

# The Donner Summit

# Heirloom



History and stories of the Donner Summit Historical Society

February, 2018 issue #114

# Scotty Allan

## King of the Dog Team Drivers

Over the years in the [Heirloom](#) we've covered some interesting people and famous characters: Dennis Jones (February '09), Hannes Schroll (October and November, '09), Bill Klein (November, '09), Norm Saylor (August, '13 and other issues), Johnny Ellis (April, '09 and then more in July and August), Alfred A. Hart (January, '14), Carleton Watkins (December, '16), etc. There are some others waiting in the wings, so to speak.

This month we highlight Scotty Allan, who lived on Donner Summit for a few years and who was a genuine world-renowned celebrity in his time.

Norm has a lot of pictures of “Scotty” Allan on Donner Summit with his dog team. Scotty Allan was not just any guy with a dog team though. Scotty Allan was a genuine celebrity living on Donner Summit where he also had a kennel in the 1930's. The internet provides a lot of information mostly via old newspapers. Scotty also wrote his autobiography in 1931 while living on Donner Summit in Soda Springs. Discovering that set off of a search. Where could we get a copy of his autobiography? That would have everything in it. One copy was available for sale on the Internet. It costs \$395.00 and is presumably still for sale. Worldcat.org is a good source for finding books in libraries. Type in the name of a book and the search will bring back libraries that have the book in their collections from the nearest library to the farthest. Scotty's book is still out there but only in a few libraries, the closest of which is the University of California at Berkeley. So off we went. What could tell us more than Scotty's own writing? It would be organized, highlight the major episodes in his life, talk about his philosophy, etc.

It turns out that Scotty didn't wait until the end of his life to write his autobiography. He wrote it in 1931, ten years before his death. Worse, it has little about life beyond Alaska. There's nothing about when he lived in Soda Springs on Donner Summit or what he did here. It also doesn't go into much more than anecdotes – see elsewhere in this [Heirloom](#).

Who was Scotty Allan and why was he world famous before coming to Donner Summit? He was amazing; it's all a good story. Is that enough of a literary hook to keep you reading?

# Story Locations in this Issue

Rainbow Lodge pg 14

Soda Springs pg 7 & 13

Soda Springs Ski Area pg 13

Van Norden pg 7



## Help from a reader

# Ski Jumping in Berkeley

Chuck Oldenburg came across this YouTube video of the Auburn Ski Club's ski jumping exhibition in Berkeley in 1935. We ran the story of the Club's work to popularize winter sports in our December, '12 [Heirloom](#) (See also the [Heirlooms](#) in January and February, 2013 for more) but those were still pictures like the one to the right. Here you can complete the story in motion pictures.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IPA9I13Kxbs>

We appreciate readers' help so if you have something.... if you come across something.... let us know.



Find us on 

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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

Allan Alexander Allan, or “Scotty” Allan started life in Scotland at a disadvantage. His mother died while he was young. His father was a blacksmith, which is not necessarily a disadvantage, but he may not have had much time for his son. Scotty was a shepherd at age six. At age nine he went to live with a Mr. Sutor to run errands and do chores before and after school. At age seventeen he was working for a lawyer after school. Scotty says in his biography “I have made my living since the age of six.” Various interviews, newspaper articles, books, and his autobiography do not show any resentment. After three years working for the lawyer after he was done with school, Scotty was sent by the lawyer to So. Dakota to deliver a Clydesdale. Scotty “assented with almost a shout of relief and joy.” He knew a great adventure lay ahead. He then went to tell his father, not asking permission, “...but remember I had been on my own for nearly ten years.” He told his father he was leaving and his father replied, “A little sudden, isn’t it?” and then, “You’re going away.”

“That was all. I recall it so clearly, because after I went to America I never saw my father again.”

Scotty took the horse to So. Dakota. Being only 5’4” tall and weighing 100 lbs. his arrival caused surprise, “...they couldn’t believe a little one hundred pound shaver like me had brought the big stallion over.” He spent some time in So. Dakota and then took jobs in various capacities with the railroad ending up in Seattle. By then, in 1895, he’d married a girl, Ella, he’d found in Oregon. He also started a family, eventually having three children. By 1897 the Klondike was in full swing and he went to Alaska to try his luck finding gold, leaving his family behind.

Allan was not successful at gold prospecting but he was successful at being a teamster, first with horses and then with dogs. He also carried mail at \$3 a letter from Nome to Valdez. He then ran a hardware store and broke and trained dogs. It was with dogs that his fame would be secured.

Eventually he’d become so famous that he’d supply dogs for Admiral Byrd’s 1928 Antarctic expedition. In 1915 the French government commissioned Scotty to acquire, train and equip 440 dogs for work in WWI delivering ammunition and supplies. Some of his dogs did so well they were awarded the Croix de Guerre (some articles say Scotty got the award but Scotty gave all the credit to his dogs) and all the dogs were awarded lives of leisure after the war. One group of dogs delivered in 4 days 180,000 lbs. of ammunition, a job that used to take two weeks by men and horses. Another team laid 18 miles of telephone wire in one night.

Here a digression is appropriate. The dogs had to be trained prior to getting on board ship for Europe. Part of their training required that they learn not to “sing or bark” so they would not attract U-Boats that might be listening in the darkness on the surface. It should also be noted as a mark of his character that Scotty promised his wife he would not go to Europe



Scotty Allan and his most famous dog, Baldy.

during the war with the dogs. To assure that, his wife kept his passport so there would be no temptation. She, no doubt, knew him well. Scotty sent his family to Berkeley, CA where his daughter was attending the university. Scotty then enlisted a friend to vouch for him (things were looser in the old days), obtained a new passport and went off to France. He could not be without the dogs, some of whom he’d bred himself.

Scotty Allan must have been well respected in the community because he was elected to Nome school board without even knowing he was running. Later he was a member of the Alaskan territorial legislature.

As Scotty gained skills training and breeding dogs and was rising as a member in the community, he was dog sled racing and that was where his fame really began. It was always contentious when dog team owners got together in Alaska to discuss whose dog was the fastest, which diet was the best, and which training methods were most productive. In 1907 a bunch of owners decided the only way to solve the “inevitable disputes which fights and anger did not solve” was to race. The “All Alaska Sweepstakes” became world-famous. The route went from Nome to Candle and back, 410 miles. Scotty won three times in his eight entries, got second place three more times, and got third place two times. Those results must have resolved at least some disputes.

Scotty Allan approached the races with a scientist’s mind. He weighed his dogs daily and weighed their food, each

getting individually sized amounts. Each dog had a blanket, harness, collar, dozens of moccasins, rabbit skin flank protectors (to keep the dogs from freezing), and mosquito netting to prevent snow blindness. The leader had his own goggles.

In the 1909 race Scotty plotted his strategy, "My figures showed that with a twenty-five per cent margin of safety, we could take a seven hour rest and, barring unusual bad breaks or accidents, win." He did.

His training methods were unique. For example, said the Wenatchee World in June 29, 1909, he trained his dogs for the 1909 race using a "big heavy basket sled" about which everyone laughed. Then just before the race he brought out a sled "that has never had an equal in the north." It was 12' long but weighed only 31 lbs. It was lashed together with D violin string (and there was a lack of music in Nome that spring due to that, Scotty said). The "whole outfit of mukluks for himself and dogs, blankets for the animals and other equipment totaled, sleigh included, only 42 pounds."

He described the 1909 race in his autobiography, "It was a wonderful feeling to be behind those two faithful little fellows [Baldy and Kid leading the dog team] going right into it [the blizzard] as if they were possessed! But what a smother it was – blinding snow, bitter wind, and a rough trail.

"I was happy, happy as ever I had been in my life! For by this time I was satisfied that the pups knew where they were going! Going as never a team did in any such blizzard as was then blowing, hugging right to the trail along which they had traveled... And all despite the terrific gusts that would have blown any ordinary dogs off their feet... at times I couldn't see beyond the bow of the sled!" At the moment of that epiphany he hadn't seen the dogs since the last town even though they were just ahead, pulling the sled.

Then a guy tried to waylay Scotty for Nome bettors. "'Get out of the way, you white-livered skate!!' I yelled at 'One Eye' 'or you'll be minus your other lamp!' I was mad now – all through." "... away we both [a friend drove another dog sled with other dogs of Scotty's] went into the blizzard... the storm was howling worse than ever. I couldn't see the trail; I couldn't see anything. I had to rely on Kid and Baldy... But these two were both hundredth [1 in a hundred] dogs! They

headed into it. In a lull I caught a glimpse of their sturdy little bodies – such small, brave bits of life in that vast storm-swept waste, their backs humped, their heads down, and their tough and sinewy feet digging bravely into the snow. It was the wolf in them that was finding the hidden trail for me; but it was the pride and courage of their dog blood that was leading their team on against the blinding gale. In sheer joy at seeing their courage I yelled... 'we're making the grade' [to his trailing partner]. We had a tough trail ahead of us... the ever present blizzard. To keep a course and make headway against it was beyond man's physical and mental ability. All we could do was hang on to the sleds and keep them right side up."

This was one of his three Sweepstakes wins.

Scotty, the most famous musher of his time once said, "Dogs are the most intuitive creatures alive. They take the disposition of their driver. That is why I never let my dogs know that I am tired. At the end of the day... I sing to the little chaps and whistle so they always reach the end of the trail with their tails up and waving."

Scotty Allan -  
"Scotland to Nome"

#### Bibliography

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Sunset Magazine February 1921 "The King of the Arctic Trail"  
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“To those awaiting news of their loved ones in the States there was no sight in all that land of beauty and majesty that could thrill them as did the first glimpse of Scotty, frost-covered but undaunted and debonair, at the handle-bars of his sled, dashing down that last stretch of the silver trail, every decorative tail on his parka dancing, every sleigh-bell ringing, every pointed-nosed, pink-tongued huskie in his team laughing and waving a proud plume of a tail! To the cheering Northerners mail-day was an epoch and Scotty a hero.”

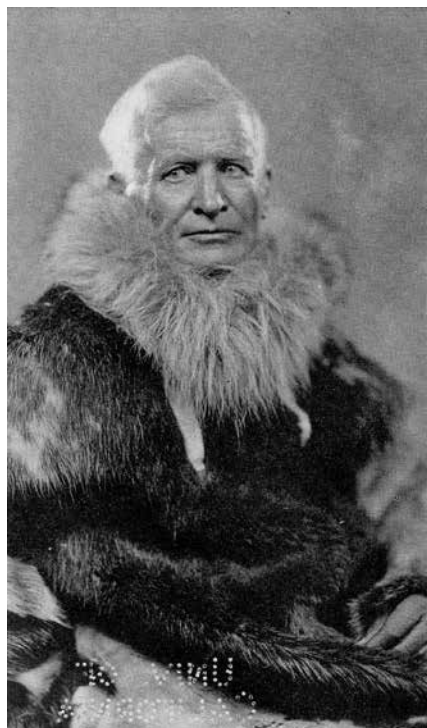
from Sunset Magazine February, 1921 “The King of the Arctic Trail”

## About his Autobiography

Discovering that Scotty Allan had written an autobiography sent the DSHS Historical Research Team (HRT) into paroxysms (a word particularly excitable historians use during bouts of research) of excitement. This would be the definitive story. The book is only in a few libraries and the only copy for sale was \$395. A trip to U.C. Berkeley for the book was in order.

Paging through it we realized that the book, which we’d known was written in 1931, was not a complete autobiography. It left out the last ten years of Scotty’s life and it left off sometime in the 1920’s. It’s also not really an autobiography. It’s more like the reminiscences of Scotty Allan.

The title comes from what influenced him in life most: gold (“the way it affects more men as they hunt it, fear it, lust for it, yearn for it, suffer for its lack”), men (who taught him a lot), and dogs (that were his life after he got to Alaska). Dogs “have given me great happiness... it is through dogs that I have found the contentment we all dream of and so rarely achieve.”)



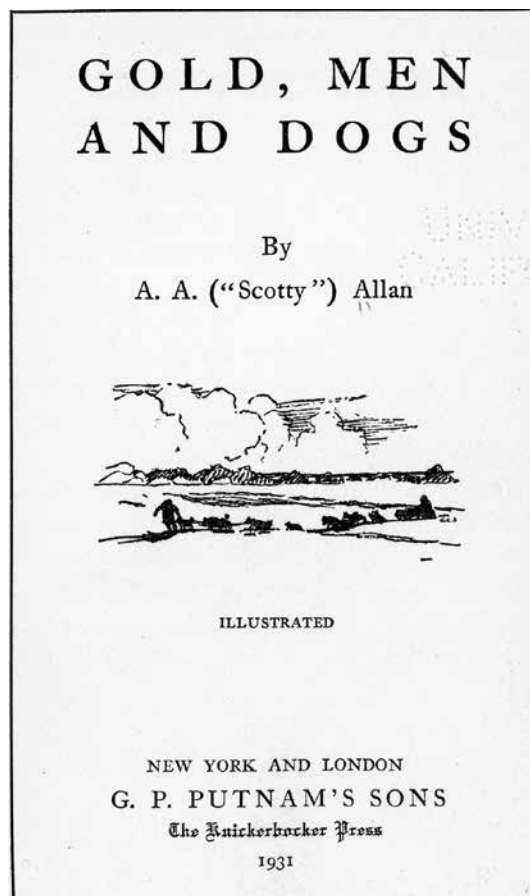
from Gold Men and Dogs

The “autobiography” is full of stories of life in the north: the guy who bought his wife – the cost being her weight in gold dust; meeting John L. Sullivan in New York, getting accidentally knocked out by him, and then coming to being

hugged and cried over by the boxing champion; bunko artists; a hobo and a shell game; the single horse that ruined a town; recovering lost RCMP liquor hidden in a nail cask; scammers; tricksters; the fellow who could start snoring before he started to sleep and while standing up; rumors of whale milk; and characters such as Porky the swamper who retired on his gold dust sweepings and Soapy Smith, the con artist.

There are little asides such as about life in the Klondike. “Conditions on the Skagway Trail were so terrible that horses were said to have committed suicide by throwing themselves in the mudholes.” Men slept in shifts, at least three to a bed each shift being eight hours. There was the fellow who hadn’t bathed in so long that when he went to sleep on a shelf by the stove the heat began melting the grease and oil on him, “oozing like an oily chunk of walrus blubber! Probably he hadn’t had a bath for three months and was soaked with bacon grease.”

The book is eminently and easily readable. It’s also fun. As an autobiography it’s short on substance about his life. Never does author Scotty Allan explain what began his



passion for dogs nor how he developed his skills. He just shows up in Nome with three dogs, a sled full of firewood, and \$18 in 1900 after losing his \$72,000 investment in a steamboat that sank. Since dogs were his life, that's an important omission. He never mentioned his family except in passing and does not cover his move from Alaska to California. Apparently he traveled often back to Alaska but given his life there and his love of the outdoors there, that's an important change in his life. It may be that he came to Donner Summit and Soda Springs because it was closest to being like Alaska, but we don't know.

Close to the end of the book there are two chapters about dogs, their care and feeding and how to teach dogs. Given his love of dogs and life with dogs, these chapters are not out of place in his "autobiography."



From Gold, Men, and Dogs, Scotty Allan's autobiography

## Scotty Allan, Character

Scotty Allan was an interesting guy. He worked hard. He earned a couple of piles of money and then lost them. Once he'd earned \$72,000 and then invested the money in a steamship that sank. When he first got to Nome he worked ten hour days hauling freight for someone else and then worked more hours each day for himself. He helped his communities serving on the Nome school board and in the Alaskan Territorial Legislature. He helped start the All Alaskan Sweepstakes dog race. He took hundreds of dogs to France to help with the war effort in World War I. He was an athlete. There is not much more grueling than sled dog racing and the 410 mile route of the Sweepstakes is perhaps the most grueling of races. He was an entrepreneur. He ran a hardware store, he ran a kennel, and he prospected for gold. He was clearly intelligent in the way he analyzed what was needed to win dog races but also in that he was hired by the railroads not as a laborer but in various administrative jobs. He was twenty years old when the lawyer he worked for sent him to the U.S. with a purebred horse. Scotty must have had attributes that were admirable to be given that job and he showed at least some of those keeping his horse as well as others healthy on the ship to America. He was also willing to take chances – going to America, moving west and then to Alaska and embarking on new ventures. He became famous through his dogs and even had a dog food named for him. He was adventurous going off into the wild with his dogs but also trying new ideas. He built an "Aero Sled" (next page) in 1921 establishing a new speed record from Nome to Valdez, 1100 miles, in ten days. The trip usually took 80 days by sled. He had put an engine and propeller on a sled and then motored to Valdez. The machine was "a combination hydroplane, aeroplane, and sled..." That shows a bit of a sense of humor as well. On Donner Summit someone came up with the idea of trying to launch a glider with a horse and then a dog sled. The horse was ridden by Mrs. James McIver Jr. (McIver Dairy in Truckee) but the dog sled was of course piloted by Scotty Allan. It was such a unique idea that it was reported upon all the way in New Jersey (see the next page).

Scotty's family moved to Berkeley, California where at least two of his children attended the University of California at Berkeley. Scotty joined them there after WWI. He must have felt a bit lost though. Dogs had been the most important part of his life and he only had his Baldy with him (above, front right) and Baldy soon gravitated to Scotty's son, George. Scotty traveled back to Alaska apparently often, serving on the territorial legislature, but that must not have been enough because Scotty Allan came to Donner Summit and Soda Springs and lived there for at least a few years.



Glider in Van Norden Meadow, Scotty Allan and his dogs

## Scotty Allan on Donner Summit

The record of Scotty Allan on Donner Summit is mostly lost to history. His autobiography stops sometime in the 1920's, some years before he wrote the book in Soda Springs in 1931.

From newspaper searches we find that Scotty Allan continued with his interests. He traveled with locals to give speeches all over the state at least sometimes taking along dogs, sled (with wheels attached to the runners), and equipment. He told school children about dog sledding and his experiences.

He also spoke about the characteristics of dogs and how they were his best friends (loyal, good memories, brave, special capabilities like knowing a person approaching by his footsteps. It was the dogs, he always said, that won the first Alaskan Sweepstakes. He couldn't see a thing in the blizzard but the dogs knew the way. He drove in some Tahoe Truckee Dog Derbies. He encouraged kids to go into dog sledding. He encouraged winter sports for the Southern Pacific and traveled to help organize and promote winter sports just because he thought that was valuable. He encouraged people to take winter vacations instead of the traditional summer vacations. For at least some of his visits to talk to people about winter sports in the area, he traveled with some of the Jones family (built Soda Springs Hotel, Rainbow Tavern, Nyack Lodge, Soda Springs Ski Area, etc.) Scotty also rescued one fellow using his dog sled and got involved in some other interesting episodes.

Scotty Allan was indeed, an Interesting Westerner as Sunset Magazine highlighted him in February of 1921 (see the headline on the next page).

### Winter Sports Program for Sierra Set Today in Soda Springs Vicinity

With a wide variety of events, including the launching of a snow glider near Lake Van Norden, the winter sports season in the vicinity of Soda Springs in the high Sierra beyond the Donner summit will be inaugurated today. Many Reno, Truckee and Tahoe snow sports enthusiasts are planning to participate.

The launching of the glider will be attempted by pulling it into the air both with a saddle horse and dog team. The saddle horse will be ridden by Mrs. James Melvor, Jr., of Truckee, and the dogs will be those owned by Scotty Allan. The glider has been named "Maude Maynard" in honor of the wife of

Wilbur Maynard, snow sports leader.

There will be ski races with both dogs and horses pulling the entrants, it being necessary for the winner to arrive at the finish line without being unseated.

A new feature to be staged today will be old-fashioned New England cutter races, the first to be run over western snows. Old Vermont cutters will be used, and will carry besides the man driver, a feminine companion. The course includes many sharp curves, and the winner must cross the finish line with cargo of occupants, robes, whip, etc., intact despite the certain spills on the turns.

The program will begin at 10:30 o'clock this morning.

Nevada State Journal December 21, 1930 note the glider in the text.

# Scotty Allan, the Hero

In November of 1931 three men from Berkeley were cutting Christmas trees somewhere below the Cedars. A storm came in and closed the road. The men struggled through the snow to the Cedars and then decided to continue on to Soda Springs, eight miles further. At the higher elevation there was more snow and the guys got really stuck. Scotty Allan found them near Ice Lakes (now Serene Lakes) and "provide[d] them with their first nourishment in days" and then got them to Soda Springs.

## Interesting Westerners

*The King of the Arctic Trail—A Man Who Conquered a River and Saved a Sixteen-Thousand-Acre Island—A Lace-and-Ribbon Artist—An Indian Legend Interpreter—A Trader for Furs in Far Countries*

Sunset Magazine February, 1921

### 5 SAVED FROM SNOW AFTER 3-DAY FIGHT

'Scotty' Allen, Famed Driver of Dog Team, Rescues Berkeleyans From Hills

Party Without Food Since Sunday; School Teacher and Another Found Safe

Oakland Tribune November 18, 1931

### AERO SLED BEATS DOGS

Scotty Allan, Famous Driver Of The Frozen North, Invents New Method Of Travel.

San Francisco, Dec. 20.—Scotty Allan, three times winner of the Alaskan sweepstakes with a team of dogs, has established a new record for speedy traveling in the frozen north by making the round trip from Nome to Valdez in little more than 10 days by means of an "aero sled." By dog teams the trip usually is made in about 80 days. The news of Allan's achievement became known here today with the arrival of Frank O'Connor, Nome agent of a steamship company.

Allan took the dogs to France for use in the battle front in the Vosges Mountains, and on his way back to Nome he purchased an engine and propeller, which he installed on a sled. After several trials he undertook the Nome-Valdez journey, about 1,100 miles, in the face of much skepticism. He started from Nome and 72 hours later he arrived in Valdez, and, returning, reached Nome on November 11.

His machine is described as a combination hydroplane, aeroplane and sled, with gasoline as the motive power.

Baltimore Sun December 21, 1916

YORNIA THURSDAY, Sept. 10, 1931 10 CENTS A COPY

## Famous Alaska Musher At Quincy Monday For Winter Sports Meeting

### Quincy Water Company Asks Rate Increase

Claim Valuation of System One-Third Too Low And Ask 50 percent Boost.

SAN FRANCISCO, Sept. 10—In a petition filed with the Railroad Commission by Mrs. Grace Webb, owner of the Quincy Water Works, a re-adjustment and increase in the rates charged by that company is asked. The petition was prepared by Attorney General U. S. Webb, husband of the applicant.

The petition sets up that the reasonable present value of the system with improvements and betterments recently made is \$50-

### Highlights of Week's Events in County

Scotty Allan, famous Alaskan dog musher and derby racer will attend Snow Sports Meeting Monday night and will talk to kids in afternoon.

County-wide snow meet set for Monday eve at 8:00 o'clock at Courthouse. Len O'Rourke will preside.

Dog flesh up thousand points with interest in Pacific Junior Dog Derby gathering momentum daily.

Ted Shipker's All-Star grid team wants to play Feather River Wonderland eleven in Plumas County November 11th—possibly a Quincy Legion county-wide Armistice celebration.

State highway maintenance crew to relieve unemployment and keep roads open this winter.

### Plumas Program To Be Discussed by Scotty Allan

Will Talk to School Children from Steps of Courthouse, Attend Meeting Later.

SCOTTY ALLAN, famous Alaska musher, will arrive at Quincy Monday afternoon to attend the meeting called by L. B. O'Rourke, chairman of the Board of Supervisors, for the purpose of discussing a county-wide Winter Sports program.

Allan was interviewed Tuesday morning at Soda Springs, where his dog kennels are located, by George Dawley of the Feather River Bulletin. When he heard Quincy is planning to hold the

Feather River Bulletin September 10, 1931



# Scotty Allan Scrapbook



**Auditorium --- Thursday**  
**2:30 P. M. to 4:30 P. M. Only**

## Scotty Allan And His Dogs

**Scotty Allan Is A Famous  
 Alaskan Explorer And  
 Alaska Dog Derby Winner**

Scotty Allan has spent more time in Alaska than all other explorers. His life has been filled with adventure and narrow escapes.

He personally transported 450 huskies from Alaska to France during the war. He travelled half way around the world and didn't lose a dog. All dog lovers will want to see Scotty and his dogs.

**Scotty Allan Will Give Brief Talks at**  
**2:30 — 3:00 — 3:30 — 4:00 P. M.**

**ADMISSION FREE — Bring the Kiddies**

## WAR DOGS FROM FAR-OFF ALASKA FOR THE FRENCH

**"Scotty" Allan, Famous Driver,  
 Supplies Consignment for  
 Dispatch Service.**

### "MUTS" BRING GOOD PRICE

**Fine-Looking, Alert Animals, Some  
 Weighing as Much as 80 or 90  
 Pounds—One of Them Was a  
 Contender in Last Sweep-  
 Stakes.**

Winnipeg, Man.—A slight little man, with a small, lean frame, keen features and iron gray hair, stood in the door of a box car at the stock yards. He wore yellow overalls and a coat to match. Little feet, encased in square-toed, custom-made shoes, protruded from beneath his trousers. In

From Hinds County Gazette Raymond,  
 Miss November 19, 1915

Eugene Guardian October 16, 1935

Oakland Tribune August 16, 1940

# YOUR DOG



CAIRN

No longer need your dog be poorly conditioned — badly nourished — due to unbalanced diet. Vast progress has been made in the research and preparation of all foods. Dog food is no exception.

For years, dog men have experimented with varying success. But it remained for Scotty Allan to develop what—vets—scientists and scientists agree is the **FIRST BALANCED** dog food; yes, really balanced!



ENGLISH BULL

And, here's a remarkable fact—your dog, reverting to his natural state, would instinctively seek out the various foods which, for your dog's health, are skillfully combined in Scotty Allan's Dog Food.

Meet Nature half way! For your dog's sake, feed him Scotty Allan's Dog Food for thirty days. You'll quickly notice a change in his general condition — liveliness — luster of coat — and sparkling eyes.

Your dog deserves the best. It costs only a few cents a day to insure his health.



AIRDALE

### Try Scotty Allan's 30-Day Dog Diet

Irrespective of what food you have been feeding your dog, try a thirty-day change to Scotty Allan's Dog Food. You won't have to be an expert to notice the improvement in the glossiness of his coat, clean breath and general health. Start today—you'll thank Scotty Allan for a healthier, livelier dog.

All Dealers have it or can get it for you quickly



**IT'S DOG HEALTH  
 INSURANCE**

H. MOFFAT CO.  
 PACKERS  
 SAN FRANCISCO

# More Scotty Allan Scrapbook

## Scotty Allen Plans Writing Life Tale

A. A. ("Scotty") Allan, noted Alaskan dog team musher, and widely known in the Sierra-Lake Tahoe region, is writing a story of his experiences since boyhood, according to word received here yesterday from Truckee. He is being assisted by Miss Alice Moyers.

The three coinage mints of the United States are at Philadelphia, Denver and San Francisco.

Nome, Alaska, was originally called Anvil City.

Nevada State Journal July 3, 1931

## Feed SCOTTY ALLAN'S DOG FOOD

Fresh, wholesome ingredients are costly . . . and any substitutes . . . any short cuts . . . must be made at the expense of your dog's well-being.

That is why we say in all sincerity, feed Scotty Allan's Dog Food.

Save the valuable Coupon-Labels on every can . . . for hundreds of premium gifts.

Scotty Allan's Coupon-Labels may be combined with the Coupon-Labels from Alpine Milk. Send for Premium Catalogue.



Oakland Tribune July 25, 19035

be ready within two weeks.

## SCOTTY ALLAN WINS ALASKA DOG RACE

**John Johnson, One of the Drivers, Stricken With Snow Blindness, Dropped Out**

NOME, Alaska, April 11.—A. A. (Scotty) Allan, driving the dog team entered by Mrs. C. E. Darling, of Berkeley, California, won the All Alaska sweepstakes, coming into Nome late today after covering the 412 miles to Candle and return in 81 hours and 40 minutes. Coke Hill, assistant prosecuting attorney, driving his own team, finished second, and Charles Johnson, driving a team of Siberian wolves entered by Fox Ramsay, third.

**Johnson Stricken Blind**

Yakima Herald July 12, 1911

note that the newspaper clippings are from all across the country.





*Scotty Allan's Team,  
Truckee-Tahoe Dog Derby.*

Oakland Tribune January 17, 1934 Scotty Allan helped organize Truckee Winter Sports and participated in some of the sled dog races as did his son.

Below: picture of Scott and friends dedicated to Muriel Jones, wife of Dennis Jones the "father of modern skiing." See the February, '09 Heirloom. Picture comes from the collection of Starr Hurley Walton, niece of Muriel and Dennis. Starr is on the DSHS Board.

JOIN THE  
**AMERICAN LEGION  
 SNOW FROLIC**  
 AT  
**TRUCKEE**  
 Saturday and Sunday, January 20 and 21

---

Spend two days in the snow where winter sports are at  
 their best

---

*Ask your S. P. agent about Special Trains and  
 Special Rates*

---

SKATE, SKI AND TOBOGGAN

**TRUCKEE WINTER SPORTS**  
 Send your name in for Free Copy of "Sierra Snow Sports."  
 C. EDMUNDS, MANAGER, Box 63, Truckee.



*Health and Happiness  
 to you Muriel  
 is the wish of your friend  
 Scotty Allan*

# Still More Scotty Allan Scrapbook

## Scotty Allan King of the Arctic Trail

“Bright colored pennants snapped in the stiff wind; whistles shrilled, bells clanged parka-clad people jostled each other in the streets... children scampered about in a delirium of excitement... The men that poured from the Great Northern Saloon,... wore a three days’ growth of beard. Their eyes were red and hollow from lack of sleep, for they had kept a three-day -and-night vigil at the bulletin board” [displaying continuing race results from the 410 miles course] .... “It’s Scotty ! Scotty Allan is winner of the All-Alaska Sweepstakes!.... Scotty Allan is King of the Arctic Trail!”

Shannon Garst in Scotty Allan King of the Dog Team Drivers - see page 16

**A DOG'S LIFE — by Doc Adams**



TELL HER SHE NEEDS  
SCOTTY ALLAN'S  
DOG FOOD  
DEAR

OFTEN A  
BRIDESMAID,  
BUT NEVER  
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Reno Gazette December 20, 1934



Reno Gazette November 22, 1934

# From the DSHS Archives

## Beyond Scary in 1932

This 1932 story reported in the [Reno Gazette Journal](#) has to be the scariest one imaginable.

A fifteen year old boy had been skiing at Soda Springs when he slid down the embankment on the train tracks, into the area cleared by the trains. He landed right in front of the rotary snow plow and was caught by the machine. His friend escaped by climbing back up the snowbank.

For four miles the boy was pushed along trapped by the rotary (example to the right). His friend meanwhile had gotten help and called the next station down the railroad line where the plow was stopped and the boy extricated. He had bruises and a broken leg. No one could figure out how he'd kept from being "Drawn into the revolving blades of the plow."

The accident could have been worse just as it had been for seven of Scotty Allan's dogs who were trapped the same way but were killed by the same machine two weeks before.

Right is a Southern Pacific rotary from our October, '16 [Heirloom](#) from Mike Pechner's album of Donner Summit railroading pictures.



# From the DSHS Archives

## Auburn-Reno Road Opened by Plows

After a battle waged unceasingly since December 20, snowplows operated by state highway crews broke through the last snow barrier on the Auburn-Reno highway at 8 o'clock this morning and opened the road to traffic, according to advices received by the California State Automobile association [sic].

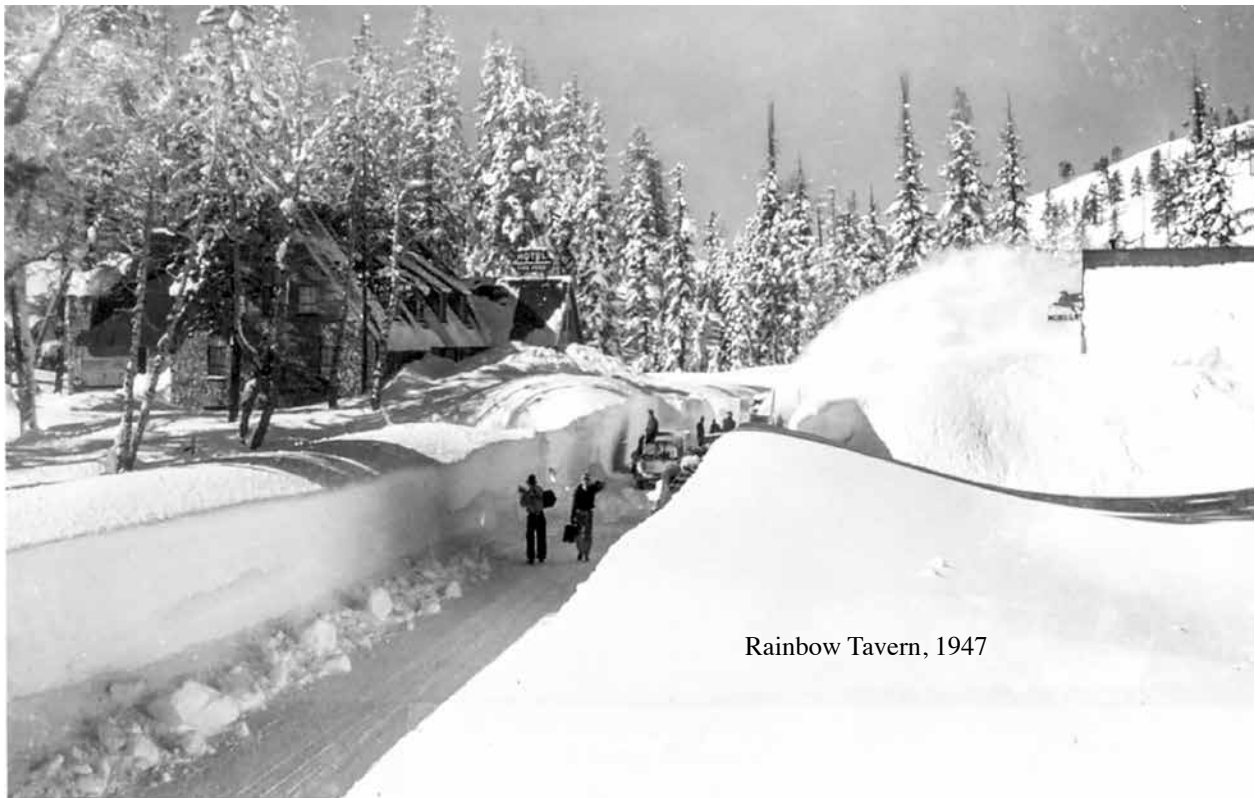
The eight-mile stretch between Soda Springs and Donner Summit has been literally carved out of snow 25 feet deep in some places. The tremendous depth, added to that piled along the roadside by the snow thrust up from below by plows, creates a narrow cut 30 to 40 feet deep between glistening snowbanks through which automobiles must crawl.

The road is only open for one-way travel between Soda Springs and the Summit, and the path carver [sic] by the plows admits vehicles not wider than 75 inches. This means that only passenger machines and light trucks can negotiate this stretch of road, heavy trucks and stages being barred.

Traffic control was established at both ends of the one-way stretch by the state highway patrol. Motorists seeking to drive through were required to use ski chains.

The road was closed from Baxter to Truckee more than two weeks ago, when the heaviest storm of the winter swept down upon the mountains. Fifty snowplows were used in clearing the highway.

Oakland Tribune January 6, 1932



Rainbow Tavern, 1947

# Odds & Ends on Donner Summit



Petroglyphs near the Eagle Lakes exit from I-80. Photo by Art Clark.

The Martis Indians left their petroglyphs in dozens of spots on Donner Summit. All Martis petroglyphs are abstract with no depictions of animals or humans except for bear paws and they are up to 4,000 years old. The Martis spent summers in the Sierra and winters in the lower elevations. No one knows what the significance of the petroglyphs was to the Martis but they must have been important. Granite is one of the hardest rocks on the planet and incising petroglyphs must have taken a lot of time and effort. Petroglyph sites are also only with views of the great peaks of the summit and not where the Martis camped. The Martis disappeared from the summit about 500 A.D. No one knows why.

If you want to read more go to the book review page of our website and open up: [Ancient Rock Carvings of the Sierra Nevada](#) and [Martis: Ancient Tribe of the Sierra Nevada](#) both by Willis Gortner. Both books are in the Truckee library.

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](#).

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

# Book Review

## Scotty Allan King of the Dog-Team Drivers

Shannon Garst 2t29 pages 1946

I've never read a book like this. On the one hand it's good because if you want to read about Scotty Allan (outside of the [Heirloom](#)) this will work. Scotty's autobiography is not available on the internet except at a huge price and it's only in a few libraries which most people don't have access to.

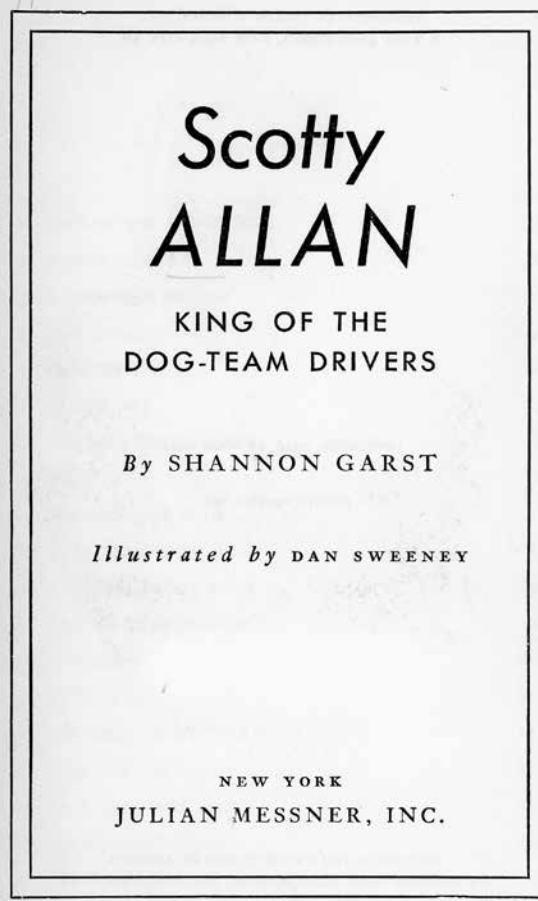
On the other hand I've never read a book that is a rehash of another book. Reading Scotty Allan King of the Dog-Team Drivers is like reading Men, Gold and Dogs, Allan's autobiography.

The difference is that King of the Dog-Team Drivers is partly fictionalized. The rest is the autobiography rewritten in conversation or third person episodes.

The book starts by setting the stage for the 1909 (not 1908 as the book says) All Alaska Sweepstakes which Scotty won, "Bright colored pennants snapped in the stiff wind; whistles shrilled, bells clanged parka-clad people jostled each other in the streets... children scampered about in a delirium of excitement... The men that poured from the Great Northern Saloon,... wore a three days' growth of beard. Their eyes were red and hollow from lack of sleep, for they had kept a three-day -and-night vigil at the bulletin board [displaying continuing race results from the 410 miles course] ...." "It's Scotty ! Scotty Allan is winner of the All-Alaska Sweepstakes!.... Scotty Allan is King of the Arctic Trail!" He won the silver cup and \$10,000.

It's a good start and starts as a novel might. It's mostly right. There was celebration among spectators and winners of the bets no doubt. The All Alaska Sweepstakes was a big deal and became world-famous. The year described is 1908 but the description later of the race is of the 1909 race (according to Scotty Allan's own account). From there the book recounts almost everything in the autobiography except that it changes the prose from Allan's first person anecdotes to what people might have said as each episode is described in the third person. There are some additional facts and stories thrown in that have to do with the Klondike and the Gold Rush and have nothing to do with Scotty Allan, although they do give some perspective and description. Garst leaves out some of the autobiography, in particular the chapters on caring for dogs.

There is some commentary as well: "People always noticed his eyes when they looked at him. They were the color of the deep blue sky when it is at its loveliest. They were



kind, good eyes, even when he was a lad with character yet unformed. His hair held the glint of the sun in it..." That's followed by lessons the author thinks are important which she injected into apparently made-up episodes: hard work pays off, rewards come, be calm and strong, losing one's temper is bad, and loyalty is repaid.

The initial stories with the morals are questionable whereas all the later ones are in Scotty Allan's autobiography and don't have morals.

I've read a lot of newspaper and magazine articles as well as the autobiography. There is no evidence that Scotty was called "Alec" when he was young, nor that he had 9 siblings. There is no evidence that he was a champion boy runner in Scotland or that he got a knife from the Prince of Wales (or even that he knew the Prince). The knife the Prince of Wales supposedly replaced was used to present a lesson, work hard. Since Scotty didn't mention those stories, the stories are only in the sections talking about Scotty as a child, and since there are no sources given, we have to assume the stories were made up and inserted as lessons for young readers. That is a tactic many authors have used. The stories Scotty related are not presented with morals; they are just stories from his life.

Another questionable story is supposed to show "Alec's" character. He would not bet the knife he won running



because the minister had said, "... betting is a scheme of the devil." Everyone later in the book, in Scotty's telling, was betting like crazy on the dog races. Scotty Allan mentioned nothing about evils of betting, never coming close to either the minister's lesson or winning the knife story.

To further show "Alec's" character and love of animals Garst has the owner of a two-time sheep trials winner abusing his dog after it did not do well a third year in sheep trials. The story makes no sense describing the abuse, both physical and verbal, the owner heaped on the dog. How did it win two prior years in a row with such an owner? The story, though, allows "Alec" to rush to the rescue and ultimately get the dog which then saves "Alec" while he was a sheepherder with recalcitrant sheep. Scotty Allan doesn't mention having a dog as a child let alone that he rescued a dog or was saved by a dog. You'd think that would be a pretty big deal given Scotty's work later. It's a good "Disney" type story for kids though.

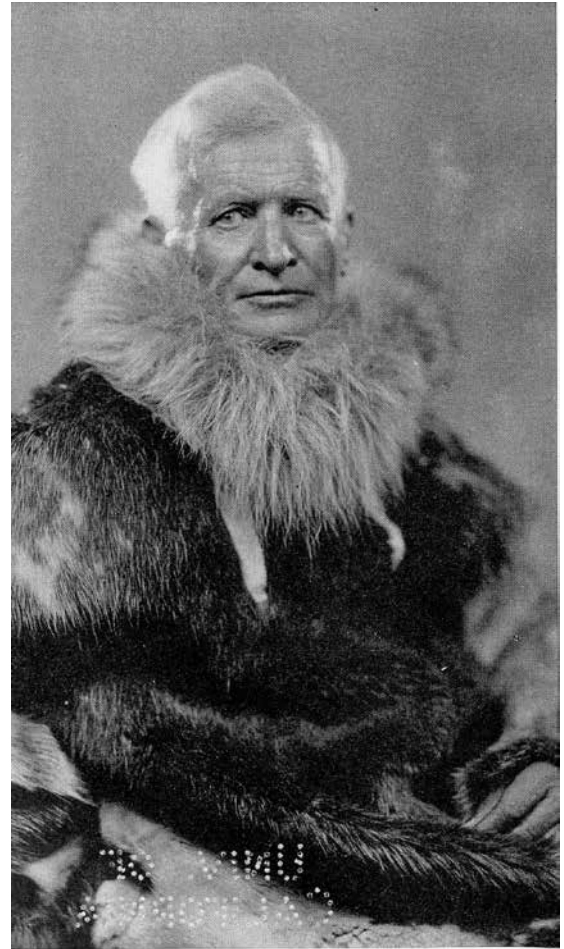
Of course the dog "Alec" rescued, Dandy, turned out to be the best dog in Scotland. "Alec" turned out to be the best runner. Then he just left the dog behind when he went to America. Garst built up their relationship so much that it's pretty weird for "Alec" to leave the dog behind while he was taking a horse to South Dakota. Of course the dog would have gotten in the way of the rest of the story.

Then there are stories about Scotty Allan that one would think are just made up since Scotty Allan never mentioned them. Garst has Scotty meeting Jack London who pumped him for information before ejaculating that Scotty was the "Malamute Kid," one of his characters. Other writers have picked that nugget up as fact about Scotty Allan. Be careful what you read but depend on the [Heirloom](#)

Towards the end there is an editorial about how prescient Scotty Allan was in supporting Billy Mitchel who advocated, prior to WWII, for air force power and against the dangers of the Japanese. Given that the book was written in 1946 that's maybe understandable hindsight, but out of place.

The only new information not in the autobiography was that Scotty Allan promoted winter sports in the Sierra, "He set out to establish winter sports in the Sierra Nevadas: dog racing, skiing, ski jumping. He threw himself into this project with zest, for this was what he liked. He wanted the city-bound folk of California to know of the delights of winter sports." This is true but no details are given. This is just appended to the end after Billy Mitchel. Also thrown in at the end was that Scotty Allan was at Treasure Island for the World's Fair in 1939 promoting winter sports. Again, there is nothing beyond that.

If you want to read about the various episodes of Scotty Allan's life, don't have access to the autobiography and want more than the [Heirloom](#) provides, then pick up this book in a library or on the internet. Otherwise depend on the [Heirloom](#) to give you the details elsewhere in this issue. Our editorial staff very seldom makes things up - there's too much that's real in Donner Summit history for that.



A. A. ("Scotty") Allan.

## 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.

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