



Graphic by George Lamson. The building is the Donner Summit weather station (see pages 5-7). The figures, center top are a rare capture of Santa Claus and his reindeer captured in 2023.

# The Donner Summit Heirloom



*History and stories of the Donner Summit Historical Society and the most historically significant square mile in California.* **December 2024 issue #196**



In our May and June, '24 Heirloom issues we included many quotes about spectacular Donner Summit. It's not only the most historically significant square mile in California but it's scenery is spectacular. People have been celebrating it for thousands of years. I don't remember how or why I highlighted the quote below but here it is. This page is a lead in to the "Painting in Prose in 1870" article in this issue (see page 15). Regarding the quote below, Dan Rosen's Indifferent Stars Above was reviewed in our February, '11 Heirloom. The review is also on the book review pages of our website.

#### Donner Lake

"I was frankly stunned by the beauty of the place – the blue lake below me was just turning to violet in the early-evening light; the snowy peaks surrounding it were tinted gold and pink in the alpenglow. Taking in the view, I recalled how Mary Ann Graves had stood near this same spot and, even though she was embarked on a life-and-death endeavor, paused to marvel at the sight of so much grandeur encapsulated in one vista."

# Story Locations in this Issue

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## DONNER SUMMIT



## Finding Your Way Through Donner Summit History

We're closing in on two hundred issues of the Heirloom: thousands of pages, thousands of pictures, and hundreds of subjects. You've probably begun to realize that you cannot keep all the history in your head. Even if you remember it all, retrieval is difficult.

Fortunately one of the choices we made back at the birth of the DSHS was to index all our Heirloom articles and pictures. We've diligently kept up the indices so that they are many pages long, full of alphabetized titles and subjects. Go to our website and to any of the Heirloom pages (one for each year) and you'll find links to the Heirloom indices.

One of the strengths of the DSHS is the incomparable historical photograph collection. The collection is thousands of pictures and again the sheer number makes finding anything in particular, difficult. Avoid the long URL by going to our website and clicking on the "photographs" link and then to the "historic photo collection link." A third link, to the Flickr URL will take you to those thousands of searchable historical photographs of Donner Summit. Have fun.

Find us on the the DSHS YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJenAxPCb47Y14agmVGI-zA>  
Find us on FaceBook where we place a new historical picture daily.

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Find us on 

 YouTube



# Look for the Details in Old Photographs

## SIERRA NEVADA MOUNTAINS.

Chuck Spinks wrote an application to make Tunnel 6 a National History Civil Engineers Landmark for the American Society of Civil Engineers, Sacramento Section. This was in April, 2024.

His beautiful application included many pictures which he'd carefully examined, discovering details not "seen" before by amateur viewers of photographs. Two of the pictures he included are on this and the next page.

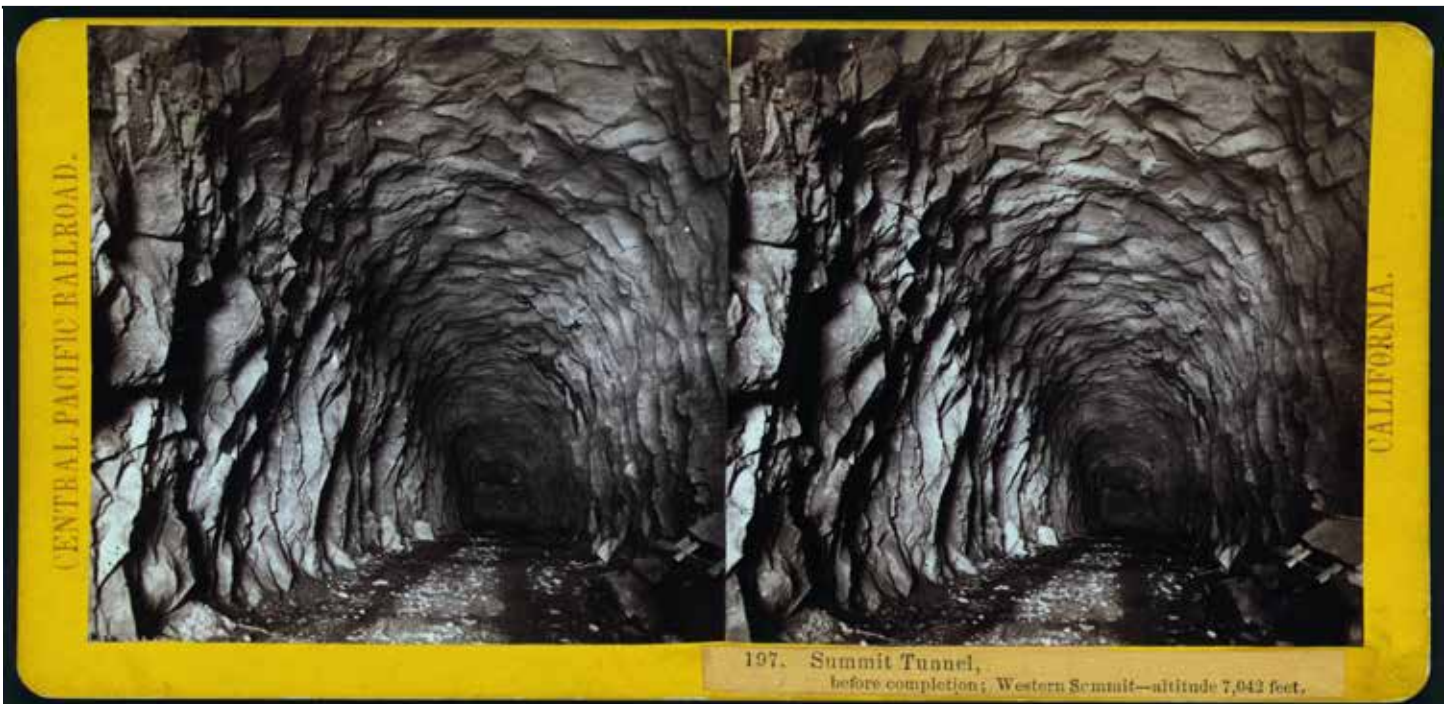
First is Alfred A. Hart's #200, "Bluff and Snow Bank in Donner Pass, Western Summit, Altitude 1,092 feet." Obviously, Mr. Hart's altimeter was malfunctioning that day by more than six thousand feet. The photograph is a view looking west with Donner Peak on the left. Donner Lake is one thousand feet lower and behind Mr. Hart. The Dutch Flat Road is in the foreground turning to go uphill to the top of the pass. It's a nice detail of some wagons and late season snow. Surprisingly to those of us who don't examine as well as Mr. Spinks does, look at the lower left. People in the past were just like us, building a snowman for a lark in the detail below. Next to the snowman appears to be a boy.



200. Bluff and Snow Bank in Donner Pass,  
Western Summit. Altitude 1,092 feet.







Mr. Spinks' detail search was not done with the picture on page one. Later in the application we come across Alfred A. Hart #197 "Summit Tunnel before completion; Western Summit - altitude 7,042". The elevation is correct for this photo.

Here we have detail about the building of Tunnel 6, the longest of the transcontinental's Sierra tunnels. People always ask how the tunnel was bored. Look carefully. The top picture is the original stereograph but our graphics dept. has highlighted the tunnel work face.

The Chinese railroad workers didn't just attack all of any of the four faces of Tunnel 6 that they were working on; they worked in stages. Imagine the tunnel, square at the bottom and arched at the top. The Chinese blasted out the arched top and half the height. Later they came back and excavated the bottoms. Here, peering into the dark and enlarging the work face, we can see the Chinese railroad workers have drilled into what would become the top of the tunnel and blasted out the rock leaving the arched upper section.. Once they had the top done they went to work on the bottom drilling down and blasting out that rock. Above you can see the bottom rock is still in place ready to be drilled, blasted and excavated. Bottom work went faster than top work. We can imagine the reason was that top work meant holding the drill bit horizontally and pounding with the sledge hammers to the wall in front of the workers. Bottom work meant holding the drill upright and hammering down on the floor.



The moral, after examining the page three and four photos, is look at the fun you can have looking for detail in historic photos.

# From the DSHS Archives

These are not really from the DSHS archives. They were found by Heidi Sproat of the Truckee Donner Historical Society. She thought we might like to have some photographs of the Donner Summit weather station from an atypical view.

The photos come from the collection that contains the papers, notebooks, and photographs of James Edward Church, who was a professor of Classics at the University of Nevada, Reno, and the man known as the "father of snow science." Church developed the Mt. Rose snow sampler to accurately measure the water content of snow. In 1935, Congress created the Federal-States Co-Operative Snow Survey based on Church's method; it continues to be used today.

Mr. Church established the snowlab in Soda Springs.

Below is a close up of the weather station with no date. The one to the right is dated February 6, 1945.

On the next pages we have the more traditional views, contemporary views, and the story of the weather station.





# The Donner Summit Weather Station

The first wagon trains, the first transcontinental railroad, and the first transcontinental highway crossed Donner Summit. So did the first transcontinental airway. That may sound silly since one would think that airplanes could go anywhere, not needing a prescribed land route.

When airplanes were new, pilots flew by the "seat of their pants" flying only when they could see. Pilots wanted to fly all the time though, and people wanted airmail, so the Federal Government developed airways and entrepreneurs improved airplanes.

The first transcontinental airway went right over Donner Summit. The pictures to the right are the traditional views we have of the weather station.

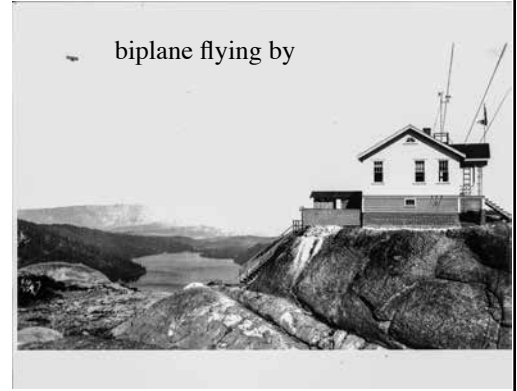
The 1920's saw great improvement in flying. Planes began to carry radios (only receivers were required initially) and guidance devices. Radio and lighted beacons were set up to guide pilots and emergency landing strips were placed at regular intervals.

In the photograph below, on top of Signal Hill (the top of Donner Ski Ranch) there is still a beacon (the one on the right) that rotated showing pilots the summit. Below the beacon were two lights oriented east-west in the direction of the official airway. Above to the right was airway station #15 with "SF - SL 15" painted on one side of the roof and "Donner" on the other. Pilots could know they were in the place to be on route over Donner Summit and going towards San Francisco or Salt Lake City.

Airway stations were placed at regular intervals all the way across the country along the transcontinental route. They provided up to the minute weather information, tracked traffic and provided communication.

The station on Donner Summit was commissioned in 1931. It was decommissioned in 1952 when planes moved to more advanced technology, more powerful radio beacons, and flew higher, making the beacons irrelevant.

The Donner station was not a preferred assignment due to the winter isolation of 40 foot snowfalls. Personnel had to travel miles over the snow to get to the train station so they could go to Truckee for mail or supplies. More hardy operators skied the whole way down to



Look at the view Marie Fitzpatrick had at the weather station.



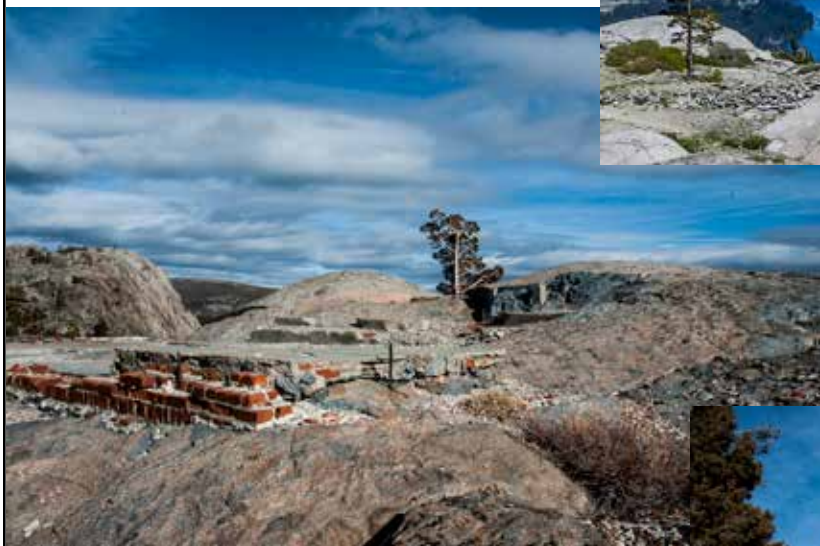
Left, the garage on Highway 40 below the weather station. It completely collapsed in 2022.

# The Donner Summit Weather Station Contemporary Views

Right: the view from the knoll on which the weather station sat until it was razed in 1952. Below are remnants of the foundation.



Look closely below and you'll see the stanchions that held the rope to help workers and visitors up the granite slabs to the weather station.



The weather on Donner Summit can be extreme. Below, left, is an example of the many bolts drilled into the granite. Some were used to affix the cables that went over the roof of the weather station to keep it from blowing away.



weather station remnants in the upper left.



# From the DSHS Archives

The pictures on this and the next page are also not from the Archives of the DSHS. They are from the California State Archives in Sacramento. Years ago we had done research there looking for anything related to Donner Summit. One set we did not follow up on was this collection of pictures (which included some others of Serene Lakes that were in their newsletter in October). The pictures were in a collection put together by William M. McCarthy (archives id 96-07-08 CO5261). The whole collection consisted of pictures taken during his travels around California in the 1920's. Most are irrelevant to Donner Summit although they are interesting slices of life, for example how people camped in the 20's. A few were of Donner Summit in general and those are here. A subset was of Serene Lakes "when the state was considering it for a State park." That never happened of course, just like a lot of other ideas that never came to fruition such as the proposal for the Serene Lakes valley to be San Francisco's water supply (prior to the Hetch Hetchy project).

Right: Donner Lake from the summit.

Below: Summit Hotel. Note on the right hand side where the elevated passage goes to the two story outhouse. The left side is snowsheds as is the connection between the sheds and the front door of the hotel. To read more about the hotel see our article in- dex on our [Heirloom](#) pages on our website.



DONNER LAKE.



SUMMIT HOTEL ON THE TRUCKEE HIGHWAY

Below: This picture was on the pages with pictures of Serene Lakes and appears to be where the old Serene Lakes Lodge would be built in twenty years. .



GROUNDS AT DONNER LAKE RESORT

Left: Donner Lake Camp Donner Pk. in the background. The Donner Lake Camp sat right at the west end beach of Donner Lake.



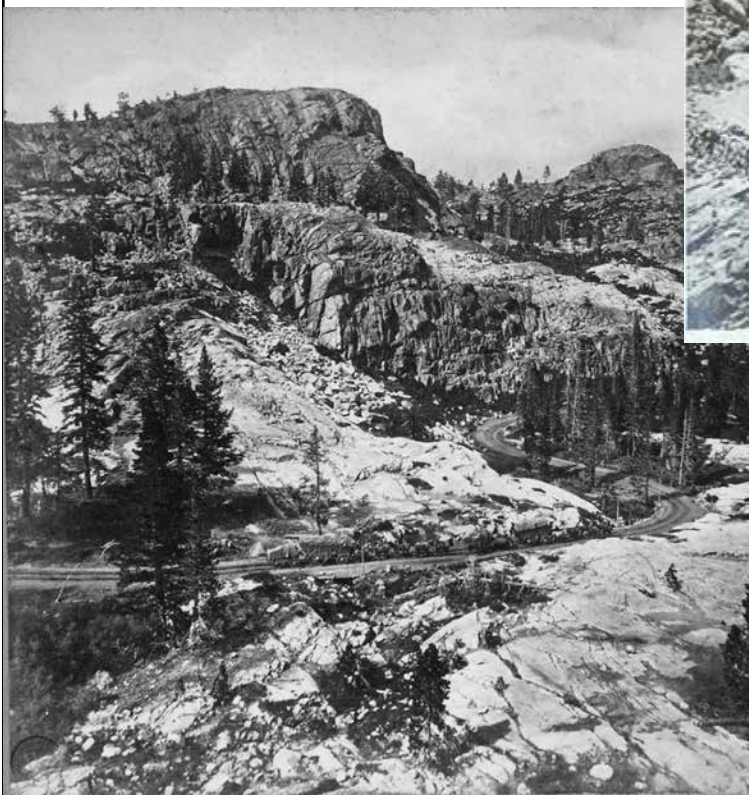
Mr. McCarthy must have been enamored with Donner Summit, which shows his good taste. He took relatively a lot of photos of the summit. Right is the Lincoln Highway just below the underpass. Note that it's a narrow road and that there is not yet any Highway 40 on the right side that will lead to the Donner Summit Bridge in 1926.



Left: the Lincoln Highway almost at the top. Donner Pk. is to the left.



Left and Above: the Lincoln Highway below the summit. In the left picture Stephens Pk. and Stewart Pk. are in the background. This picture was in the McCarthy collection but was not taken by him. It's much earlier. That's the Dutch Flat Rd. in the foreground and you can see some freight wagons on it. We also found this photograph in the Placer County Archives, "Teaming down the Summit on the Donner Lake & Dutch Flat Wagon Rd. #575." It was last in the [Heirloom](#) on page 13 of the January, '23 issue with a closeup of the wagons.



# Book Review

## The Complete Official Guide to the Lincoln Highway

Lincoln Highway Association 1915 158 pages

It's fun to take a look at old books. They supply slices of life in the past, in this case, 1915.

Last month we reviewed the 1924 guide to the Lincoln Highway. It was full of details, pictures, advice, and ads making it easy to cross the country by automobile in 1924. In 1915 it was a little different. That was only two years after the 1913 inauguration of the Lincoln Highway. The 1915 road guide was a lot slimmer than it would be in 1924. The Lincoln Highway people were just getting started.

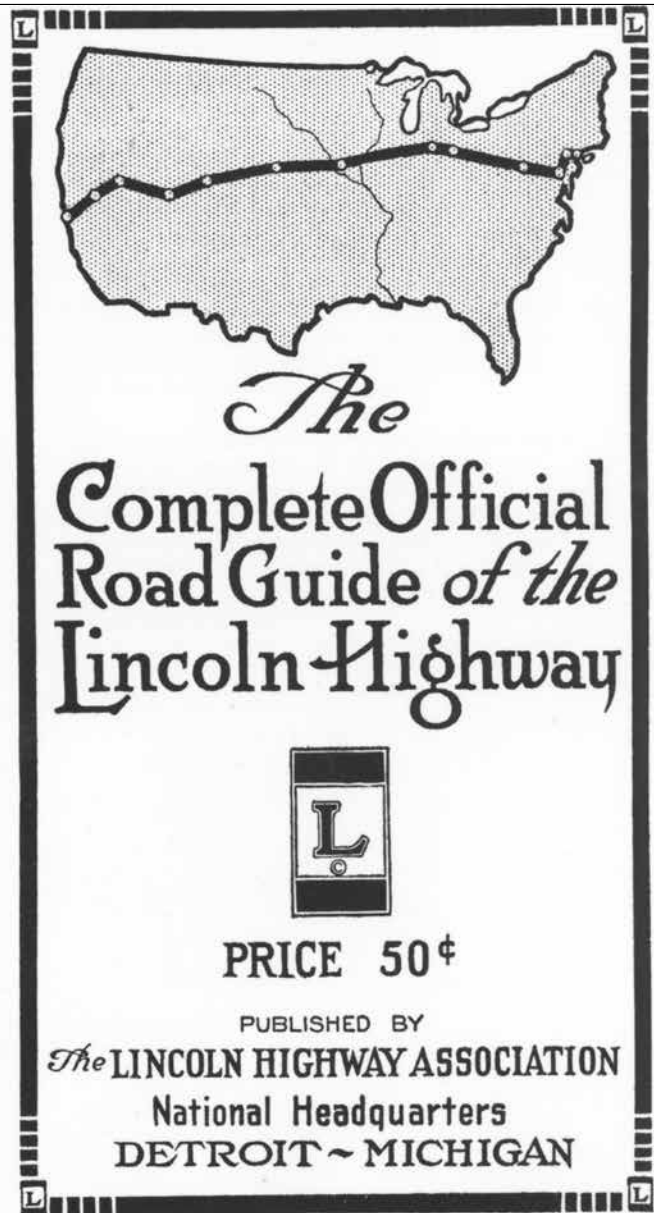
If you want your very own copy of the 1915 guide it's available at the Lincoln Highway Trading Post for only \$16.45, including shipping. It might be useful for any cross-country trips you may have planned. It includes many ads for things you might need on your trip, some of which you can find here.

The guide begins with hints to transcontinental tourists. The greatest assets to have in planning and taking the cross-country trip are common sense and efficient equipment. For a trip of 3384 miles\* across the continent with four people, the cost would be about \$300. It would take about nineteen days and travelers would be camping out and doing their own cooking. The trip would mean driving ten hours per day averaging about eighteen miles per hour.\*\* There is specific advice such as how to get out of a mud hole and to put your shoes under your sleeping bag. There is also puzzling advice, "If the feet get sore, rub the inside of the stockings with soap."

There is history, listings of all numbers of businesses one can expect on the trip, and hotel and meal costs. In Nevada for example on the 425 miles of Lincoln Highway in that state, there were twelve hotels and twenty-nine other lodgings and food places.

Given fair weather, and with the exercise of reasonable care and caution in your preparation for the tour, in the driving of your car, and in providing yourself with suitable equipment, provisions, water, gas and oil, whenever the opportunity offers or the need arises, your trip across the Lincoln Highway should be neither perilous nor unduly hazardous.

There were another twenty-four places where one could get food but not lodging. Water was available at forty-one places. There were nine garages for repairs. There were seven tire stations for replacing tires, twenty-four gas stations, twenty-one oil stations, twenty-four telephone stations, and sixteen telegraph stations along with thirty-four "good camp sites." This is all important information. There were also a couple of articles reiterating the



\*By 1924 the total mileage across the country by Lincoln Highway was 3142 due to re-alignments of the route

\*\*For reference the 1924 guide book said it would still take twenty to thirty days driving seven hours per day and averaging eighteen miles per hour.



Of course a journey for the Atlantic to the Pacific by motor car is still something of a sporting trip, and one must expect and put up cheerfully with some unpleasantness..."

need for common sense and good equipment. There's also a list of Lincoln Highway facts.

By page 139 we've gotten to Truckee with 252 miles left to go to reach San Francisco. The population was 1,600 (in 2022 it was 16,850). There were various hotels. A garage for the night was fifty cents. Gas was 25 cents, oil 90 cents. The route was well marked. There were two railroads, forty-two general businesses, a newspaper, two public schools, electric lights and a water works. There were nine privately owned automobiles.

Donner Summit was given short shrift. There were two hotels accommodating ninety people. Summit House was \$2.00 a night. The Soda Springs Hotel was also two dollars with gas at 30 cents and oil at \$1.00. The route was also well marked crossing the summit. There was also an express company with a telegraph. The hotel in Soda Springs is puzzling since the Soda Springs Hotel was not built until 1927.

In the end the book is mostly advice encouraging readers to take the transcontinental trip on the Lincoln Highway.

Here we have a special bonus for reading this far. We have a ticket (below) to the 1915 Panama Pacific Exposition in San Francisco. It was left over from a booklet of tickets my grandmother and her friend had. Enjoy the visit.

After the general information the book goes into the guide for traveling from New York to California. One interesting aside is that the book suggests that after the trip west to see the Panama Pacific Exposition one could ship his/her car back east (see the ad on page 12). Apparently the one way trip was enough for almost everyone.



Actual ticket allowing admission to the 1915 Panama Pacific Exhibition in San Francisco. Many 1915 automobile transcontinentalists saw driving across the country to the exhibition as a good adventure. The ticket here belonged to the editor's grandmother and was, with no explanation, not used along with some others. Since it was unused it ought to still be valid.

**"See America"  
IN AUTOMOBILE**

Why not go to the Exposition by auto over the  
Lincoln Highway?

Parties leave Boston May 31, June 28, July 26, outward by auto, returning by rail. Eastbound auto parties leave San Francisco July 26, August 23, September 20. Join anywhere en route.

Large, roomy STUDEBAKER SIXES specially equipped

**H. W. DUNNING & CO., 14 Beacon St., Boston, Mass.**  
(See also page 141)

Stop at the next

**BOWSER**  
ESTABLISHED 1888

**Lincoln Highway  
Sentry**



and you will get gasoline just as fresh, full of power, life and "kick" as it was when emptied into the tank. A Bowser Outfit keeps the "gas" in gasoline. And it will be filtered free of dirt, grit and water.

**You'll Find Bowers Everywhere**

When you leave the Lincoln Highway to drive through the country by-roads or on the boulevards of the city, in villages, or cross road hamlets, you'll see Bowser "Red Sentry" Service Stations or Bowser Indoor Pumps.

**They're Good Places to Stop and Fill Up the Car**

All Prices, Sizes and Styles for your home garage. You wouldn't be without a Bowser System for gasoline and oils if you actually knew what they would save you each month in fuel efficiency. If you only realized the convenience of having gasoline right on tap, ready when you want it, you would appreciate what Bowser Service stands for. Isn't it about time you found out? You'll sell yourself in ten minutes when you see it. An inquiry doesn't obligate you. Write today for Free Literature and full information. Our tank specialist will gladly advise with you without charge.

**S. F. BOWSER & CO., Inc.**  
Engineers, Manufacturers and Original Patents  
Oil Handling Devices

242 Thomas St.  
FORT WAYNE  
INDIANA  
U. S. A.

Sales Offices in all  
Centers and  
Representatives  
Everywhere

LOOK FOR THE  
ON THE ROAD  
RED SENTRY

WHEN AT HOME  
USE  
A  
BOWSER

I cannot imagine a more enriching American trip for my country-women than this tour across the continent.... If you would love to see the noble pine forest and lofty peaks of the high Sierras, .... Then take the Lincoln Highway tour.



View From Seat

## Gauge vs. Guess

Do not allow your trip across the Lincoln Highway to be spoiled by a burned out bearing or a scored cylinder.

In past, you have perhaps trusted to "guess" to tell you when your radiator water is low; when your oil supply is insufficient; when a fan belt breaks, etc., but a **BOYCE MOTO-METER** will warn you miles in advance of these conditions, allowing you plenty of time to find water, or remedy whatever difficulty exists.

The **BOYCE MOTO-METER** radiator heat gauge will absolutely prevent motor damage; it will enable you to make the finest carburetor adjustments in any altitude, and, above all, it will constantly give you that wonderful sense of security that can be had only when you are positive that everything beneath the hood is in perfect working order.

Used by 17 out of 20 entrants in the great Coast-to-Coast tour by the Indiana Automobile Manufacturers; used as factory equipment by Mercer; used as factory equipment on all Packard trucks, and as optional equipment on all Packard touring cars.

Be guided by these men who know. Attach a **MOTO-METER** to your radiator cap in five minutes. Two models, \$5.00 and \$10.00. Latter with special Lincoln Highway Emblem.

**MOTOMETER COMPANY**  
1790 Broadway New York City

## Low Freight Rates On Automobiles Eastbound

**T**HE freight rate on automobiles from Pacific Coast Points to Boston, Philadelphia, New York, etc. (when shipped singly) is \$7.40 per 100 pounds.

The rate to Chicago is \$6.80.

By making up carloads of three or more automobiles, the reduction in the rate is from 25 to 50 per cent.

To give Lincoln Highway tourists the benefit of this lower rate, the Lincoln Highway Association has arranged with the Lawrence Warehouse Company of Oakland, California, to use their facilities for making carload shipments to points in the East at frequent intervals. They have experienced carloaders—will secure a clear receipt from the railroad company and will arrange for delivery to any railroad station in the United States.

Oakland is the Pacific terminal of the Lincoln Highway, is centrally located, and the Lawrence Warehouse Company has an organization to give the best possible service.

They have agencies in San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Diego, Portland, Seattle and Tacoma. These agencies will accept delivery of automobiles for carload shipments. The company also has connections in all distributing centers in the east, and these connections will make deliveries to final destination.

For freight rates and full information wire or write the main office, in Oakland. Kindly give the following information:

Name of car.

When car will be ready for shipment.

City where car will be delivered for shipment.

City to which shipment is to be made.

### Lawrence Warehouse Company

Main Office, 402 Eleventh St., Oakland Cal.  
Long Distance Phones, Lakeside 456 and 457

(130)

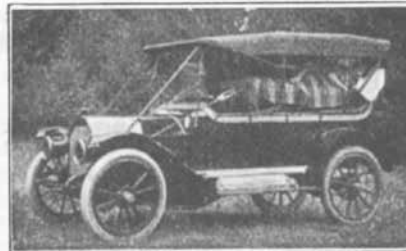
Ads from the 1915 Official guide to the Lincoln Highway

## SLEEP IN YOUR AUTO ON TOUR!

**N**O more hotel bills on your trips! No need even to make the next town. Sleep in your car out in the country's fresh air. Fine! Restful! Awaken full of pep! Get a

### BRADLEY AUTO SLEEPER

**S**AVED hotel-bills pay for it in a week! Enables you to stop where you like. Ideal for touring, camping, fishing or week-end trips. Comfortable! Restful!



SLEEP IN YOUR OWN AUTO PULLMAN

### THE IDEAL WAY TO TAKE AN AUTO TRIP

is to carry a Bradley Auto Sleeper with you. Fits any car. Makes a bed above the seats. Folds to 6 in. x 3 ft. and weighs only 30 lbs. Carries on running board or under seat. Can be set up in 3 to 5 minutes. Simple! No attachments needed on car. No parts to wear. Indestructible. Made with heavily nicked telescopic retention rods and sup-

ports. Folds in sections. Heavily nicked pulleys. Yacht manilla rope. Makes full sized double bed. Needs no mattress. Cannot sag. Tension can be regulated. Can be set up in your boat. Price only \$25.00 complete, F. O. B. Chicago, Ill. Send for full descriptive literature and illustrations.  
**USE THIS COUPON**



## What to take on a cross-country trip

### Car Equipment

- 1 Lincoln Highway Radiator Emblem.
- 1 pair Lincoln Highway Pennants.
- 2 sets Tire Chains.
- 6 extra Cross Chains.
- 1 Sparton Horn.
- 1 set Chain Tightener Springs.
- 1 set Tools.
- 2 Jacks.
- 1 pair Good Cutting Pliers.
- 1 piece Hardwood Board, 1½ in. x 4 ft. x 10 in.
- 2 extra Tire Casings.
- 4 extra Inner Tubes.
- 1 Casing Patch.
- 3 Spark Plugs.
- 8 feet High Tension Cable.
- 8 feet Low Tension Cable.
- 1 extra Valve and Spring, complete.
- 3 Cans Oil, in one gallon cans.
- 1 Axe.
- 1 Shovel (medium size).
- 50 feet Manila Rope.
- 1 small Can Liquid Glue (mending camera, etc.)
- 1 Upper Radiator Connection.
- 1 Lower Radiator Connection.
- 1 set Lamp Bulbs.
- 1 Motometer.

### Camp Equipment

- 1 10-gal. Milk Can with stay straps  
(for water, west of Omaha).
- Canteen, 2 quarts.
- Frying Pan, 10 in.
- 1 Grate for camp fire, 12 in. x 24 in.
- 1 Coffee Pot, 2 quarts.
- 4 Cups, large.
- 4 Pans (deep), 5 in. diameter.
- 4 Knives.
- Forks.
- Teaspoons.
- 2 Cooking Spoons.
- 4 Soup Spoons.
- 1 Dipper.
- 8 Plates, 8 in. diameter.
- 2 Stew Pots (to nest).
- 1 Cooking Fork, 3-prong.
- 1 Carving Knife, butcher type.
- 3 bars Ivory Soap.
- Dish Towels.
- 1 Can Opener.
- 1 Bread Pan (for dish washing).
- 1 Bucket with lid.
- 1 Can for Pepper.
- Patent Egg Carrier (1 dozen).
- Cork Screw.
- 1 Air-Tight Coffee Can, 2 pound.
- 1 Air-Tight Tea Can, ½ pound.

### Personal Equipment Each Man.

- Lincoln Highway Association Membership Card.
- 1 Lincoln Highway Lapel Button.
- 1 Waterproof Sleeping Bag (warm type).
- 1 Waterproof Duffle Bag, 15 in. x 36 in.
- No suit case or satchel should be carried.

- 1 Sleeping Cap (knit silk).
- 1 Pair Light Moccasins.
- 2 pair Khaki (or Duxbac) Riding Trousers.
- 2 Army Officers' Shirts (best quality for warmth). 1 pair Light Weight Tan Shoes.
- 1 pair Heavy Weight Tan Shoes  
(loose enough for heavy socks).
- 2 pair Heavy Wool Socks.
- 2 suits Heavy Wool Underwear.
- 2 suits Light Linen or Cotton Underwear (to wear under the wool or alone don't wear wool next the skin).
- 2 Bandana Neck Kerchiefs.
- 6 Pocket Handkerchiefs.
- 3 pair Medium Weight Socks.
- 1 Teamster's Canvas Coat, slicker and flannel,  
lined and with a high collar.
- 1 pair Canvas Puttees (don't wear leather).
- 1 Rubber Shirt.
- 1 stick Camphor Ice.
- 2 dozen Cathartic Tablets.
- 1 package Gauze.
- 3 rolls Gauze Bandages, 1 ½ in. wide.
- 1 tube Vaseline (for guns and burns).
- 1 Tooth Brush.
- 1 Comb.
- Knife (strong), two or three blades.
- 1 Pocket Compass.
- 1 Safety Razor.
- 1 can Shaving Soap, Powder.
- 1 Shaving Brush.
- 1 Mirror (small).
- Needles and Thread.
- 1 package Bachelor Buttons.
- 1 pair Scissors (small).
- 2 pair Gloves, gauntlet.
- 1 Belt, leather.
- Inexpensive Open Face Watch.
- Rubber Sheet, 6 ft. x 7 ft.
- 1 pair Yellow Goggles.
- 1 pair White Goggles.
- 1 sq. yd. Mosquito Netting.
- 1 Camera.
- 1 Cap.
- 1 Can Tooth Paste.

### Provisions (This list should be with the car

- at all times, west of Omaha, Neb.)
- 1 Slab Best Bacon. 3 cans Peaches.
- 3 cans Pineapple. 3 cans Tomatoes.
- 3 cans Baked Beans. 1 dozen Eggs.
- 4 loaves Bread. 1 sack Salt.
- 1 can Pepper.
- 1 pound Butter (not necessary).
- 2 pounds Rice.
- 10 pounds Potatoes.
- 6 cans Evaporated Milk (small size).
- 1 pound Sugar.
- 1 package Safety Matches (dozen boxes).
- 2 pounds Cracked Wheat.
- 1 pint Pickles.
- 1 box Graham Crackers.
- 2 pounds Coffee (ground).
- ½ pound Tea.
- 1 roll Surgeons' Plaster, 1 in. wide, 5 yards (for sealing cans etc.).
- 3 cans Corn.
- Fresh Fruit, often as possible.

Advice for crossing the country by automobile

Don't wear wool next to the skin. Wear linen or cotton underneath. That's just common sense.

Don't wait until the gasoline is almost gone before looking for more.

Don't allow the water can to be anything but full.

Don't allow the car to be without food at any time. That's different from the gasoline. This is people food. Traveling can be hungry.

Don't fail to have warm clothing.

Don't carry loaded firearms no matter what the NRA says. We must admit the last part of that is not 1914 advice but the staff at the Heirloom has to have some fun.

Don't fail to put out your campfire.

Don't forget the yellow goggles.

Don't forget camphor ice.

Don't ford water without first wading through it. You'll dry off soon enough.

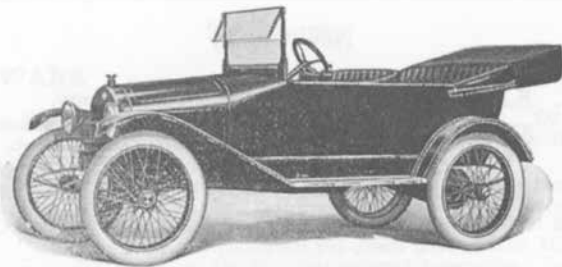
Don't drive more than twenty five miles an hour. Things will break.

Don't carry your good clothes. Ship them ahead.

Don't wear leather puttees – use canvas.

Don't drink alkali water.

Don't wear new shoes.



# METZ

## “TWENTY-FIVE” The Quality Car

**\$600 Touring Model, Equipped Complete, Including Electric Starter and Electric Lights**

Here is a car that offers you everything obtainable in the way of luxurious motoring, and at a cost that you can easily afford. Strictly up to date, both in design and equipment, it embodies all the leading features found in other high grade cars, and, in addition to these, certain exclusive advantages which they do not possess.

Regular equipment includes Gray & Davis electric system, rain-vision windshield, instant one-man top, 32-inch wheels, 3½-inch Goodrich clincher tires, full elliptic springs, 25 h. p. water-cooled motor, Bosch magneto, Hyatt roller bearings, speedometer, built-in gasoline gauge, signal horn, etc.

### Metz Roadster

This is the car that won the last Glidden Tour, the three Metz cars that participated in that eight-day contest being the ONLY cars in the tour that came through with perfect scores. 22 H. P. motor, Bosch magneto, Prest-O-Lite tank, rain-vision windshield, 30-inch wheels, 3-inch Goodrich clincher tires, standard equipment throughout. Price, \$495.

All Metz cars are equipped with fibre grip gearless transmission, which entirely eliminates gear and clutch trouble.

**SPARTON**  
Is the  
**Automobile Horn of Progress**  
Just As Truly As  
**The Lincoln Highway**  
Is  
**“The Path of Progress”**  
*That is why it was adopted on the Official  
Lincoln Highway Car*



The SPARTON is original. It is an inspiration. It breathes the twentieth century, and its lungs are robust and enduring. It frees the farmer and city man from the danger of accident because its warning sound is compelling and unfailling. Its emphatic, insistent voice is already heard over every one of the 3384 miles of the Lincoln Highway.

The men behind the SPARTON are glad to support those who are devoting their time, energy and ability to this American Appian Way, for they believe it makes America greater.

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Sparton family of life savers and road cleaners range in price from \$4.00 for the Model “F” hand operated horn to \$15 for the Model “D” motor driven signal.

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Contemporary view of Donner Lake from Donner Summit for comparison with the pictures on the next two pages.



## Painting in Prose from 1870

From Vischer's Pictorial of California page 62....

Given the number of picture books about American scenery published in the 19th Century they must have been very popular for a public hungry about the newly acquired lands in the West. Some thousands would travel but most people stayed home and so picture books became vicarious travel. Mr. Vischer published a number of them which are all available in places like the California State Library or the internet. Here are some excerpts from Vischer's Pictorial of California published in 1870. The book actually came in two volumes. One was the text of the chosen picturesque spots and the other had the pictures. Since this is The Donner Summit Heirloom our excerpt is Donner Summit. Punctuation was a little different in those days.

In Vischer's Pictorial we have a description of Donner Lake and Donner Summit with a beautiful description of the transcontinental railroad being built (such as the siddebar to the right). The reader can see in her mind's eye the "roaring broadsides of countless tons of rock... flying through the air, avalanches of boulders rattling down the hill -sides..." The first Vischer pictorial drawing on the next page, of Donner Lake, is copied from an 1865 photograph. The second on page 17, a few years later shows the line of the railroad in distance to the right. Here man is a small part of spectacular nature. It's unfortunate that Mr. Vischer was working in black and white because his color descriptions are beautiful. Those 19th Century Easterners had something to look forward to.

"No. 42 --Donner Lake, from the Summit of the Sierra Nevada. on the Dutch Flat , Virginia Road" Vischer's description of Donner Summit.

This beautiful mountain-retreat is situated immediately east of and in full view of the crowning granite summit of the Sierra Nevada at Donner Pass. The lake is clear as crystal , reflects mountain and pine forest as perfectly as the finest plate glass mirror. The air is clear and pure , and eminently invigorating. A moonlight sail on the lake is a glimpse into the weird beauty of fairy land . Nothing disturbs the slumber of nature here , save the murmur of falling waters , the sighing of pines, and , since spring, the hoarse yell of the locomotive as it goes clattering through the railroad snowsheds above the lake .

Seen from the heights , the lake is of an intensely blue color, owing to its great depth which , in one place , is said to reach 1,500 feet . [actually it's 328' deep according to the State of California]. The surrounding mountains rise to 2,000 feet above the lake .

### About building the railroad on Donner Summit:

"the blasts prepared during the day filled the air with reverberations , as of the roaring broadsides of contending fleet [sic]-sending countless tons of rock far and wide flying through the air, avalanches of boulders rattling down the hill-sides , clusters of tall pines converging like tottering nine-pins , or toppling over with a crash. For a while , mountain and forest seemed convulsed , as by a continuous earthquake ; then the stillness of desolation prevailed..."





A purple haze overspreads these mountains in the evening ; while nothing can be more beautiful than to see the soft yellow sunlight gradually steal down their sides in the early morning, covering the trees , the rocks , the earth , and even the dead stumps , with a flood of golden light. Nature paints colors and arranges combinations of harmony in this, one of her great natural temples , such as no painter ever succeeded in approaching."

Our sketch [above], from a considerably earlier date , is taken in 1865 , at the time when surveying parties of the Pacific Railroad Company, encamped near Donner Peak , were out in every direction , to ascertain the best practical way to reach the depression of the east range of the Sierra ....

Two years later , a three days' ramble near the Summit brought us once more to that locality . What we had known as a solitude was now teeming with bustling activity . Cisco was the great centre of operations ; but there were thousands of Chinese , with working gangs of mechanics and white laborers, distributed in camps along the road-every station designated by its number. The work of blasting was at its height, and every evening, an hour before sunset, the general road-travel being suspended by regulation , and man and beast brought under sheltering cover , the simultaneous discharge of all the blasts prepared during the day filled the air with reverberations , as of the roaring broad-sides of contending fleet-sending countless tons of rock far and wide flying through the air, avalanches of boulders rattling down the hillsides , clusters of tall pines converging like tottering nine-pins , or toppling over with a crash. For a while , mountain and forest seemed convulsed , as by a continuous earthquake ; then the stillness of desolation prevailed , relieved only by the tramp of squads of workmen , returning to their camps , or the jingling bells of some belated teamster, seeking to gain his way-station for the night. The working gangs employed in the opening of the great summit tunnel , having pushed the work from opposite sides , had just met in the centre , opening the first peep of perforation . Half a dozen smaller tunnels on either side of the Summit, already completed , offered eyeholes for the coming locomotive.

VISCHER'S  
**PICTORIAL OF CALIFORNIA**

LANDSCAPE,  
TREES AND FOREST SCENES.

GRAND FEATURES OF CALIFORNIA SCENERY,  
LIFE, TRAFFIC AND CUSTOMS.

PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE ORIGINAL DRAWINGS.

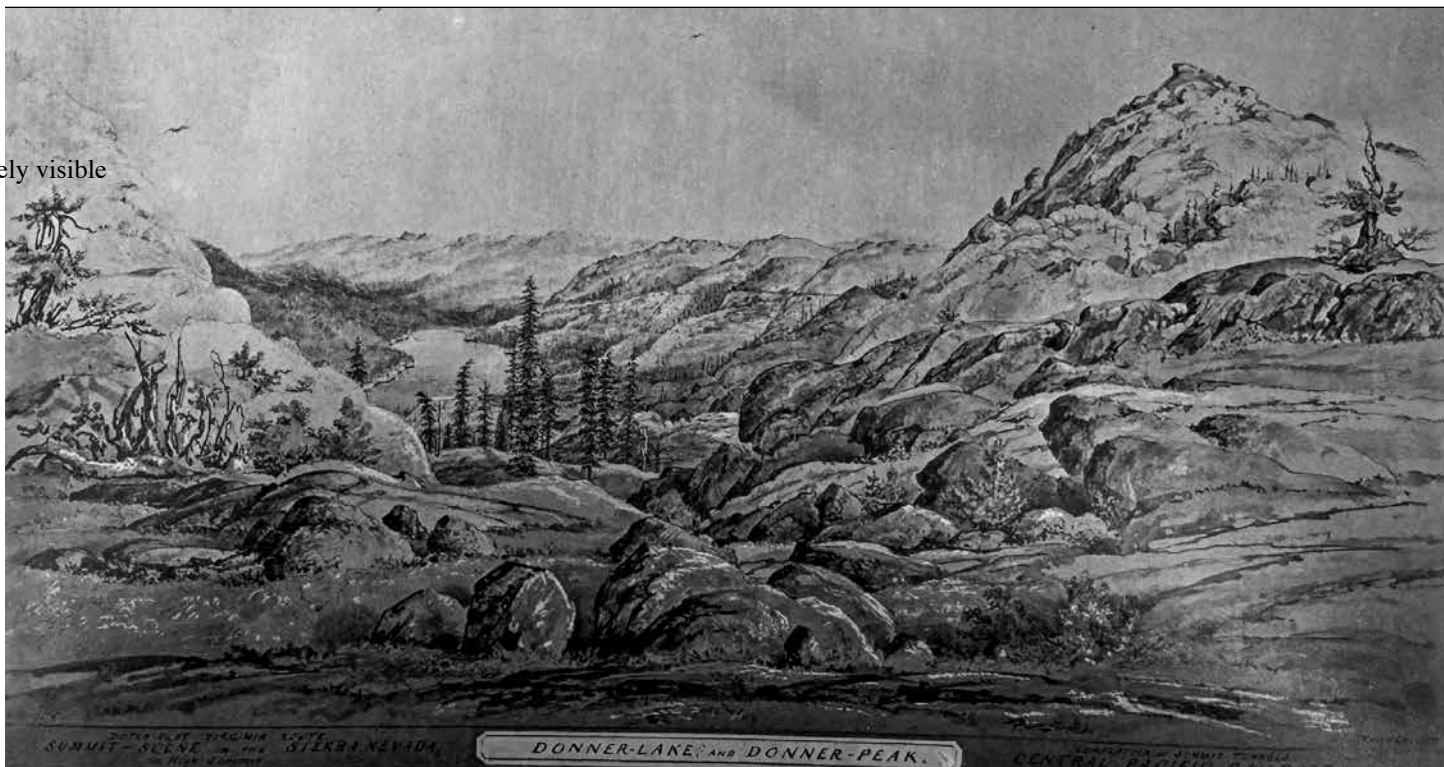
IN FIVE SERIES OF TWELVE NUMBERED EACH, WITH A SUPPLEMENT, AND CONTRIBUTIONS FROM  
RELIABLE SOURCES.

SAN FRANCISCO, June, 1870.

PRINTED BY  
JOSEPH WINTERBURN & COMPANY, No. 417 CLAY STREET,  
Between Market and Battery Streets.



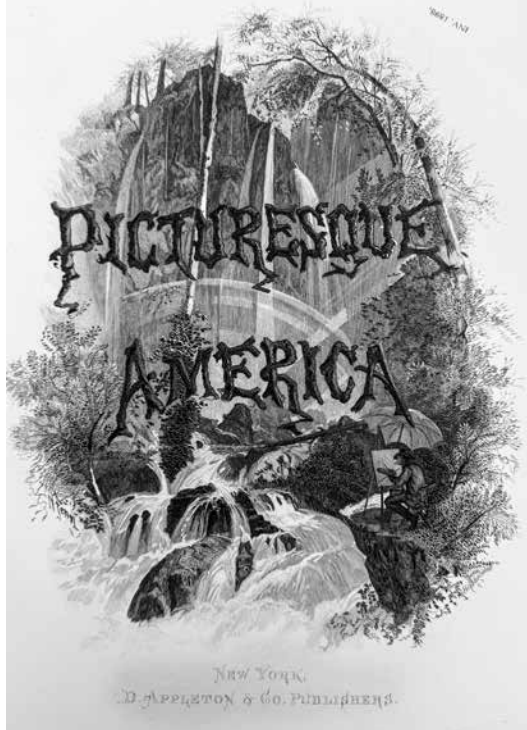
R is barely visible



The completion of the Summit tunnel, as soon as the track was laid, was celebrated by an excursion party from Sacramento, on the 7th of December, 1867, and in May following [1868], when a considerable portion of the Truckee road was already in working order, the Central Pacific opened its road as far as Reno, for public use and travel.

The scenery around the Summit is truly magnificent. Of the thousands of passengers who, since the opening of the Pacific Railroad, have been rushed, blindfold, or blinkered, [due to traveling through the snowsheds] as it were, through its dark tunnels and sombre snowsheds, none but such as had previously, traveling by wagon or on horseback, or who, as hunters or prospectors, had climbed its culminating heights, could have a faint conception of the vistas, literally within their reach; and even when stepping out on a platform, they see nothing but the track, and its view-obstructing embankments, and a streak of desolation in its wake—the effect of blasting and devastation of the forest in the building of the road.

Half an hour's easy, scarcely perceptible ascent from the Summit House [Summit Hotel], a path between rocks and



thickets, leads to the very top of the dome opposite Donner Peak; and there, with a foreground of stupendous rocks, and some of the lordliest specimens of the forest reaching up out of a neighboring ravine, a picture of magic significance unfolds itself before our eyes. It speaks to the mind with the full impressiveness of weight and breadth and power of awe-inspiring solitude: a panorama of the central high Sierra, a study of the great outlines of its mighty ranges; and, near by, as imposing specimens of the material it is built of, picturesquely grouped, there is Donner Peak, and Mount Lincoln, with its massive flanks and patches of perennial snow, rising in the south; on the other hand, dominating the next range, Fremont Peak [now Castle Peak], with its castellated crest; and further on, summit on summit, extending towards the Downieville

Buttes and Lassen's Peak; the Truckee Nevada range in the east, and Donner Lake sweetly nestled in the forest depth; and everywhere, through rock and timber, the charming surprises of the wilderness; occasional glimpses towards the Californian slopes, with dark blue mountain lakes, set in roseate granite ledges, reflecting, mirror-like, the belts of timber lining these sombre ravines down to the very water's edge.

Hard by, though chastely hidden in the forest depth, is Angela

Lake , so baptized in honor of the queen of a merry party from Sacramento , the guests at the surveyor's camp on the shore of that lovely expanse of water ; and truly, a more romantic spot than that summit lake cannot be imagined .

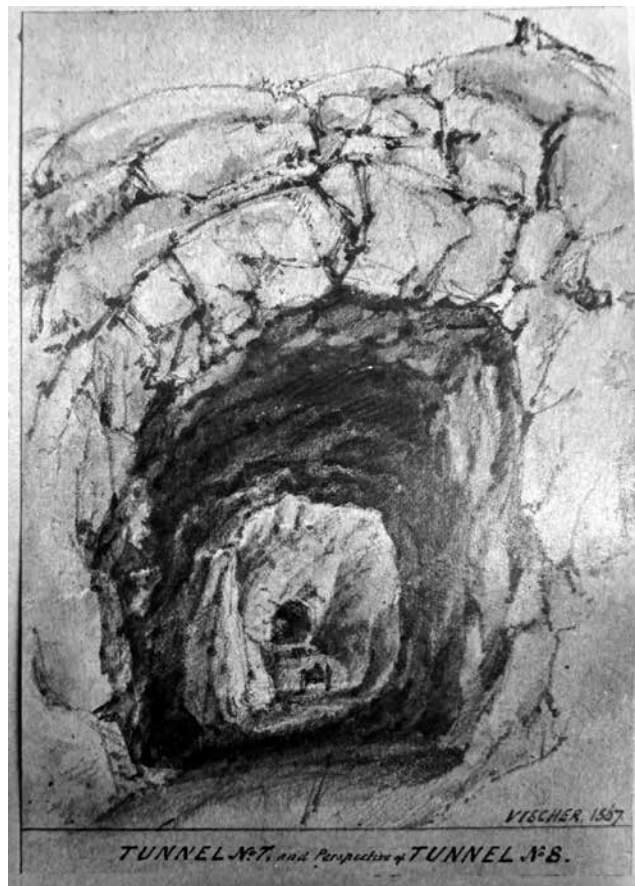
But to return to our sketch , which shows, in the descending ledges to the right of Donner Lake, the smoke of camp fires , premonitory of the coming locomotive . Here it was that , to ascertain the practicability of a route, men were let down by ropes into yawning abysses and frightful chasms . One of the numbers of last year's "Overland Monthly" contains , from a surveyor's graphic pen , a thrilling account of field-work performed in those days, with a light-hearted raciness which best indicates the man of nerve and indomitable energy. In the distant background we have the western , or Truckee range of the Sierra Nevada, with the remarkable depression in its culminating ridge, called the Saddle. At the further end of the lake , just beyond the bend, is the site of the Donner tragedy.

This side of the lake , we have before us a treble range of granite ledges , with trees straggling out of every crevice . This granite descent separates us from the nearest , or west shore of the lake, where Pollard's Hotel offers a well- known retreat and resting place .

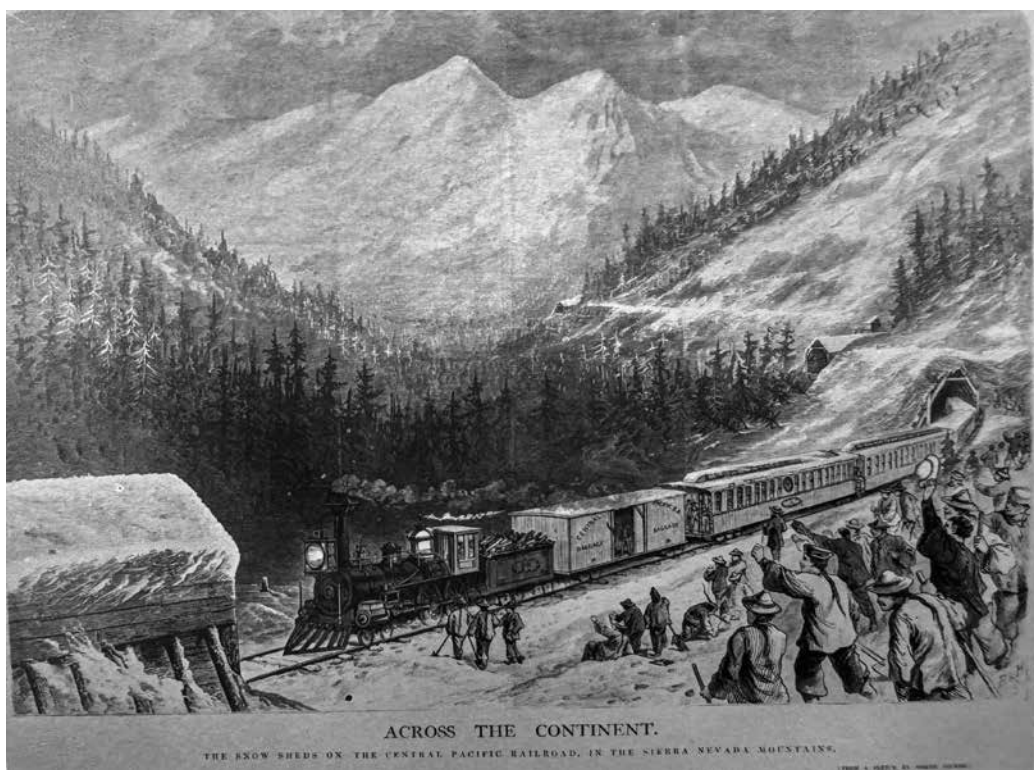
A six-horse stage , laden with passengers , and with its steeds panting, is fast gaining the summit, while an eastern-bound freight wagon , followed by the inevitable tender, and relay horses in the rear, having already passed the Rubicon , is seen descending, as it were , by its own weight. The telegraph pole in the foreground , answering at the same time the purpose of a snow-mark, shows the necessity of the protecting snow-sheds, without which it were utterly impracticable to keep the road-track available for winter travel.

Altogether, this region is replete with interest , rendering our No. 42 (more elaborate than grateful) one of the most characteristic of our collection.

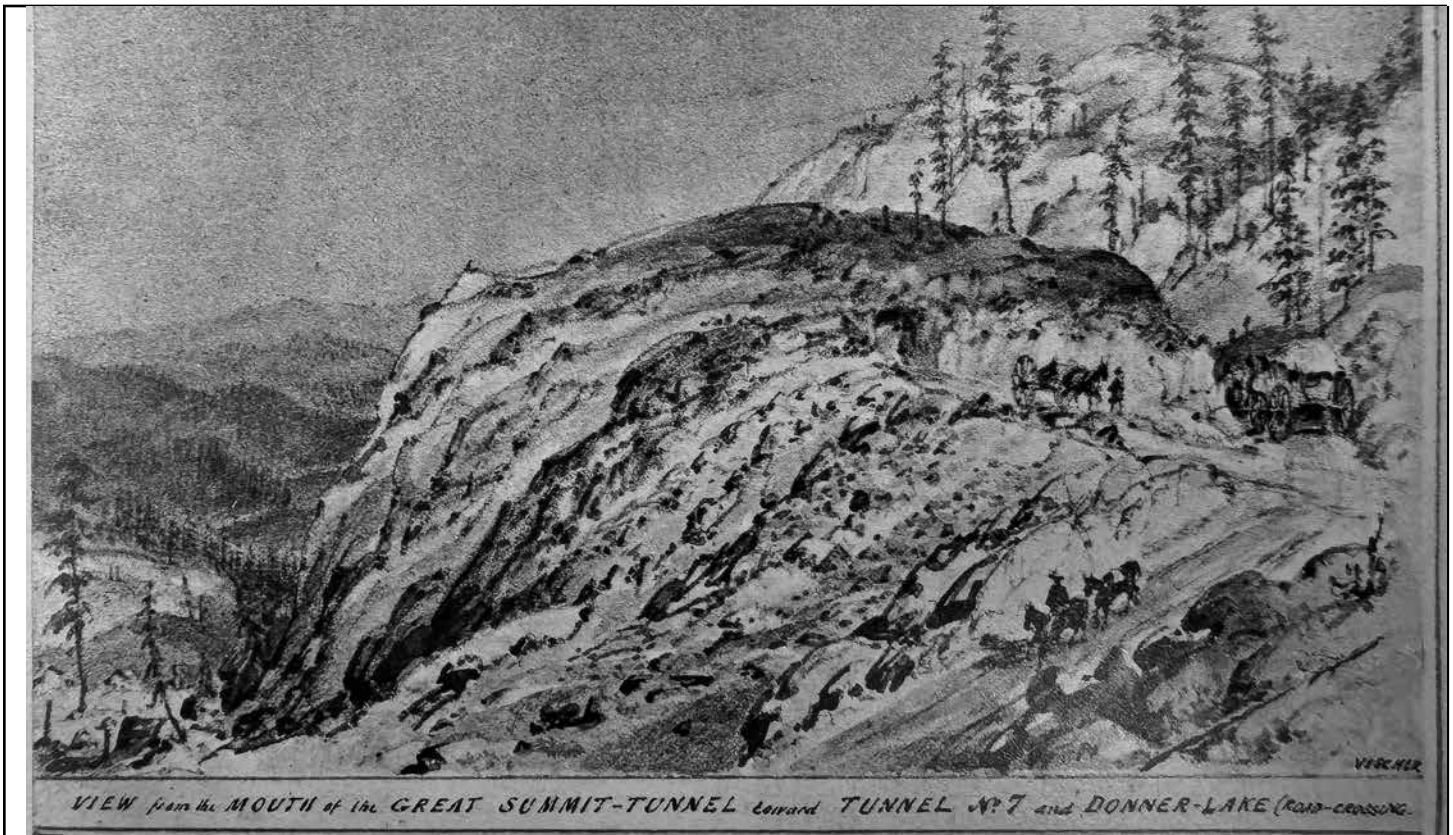
But it is only from the main Summit that the grand picture of the high Sierra unrolls itself!



Above: Tunnel 8. Below, "Across the Continent" the Chinese workers cheering their accomplishment.

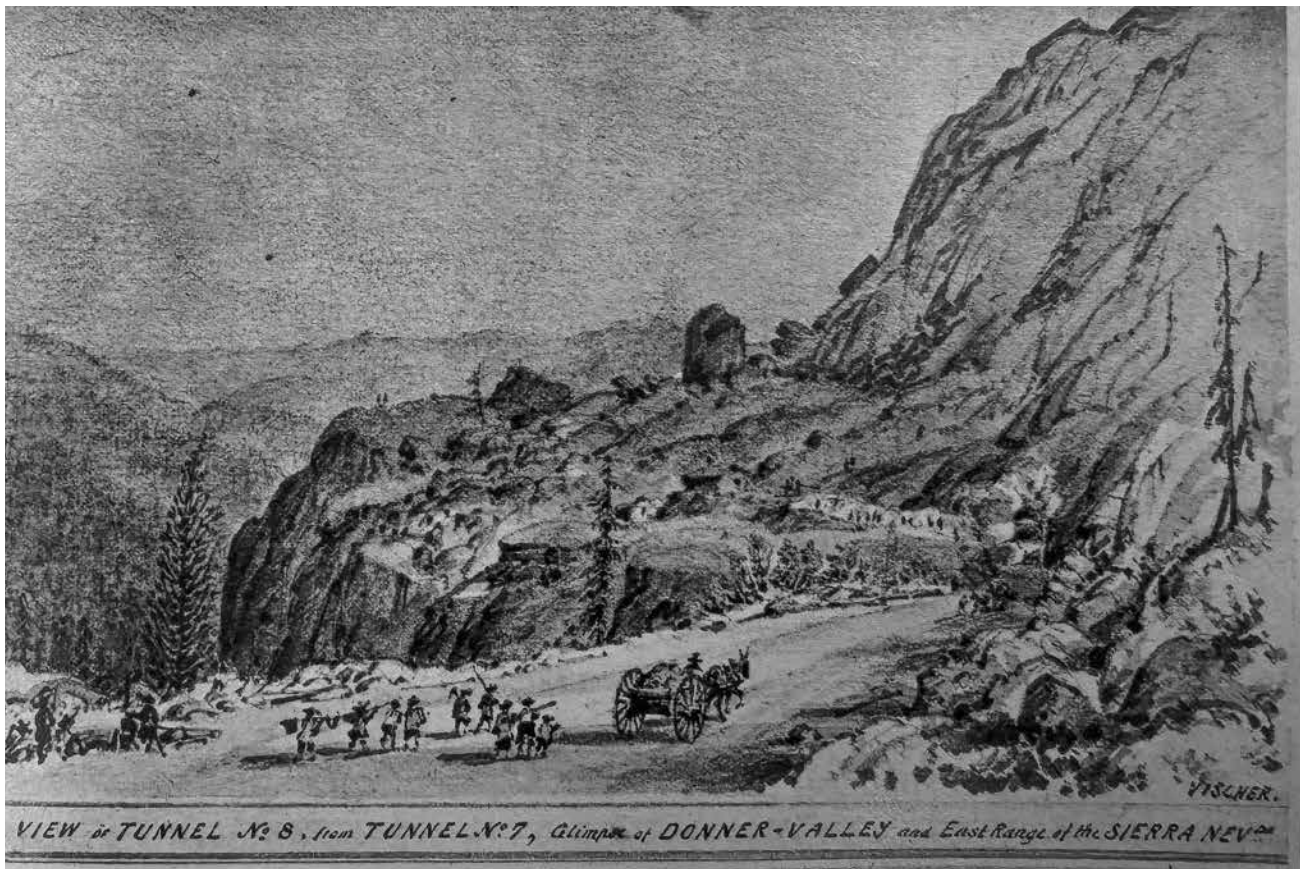






*VIEW from the MOUTH of the GREAT SUMMIT-TUNNEL toward TUNNEL N<sup>o</sup> 7 and DONNER-LAKE (ROAD-CROSSING)*

Above: from the east end of Tunnel 6 looking towards Tunnel 7. Today Tunnel 7 has no natural top it having been blasted off to accommodate larger trains.



*VIEW of TUNNEL N<sup>o</sup> 8, from TUNNEL N<sup>o</sup> 7, Glimpse of DONNER-VALLEY and East Range of the SIERRA NEV<sup>o</sup>*

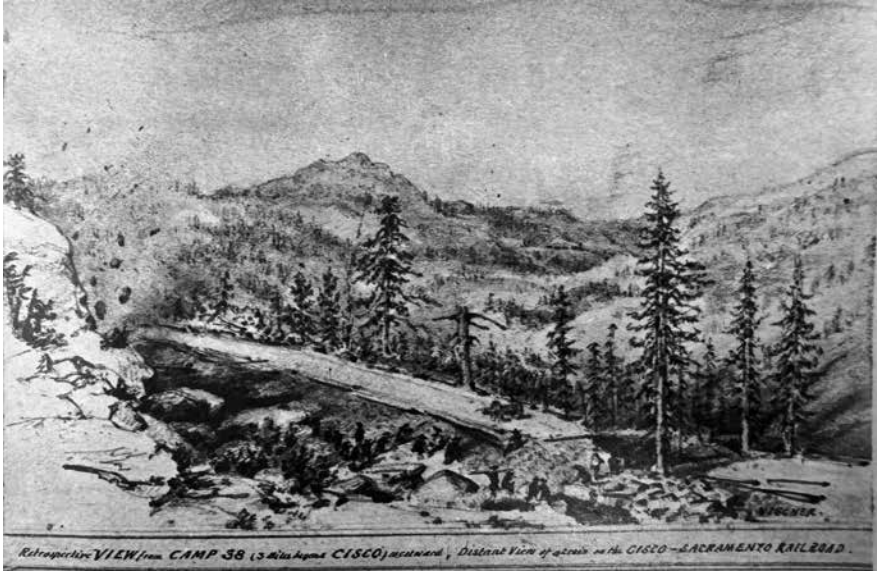
Tunnel 8 from Tunnel 7



Tunnels 3 and 4.

*SCENE beyond CISCO, between TUNNELS N<sup>o</sup> 3 & 4. Simultaneous Discharge of Rocks prepared during the Day.*

Right: Cisco. Below Tunnel 6 west end.



*Retrospective VIEW from CAMP 38 (3 Miles beyond CISCO) westward, Distant View of grade on the CISCO-SACRAMENTO RAILROAD.*



*WEST-ADIT OF THE GREAT SUMMIT TUNNEL (LENGTH 1050 FEET)*



# Odds & Ends on Donner Summit



When you take the scenic route over Donner Summit instead of Interstate 80 you're liable for surprises. Pick up our brochure so you can go from Rocklin to Truckee without the freeway - almost. Here is one example. At the Cisco Grove exit where you can get back on Old Highway 40 you'll see the stone buildings which used to be a gift shop when Highway 40 was a major route across the country. Next time stop and read our 20 Mile Museum sign and peer into the buildings and be amazed at the petrified wood built into the walls.



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 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)

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

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- Patron \$500
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The Donner Summit Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) non-profit

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



Download brochures at:  
<http://www.donnersummithistoricalsociety.org/pages/brochures.html>

**50 interpretive signs along Old 40**

<http://www.donnersummithistoricalsociety.org/pages/20MileMuseum.html>