

The Donner Summit

Heirloom

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History and stories of the Donner Summit Historical Society

January, 2020 issue #137

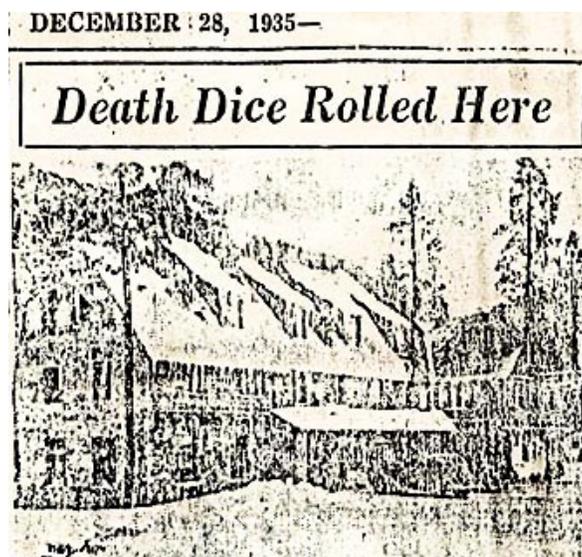
Sierra Nevada Resort Owner Murdered By An Employee In Dice Game

actual headline [Santa Cruz Sentinel](#) December 27, 1935

We could have started this [Heirloom](#) with the Hutchinson Lodge story, "Historical Serendipity", something about the archives, the old map, or the erudite book review that are also in this issue but we've been studying the popular press. The popular press takes the most sensational story and puts that on page one. We understand there are even variations of the popular press that make things up to put on page one. We'd never do that because it's dishonest and because there are so many good stories on Donner Summit. Here we are at issue 137 and we've still not run out of Donner Summit history. We decided on this lead story because, if we've learned our lessons from studying the popular press, we should see a spike in subscriptions. We'll report on that in the future. Right now we're at 907.

The headline above is from the [Santa Cruz Sentinel](#). The sub head said, "Chris Christianson Is Shot by Tony Jones, Who Escaped." The date was December 27, 1935. The killing was covered in many newspapers from Los Angeles to Santa Cruz, over to the Bay Area, up to Woodland, and then up the Sierra. Some reports were almost poetic, "Death and not Lady Luck rolled the dice in a game in the Rainbow Tavern" "a fashionable resort on the Reno-Auburn Highway near Cisco."

Chris Christianson owned a number of night clubs, or was a "backer of taverns" and "wealthy sportsman." The list varied depending on the newspaper. He was shot and killed with a .25 (or .30.30 depending on the newspaper) caliber rifle by Tony Jones (or Lonnie Jones, depending on the newspaper), an employee or odd job man (or had just been laid off). Jones escaped after the shooting by herding all the witnesses out of the basement bar (or temporary recreation hall) (or the witnesses were panic stricken by the tragedy and ran out, depending on the newspaper) and "headed for the deep mountain snows and the Southern Pacific railroad track." The railroad is up the hill from the lodge.

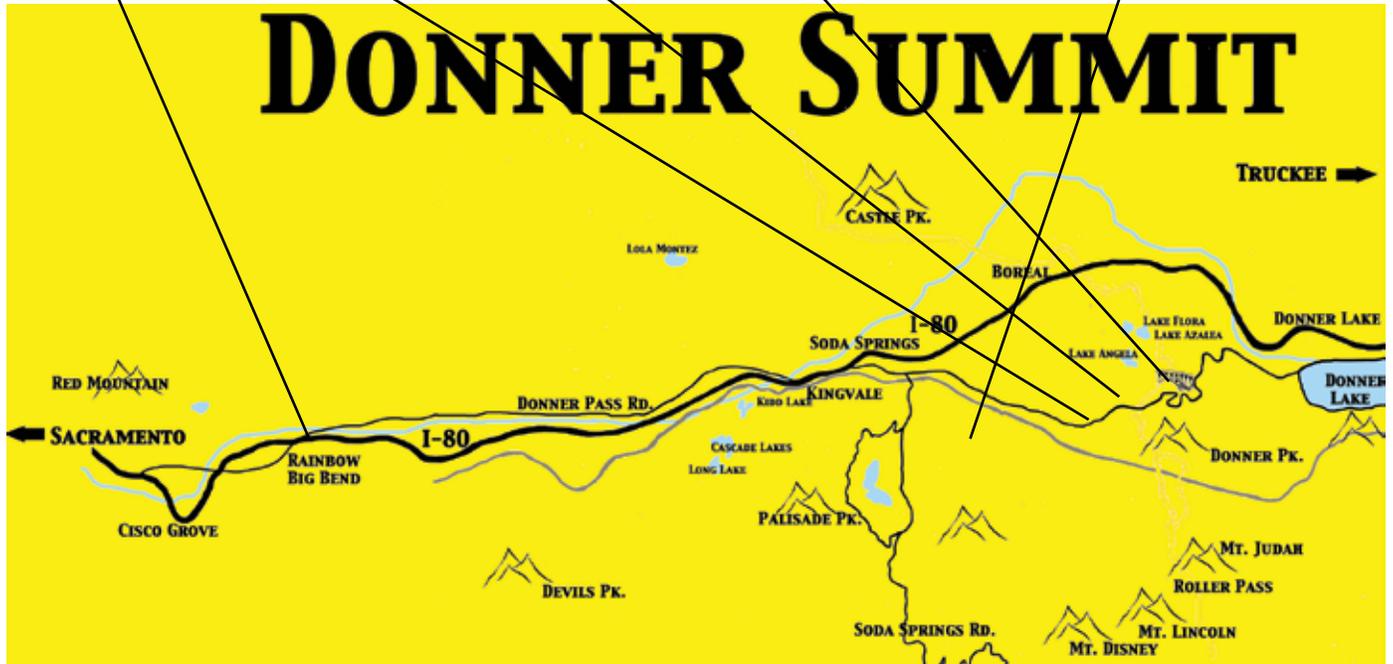


from Jim Wiggins, who lives next to
Rainbow Lodge, newspaper unknown

cont'd on page 20

Story Locations in this Issue

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A Note from Nick Chickering about the October Heirloom and the Snows of '52

The October issue with the first few pictures of 1952 had barely "hit the stands" when Nick Chickering responded with his memories of 1952. Those would have been best added to the November or December Heirlooms but those were done and there was no room. Besides we'd also hoped to get copies of the picture Nick mentioned. Nick did try to contact the owners of their old Sugar Bowl cabin, but no luck. The Chickering's were one of the four founding families of Sugar Bowl (see an interview with Nick's mother, Jean, in the December, '09 Heirloom) and Nick has written for the Heirloom several times (See the indices). Today his family owns the old Mark Hopkins estate adjacent to the Cedars in the actual Soda Springs.

Bill, with regard to the winter of 1952 and snow removal, I have two first hand thoughts:

1. My Mother and I, along with my 2 siblings, were snowed in at our Sugar Bowl cabin at the time the Train was snowed in at Yuba Gap. I believe we were stuck for a week, and there are photos we left at the cabin showing walking straight in via the 3rd story. Snow depth there hit 32 ft.
2. In 1975 I became President of Alpha Hardware Company in Nevada City which owned the largest explosives dealer in California, Alpha Explosives. The long time owner, Downey Clinch, told me that Highway 40's snow depth and ice was so deep on the highway in that epic winter, that none of the snow plows then could remove the tremendous depth compacted with ice. They turned to Alpha Explosives, and Downey spent days on the highway using tamping poles, then dropping dynamite into the holes to blow up the ice and snow so the vehicles could remove it. [so we can guess that pictures showing guys poking holes in the "Sierra Cement" for dynamite were from Downey-ed].

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Proofread by Pat Malberg, Lake Mary, Donner Summit

While Alpha Hardware is long gone, it operated for more than 100 years starting in 1874.

Historical Serendipity

One day I was poking around in the DSHS. It's tough deciding whether a failing memory makes old things appear new or whether something found is actually new. In this case I was poking around, as I noted above, and came across a flash drive. Norm Saylor (president of the DSHS) does not use flash drives and he had no idea, initially, where it had come from. It turned out to be full of old pictures of Hutchinson Lodge, mostly under construction. Once the contents were ascertained, Norm remembered the flash drive had come from Ingrid Wickin who has the website and library, "The California Ski Library" in Norco, California (<http://www.skilibrary.com/index.html>), "...one of the largest collections of ski books, magazines, programs, brochures, and more..." Here is a place (on the web and in person) to explore. Ingrid has also written books on skiing.

Ingrid is a friend of Norm's and she replied to my email, "Yes, those scans came from me. I purchased those (150 glass slides) a couple of years ago at a book fair in Oakland. I do have more information on Hutchinson Lodge because I am working on a book on lost ski areas of Tahoe-Donner and will include information about Hutchinson Lodge and Clair Tappaan." Stay tuned.

You can read a bit more about the Hutchinson Lodge in the September, '11 [Heirloom](#). Here, below, is the history text of our 20 Mile Museum sign for Hutchinson Lodge to introduce the pictures from Ingrid's flash drive. You might also be interested in the April and May, '17 [Heirlooms](#) for Clair Tappaan Lodge which is next door. Hutchinson Lodge is just off Old Highway 40, Donner Pass Rd., just west of the Sierra Club's Clair Tappaan Lodge. There's a little pull out from the road and walk up the dirt road a couple of hundred yards.

From the 20 Mile Museum sign for Hutchinson Lodge:

"Lincoln and James Hutchinson, for whom Hutchinson Lodge is named, were born in the late 1860's in San Francisco of pioneer parents. Both were educated at University of California Berkeley and Harvard. James was a charter member of the Sierra Club, founded in 1892. The brothers and their friends were avid outdoorsmen and bagged Sierra Nevada peaks in the summer and skied in the winter.

They called their group "The Sierra Ski Club." Dissatisfied with existing Summit lodging, they built Hutchinson Lodge in the summers of 1924 and 1925. The lodge was constructed from rock and trees on the property following plans drawn by group member Walter Radcliff. Initially electricity was not available and water came from a spring, was stored in a redwood tank up the hill and gravity fed to the lodge. Heat came from wood burned in an open fireplace with a huge copper hood."

By the 1950's, with the members aging and use of the lodge diminishing, the lodge and lands were given to the Sierra Club. The lodge has remained largely as constructed with a recent modest updating for comfort and safety.



To whet your appetite, here are pictures of Hutchinson Lodge today, front door is above. On the next page is a mural on the wall inside.



The mural on the wall in Hutchinson Lodge which is supposed to represent Donner Summit in 1929. It was done by Susan Barry in 2009.

The Human Question

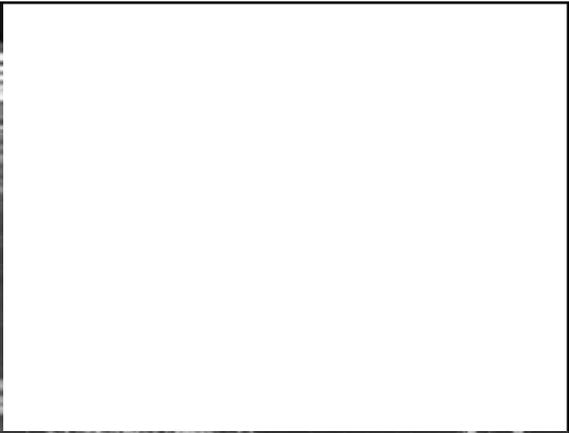
Coming across a collection of glass slides as Ingrid Wicken did, is really good luck. Fortunately someone had not just thrown them away without wondering who would want them.

In the 150 slides we have a window on a day long gone by. Here we have a large group of people dedicating their time, effort, and money to build a lodge on Donner Summit which they will inhabit from time to time in a communal living arrangement. That volunteer work is really rare today as is the idea of communal living although you can do that at Clair Tappaan (<https://clairtappaanlodge.com/reservations>).

We can wonder who the people were, but their identities are lost to time. Look at the men at the dining table on the next page. Who were they? What were their jobs in real life when not building Hutchinson Lodge? What induced them to leave home, camp out (see the picture on page 7), and do really hard physical labor? Might a descendant stumble across these pages and identify grandpa? Who are the girls on the wall on the next page? Are they providing inspiration or are they part of the work crew? Will someone come along and identify grandma? Then, who was the photographer? Is he the fellow on page 9? Was his collection "official" for the club or did he do it for himself and his friends? Where were the pictures until Ingrid found them?

Under Construction, 1924









One had to hike in to the lodge over the snow carrying whatever was needed.

Skating on Lake Mary





Left, Mt. Judah in the background



Once the Work Was Done it Was Time to Play

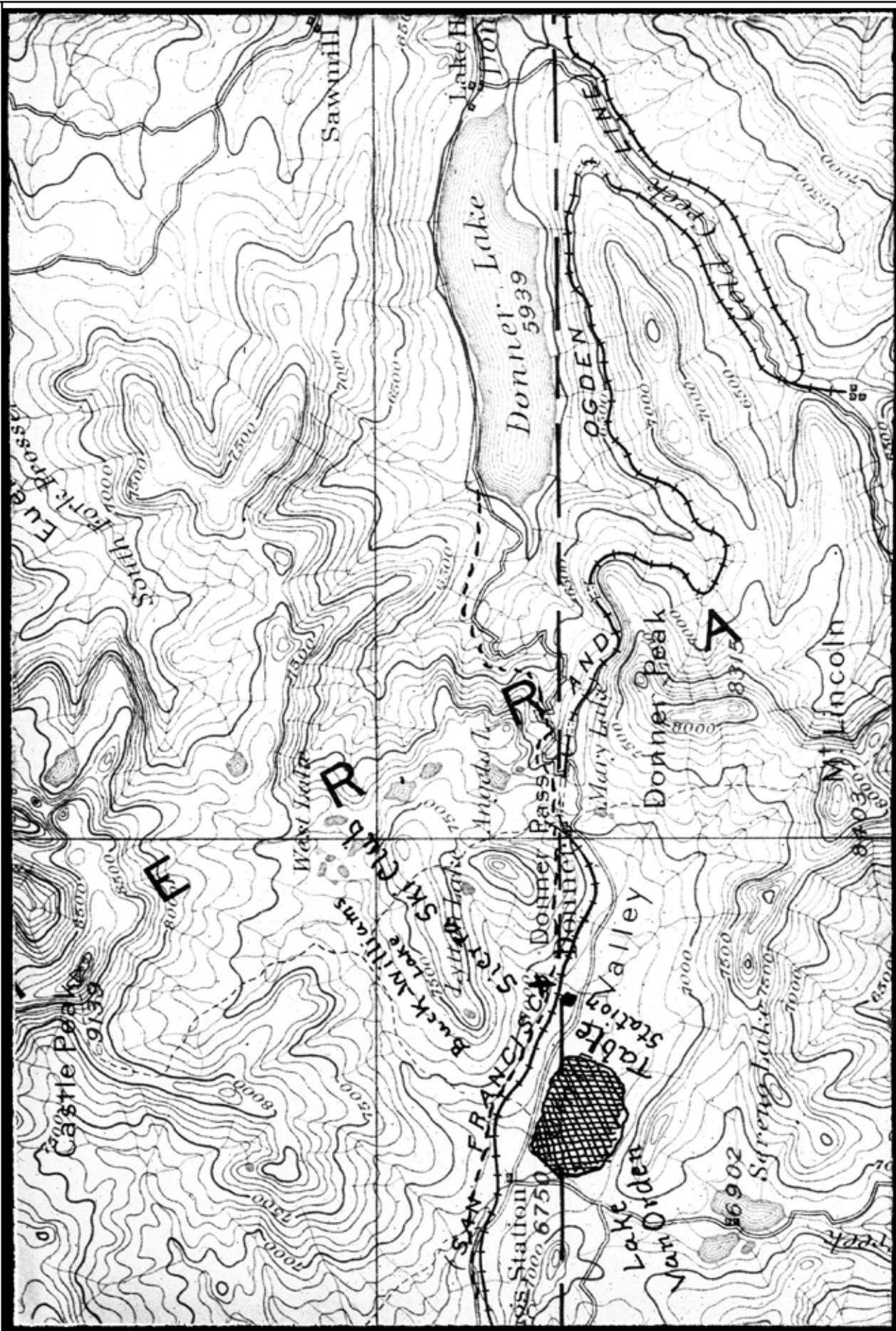


Sierra Ski Club —

Compliments on your building. It is practical as well as
Best Looking Lodge that I have had the pleasure of viewing in
California. Many enjoyable times to you.

A Visitor.





See the next page for annotation regarding this map

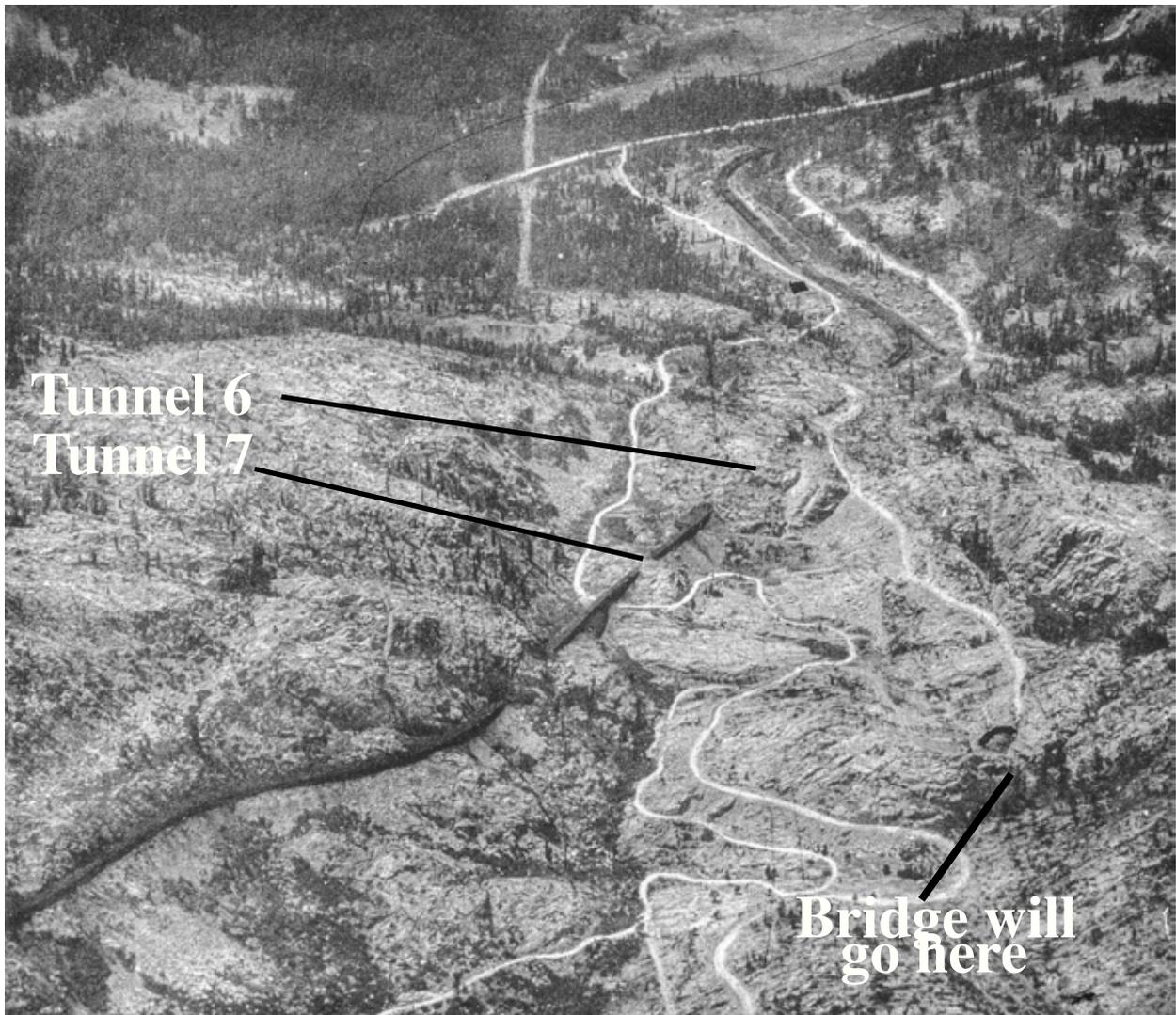
Regarding the map on the previous page

Typically we don't reprint old maps in total because they take up space at the same time there's a lot of Donner Summit history vying for that same space. We do reprint pieces that illustrate stories though. In this case though, we thought it would be fun to see what else was in the collection of glass plates that Ingrid Wicken had found.

You might have fun investigating the map on the previous page and seeing if you can date it.

Answer: First, since it's in a collection of pictures from 1924-1925 or so, we can figure the map dates from then. But that's too easy. Second, on the west side of the map you can see "Sereno Lakes" which today is "Serene Lakes." There are three lakes and the main road to the Cedars and Auburn beyond, goes across between the two large lakes. The dam was built there in the 1940's making the three lakes into two as they are today. The road was rerouted after that to go down the east side of the lakes as it does today. So the map is pre-1940's. The "Sierra Ski Club" is labeled. That's the group that built Hutchinson Lodge and later gave it to the Sierra Club. Since the lodge is labeled and presumably existing, the map must be about 1925. Follow the road along "Lake Van Orden" (someone misheard because even then it was "Lake Van Norden") and go east to where it crosses the railroad just after Tunnel 6 (that's at the east end of where the railroad line has a break because it went into the tunnel). That looks like it goes through the underpass. The underpass was put into use in 1914 and stopped being used when the new road, Highway 40, and the Donner Summit Bridge (Rainbow Bridge) came into use in 1926. The dashed line looks like it might be the route of the new road, prior to its construction. So that might date the map to 1925.

Then, for fun, below is an aerial view of Summit Canyon from the same collection and so about the same date. Note the white line, the old road, crosses under the train tracks and that to the right, the new highway, 40, is under construction but there's no bridge yet. Look closely and you can see where the old Lincoln Highway crossed the railroad tracks just at the east end of Tunnel 6.



From the DSHS Archives

These also come from Ingrid Wicken's find but they are Donner Summit pictures, not specifically Hutchinson Lodge pictures.

Right is the Donner Summit Bridge under construction. Below is railroad worker housing. With the improvement of technology and increased automation the need for railroad workers on the summit disappeared. The railroad community, once several hundred on Donner Summit, is now gone.

Below is what will become Old Highway 40. Crows Nest is in the background. Right bottom, we get a lot of snow on Donner Summit (average 34' per year) so second floor entries are important.



TRIP OVER THE MOUNTAINS. —

A correspondent of the San Francisco Bulletin, writing from Virginia, January 5th, says : A party, of which I made one, left San Francisco on Monday last, and reached this city last evening between five and six o'clock. We came by the Dutch Flat and Donner Lake route, making the trip in a little less than two days from Sacramento. Traveling in mid-Winter across the Sierra Nevada is not a pleasant business on any route, but it is only fair to admit that from Dutch Flat to Virginia—the trip yesterday — I thought pleasanter than it was last Summer. That portion made over the snow — about forty miles — was to me romantic and rather pleasant than otherwise, particularly that portion from Donner Lake to Dog Mountain. Generally the snow is not deep, except for a few miles on the summit, where it appears to be several feet in depth. The worst portion of the road is that from Newcastle to Dutch Flat— forty miles — which was very heavy, the mud being deep and troublesome in places. Ten hours were consumed in making those forty miles. In fact, the roads below the snow line in California are much worse than they are on the mountains and in this State. Deep mud is a much greater obstacle to travel than snow.

Sacramento Daily Union,
Volume 28, Number 4308,
11 January 1865

Quotes Mark Hopkins

January 1868, railroad work

“At this time it averages 7 to 12 ft of deep & almost as solid as ice.”

“This snow work was commenced as early as March as storms would permit & be continued, by all the men who could be found willing to work themselves blind & their faces peeled & scab[b] as though they had been scalded on the face with scalding water.” Pg 632 The Inside Man (reviewed in the June, '19 Heirloom)

“the snow plough has worked through the Summit Tunnel from Cisco, & working on down grade Eastward,” “Snow deep, very heavy & hard, requiring vast amount of shoveling, at some places six times over from Bench to Bench to get it up to the top of the snow cut & out of the way.” May 27 1868 (Meaning men shoveled snow throwing it up to a higher level where more men shoveled that snow higher still until it was away from the tracks.)

Trip Over Summit to Reno Easily Made Despite Snows

You can make a land cruise to Reno, Virginia City, Carson City, and other colorful Nevada communities nowadays with a casualness characteristic of the Clipper ship flight to Manila, such is the efficiency of California's road patrol in the high Sierra and such is the excellence of the highway. A Chevrolet party demonstrated this fact recently when a 1936 Master De Luxe town sedan made the trip on a minute's notice and breezed right through a snowstorm on “the hump” that would do credit to Chicago's iciest blows. The road were right. The supervision was right. The motorists, therefore, moved along at slightly less than highway speeds and negotiated the run with peace of mind.

Ordinarily the trip from Eastbay [sic] cities to Reno requires seven hours if the Golden Rule of the highway is observed. On this encounter with flying flakes, only one hour was added to the time. That fact is worth noting, you motorists who have “thought about” a trip to the snow many times, but have never enjoyed this truly great sport jaunt that awaits the taking practically in our own backyard.

From Auburn eastward, the beautiful scroller of the snow king serves up its visual treat. Sparingly, at first, and then with increasing lavishness as you near the crest at summit and drop down the winding all-year highway to Donner Lake and beyond to Truckee. On the mountainsides are healthy persons cavorting in snow clothes. Skies are powder blue above the rich green of the pines. White carpets have been draped over meadow and rock and tree branches. The crispness in the air is a tonic.

Then it's on to Reno and Virginia City. Virginia City is no longer a ghost town (in 1936) of the “romantic west...” People were working the mines and families had moved in. It's a nice place to visit where “Mark Train fabricated... whoppers,” the graveyard, schoolhouses, etc. so you can partake of the “roaring times of the 1880's.” We won't spend time on that given that if you get to Donner Summit, why would you want to go further?

Oakland Tribune January 5, 1936

HARTFORD PICTURE CO. COMING TO TRUCKEE

This City Will Be Headquarters for a Period of Two Months

Truckee will soon be the headquarters for the David M. Hartford Motion Picture company of Los Angeles. This fact was established when Joseph Montrose, representative of the company, returned south to report favorably on the various locations inspected.

That this will mean much to Truckee is evinced by the fact that over 50 people will be added to the town's population for a period extending over six weeks. Over 180 horses, and a large number of Alaskan dogs will be required in various scenes.

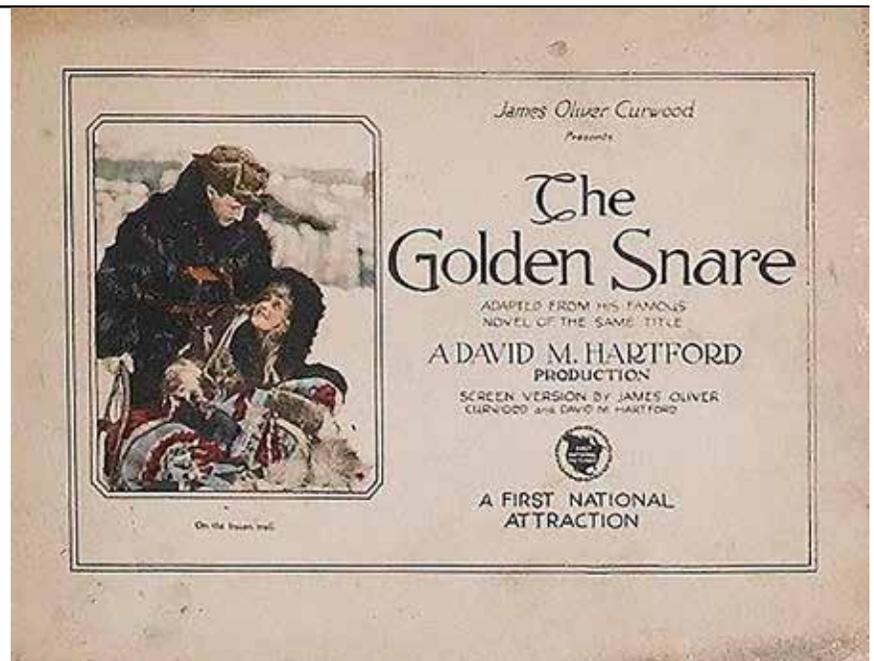
Soda Springs will be the location used in the production of "The Golden Snare," a story by James Oliver Curwood. The scene of the story is supposed to be laid in Alaska, and a stretch of valley three miles long, surrounded by mountains is required. Such a spot has been found at Soda Springs near Lake Van Norden.

Several men are there at present building a stockade to accommodate the animals required in the picture.

The producers planned to film this picture in Colorado, but were forced to change their plans on account of there being insufficient snow there.

There is at present three to four feet at Soda Springs, and about seven feet at Summit.

Truckee Republican January 13, 1921
Headline as printed in the paper.



**Filmed on Donner Summit
- if only we could find a
copy of the movie.**

"The Golden Snare" - plot summary
James Oliver CURWOOD (1878 - 1927)

With but two years of service in the RCMP Philip Raine finds himself somewhat unwillingly on the trail of Bram Johnson, wanted for murder and a wild, untamed and savage man who commands a pack of wolves as his brethren. But most peculiar of all is the snare which Bram had had in his possession and had somehow lost. It was a golden snare intricately woven out of the finest, most delicate flaxen hair of a woman. But what could possibly be the relationship between this half-human murderer and a woman who could have borne a crown of such beauty and elegance? The mystery of Bram Johnson and his wolves and the golden snare becomes one which Raine feels compelled to unravel even as he pursues the wild man and his pack among his own territory of the Canadian barren lands.

Summary by Roger Melin found in various places on the internet

The Golden Snare is a book too, published in 1921. It's 112 pages long by James Oliver Curwood. A paperback version goes for \$20 on Amazon.



The movie was filmed on Donner Summit. In order for the film crew to be able to return to Truckee after each day's shoot, the Southern Pacific cut a hole in a snowshed to make a temporary railroad station. They named the station, Hartford, in honor of the movie's director. (Southern Pacific Bulletin December, 1922) According to the Truckee Republican (February 10, 1921) a special phone was installed in Soda Springs for the movie company.

Having a Good Time.—

Virginia Union of January 25th says : From one who has just got through on the Dutch Flat route learn that quite a party of our citizens are snow bound at Policy's Station (probably Pollards Station at Donner Lake) "and are having a jolly good time of it, as all of the delicacies of the season have accumulated there. Owing to the stoppage of many freight wagons there is no doubt but what the unfortunates who are thus delayed are having a grand and glorious time of it amid the snow-peaks of the wild Sierras.

Sacramento Daily Union,
Volume 30, Number 4634,
29 January 1866

Book Review

Emigrant Trails The Long Road to California (“Revised and Enlarged”)

Marshall Fey 2019 224 pages large format

One day the mail contained a happy surprise, a copy of Emigrant Trails by Marshall Fey. We first reviewed this book in our April, '11 Heirloom, but that was the old version. This one is “revised and enlarged.” We thought that since it’s a new edition, since the original is so good, and since our Heirloom circulation is now over 900 (actually 907), we ought to take another look. There are a lot of people who did not see that first review.

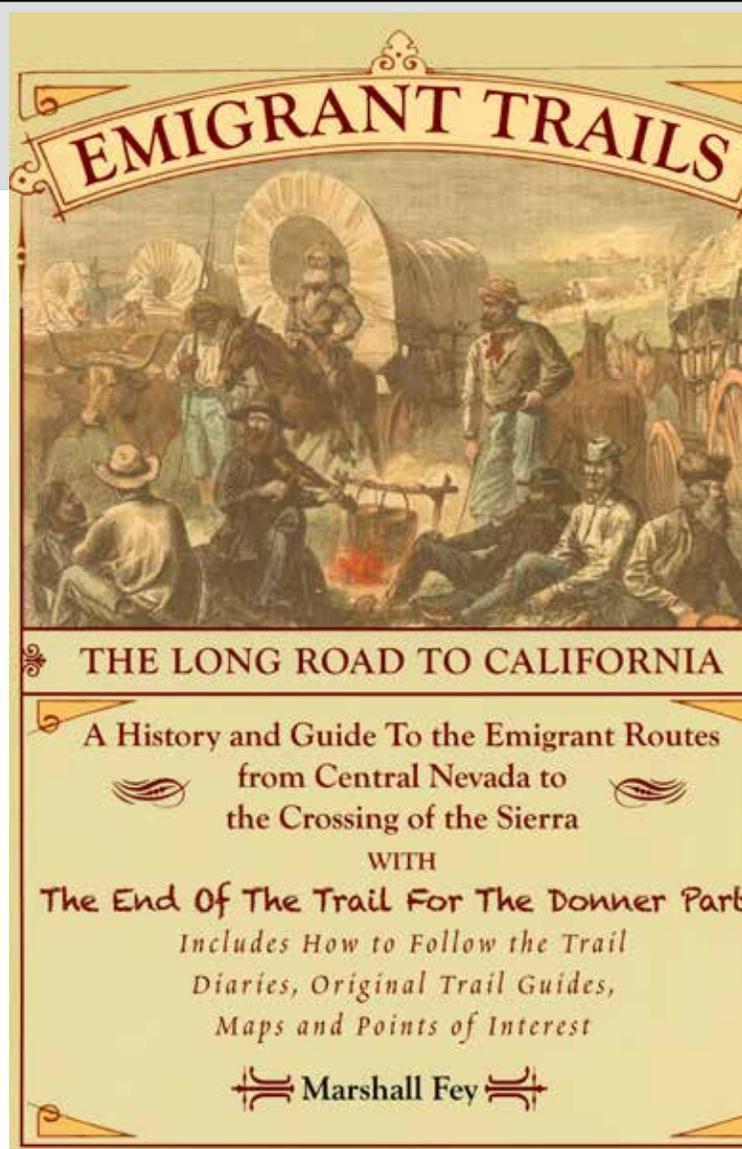
Rereading years later – even though I know the history – the book is an enjoyable experience because it moves beyond the theoretical or abstract facts of the emigrants’ crossing and personalizes the story. The quotes, the main strength of the book, are so evocative. Fey has put an amazing amount of work into the research of various aspects of the emigrant experience, and ferreting out the various emigrant routes.

This new edition is just like the old edition and as we said in April, '11, “Emigrant Trails is a must for any history buff especially one with an interest in the emigrant wagon trains that helped populate and build California. For those with an interest in Donner Summit, parts are especially interesting.” That all is still true and what makes it all the more true are the many many pictures and illustrations (with new and better ones substituted for some of those in the last edition), maps, emigrant quotes, asides, essays, primary sources, and background information.

This is a non-traditional history book because it’s really an eclectic collection of fascinating information rather than pages of prose. There are excerpts from 19th Century trail guides in case you want to do the trip across the continent. There are maps so you can hike portions of the trails with detailed instructions for how to get to those portions. There are instructions for finding Emigrant Trail markers so you can visit trail remnants and consider the emigrant crossing almost first hand. There are even some hints for bicyclists. There are lots of interesting details like the emigrants feeding the oxen the straw from their mattresses to “keep the poor things from starving for a few hours...”

Towards the end of the book we get close to home and Donner Summit. Here Fey covers our local emigrant routes on the summit, at the State Park, and at Alder Cr. Here too are the maps, pictures, and interesting tidbits of information.

The new edition adds twelve pages of information and essays about the history of Emigrant Trail marking. Fey says in an email, “The object of the book was to save the legacy of the pioneer marking program and also save the early established trails: Stephens Pass, Coldstream Pass and the trail from Verdi to Dog Valley.” This section is interesting to trail buffs, those who like going out to search for trail remnants, but it’s also interesting to the average reader interested in the emigrant experience. It highlights the huge community effort to mark the Emigrant Trail in Nevada and then traces the demise of the Nevada Emigrant Trail Marking Committee (NETMC) and its replacement by Trails West. That leads to conflict as Trails West, in the late 20th Century, began to move and replace NETMC trail markers. Here Fey describes a series of errors made by Trails West which



Evocative quotes

"...the scenes and the occurrences in the Desert even transcended the others in melancholy and horror, the whole line being marked with putrid carcasses and deserted wagons while the air was filled with the moans of the dying, the wails of the suffering and the wild screams of the maniac."

John Banks, 1949

"...here are hundreds lamenting their anticipated death, and suffering on the burning plain. Expect to find the worst desert you ever saw and then find it worse than you expected."

John Wood, 1850

"All along the desert from the very start, even the waysides was strewn with the dead bodies of oxen, mules and horses and the stench was horrible...."

Bennett C. Clark 1849

"Morning comes, and the light of day presents a scene more horrid than the rout of a defeated army; dead stock line the roads, wagons, rifles, tents, clothes, everything but food may be found scattered along the road. The desert!

You must see it and feel it in an August day, when legions have crossed it before you, to realize it in all its horrors. But heaven save you from this experience." [sic]

Eleaszer Ingalls 1850

And closer to home

"Soon after starting this morning we came to the Cannibal Cabins of the Donner Party, as it was called.... I stopped awhile to view this sad memorial to one of the most horrible occurrences in life, one that has no parallel in history... There were scattered about in the fernal adobe, piles of rags and rubbish, skulls and bones, some of them undoubtedly once part of the human form devine, for in their cannibal feast these ghouls were not particular to bury what remained. Around it were stumps from ten to twenty feet high that were haggled off at the snow line by the suffering denizens below." [sic]

Ansell McCall 1849

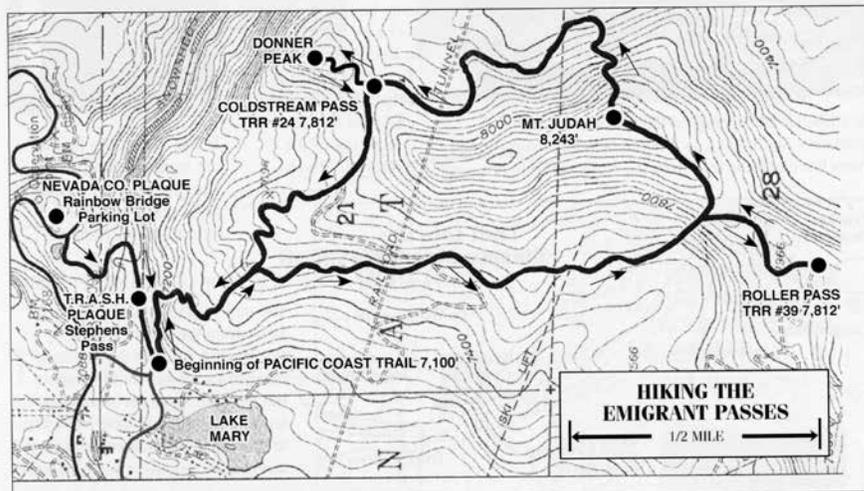


Hiking the Three Sierra Nevada Passes

Perhaps the best way to experience the challenges faced by wagon trains crossing the Sierra, is to walk the trails. As you trudge up the mountains, remember the emigrants had been on the trail for almost five months; the Stephens-Townsend-Murphy party six

months, and had traveled approximately 1,700 miles when they reached the passes. The Sierra hikes are among the best available along the entire overland emigrant road.

The Ultimate Hike: Steven's Pass, Roller Pass, Coldstream Pass and Donner Peak



moved to a lawsuit and which was won by the traditional view of the Emigrant Trail route in various places. Apparently that controversy is long past with the departure of those of the opposite views.

At the end of the new edition there is an essay, "The Ox – Symbol of Western Settlement." This is a paean to the oxen that pulled the emigrants across the continent, "...these patient animals are the heroes of the emigrant era of 1849-1868." I haven't seen anyone celebrating the oxen before but the accolades are well deserved.

Finally, the last page has a bio of Marshall Fey along with a picture of him exploring the Emigrant Trail. That page is a nice addition.

For more about the book's first edition see our April, '11 [Heirloom](#). There you will find more interesting little tidbits that will make you want to get a copy of the book.

For an autographed copy of Emigrant Trails Send \$19.95 plus \$7.00 shipping (Priority Mail) to Marshall Fey, 2925 West Moana Lane Reno, NV 89509

Note:

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

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

You might even want to do a review for us.

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

William Todd 1845

Emigrant Quotes

Donner Summit

"...a long time to go two miles over rough, new made road... over the rough rocks, in some places, and so smooth in others, that the oxen would slip and fall on their knees; the blood from their feet and knees staining the rocks they passed over. Mother and I walked, (we were so sorry for the poor, faithful oxen) all those two miles – all our clothing being packed on the horses' backs. It was a trying time – men swearing at their teams, and beating them most cruelly, all along the rugged way."

Sarah Ide 1845



December 27, 1935

Murder at Rainbow Tavern from page 20

Jones, Christianson and others had been playing dice and Christianson and Jones placed a number of side bets amounting to about \$10 (or \$40 depending on the newspaper). They began to argue. Jones, who was a hot tempered guy left the room in a rage and picked up a nearby rifle, then returned and shot Christianson from the doorway. News was that sheriff's personnel were searching every road but that the new snow was making the search hard. Christianson died on the couch upstairs.

The search continued all night "through a raging snow storm" and "culminated" in the morning with Jones' arrest by a posse at a friend's cabin only 600 yards from Rainbow Tavern (or 2 miles depending on the newspaper). Had he not found refuge he'd probably have frozen in the storm. Herstel Jones, who owned the Rainbow Tavern and was no relation to Tony Jones, said Jones, the killer, had gotten the rifle used in the murder from Jones', the Rainbow Tavern owner, room (or "borrowed it from a guest," depending on the newspaper).

When the sheriff's' deputies, following Jones' footprints (or not, depending on the newspaper) got to the cabin where he was hiding they kicked in the door. Jones said, "You got the drop on me or I'd have shot you. If I had snowshoes, you would have never caught me."

Rainbow Tavern had just been enlarged and had had a grand opening the week before. It was a "rendezvous for mountain visits, particularly from the San Francisco area." Christianson had some kind of financial interest in Rainbow Tavern.

The coroner's jury found that Jones was responsible for the death of Christianson. Jones claimed his mind was a blank about the affair.

Odds & Ends on Donner Summit



Here's an "Odd & End" that only just appeared. The Land Trust is notching the Van Norden Dam so that no water can ever be impounded there. As they dug through the sides of the 1976 notch that allowed a lake of about 180 acre feet, portions of an older dam appeared. The redwood timbers have been buried since perhaps 1915 or maybe even earlier since there were various iterations of the dam since at least 1874 (see the picture at the bottom). The timbers were held to each other with square nails, left. The pieces of wood are redwood fragments just to prove the veracity of our reporting.

For more on the history of the dam see the May and June, '13 [Heirlooms](#) and then April, '17. You can also look for the Van Norden exhibits on the exhibits page of our website.



DONNER SUMMIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY
 Donner Summit Historical Society.org

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

DATE _____

NAME(S) _____

_____ New Membership

MAILING ADDRESS _____

_____ Renewing Membership

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

_____ Individual Membership - \$30

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

_____ Family Membership - \$50

_____ Friend Membership - \$100

_____ Sponsor - \$250

_____ Patron - \$500

_____ Benefactor - \$1000

_____ Business - \$250

_____ Business Sponsor - \$1000

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

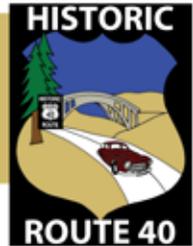
If you would like monthly newsletter announcements, please write your email address below VERY neatly.



If one really wanted to date the dam that appeared in the excavation on the previous page, one could take the tree rings in redwood timber above and match them to data bases of tree rings. The match would show when the tree, from which the timber was harvested, was cut down. Good as we are at the DSHS we don't have this capability so we include the tree rings here thinking maybe a reader has access to a relevant database of tree rings.

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, 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

Pages 21 and 22 here are 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 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.