Heirloom](#) archives too – September, 2018. You can also read a wonderful longer version by Mr. David, "The Next Prince" (the link is on the 2018 [Heirloom](#) page in the "September" paragraph.

One would have thought the happy story of finding the 1939 David family cabin would be the end of the story, but it was not. Mr. David followed up with the following story. Here we'll just print the whole email because the [Heirloom](#) can use good reviews.

"Thanks for sending the August [Heirloom](#) newsletter just now. I snuck a 'peek' at the issue from the link on your website earlier this morning and thoroughly enjoyed reading cover to cover.

"Congratulations on your 10-year milestone! [that was august, 2018] That's a lot of written history (no matter HOW you count the pages).

"Your blurb on the [Heirloom](#) Indices drew my attention back to them again. I remembered it was there, while searching for articles listed under 'Kingvale', that I first discovered Lois Shane's short piece from the November 2008 Issue... Lois' article led me to you in 2015...



“Here’s a small world thing. Lois had interviewed two elderly residents of Kingvale for her 2008 piece. One of them, Ms. Bobbie Gomes Butler, recounted her childhood memories of life in Kingvale back in the 1940’s. From Bobbie’s mouth, Lois wrote “One handsome youth could make the girls swoon with his gorgeous swan dive off ‘The Rock’.”

“Bobbie visited Kingvale a couple of summers ago and Lois took the opportunity to ask her if she remembered a boy named ‘Cliff David’ (my dad). Apparently, Bobbie’s face lit up as she repeated the story about the handsome youth whose swan dive made her swoon!!

“Lois’ article appeared in the first year of Heirloom’s publication, 2008. So Dad celebrates the 10th anniversary this year of his “first appearance” in your pages, as does Lois Shane. (Time for her to write another piece!)

“And thank you again, Bill, for giving dad a “second appearance”... (the September, 2018 issue).

“P.S. Here is a picture of Dad in Kingvale at the South Fortk of the Yuba River in 1946... no doubt preparing to make Bobbie Butler swoon! (Bobbie may be in the background?)” See the previous page.

## Caravan Trapped in Snows

Truckee.-- Snowplows and tow cars were used to rescue 65 caravan automobiles trapped in heavy snowdrifts at Donner Summit on the Victory Highway. The cars were being driven to California for delivery to dealers and were not equipped with skid chains, when caught in a sudden storm.

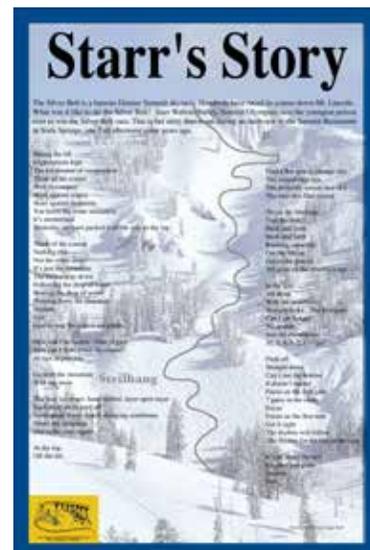
From the Plumas Independent  
December 26, 1935



This is just for fun because there is space. The picture comes from Bob Williams of the Dartmouth Outing Club (Johnny Ellis the DOC's first cabin on Lake Mary - April, July, and August '09 Heirlooms) The picture was taken at the Gatekeeper's cabin in Tahoe City. Sugar Bowl had the first chair lift in California and this may be one of the chairs given that it's dated "1938" and Sugar Bowl opened in 1939 (see October to December, '09 Heirlooms among others).

# From the DSHS Archives

Norm was pulling out pictures for the lead story in this and the last Heirloom and in the middle of one binder was the picture here. This is a really good picture and it turns out to be a picture of Starr Walton Hurley who is on the DSHS Board. She also has a 1930's house across from the DSHS, was an Olympic skier, and is a descendant of the founders of Donner Ski Ranch, the Soda Springs Hotel, along with other claims to fame. It was taken some time in the last 50's Starr thinks and was taken at Sugar Bowl. It's probably not a Silver Belt run but that brought up for a repeat two posters our DSHS creative writing team did called "Starr's Story" which you can see in miniature here. For full size versions go to the URL's below. Starr's Story is free form verse about skiing the Silver Belt at Sugar Bowl.



<http://www.donnersummithistoricalociety.org/pages/Posterstarrsstory1.jpg>

<http://www.donnersummithistoricalociety.org/pages/Posterstarrsstory2.jpg>

Note that those are two different URL's 1 and 2

# Winter Experiences in the "Old Days"

Pat Malberg

I was born and raised in San Francisco. In 1945, when I was just 4 years old, my parents, Frank and Anne Nast, bought a cabin on Lake Mary, Donner Summit paying \$8000 in cash! They'd been through the Great Depression and were determined not to buy on credit. They were skiers and had developed a friendship with Ole and Alma Sater, who had the cabin next door and who encouraged my parents to purchase ours. There were three properties on the shore of the lake (ours being in the middle) which Johnny Ellis had sold in the mid-30's as a means of paying for his investment in a large subdivision associated with his rope tow and his dream of real estate development until WWII broke out and put an end to that. Even the previous owner-builders of our cabin, the Chelton-Leonard family, were not permitted to access it during the war because of the nearby railroad transport of troops and supplies. Those owners in the meantime had found another ski and resort area that they apparently ended up liking better and so put their Lake Mary cabin on the market.

The cabin is built of the heavy black snowshed support timbers which are 8 inches thick and anywhere from 16-18 inches wide, all heart wood because the railroad had access to unlimited timber, having been granted by Congress every other section along the tracks, for use as needed. The snowsheds burned or needed replacing periodically, and the used lumber was discarded nearby. You can see remnants of this practice as you go down Donner Pass Road and look over at the abandoned track beyond the climbers' cliffs. Many cabins in the area are built with this fine lumber, in which, when the black is sanded down [see the next

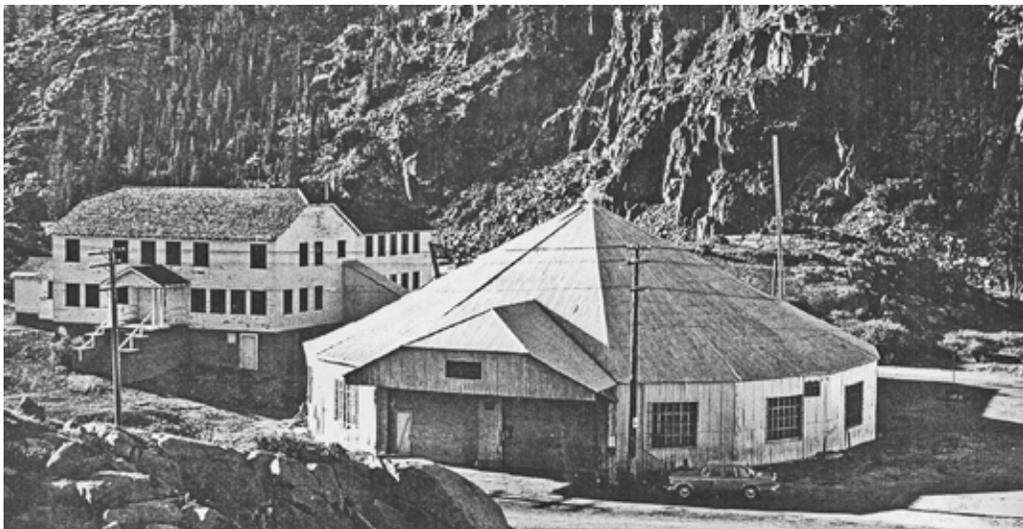
page, bottom left column for the sanded wood], as my Mom did by hand in our cabin, the fine grain and color are revealed. In our cabin, the chinking was originally of cement which shrank over time so that the wind whistled through the cracks, making the potbelly stove in the center of the living room fairly worthless in winter. I'm thankful my parents were very tough and were not discouraged from coming up regularly, no matter how foul the weather.

Soon my parents began a series of upgrades — always a big hole somewhere each summer, for fireplace, dormer, big window, etc, that had to be filled before snowfall — that resulted in the beautiful and now fairly cozy cabin that is unique and special to the family, extending into a fifth generation, and many friends.

I thought it would be fun to relive some of the winter memories that stand out from my childhood of the nearly weekly trips we took to come up to the cabin to ski. In 1950 my Dad purchased a Chevy pickup because that was the only vehicle available after the war. He

manufactured a handsome canopy of Masonite, and arranged for a storage compartment on the truck bed for skis, packs and boxes of supplies, topped with a plank that served as a platform for a mattress. The mattress was needed because in those days, it took at least 7-1/2 hours to drive from San Francisco to the Summit, under best conditions, and the kids needed to sleep at least part of the way. The Lincoln Highway went through all the towns, including Sacramento, Roseville, Rocklin, Auburn, etc., with stop lights and heavy traffic, especially on Friday evenings. Sometimes a snowstorm would temporarily close the highway, even as low as Baxter, where determined skiers would camp out in the coffee shop until given the all clear by the highway department. Many friendships were forged during those long hours of patient waiting.

Once on the highway in the mountains, of course, it was almost inevitable that we would need chains. My Dad did the honors, admirably quickly as he had created an ingenious gimmick to simplify the process, but I remember his hands being icy cold when he got back behind the wheel. Then there was the





Nast cabin, about 1936 made of snowshed timbers

arrival at the Summit. We were permitted to drive into the huge circular maintenance station where the Department of Highway's snow removal equipment was housed [previous page, bottom] — huge machines that reverberated in the cavernous building so that it was a bit frightening, but at least out of the harsh wind, which was ever present at the Summit. We quickly put on our ski clothes and boots, stuffed the packs with whatever food and supplies were needed for the time we'd be spending at the cabin, maybe for several house guests too, as my parents loved to invite others to join us there. The cabin, small as it is, seemed elastic in those days, able to expand to accommodate family and friends and create hilarious memories. My Dad often took several trips out to the truck to get everything; he had a horrible army surplus backpack which must have been very uncomfortable with the 75 pounds he was known to carry in it regularly.

Once we were all ready, my Dad would drive the pickup out onto the edge of the highway where we were permitted to park so long as it was behind the "white line." Nevada County put the kibosh on that practice many years ago, which has complicated our winter parking situation



Inside of the Nast, now Malberg Cabin, about 2015 - the woodwork was all dark/black from locomotive smoke. Pat's mother sanded it all by hand.

immensely. We then put on the skis and without any light that I can remember, broke trail into the cabin, a distance of about two long city blocks, mostly level or slightly downhill. The going could be pretty slow during a big snow storm, the wind could be really bitter, and once we reached the cabin, we were finally relieved of the constant pelting of snow. However, the temperature inside usually was about the same as that outside — freezing! Dad immediately got the huge fireplace fire going and Mom worked on the kitchen Wedgewood stove, but they had to be careful not to create a draft of one fire to the other or the smoke would fill the whole downstairs. In that case, we had to open the door to let out the smoke and the little bit of heat that had been generated went out the door with the smoke.

Another vivid memory — my mother had hung a very thick curtain on the stairway to slow the cold air that otherwise raced downstairs to replace the warm air that was going up the chimney. The curtain was secured at the bottom by a huge truck chain, and it billowed pregnantly for our amusement. The chain rattled whenever someone came up or down. Sometimes there were dead chipmunks, frozen after having come down the chimney and curled up in the fur couch covers that were my mother's attempt at elegance and comfort. It took a good while to heat up the cabin, and we always joked that we put on all our clothes to go to bed! Electric blankets eventually helped, but it was still very cold the first night.

Up early, my mother started "rattling the pots and pans" and there was no sleeping in for the rest of us. The single bathroom was very busy! My mother always prepared a delicious breakfast and shooed us out the door so that we could get to the [Sugar] Bowl by the time the lift opened. It took teamwork to break trail, the leader of the line stepped aside to let the person behind continue the work, until that person stepped aside and so on. It was a challenge to make a beautiful straight line across the lake — it's not easy. Often the wind erased the trail on the lake almost immediately and froze our cheeks and hands, but while we were in the forest it seemed so calm and beautiful, and by the time we reached the Bowl, we were always warmed up and ready to ski.

Then there was the ski lift. A full day's ticket was somewhere between \$2 and \$5, and a season ticket was certainly equally affordable. There was only one chairlift, a single slow chair on Mt. Disney, with frequent stops for different problems, including wind, which soon caused a long waiting line to form at the bottom. Sometimes the wait was 1/2 hour. So 20-25 trips in a day, with no stop for lunch, just a candy or two tucked into the pocket, was a big accomplishment. As children, we developed ways to sneak our ski tips ahead of others in line who were deep in conversation, and maybe gain a spot or two. But it was slow going.

As part of the junior ski team, I was expected to stay on after the lift closed to work with the coach, Imo, who brought out the slalom poles and set up a long flush on the Nose. We climbed up repeatedly and snaked through the poles as fast as

we could manage, got his comments and advice, and trudged up to the top of the course to do it all again. I then skied the trail back to the cabin, much of it uphill, and often arrived just as it turned dark. My mother had prepared dinner that morning, a chicken or meat roast in an electric roaster with all the fixings, on a timer, so that when you walked in the door, the aroma would set the juices flowing and reminded you how very hungry you were. The dinners were always gourmet and memorable. When anyone staying at the cabin had taken a lesson that day, everyone gathered around the fireplace to learn what that person had learned — there were demonstrations on the hearth of ruade, stem christie's, reverse shoulder and such, and then my parents would often launch into their entertainment routine (this was after a beer or glass of wine, usually). They loved to act out some long-winded joke, a shaggy dog story, to uproarious laughter. Saturday night I had to do my homework at the kitchen table — sometimes the partying continued after dinner, but often all was quiet as the exhausted skiers went to bed.



Malberg cabin today

Sunday evening we ate dinner at the cabin and then packed everything that needed to go back out to the truck. My mother often admonished us to finish our dinner because she wasn't going to lug it out. Sometimes the pickup would be snowed in or the plow might have made a huge berm, in which case we had a good shoveling session before the kids got to climb into the back and go to sleep while my parents did the driving.

Monday morning it was back to school. For skiing, my mother knitted little beanies for me, with ear flaps and a tie under the chin, which, along with the huge goggles, made for a very strange sun/wind burn pattern on my face. The kids would wonder where I'd been, and of course, in San Francisco in those days, there weren't very many who knew anything about skiing. And then, come Friday afternoon, the whole routine started up again.

These experiences built character and stamina, and I'm so grateful that my parents had the strength and vision to provide this unique childhood and legacy for me. Today, of course, our ski clothing is much more comfortable, the skis are much more manageable and the lifts are far more numerous and rapid. But the cabin is still always cold when we first arrive, although it warms up a lot more quickly and easily, and breaking trail over to the Bowl after a storm is still a challenge, especially now that we are very senior citizens. Some things don't change, including our constant realization of how lucky we are!

## Advice for Winter Driving – 1931

In case you are ever on Highway 40 in winter in 1931 you may be happy to have this advice from the Oakland Tribune (December 20, 1931).

Even though the roads in 1931 were better than in the past it was still necessary to equip your car for snow: ropes, chains, shovels, and emergency equipment were necessary and the highway patrol (just generic highway patrol apparently in 1931 – no capital letters yet) will not allow you to proceed without the necessities.

Those emergency items were indispensable in winter because of the “danger of side-slipping, skidding, stalling and other perils of modern mountain climbing, even on wide grades of easy grade and gentle curves...” Just too many casual drivers had tried to negotiate the Sierra roads on Sundays causing accidents (“happily non-fatal”) when not equipped properly so “an absolute ban on traffic over Donner summit [sic] for cars not operating with tires [and chains] to be reinforced.”

“During the past few days, several heavy trucks have slid backwards over embankments in attempting to climb wet or snow covered roads without chains...” “If motorists lack chains a quantity of rope should be carried. If this is wound around the tires, it will materially aid in giving traction.”

The previous January, the Auburn Ski Club had held a ski jumping competition at Cisco Grove to which the club invited members of the State legislature. Hearing something special in the works, 4,000 automobiles full of spectators filed up two lane Highway 40. The resulting monumental traffic jam encouraged the legislature to vote to clear Highway 40 in winter. That would start in 1932.

# From the DSHS Archives



Here's a really nice picture of the Norden Store about 1936. All along Highway 40 there were little communities with bus stops. Here the Greyhound is stopping at the Norden Store and Lodge. People could stay there, go to one of the ski clubs along Old 40, go down the road to Clair Tappaan Lodge or Hutchinson Lodge, or cross the street to Norden Station where they could get a ride to Sugar Bowl (after 1939).

They sold "Fire Chief" gasoline here in one of the many gas stations along the highway. There was also a post office in the store for the summit community of Norden. Today the Norden post office (zip 95724) is at the end of the hallway at the Soda Springs post office (zip 95728). The address of the DSHS is P.O. 1 Norden.

# Book Review

## Survival at Boiler Point Lake Tahoe

Vesta Avis Mandeville 2001 269 pages large format

Clearly, based on the title, this book is not Donner Summit history. Both Norm Saylor (president of the DSHS) and Molly Beucus (who is often at the DSHS) recommend this book despite its lack of Donner Summit history. Molly says, "If I could read only one book there [at the DSHS] it would be this one." So with that...

This book is really two books. The first 167 pages or so are the reminiscences and family history of Vesta Mandeville who, as a newborn, moved with her family to Boiler Point on Lake Tahoe. Her reminiscences cover every conceivable aspect of her growing up and her family.

The last hundred pages of the book are the log books and letters of Vesta's father, Sydney James Mandeville, who served as a State Fish and Game warden, among other things.

Boiler Point is at the north end of Lake Tahoe, near Brockway and Tahoe Vista and west of Stateline in California. In 1914 when the family settled there with a new baby (Vesta) it was remote. In winter the only communication with the outside world was the once-a-week mail boat. Living there the family relied on their "own abilities, ingenuity, and good sense... on the shore of one the world's most beautiful lakes." The book has some period pictures and lots of Mandeville family pictures.

"I feel very fortunate to have lived back then, when we walked, skied, snowshoed, rode horses, or rode in wagons or buggies, traveling slowly enough to see every rock and stick along the road. We could sneak up on rabbits, squirrels and birds, getting a close look at nature by traveling slowly. As Mom said, 'Take time to smell the flowers, Honey.'"

Vesta Mandeville

Vesta's reminiscences cover general local history such as the shingle mill whose boiler gave Boiler Point its name, log flumes, the Floriston paper mill where Vesta's father worked for a time, and Native Americans in the area and their mythology. The bulk of Vesta's part of the book are reminiscences of her and her family: the house, life, adventures, routine like bread making and the cook stove, Truckee Dick (a local Native American), cooking, the sugar sack, refrigeration, making ice cream from fresh snow, wash day, home remedies, etc. Another part of her reminiscences, the larger part, was about family: how Vesta and her six brothers got along, lessons learned while growing up, parental guidance, etc. Vesta relates one story after another about family, some of which are clearly not her reminiscences because she was so young in some stories. All together the reminiscences provide a good look at an early 20th Century family living in the mountains in California.

The reader also learns a bit about the tourist industry at north Tahoe in those days since Boiler Point was near both the Brockway Hotel and the Tahoe Vista Hotel. Members of the family worked there. That part of the story talks about the resorts, lake steamers, and narrow gauge railroads, all now gone. It's interesting to read how the family got from Boiler Point to Truckee and the landmarks that marked their journey. "The fourteen-mile trip to Truckee on foot let us know we were really survivors. Dad

## SURVIVAL AT BOILER POINT LAKE TAHOE

By: Vesta Avis Mandeville



always said, 'Don't turn back once on a trip keep going forward to the end.' No matter what it took, we would push on until we reached our destination. That lesson helped me all of my life."

Interesting too is the description of Truckee: "Truckee had several businesses in addition to the lumber mill and railroad..." There were hotels charging one dollar and up for steam heated rooms. Buildings had double brick walls filled with sawdust for insulation. There was a drug store, a couple of grocery stores, a clothing store, a laundry, some bars, and a livery. The drug store had the "best ice cream sodas this side of the Rockies." Some of the business names are familiar still today.

Vesta's father was a State Fish and Game warden . His area was from Lake Tahoe north to Independence Lake, east to Floriston, and west to Donner Summit and down to Cisco.

"Sometimes it got to 40 degrees below zero at Boca. We had to breathe through our muffler; even then, our nostrils froze together. As we exhaled, we were in a cloud of steam." Aunt Florence curled Vesta's hair and wet the curls. "By the time I walked across town to school, my curls would be sticks of ice: clink, clink! The teacher would break off the ice and let me stand by the big, pot bellied stove to dry."

The second part of the book is the log books of Vesta's father, Sydney James Mandeville. It's best if you skim through the entries though. Entry after entry is a bit tedious and there are a hundred large pages of entries. The log books start in 1908 and each entry briefly describes what a game warden did in the early 20th Century protecting the forests and wildlife from predatory visitors of the human persuasion. It's really a catalog of environmental law breaking and Mandeville was tasked with reducing it. There were so many lawbreakers, some serial, that elimination was probably not an option.

Some examples of skullduggery Mandeville dealt with: catching fish too small, catching too many fish, scooping up fish as they tried to get over the fish ladders, fishing too close to dams, polluting streams with sawdust or mercury, using bags as seine nets, shipping fish out on the train using different names so as to get past the catch limits, hunting out of season, shooting deer that were too young, dynamiting the rivers and streams to knock out the fish so they'd be easy to scoop up,



Vesta in front of the cabin at Boiler Point. Downstairs was a large room including a kitchen and sleeping area for the parents. The six kids were upstairs.

using fish traps, stuffing trout with rocks so the fish would weigh at least the one pound minimum, hiding over the limit fish in hidden boxes, etc. There was a lot of creativity in the old days.

Sometimes the work required detective work: checking shipping records to see who was shipping fish and how many, investigating reports of illegal fish at the Reno fish market, figuring out whose fish were whose, comparing stories, etc.

Mostly the job was walking, watching, and waiting as Mandeville went from place to place scouting for illegality. It is just tiring considering his activity. Most entries told how far he walked that day: twenty-four miles, sixteen miles, seventeen miles, twenty-three miles. That was every day as he patrolled. Walking from Truckee to Floriston was no big deal and so we can see the family outings to Truckee from Boiler Point that required everyone to walk the fourteen miles were also no big deal.

The beginning of the log books gives a taste for what's to come. Mandeville was tracking a character named Billy Foote who would feature in many later entries as a serial lawbreaker and apparently a poacher. Sydney followed the fellow until 2 AM one night. Then he got caught in a cloudburst. He walked twenty-two miles home. The next day he caught Mr. Foote with 48 fish and there was more rain. The next day he caught two more guys breaking the law and then there was something about dynamiting, "fishermen were plotting against me." Shortly thereafter there was a "Greek gang at Summit" which was stealing fish. The gang members were catching fish with their hands at Cisco which was apparently illegal. There were more Greeks at Van Norden shooting robins and scooping fish out of a hole.

There were other things too in the duties. He watched for fires and a number of times rescued landlocked trout using oil cans once transferring forty-four cans' worth so the fish would not die. Besides the walking and waiting there were other problems. Mandeville once chased a guy in his boat from Emerald Bay to Cave Rock but did not catch him because Mandeville broke an oar and had to paddle all the way back with one oar.

The log books would make a good reality show of the game warden's life in 1910 or so. Many of the entries would make good stories fleshed out with a bit more detail.

#### Entry examples from Donner Summit - (reproduced as in the log book)

August 9, 1908 = Up at 3:45 AM and down the canyon on south side of Lake Van Norden and around lake & back to Summit. Then at 8 PM we left for Soda Springs end of lake & watched some fisherman till 10:30 PM. They had poor luck as they only had 20 Dolly Varden trout. Got back to our blankets at 11:30... miles walked 16.

August 12 = Followed up little streams that flow into Van Norden and found hole after hole that had been dynamited and dead trout by dozens varying in size from minnows to trout of 1 lbs in weight, and mostly Dolly Varden. I find also that the streams are full of them and that they are spawning. Back to Summit at 2 PM then jumped a freight to Emigrant Gap. Found lots of campers there. Back to Summit on work train at 6:10 PM. Miles walked 12.

August 13 = Up the little streams of arm and found a slapper and some sacks that had been used to get the fish out of the streams. Sacks were sewed together and had been used as a seine. The slappers they used to slap the water and scare them up into the holes to be shot. Found thousands of small trout in holes away up the stream that could not get either up or down stream as the streams are about dry and the water in the holes will soon be gone and got coal oils cans and got 44 cans of trout varying in size from minnow to 5" long and took them down to lake [Van Norden]. Walked 16.

## 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.

## Odds & Ends on Donner Summit

These are old highway markers that can be found here and there along the Lincoln Highway route on Donner Summit. The Left two were found by Art Clark at Cisco and the one on the right is at Rainbow.



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 them one to the editor - see page 2

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



# Hwy 40 Scenic Bypass

## Truckee Roundhouse



### History

"Needed to house and maintain the engines of the Central Pacific Railroad during construction of the trans-Sierra crossing, an enclosed wooden round house was constructed here in 1868. It was razed by fire in March of 1869. A 16 stall wooden structure was built that year as the maintenance facility of the C.P.R.R., Truckee Division. Another fire in 1876 resulted in construction of a 22 stall granite and wooden structure. This served thru 1942, when it was officially retired, a victim of the end of the steam era and consolidation of maintenance at other locations. The round houses were home to helper engines, fire trains and the first rotary snow plow in the Sierra."<sup>\*</sup>



### A Good Story

At 5 A.M. on May 2, 1904 the Norris and Rowe circus train was climbing to the summit when some circus wagons got snagged as the train entered a tunnel and

fell off the train. Newspaper headlines reported the result: "Feroocious Animals are Free", "Wreck Liberates Circus Animals" and "beasts... were liberated." At the summit the missing cages were discovered. A special train was sent back to retrieve the circus wagons and a posse formed to gather up the animals. Most animals were gathered with no problem although a snake charmer had to be employed to get a boa down from the snowshed rafters. A tiger scared some tramps but he was locked up in the summit depot waiting room. Some monkeys were left behind, having scampered off.



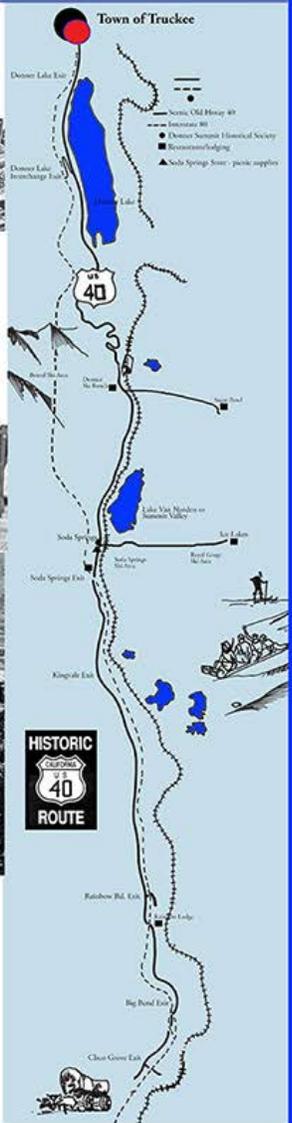
The Truckee Republican reported on May 4 that two monkeys had apparently found the snow on the summit too cold and found the warmest place nearby, under the locomotive. The stowaways traveled to Rocklin and then back to the summit and down to Truckee where they were discovered. The monkeys refused to come out and "They were finally taken out in the local Round House by a liberal application of smoke." Presumably the simians were given tickets to join their friends who had gone off to Marysville.



### Things to do right here

around Truckee. The snowplow was used to keep the tracks open during Truckee's heavy snow years. The wrecking crane was used to clear wrecks from Truckee on east past Sparks into Nevada.

Explore the Railyard, take a walking tour of downtown Truckee, visit the Truckee Donner Historical Society. Go to the Pocket Park just east of here and see the rotary snowplow and the railroad wrecking crane. Both were used



<sup>\*</sup>Original wording of the commemorative plaque placed by Chief Truckee, E. Clampus Vitus Chapter No. 3691, August 10, 1991.  
 ©2019 Donner Summit Historical Society www.donnersummithistoricalsociety.org  
 Sponsored by the Truckee Railyard Project  
 pictures courtesy of the Truckee Donner Historical Society https://www.truckeehistory.org/

Truckee is in the midst of some great improvements. The former railyard at the east end of town is being re-imagined extending downtown with walkable high density multi-use development. The new railyards will have movie theaters, a grocery store, restaurants, housing, civic space, and retail space. The railroad roundhouse that used to occupy a large part of what is now the railyards is long gone but the DSHS had heard that the railyard people wanted to recognize that part of Truckee's heritage. So we offered them a 20 Mile Museum sign. Here it is, approved by the developers and the Town of Truckee.

DONNER SUMMIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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

I/we would like to join The Donner Summit Historical Society and share in the Summit's rich history.

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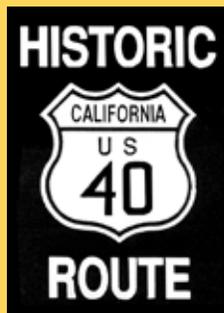
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\_\_\_\_\_



# Take the Scenic Route: Donner Summit's Old Highway 40



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