

The Donner Summit

Heirloom

History and stories of the Donner Summit Historical Society

May, 2019 issue #129



Say It Ain't So!

We at the [Heirloom](#) pride ourselves in our reportage of Donner Summit history. No one does it better. So you can imagine our disappointment and chagrin in having reported about catfish in Catfish Pond, AKA Maiden's Retreat, and discovering that local lore (and our reportage) was not quite in sync with historical sources.

"Say It Ain't So..." is one of the more famous cultural quotes we know and goes back to 1920 when Shoeless Joe Jackson admitted he'd helped throw the World Series. Joe was a White Sox and he and his friends became known as the Black Sox for their betrayal of the game, sportsmanship, and their fans. Supposedly a young fan went up to Joe, hoping there could be some redemption from the scandal. "Say it ain't so, Joe," the boy said. But it was "so."

Whether the quote is apocryphal or not we can imagine the let-down for the young fan. It's hard to see your heroes turn out to have "feet of clay," for long held beliefs to be dashed, to find out "articles of faith" are not what we thought.

Here we have a story as equally appalling to conventional wisdom.

It has long been an article of faith that Catfish Pond, or Maiden's Retreat, right, on Donner Summit was stocked with catfish by the Chinese railroad workers during the construction of the transcontinental railroad (November, '10 [Heirloom](#)). There is "proof." There are catfish in the pond and in other small lakes down the western Sierra slope along the railroad line. The Chinese were on Donner Summit with a large workforce during the two year construction of the Tunnel 6 as well as the other Sierra tunnels. There was a large Chinese workers' camp right at the summit that lasted four years (August, '16 [Heirloom](#)). The Chinese ate better than the white workers. White workers' food came from the railroad and was monotonous. The Chinese were divided into gangs and each gang had a cook and someone to procure food. They ate varied, interesting, and healthy diets. (See the Chinese RR workers series: June-September, '16 [Heirlooms](#)). Given that the Chinese were in the neighborhood so long, and that catfish pond is relatively near the camp, it makes sense the Chinese would have planted their own fresh fish.

In addition, there was circumstantial evidence. Benjamin Bernard Redding was, among other things, a land agent for the CPRR and he had a background from back east in fish culture and stocking. He would become fish commissioner in California. His



Catfish Pond, or Maiden's Retreat on Donner Summit. See page 3 for a larger version.

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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



Catfish Pond, or Maiden's Retreat, is worth the short walk from Old 40. Bring bread or cookie crumbs for your new friends, right.

brother was the first settler at Ice Lakes on Donner Summit and did the first fish stocking there, hauling in several hundred trout. (Those stories will one day appear in the Heirloom so keep up your subscription.)

Well, there we have people connected to the railroad connected to fish stocking. One can imagine the suggestion being made and allowing the Chinese to do some fish stocking.

That has been the story on Donner Summit for decades* and one passed off to trusting tourists for almost as long. A popular short walk is from Old 40 to Catfish Pond along with some cookie and cracker crumbs. Toss them in and the catfish swarm. It's cheap entertainment. One lady, lacking crumbs, put her bare feet into the pond and pronounced the resulting pedicure delightful.

The reader must know that we could have left the story alone and not done anything to ruin the "truth" with a self-congratulatory exposé but we take our responsibility to share Donner Summit history seriously. Our readers deserve no less. And there are Pulitzers to consider.

The story here starts with a short article in the newspaper, (Sacramento Record Union April 28, 1882) "Some fine specimens of

(*see sidebar pg 4)



Some fine specimens of catfish were received in this city yesterday from Lake Angelina. Catfish were planted there a few years since by Seth Green.”

Sacramento Record Union April 28, 1882

catfish were received in this city yesterday from Lake Angelina. Catfish were planted there few years since by Seth Green.”

At first we thought it was an April Fool’s joke but we checked the date again and the publication date was some days afterwards and the Sacramento Record Union seemed to be a reputable news organ. No reputable periodical would engage in April Foolery. So we were spurred to search further. Might Seth Green have planted the catfish and not the Chinese? Could the resulting uproar harm the Heirloom?

The Los Angeles Herald carried an editorial (June 18, 1881) advocating fish planting.

The movement now apparent all over the United States, of which Mr. Seth Green has been the Prophet, and Judge Redding, of this State, one of the principal Apostles, viz., the intelligent breeding of fish where... fish did not exist before,.. has already been of incalculable benefit to the people of the United States.”

The “piscicultural [their word not the Heirloom’s] enthusiasm” advocated by the paper was resulting in the stocking of all kinds of fish everywhere so that “the angler may fill a basket as the result of a few hours fishing.” Note that the beginning of this editorial mentions Mr. Redding whose connection to Donner Summit we’ve already noted.

The Weekly Colusa Sun (May 28, 1881) mentioned a Seth Green too. “The work of the California Fish Commissioners has been attended with the most gratifying results. The best result has been a cheapening of one of the best and most desirable kinds of food. The finest salmon is so cheap in California that it is within the reach of every class...” Parenthetically the Sun also mentioned Mr. Redding. This article too advocated the stocking of fish, especially white fish, which the article said had been stocked in Donner Lake. Then,

The Commissioners have, this season placed in Donner and small lakes about 50,000 land locked salmon. The catfish brought here six years ago and placed in the sloughs and ponds and tributaries of the Sacramento are doing remarkably well. There are said to be millions of them, and complaint is even made that there are too many for other fish.

Further searching for Mr. Seth Green turned up the Santa Rosa Press Democrat (October 1, 1883). Seth Green was “the veteran fish culturist, who is known to the entire world” and who was involved with fish breeding – developing hybrids to improve fish. He was also involved with “propagating mosquitoes” which should endear him to people on Donner Summit – see the sidebar on the next page. There were a lot more articles about Mr. Green and his research and views but this is not a piscatorial review.



Seth Green, 1882 aged 65

*From the November, '10 Heirloom
Mark McLaughlin, the “Storm King” and historical author says in a web article, “Chinese Catfish Pond: Donner Pass” that he thinks the stories are true. Norm Saylor, of the Donner Summit Historical Society thinks the stories are true too and says the catfish get larger with the decrease in elevation, which makes sense. There are no indigenous catfish in the Sierra which means the catfish had to come from somewhere. McLaughlin says the CPRR supplied the Chinese with fresh seafood and so maybe the cooks stocked nearby ponds. The Chinese worked on Tunnel 6 for two years. If the catfish story is true, then since the Chinese were in the neighborhood for a long time, shouldn’t there be a pond or two resident catfish?

On the 1st of June an Eastern trout was caught in Donner Lake that weighed one pound and three ounces. It was sent to Fish Commissioner B. B. Redding, who planted these fish in Donner and other mountain lakes. On June 1st, in that little mountain recess, called Independence Lake, four hundred and thirty nine trout were the result of one day's fishing.

Grass Valley Morning Union June 7, 1881

So it looked like Mr. Seth Green or associates of his might have done the planting of the catfish on Donner Summit.

Then we found an article in the Truckee Republican (April 19, 1882) titled, "Cardwell Planted Them"

A short time since a railroad man living at the summit sent to a friend in Sacramento a catfish which measured over two feet in length. It was taken from one of the small lakes near the Summit Hotel, and the man who caught it writes to his friend that Seth Green was the man who first planted them there, whereupon Jim Cardwell, who formerly kept the Summit Hotel, and subsequently the Cardwell House in Truckee, gets mad and rushes into print. In a letter to the Sacramento Bee he says: It is a mistake about Seth Green planting catfish in Lake Mary, or in planting fish of any kind in Lake Mary or Lake Angeline. I put the first trout and chubbs in those lakes in 1872; and three or four years ago O.C. Jackson, of the police force of our city, made me a present of 400 or 500 catfish, and Mr. Jackson and myself put them in Lake Mary. I think that I ought to know something about the matter, as I lived almost continuously at the Summit from 1864 to 1877. B. B. Redding offered to stock both lakes, but I thought if he did so the fish would belong to the public and they would soon clean them out."

There is one more piece of circumstantial evidence which comes from the Marysville Appeal on June 13, 1876. Mr. Cardwell (above) was quite an entrepreneur and one of the founders of the Donner Summit/Truckee/Tahoe tourist industry. He owned a number of hotels (see ad to the right) from time to time and held special events to attract tourists (see the "Ball in the Snow" on page 16). One event was a "Sierra Excursion" during which he took forty tourists to Truckee fisheries. Mr. Cardwell owned a number of breeding ponds and "extended every courtesy imaginable." He helped several ladies catch "very handsome little trout." Then the party headed for a Tahoe steamer ride followed by music and a train ride. Since Mr.

HOTELS.

SUMMIT HOTEL,

*At the Summit of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, on the
Central Pacific Railroad.*

JAMES CARDWELL, Proprietor

This Hotel is the FINEST SUMMER RESORT in the State of California. The Climate is cool and pleasant in the Summer months; the Hotel overlooks "Donner Lake," and is about a pleasant drive from the famous Soda Springs.

A FINE LIVERY STABLE

in connection with the Hotel, at which Fast Turn-outs can be had at any time.

The Table will be supplied with all the Delicacies of the season.

For INVALIDS' no better resort than this can be found in the World, as the air is always Pure and Invigorating

37.19

California Farmer and Journal of Useful Sciences

October 31, 1872

Summit Hotel ad when James Cardwell was proprietor

Cardwell owned breeding ponds it makes sense that he'd be interested in fish stocking a little pond on Donner Summit not far from his hotel.

The only saving grace for the original accepted version of the catfish story is that no one mentions stocking Catfish Pond or Maiden's Retreat. Does it make sense, though, for the Chinese to stock only Catfish Pond and not the more easily accessible Lake Angeline (Angela)?

Propagating Mosquitoes.— This is a new branch of industry initiated by Seth Green, the fish culturist. He says: "Some folks think mosquitoes can't be hatched artificially, but they can. All you have to do is to fill a few barrels with rain-water, and you will raise all you want, and enough to annoy your neighbors for miles around. I have raised them by the bushel to feed to young fish." Here's encouragement for some of our enterprising frontier settlers to go to trapping mosquitoes for the fish hatcheries. There is no use allowing Mr. Green to have a monopoly of the business. By-and-by he will be asking for protection. Who knows! Then there will be a corner on mosquito bars. [sic]

Sacramento Daily Union February 16, 1884

The Sesquicentennial Is Coming

Pt III

What the RR Meant

Last month we ran the second part of this article about the meaning of the transcontinental railroad and fitting it into the context of the 19th Century. This month we have Part III as well as a list of events we've been planning for the start of the celebration in May and running until Labor Day, 2019.

2019 is the Sesquicentennial of the first Transcontinental Railroad. The railroad is just one of the many firsts for Donner Summit but it was important for the country as well. In Part III we talk about what 19th Century people thought about the railroad. After reading those three articles your newly acquired sesquicentennial and railroad perspective will make you so erudite you will be able to enter conversation on the matter with confidence. Take a look at our website and FaceBook pages and the list of events: talks, newspaper articles, music on China Wall, walks and hikes, historical exhibits and the Passport, Then/Now's, and the Golden Spike drink. People, organizations and businesses in Truckee and on Donner Summit will be participating.

Two days before the railroad's completion and the driving of the Golden Spike The Sacramento Union said (May 8, 1869) that the railroad was "a victory over space, the elements, and the stupendous mountain barriers separating the East from the West, and apparently defying the genius and energy of man to surmount. Every heart was gladdened by the contemplation of the grand achievement."

The long anticipated completion of the railroad in 1869 was a national event. There were huge celebrations.

Once the immediate reporting was done, book authors took up the celebratory task. Alfred Richardson in Beyond the Mississippi, published in 1869, said, "...this magic key will unlock our Golden Gate, and send surging through its rocky portals a world-encircling tide of travel, commerce, and Christian civilization."

The celebrations and the florid language were appropriate. The Transcontinental railroad was an amazing feat of 19th Century engineering. Nothing like it had ever been done before. Capital had been raised on a scale not seen before. Congress had to pass enabling legislation it had never before considered. It was the greatest construction project of the time using the largest wage-labor force of the 19th Century.

The results too were admirable. The new railroad tied the country together. It opened California to the country and to the world. The land of dreams and better lives – the Golden State – was accessible. Emigration to California was spurred and California's goods could get to the rest of the country. Mail was faster, the transportation of goods was faster. Besides California, whole areas of the country were opened, the resources to be used by a growing nation. Towns and cities were born. News could travel and be read while it was still relevant. Innovation was spurred.

Albert Richardson, in Beyond the Mississippi (1869), listed the benefits he saw for 19th Century America: The road will protect our military interests, open natural resources, revolutionize trade and finance, and strengthen us socially and politically. "Great indeed must be the vitality of the republic when the warm blood from its heart pulsates to these remote extremities" because the railroad would "Do away with isolation; cut through the mountains! This enchanter's wand will make New York acknowledged queen of cities and San Francisco her eldest sister..." You can almost hear the stentorian cadence of someone giving a speech and exhorting the audience with each item.

There were negatives as well of course. The coming of the railroad was a harbinger to the destruction of the great buffalo herds and the Native Americans. It was a nail in the frontier's coffin and many small towns, bypassed by the railroad, simply disappeared, upending lives.

In keeping with the age of wonder that was the 19th Century, the entire country was able to participate in the driving of the Golden Spike at Promontory Point, Utah on May 10, 1869. The transcontinental railroad was finished and the dignitaries had gathered. The driving of the Golden Spike was to be the ceremonial finish. A wire had been attached to the spike maul and another wire to the Golden Spike. Each strike of the maul on the Golden Spike would send a click across the telegraph wires to the country. The nation would instantaneously know the tracks from the east and the west were joined. It was truly an age of wonder.

Governor Stanford missed the spike on his first strike but the telegraph operator dutifully clicked the key anyway. Bells rang; people rejoiced.

The railroad was done.

With the driving of the Golden Spike there could be real celebration of accomplishment and opportunity. Festivities were the order of the day. Sacramento, the starting point of the western portion of the road, and San Francisco had huge celebrations that must have been planned far in advance. There were also celebrations in Virginia City, Stockton, Petaluma, Placerville, and Vallejo.

In Sacramento there had been ads in the papers drawing people to the celebration. The Sacramento Union said on May 8, 1869 that the completion of the railroad was “a victory over space, the elements, and the stupendous mountain barriers separating the East from the West, and apparently defying the genius and energy of man to surmount. Every heart was gladdened by the contemplation of the grand achievement.”

Sacramento had a grand parade and The Daily Alta California reported, “A more favorable day could not be asked. A bright, unclouded sky, the sun tempered with refreshing air, Sacramento never saw a more favorable occasion for a public celebration. At dawn the people were moving; ...At an early hour a train arrived with firemen of Nevada Engine Company, No. 1, from Gold Hill,... fine stalwart fellows, and well capable of battling with the destroying element anywhere... [more firemen arrived from elsewhere]... About the same hour the boat arrived from San Francisco, bringing five bands... Every manufacturing establishment and mercantile house is gaily decorated... There is a great profusion of bunting and flags... The streets are now crowded, the people expecting the commencement of the exercises by the announcement of the driving of the last spike... Everybody is in holiday garb. The hotels are full... The scenes in

the principal streets are indescribably lively. Constantly steamers, trains, cars and country vehicles are arriving, adding confusion to the throng... One thousand school children from city and country are here to participate in the fruition and the hope of their parents.”

“A minute... before 10 o'clock the completion was announced of the laying of the last rail and the driving of the last spike on the Central Pacific Railroad. Immediately following the report there went up a most unearthly din, produced by all the engines owned by the [railroad] Company, which were gaily decorated and arranged along the city front, with a chorus of all the stationary engines and city boats and the ringing of city bells, which continued ten minutes, during which persons of weak tympana put their fingers in their ears, and rejoiced when the chorus was over. Thousands were present who never before and never will again hear such a grand diapason. The engineers vied with one another in producing screeches and sounding notes. There was harmony and discord... All the principal streets were packed, rendering locomotion difficult. The procession commenced moving at eleven o'clock.”

The parade included bands; the militia; the National Guard accompanied by artillery; firemen; machinists; blacksmiths; boilermakers; wagons with machinery; contingents of civic organizations; a boiler and attached smokestack; 29 omnibuses, carriages, and wagons of school children; private societies in parade attire; politicians; a contingent of weavers; carriages; buggies; and horsemen; rail workers; wagons from the telegraph company and Wells Fargo; etc. Participants

arrived in 18 trains. There was bunting, banners with stirring quotes, and flags; speeches and poems; there was music; and there was prayer. There were throngs of people, even some of the workers who'd laid the 10 miles of track in one day. The parade took hours to pass.

The first shovel used to build the railroad was exhibited, as were the first tie and a picture of the last one.

There were speeches and the San Francisco Bulletin reported Judge Nathan Bennet's speech at the San Francisco celebration. He said this triumph of railroad construction was wholly owing to the fact that his fellow Californians were "composed of the right materials, derived from the proper origins... In the veins of our people flows the commingled blood of the four greatest nationalities of modern days. The impetuous daring and dash of the French, the philosophical spirit of the German, the unflinching solidity of the English, and the light-hearted impetuosity of the Irish, have all contributed each its appropriate share... A people deducing

....now that the mass of our people can stop to reflect upon the Grand results which has caused such vast rejoicings over the State within the past week, we shall all begin to see and feel the full value of our State, to Our Country, and to the World, the boundless good which has been achieved for us all by the Grand, Triumphant and Gloriously successful COMPLETION OF THE PACIFIC RAILROAD.

California Farmer and Journal of Useful Sciences May 13, 1869

its origins from such races, and condensing their best traits into its national life, is capable of any achievements." It was stirring. Could anything derail California or the nation?

Equally stirring was Governor Haight's address in Sacramento. "Fellow Citizens: — We meet today to celebrate one of the most remarkable events of this eventful age, one whose influence upon the future of our country and upon human destiny it would be difficult properly to measure; one of the greatest triumphs of American enterprise, engineering and constructive skill and energy of which our history can boast. It ushers in a new era in American progress, and while it is an event of world-wide significance, it is one of special importance to our own country and our own State.

"I would that its great results to California could be set forth on this day of rejoicing by eloquence more worthy of the

theme than any poor efforts of mine; but in consenting to accept the invitation with which you have honored me, to be your speaker on this occasion, I have rather yielded to the necessities of official position than assumed a task to which I felt adequate...

"The day is at hand when a more splendid civilization than any which has preceded it will arise upon these distant shores. A vast population will pour into this Canaan of the New World. Tourists will be attracted by the most sublime scenery on the continent, and thousands will come to repair physical constitutions racked by the extremes of climate, the inclement air, and the miasma of the states east of the mountains."

Enjoy the Sesquicentennial of the Transcontinental Railroad.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS, DONNER SUMMIT-TRUCKEE TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILROAD SESQUICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION MAY-AUGUST 2019

- May 4-5, Truckee Tahoe Community Choir (<https://www.truckeechorus.org/>), Presenting Historical Review
May 10, Ribbon Cutting Kickoff at The Truckee Train Depot, 12 Noon.
May 10, Truckee Public Arts Commission Reception, 8924 Donner Pass Rd., Truckee Donner Recreation and Parks Community Center, Opening show of the celebration of the Railroad. 5 PM
May 11, Historical Talk, the Meaning of the Railroad. 7pm, Truckee Tahoe Airport Conference Room
May 18, Historical Talk by Norm Saylor, businesses and History of Old Hiway 40, Donner State Park Visitors Center, 5:30PM
May 20, Dedication of Plaque, George Wyman Foundation. First Motorcycle over Donner Summit. Also, a Memorial Motorcycle ride from the site of the Summit Hotel to the Visitors Center, Train Depot Truckee. Time to be announced and weather dependent.
May 18 Truckee River Railroad for Kids and Adults Truckee Regional Park 11-3PM
May 20 George Wyman Dedication visitors' center downtown Noon
May 31, Music on China Wall. Truckee Tahoe High School band to have a concert on China Wall, Donner Summit. 6PM
- June 2019
June 1, Historical Talk, Discussion of the "Firsts" that occurred over Donner Summit due to the railroad Truckee Tahoe Airport Conference Room, 7:00pm.
June 8 Tunnel 6 Clair Tappaan Lodge on Donner Summit - 5PM (optional BBQ dinner follows at 6:15 - RSVP 426-3632 - \$15)
June 10 Locomotive technologies Pizza on the Hill 11509 Northwoods Blvd Truckee 6 PM
June 15, Interpretive Walk, Town of Boca site. 10:00am
June 15, Historical Talk, Boca Brewery, Steam and Beer. Donner State Park Visitors Center. 5:30 PM
June 22 Historical Talk, Chinese and their Importance to the Railroad. Truckee Tahoe Airport Conf Rm., 7:00pm
And Bill George video "Sacramento and the Transcontinental railroad"
June 29, Historical Talk, Snow Sheds-Fires and other Related Subjects. Truckee Tahoe Airport Conf Rm. 7:00pm
June 29 Truckee River Railroad for Kids and Adults Truckee Regional Park 11-3PM
- July 2019
July 4, Town of Truckee Annual Parade. Theme: Transc. RR 150th Anniversary. Starts 10:00am at the High School
July 6 Truckee River Railroad for Kids and Adults Truckee Regional Park 11-3PM
July 18, Historical Talk, History of the Construction of the Railroad, Tahoe Donner Giving Fund Dinner
Tahoe Donner Lodge 12850 Northwoods Blvd. 5:30 PM
July 20, Historical Talk, Lincoln Highway. Donner Memorial State Park, Visitors Center. 5:30 pm
July 20 Truckee River Railroad for Kids and Adults Truckee Regional Park 11-3PM
July 27, Historical Talk, Logging Railroads. Truckee Tahoe Airport Conference Room, 7:00pm
July 28, Trestle Tour Drive/Walk. Meet at 9:00am at the Railroad Museum, 10075 Donner Pass Road, Truckee
Driving/Walking Tour of old Logging Trestles.
- August 2019
August 3 Truckee River Railroad for Kids and Adults Truckee Regional Park 11-3PM
Aug 3, Historical Talk. Truckee Lake Tahoe Railway. Truckee Tahoe Airport Conference Room. 7:00pm
Aug 10, Historical Walk. Jibboom Street, History of the Red-Light District. Time Pending
Aug 10, Historical Talk, Art Truckee, Red-Light District of Truckee, History of the Women, Time Pending
Aug 17, Historical Talk, Vigilantism. Donner Memorial State Park, Visitors Center. 5:30pm
August 17 Truckee River Railroad for Kids and Adults Truckee Regional Park 11-3PM
Aug 24, Historical Talk, Henness Pass, Truckee Tahoe Airport Conference Room. 7:00pm
Aug 31, Final Picnic, Truckee River Railroad, Regional Park Truckee, 11-3PM.
- Sept. 14 Truckee River Railroad for Kids and Adults Truckee Regional Park 11-3PM
Sept. 14-15 Donner Party Hike event (Mt. Judah Lodge Sugar Bowl and the State Park) donnerpartyhike.com
Sept. 28 Truckee River Railroad for Kids and Adults Truckee Regional Park 11-3PM

Updated listed available on Facebook: "Donner Summit-Truckee Golden Spike Celebration" Or via: <https://www.goldspike.org/>

Subject to change.

Walking

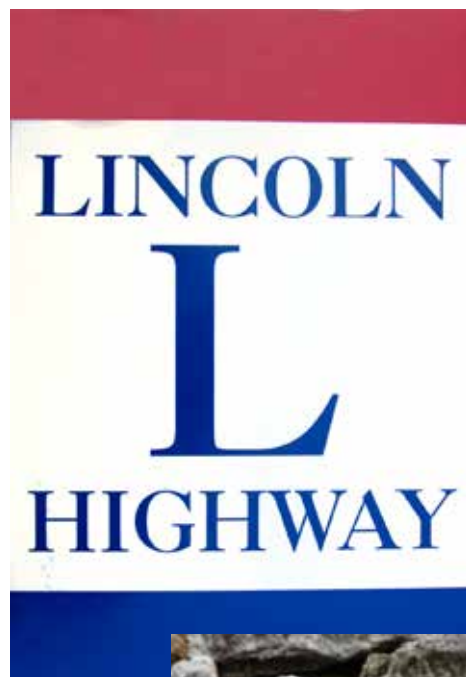
The Lincoln Highway on Donner Summit

Last month in "Serendipity and the Lincoln Highway" we told the story of the editor of this august publication, the owner of a 1914 custom Model T, and a PBS film producer. The car owner, Rob Squires, wanted to find a place to photograph his old car on the Lincoln Highway. Separately, PBS guy Brent Baader, wanted to film an old car on the Lincoln Highway. The Serendipitous coming together produced some really nice pictures of remnants of the Lincoln Highway.

Photography accomplished, our editorial staff considered using a collection of photographs we've been saving for an article about walking along the Lincoln Highway on Donner Summit. The time seemed ripe since summer and walking/hiking season is almost here (i.e. snow is melting) and interest had been piqued by last month's article and photographs.

There are a number of spots on Donner Summit where the Lincoln Highway (there are a number of references to the Lincoln Highway in articles and pictures in past [Heirlooms](#) in our article and picture indices) can be walked and you can get a feel for what travel on the first transcontinental highway was like: Summit Canyon, below the east side of Donner Pass; along what used to be Lake Van Norden; at Big Bend in two places; and at the Eagle Lakes exit from I-80.

As you walk along you'll come to the markers here on this page. Right, is the standard Lincoln Highway logo that used to be found all across the country. There is at least one reproduction at the beginning of the walk down Summit Canyon. Below right is a reproduction of the concrete Lincoln Highway markers put up by the Boy Scouts in 1928. Below left is an original marker and interpretive sign at Big Bend. Below center is one of our 20 Mile Museum signs along Old 40 west of Big Bend.



Hwy 40 Scenic Bypass Lincoln Highway

History

"An splitting of the road is sure to follow this contact with Nature in her majesty, and Self becomes smaller and smaller as we realize the immensity of things in traversing this country."
1924 *Lincoln Highway Official Road Guide of the Lincoln Highway*

The Lincoln Highway, which strung together existing routes, in 1913 was the nation's first road built by President Lincoln and was the first transcontinental highway. It was a time when there were only about 150 cross country trips by automobile annually. The Lincoln Highway Association had a vision: "a continuous open highway from the Atlantic to the Pacific, open to all... without toll charges." The road cut across the river here in a remaining section of the original 1913 Lincoln Highway.

The new Lincoln Highway standards called for a design "predicated upon an average of 15,000 passenger automobiles per day traveling at a speed of 35 miles per hour and 5,000 motor trucks... traveling at an average speed of 15 miles per hour."

The Official Lincoln Highway guide said: "The usual pleasure party, however, with easy driving and only nominal amount of sight-seeing... can make the trip (cross country) in twenty to thirty days with ease (down from 60 before the highway). Driving approximately by seven hours per day. This estimate means that approximately 18 miles per hour must be made during the driving time as an average."

Advice for travelers from the 1924 Official Guide
Do not carry loaded firearms, do not forget colored goggles or camphor ice, do not feed water without first washing through it, do not drink alkali water, and "Don't wear new shoes." Traveling equipment needed included chains, shovel, axe, jacks, tires and inner tubes, and a set of tools.

If real trouble occurs "build a sagesbrush fire" to summon help.

A Good Story

The school of the laterate can now be heard here. It was tough going crossing the country even with the Lincoln Highway. In 1919 the first transcontinental Army convoy averaged 33 miles per day along the Lincoln Highway route. Dwight Eisenhower was a young officer on the trip and it was the memory of that trip that spurred him to build the interstate highway system when he became president.

Things to do right here

You can walk the old Lincoln highway route you see across the river. It's the dirt road to the right at Big Bend. Walk beside old cabins and enjoy the river and look for old bridge foundations. Can you find dates on any existing bridges or old abutments?

This sign sponsored by the Hill Family of Sonoma Lakes
Copyright 2010 Donner Summit Historical Society www.donnerhistoricalsociety.org

The Lincoln Highway at Big Bend

There are two places at Big Bend to find the Lincoln Highway. Park at the fire station and look directly across the street at the garage. Walk around the right hand side and back about 20 yards. You'll come to the Lincoln Highway marker and interpretive sign in the left-hand picture on the previous page. From there walk left, or east and you'll come to the picture here on the right. This was a USFS building that was partly a stable.



Go back west from the marker and the old highway merges onto the pavement but just a bit further there is a dirt road that goes off to the left. That is the old Lincoln Highway and leads around past cabins to a USFS trailhead and then along the river to the overpass where you can't go any further. It's a nice walk along the river especially when the river is full.



Above: old USFS building on the Lincoln Highway. Left, summer cabin between the Yuba River and the Lincoln Highway. Below, old bridge abutment on the Yuba River.



Above: scene along the Lincoln Highway (right cleared space in the picture) and the Yuba River at Big Bend.

Right, rapids in the Yuba River.



Left: Trails West marker for the Emigrant Trail at the side of the Lincoln Highway just beyond the USFS trailhead to Huysink Lake.





The Lincoln Highway at Eagle Lakes Exit

Take the Eagle Lakes exit from I-80 (the next exit west from Cisco Grove) and go to the south side of the freeway. (Parenthetically, you can walk Old Highway 40 along the river between the east and west-bound I-80 lanes here at the bridge.) The road turns to dirt. Go left. You can drive a ways and then park to walk more of the highway.

If you were to turn right where you turned left, above, you'll go uphill to the railroad tracks where the highway used to cross. On the other side of the tracks you can see the continuation of the Lincoln Highway but there is barbed wire there. Follow that road remnant and you'll come to Crystal Lake which used to be a railroad stop with hotel. It's private today.

Top: view of the Lincoln Highway from across I-80 between Cisco and Eagle Lakes exit. Upper right, view of the highway at the Eagle Lakes exit (I-80 peeking in on the left). Right and below views along the Lincoln Highway at the Eagle Lakes exit. below right, rock work near the freeway of the Lincoln Highway.





The Lincoln Highway at Summit Canyon

In the introduction we mentioned that there is a stretch of Lincoln Highway along what was Lake Van Norden. It's not so scenic so we're leaving out its pictures. If you want to find it go to the Van Norden Dam opposite Soda Springs Ski Area. There is a dirt road to the left of the dam. That will go a few miles over the railroad tracks, past some ski club lodges, then to the road into Sugar Bowl, and finally past Lake Mary to the entrance to the best part of the Lincoln Highway on Donner Summit, Summit Canyon.

You can also get here by going to the top of Old 40 to the large gray building now called Summit Haus. You'll see the shed here to the right. In front of the shed is a road that goes downhill. Park here and walk down to the sharp right turn or park at the parking lot down there. At that sharp right turn you are at the Pacific Crest trailhead. Go left to the trail in the picture above right. That's the old Lincoln Highway, the first transcontinental highway. At one time thousands of automobiles were going through here each year (between 20 and 25,000 in 1923 according to the Lincoln Highway Association). Walk down the path and you'll come the view on the right and then the 1914 underpass, right. That's Mt. Stephens in the background and the Donner Summit Bridge (1926) through the underpass.



The photograph at top was taken on the Lincoln Highway. Some portions are very rough due to erosion and the installation of the petroleum pipeline and fiber optic cable. The views can be great.



Views along the Lincoln Highway in Summit Canyon. Top, You can make out the Lincoln Highway across the center of the photograph. Old Highway 40 is above.

Above is the underpass from the north side. Below that is the Lincoln Highway leading away from the underpass. The picture upper right is a distant view of that spot. Right is the Lincoln Highway with Mt. Stephens in the background showing erosion. The replica marker on the right side of page 9 is just up the hill here and below Old 40.



Here are scenes further down the canyon showing Lincoln Highway rock work, the old road leading through the forest.



Signs painted on rocks along the Lincoln Highway for tourists.



The signs today don't look as good as this. These have been run through the DSHS's MX-1000 historical rejuvenator.

The sign below for the Tamrak Lodge looks just like this and has not been run through the rejuvenator.



The bridge on the Lincoln Highway here, right, is long gone but the rock work and metal are still there.



Left and right, two views of the Lincoln Highway today.



Special Bonus:

The "chimney" to the the right is down at Rainbow and is along the Lincoln Highway although it came later. See the February "10 [Heirloom](#). This view is looking down at the "chimney" and Old 40 in the background.



From the DSHS Archives

The ad at right goes with the Mr. Cardwell and the catfish article that starts on page 1 and comes from the Sacramento Daily Union, June 24, 1874. Here is one of the special events Mr. Cardwell used to put on to attract visitors to the area.

Below is a newspaper notice about a subsequent owner of the Summit Hotel. To the right is an ad for the Summit Hotel owned by the same proprietor. Some of our history, even on Donner Summit, is not that savory.

BALL IN THE SNOW.



THE GREAT EVENT OF EACH Summer will be repeated this year at the **SUMMIT HOTEL**, Summit of the Sierras, by a **Ball in the Snow**. The snow is from six to thirty feet deep, the weather not cold, the air life-giving, the scenery sublime. Cardwell & Gordon will lay out one of their **GRANDEST SUPPERS**. Parties can leave Sacramento at 2 P. M. and return by 1 P. M. the next day. **THURSDAY**, June 25th, is the date. A special car will be attached to the Overland Train.

FARES (including Ball and Supper), ROUND TRIP:

From	Gent and Lady.	Single Ticket.
Sacramento	\$15 00	\$10 00
Rocklin and Roseville.....	14 00	9 00
Auburn.....	13 00	8 00
Colfax	10 00	7 50
Gold Run and Dutch Flat...	8 00	5 00

Music by **CHURCH, JONES & BEEBE**, of Sacramento. The management will be of the most select and perfect kind. A grander and cheaper trip or more delightful excursion cannot be conceived.

Tickets at A. Dennery's, J street; Gates' Drug Store, J street; and at all the Depots on the road to the Summit. j22-4t

The Summit All Right.

EDITOR REPUBLICAN: Last night, J. Goulden discharged the two Chinamen who were employed as cooks in the Summit Hotel. The Chinamen were completely taken by surprise, and at first thought it was a joke, but when Mr. Goulden paid them their wages, it convinced them of the fact that "the Chinese must go." The Chinamen left on the first train for Dutch Flat, with the avowed intention of leaving California for China on the next steamer. **Doto.**

SUMMIT, Feb. 12, 1886.

Truckee Republican February 13, 1886

SUMMIT HOTEL.

Ideal Mountain Resort at Summit of the Sierras, California.

If you would see nature's wonderland visit this ideal resort. Picturesque scenery, that rivals the Alps of Switzerland, everywhere greets the eye. Lakes, rivers and mountains all charm the tourist and pleasure seeker. Yea, more, here is the sportsman's paradise. He realizes his dreams. Joseph Golden is the genial host and progressive representative of this world-famous resort. He is also proprietor of the Soda Springs Station Hotel, which commands generous mention as an ideal resort.

Truckee Republican August 21, 1907

Book Review

“Let the pilgrim to these Sierra shrines... leave the beaten line of travel...Let him quit the scene where sawdust chokes and stains the icy streams....” Instead let him “Plunge into the unbroken forests — into the deep canons [sic] ; climb the high peaks ; be alone a while and free. Look into nature... [it] will make a man better, physically and mentally. He will realize from it... the value of high mountain exercise in restoring wasted nervous energy and reviving the zest and capacity for brain work. He will find in it a moral tonic... and come back to the world... more patient and tolerant, more willing to... work.”

Benjamin Avery

Californian Pictures in Prose and Verse

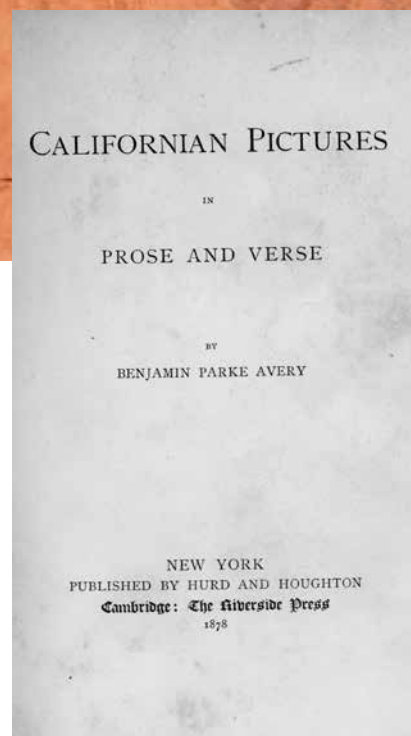
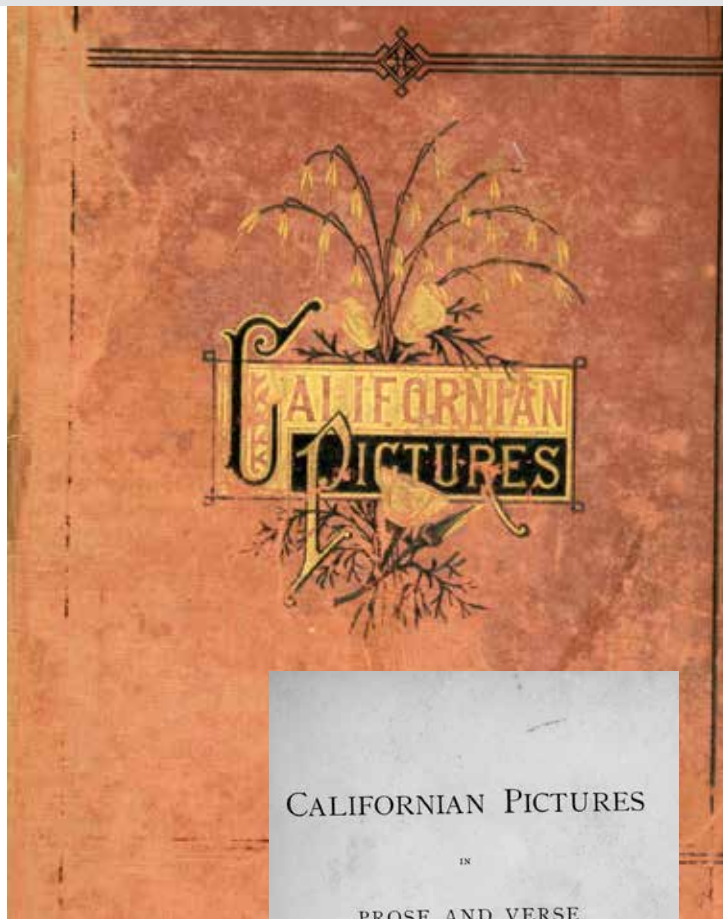
Benjamin Avery
344 pages 1878

To get an idea of what it really was like in the old days: what people did, how they lived, what the ramifications of what they did are for today, why we do what we do, etc. we can read history texts. Then we have to rely on what the author chooses to tell us, what facts she decides are important, what their meanings are, and of course we have to navigate author prejudices or preferences. History texts are good – this august publication the Heirloom is one example.

It can also be useful and fun to read primary texts – what people wrote at the time. We have to navigate those prejudices too and they can be substantial, but those prejudices help tell us about history too. Reading initial reports of the Donner Party, for example, tell us that people in those days were just like us today. The telling is lurid and would fit well in today’s supermarket tabloids and “fake news” outlets.

That’s by way of explaining why this month’s book review is of a 19th Century book. Californian Pictures in Prose and Verse is a slice of time in California, written for armchair travelers, about the wonders of California. It must have made readers wish they too could trace Benjamin Avery’s travels. My copy of the book came from New York (besides used books there are also a number of variations of ebooks you can access for free.) I can imagine a previous owner of my copy of Californian Pictures... sitting in his study in New York City, brandy in one hand, book in the other, a fire in the fireplace, dog curled up on his slipper-covered feet, imagining traveling to California, entranced by the wonders Avery describes.

In general, one has to like words to delve into 19th Century literature. It was a different time and things went at a slower pace. The vocabulary is richer and the sentence structure more complicated. Delving into Avery’s book is like that. His descriptions are amazingly evocative. For example, here, after describing Castle Peak and the climb to the summit, Avery says, “grass and flowers grow luxuriantly, and swarms of humming-birds hover over the floral feast, their brilliant iridescent plumage flashing in the sun, and the movement of their wings filling the air with a



bee-like drone.” Don’t you wish you could be there? I should note, too, that the top of Castle Pk. is just like that summer.

Coming up the “Western Slope” on the train, Avery must have gotten off the train for a walk, “Once more the quail is heard piping to its mates, the heavy whirring flight of the grouse startles the meditative rambler, and the pines give forth again their surf-like roar to the passing breeze, waving their plumed tops in slow and graceful curves across a sky wonderfully clear and blue.” You don’t rush through prose like that; you slow down, savor it rolling the words around on your tongue, and imagine the images.

There are only 13 traditional pictures or drawings in this book because the book is not a picture book in the traditional sense. The other 331 pages are full of pictures in prose, like the ones above, and verse, describing California and of course, Donner Summit. Avery called them “word sketches” or “pictures in rhyme.” Section after section is described by Avery in “word sketches” as evocative as actual pictures. For example, he visited Summit Soda Springs, the original Soda Springs on Donner Summit, and took a trip to the top of Tinker’s Knob “(named after an old mountaineer, with humorous reference to his eccentric nasal feature)... Clambering over the broken rock to the top of Tinker's Knob a magnificent panorama is unfolded. Over three thousand feet below winds the American River, — a ribbon of silver in a concavity of sombre green, seen at intervals only in starry flashes, like diamonds set in emerald.”

Taking the train to Truckee Avery says, “The descent to Donner from the granite peaks at its western end is abrupt and rugged, and the view from those peaks is remarkable for its stern grandeur.” Then at Lake Tahoe, “The transparency of the water is so great that small white objects sunk in it can be seen to a depth of more than one hundred feet. Sailing or rowing over the translucent depths, not too far from shore, one sees the beautiful trout far below, and sometimes their shadows on the light bottom. It is like hovering above a denser atmosphere.”



Section of Snow-shed.

Lake Tahoe

“The most extensive and celebrated of the whole group is Lake Tahoe, in El Dorado County, only fifteen miles southwardly from Donner Lake and the line of the Central Pacific Railroad.

Its elevation above the sea, exceeding six thousand feet; its great depth, reaching a maximum of more than one thousand five hundred feet; its exquisite purity and beauty of color; the grandeur of its snowy mountain walls; its fine beaches and shore groves of pine, — make it the most picturesque and attractive of all the California lakes. Profound as it is, it is wonderfully transparent, and the sensation upon floating over and gazing into its still bosom, where the granite boulders can be seen far, far below, and large trout dart swiftly, incapable of concealment, is almost akin to that one might feel in a balloon above the earth. The color of the water changes with its depth, from a light, bluish green, near the shore, to a darker green, farther out, and finally to a blue so deep that artists hardly dare put it on canvas. When the lake is still, it is one of the loveliest sights conceivable, flashing silvery in the sun, or mocking all the colors of the sky, while the sound of its soft beating on the beach is like the music of the sea-shell.”

Avery wrote a number of books and magazine articles (for Overland Monthly for example) about his travels (see also “Summering the Sierra” Pts. I and II in the June & August, ’11 Heirlooms for example.) He begins California Pictures... with a description of California’s two mountain ranges, the Coast Range, separated by the Golden Gate, and the Sierra Nevada. The he goes on to the Central Valley and large and small lakes, passes, etc. This inventory of topographical diversity acquaints the reader with the richness of California and sets up the narrative for the focus on specific areas. There’s nothing surprising here for us because the geography has not changed.

Moving into the mountains, Donner Summit is first mentioned when noting that a forerunner of P.G.&E., the South Yuba Canal Company, had dammed Meadow Lake (north of Fordyce) and, near Devil’s Peak, was using Devil’s Peak Lake (today’s Kidd Lake) and nearby lakes. Water released from those

lakes kept the So. Yuba flowing in summer before water was siphoned off downstream for mining. Presciently Avery

Snowsheds

“These sheds, covering the track for thirty-five miles, are massive arched galleries of large timbers, shady and cool, blackened with the smoke of engines, sinuous, and full of strange sounds. Through the vents in the roof the interstices between the roof-boards, the sunlight falls in countless narrow bars, pallid as moonshine. In the roof standing in a curve the effect is precisely that of the interior of some old Gothic cloister or abbey hall, with the light breaking through narrow side windows. The footstep awakes echoes, and the tones of the voice are full and resounding. A coming train announces itself miles away by the tinkling crepitation communicated along the rails, which gradually swells into a metallic ring, followed by a thunderous roar that shakes the ground; then the shriek of the engine-valve, and in a flash the engine itself bursts into view, the bars of sunlight playing across its dark front with kaleidoscopic effect... The approach of a train at night is heralded by a sound like the distant roaring of surf, half an hour before the train itself arrives; and when the locomotive dashes into view, the dazzling glare of its head-light in the black cavern, shooting like a meteor from the Plutonic abyss, is wild and awful.”

notes that when mining stops the water would be used to “irrigate countless gardens and vineyards on the lower slopes of the Sierra.” Indeed, the canal companies were in trouble once the State Supreme Court outlawed hydraulic mining in 1884 (six years after this book was published). Fortunately, orchards were being planted in the Central Valley and foothills, providing a market for Sierra water. Lake Van Norden would fit into that scheme a bit later, but that’s a different story for a different Heirloom.

“Up the Western Slope” is “the grandest of all the mountain ranges on the western side of the United States”, the Sierra Nevada. “Probably the passage of no other mountain range of equal magnitude affords so much scenic enjoyment... as the Pacific Railroad makes daily practicable.” One must leave the train, though, to enjoy the full experience, “a trip to the summit is especially striking for the sharp contrast between the Eden-like beauty of the lower country and the Arctic pallor of the region within the snow-belt.” Avery describes the beauty of train travel from Sacramento across the Sierra: “many-colored wild flowers”, most brilliant of which is the California poppy “deep orange cups flame out in sunny splendor where they are massed in large tracts,” mistletoe tangled in the “leafy tresses” of trees, birds making “gay scenes vocal with unfailing song. The atmosphere is singularly clear and pure;... The whole influence of the landscape and the season intoxicating. And the floral profusion... vernal dressing... honey breathing bloom...” But it’s not all beauty as the train passes the hydraulic mining areas.

On the summit

At the base of cliffs which looked forbidden at a distance, cool springs will be found, painting the ravines with freshest green; red lilies swing their bells, lupins and larkspurs call down the tint of heaven; ferns shake their delicate plumes, bright with drops of dew; and the rocks offer soft cushions of moss, the precipice above, where water trickles down, being clad with lichens, and a hundred crannied growths. The delighted pedestrian lingers at such oases, loath to go forward. Goethe says, “Great heights charm us; the steps that lead to them do not.” But this is hardly true in a great part of the Sierra Nevada, where the scenery by the way lightens the labor of climbing, and the sensation at the summit is only the climax of protracted enjoyment.

“Here the chocolate-colored rivers, choked for a hundred feet deep with mining debris, attest the destructive activity of the gold-hunters. Every ravine and gulch has been sluiced into deeper ruts or filled with washings from above. Lofty ridges have been stripped of auriferous gravel for several continuous miles together, to a depth of from one hundred to two hundred feet. Cataracts of mud have replaced these foaming cascades which used to gleam like snow in the primeval woods. And the woods have, alas! in too many cases, been quite obliterated by the insatiate miner.

“But it is pleasant to observe how nature seeks to heal the wounds inflicted by man; how she recreates soil, renews vegetation, and draws over the ugly scars of twenty years a fresh mantle of verdure and bloom.” He continues, saying old mining camps are becoming orchards and vineyards. Rude cabins are being replaced by “vine-clad cottage[s].” Oleanders bloom “before doorways” where before there was only the noxious poison oak.

“Yet it is a relief to get out of sight of the crater like chasms left by the miner, with their pinky chalk cliffs of ancient drift, along which the cars fly as over a parapet or wall. It is pleasant to quit the hills denuded of timber and left so desolate in their dusty brown; delightful to reach loftier ridges and plunge into cool shades of spicy pine.

Here nature seems to reassert herself as in the time of her unbroken solitude, when the trees grew, and flowers bloomed, and birds caroled; when the bright cataracts leaped in song, and the hazy canon walls rose in softened grandeur, indifferent to the absence of civilized man” even though it’s civilization that has given us access to the beauty via the railroad.

“Flying over deep gulches on trestles one hundred feet high, and along the verge of canons [sic] two thousand feet deep, we look out on the air and view the landscape as from a perch in the sky. Thus is the picturesque made easy, and thus mechanical genius lends itself to the fine wants of the soul.”

And then the traveler gets to the snowsheds: “the vision of mountain scenery is cut off by the many miles of snowsheds, or, at best, is only caught in snatches provokingly brief, as the train dashes by an occasional opening.” “Here and there in the sheds are cavernous side-openings, which indicate snow-buried stations or towns, where stand waiting groups of men, who receive daily supplies — even to the daily newspaper — in this strange region. The railroad is the raven that feeds them. Without it these winter wildernesses would be uninhabitable. When the train has passed, they walk through snow tunnels or smaller sheds to their cabins, which give no hint of their presence but for the shaft of begrimed snow where the chimney-smoke curls up. And in these subnivean abodes dwell the station and section people, and the lumbermen, during several months, until the snow melts and its glaring monotony of white is suddenly succeeded by grass and flowers...”

“Nothing can be more charming than the woods of the Sierra summit in June, July, and August, especially in the level glades margining the open summit valleys, at an elevation of from six thousand to seven thousand feet. The pines and firs, prevailing over spruces and cedars, attain a height ranging from one hundred to two hundred feet, and even more. Their trunks are perfectly straight, limbless for fifty to a hundred feet, painted above the snow-mark with yellow mosses, and ranged in open park-like groups...”

“To the citizen weary of sordid toil and depressed by long exile from nature, there is an influence in these elevated groves which both soothes and excites. Here beauty and happiness seem to be the rule, and care is banished. The feast of color, the keen, pure atmosphere, the deep, bright heavens, the grand peaks bounding the view, are intoxicating. There is a sense of freedom, and the step becomes elastic and quick under the new feeling of self-ownership. Love for all created things fills the soul as never before. One listens to the birds as to friends, and would fain cultivate with them a close intimacy. The water-fall has a voice full of meaning. The wild rose tempts the mouth to kisses, and the trees and rocks solicit an embrace. We are in harmony with the dear mother on whom we had turned our backs so long, yet who receives us with a welcome unalloyed by reproaches. The spirit

One of the nearby peaks is Castle Peak “Its volcanic crests is carved into a curious resemblance to a ruined castle.” [sic] Avery says you can start the climb on horseback and then must resort to climbing “afoot.” The final slope is arduous, steep, and covered with “sliding debris” which anyone who has climbed Castle Pk. can attest is still the experience. At the top the effort is repaid with a “superb view, embracing at least a hundred miles of Sierra crests... Including the flashing sheet of Tahoe.”

worships in an ecstasy of reverence. This is the Madonna of a religion without dogma, whose creed is written only in the hieroglyphics of beauty, voiced only in the triple language of color, form, and sound.

That’s all prelude to arriving at the Summit, “Arrived at the summit of the Sierra Nevada, on the line of the railroad, there are many delightful pedestrian and horseback excursions to be made in various directions.” Avery arrived at the Summit Valley which he says was associated with the “tragically fated Donner emigrants.”*

Compared to the natural scenery the summit was not attractive. There was “an odious sawmill, which has thinned out the forests ; an ugly group of whitewashed houses ; a ruined creek, whose waters are like a tan-vat ; a big sand dam across the valley, reared in a vain attempt to make an ice pond ; a multitude of dead, blanched trees ; a great, staring, repellent blank...”

It wasn’t completely “unlovely” though because there was still a green meadow leading to the base of peaks ten thousand feet high “whose light gray summits of granite, or volcanic breccia, weathered into castellated forms, rise in sharp contrast to the green woods margining the level mead.” The glacial erratics in Summit Valley, “the boulder-strewn earth reminds one of a pasture dotted with sheep.”

Finishing with the summit Avery goes on to describe Plumas, Shasta, Lassen, an experience on the stage, fishing (one summer a guy caught 3,182 trout using salmon eggs), the Geysers, San Francisco, Monterey, and the Native Americans (including the petroglyphs at Summit Soda Springs).

Of course for the [Heirloom](#) reader the descriptions of Donner Summit are the most interesting but a close second is San Francisco in 1878. Today as we enter the Bay we’d describe the bridges, skyscrapers, and the wharfs along the waterfront along with maybe Giants stadium. Avery visited in 1878 though, and he saw a different San Francisco, “There is some beauty of form in the deeply eroded sandstone hills along the ocean where the surf dashes and roars constantly, and some richness in their tints of brown rock and yellow stubble under a summer sun and clear sky. There, as the ship enters a

*The rescuers of the Donner Party and the rescuees all traveled Summit Valley and somewhere in the neighborhood was Starved Camp (see the June, ’18 [Heirloom](#)).

narrow strait leading to the bay, bold rocky cliffs on one side, a tall mountain on the other..." Then from the top of Nob Hill, "Returning again to our hill in the city, one overlooks the undulations of the metropolis all around him, and has a vivid sense of the abounding energy, increased by the stimulus of a dry and equable climate, which created the place from nothing." Looking west, "The noisy town on one side, and the still blue Pacific on the other, of these thousands who have gone before [graves he can see], are apt emblems of the lives they led, and the peace they have found. The city thins into scattered hamlets, that are lost in drifting sand ; and beyond one sees the ocean, hears the faint roar of

its surf... Among the sand, on every hand are hillocks of green shrubbery with intervals [sic] of grass, hollows filled with ceanothus thickets and groves of stunted live-oak, and even a lakelet or two, where a great park is in progress of creation."

It's a bit different now.

"California Pictures..." is a fun book to peruse if you like words. I can't imagine my guy in New York (See the second paragraph above) staying in his study when a ten day train ride would have taken him to California.

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.

Odds & Ends on Donner Summit



All over Donner Summit are old ski trail markers like the one to the left. The Forest Service marked, but did not groom, ski trails in the 1930's and 40's so people would not get lost and could easily get back to Highway 40 in storms.

Many of the markers were re-purposed so when you find a metal one there may be something on the back. Wooden ones that have their top paint layer worn away show they were somewhere else too.

To read about them and see more look in our [Heirloom](#) article index for Sierra Crest, Sierra SkiWays and Ski Ways, and ski trails.

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 PARTY HIKE

September 14 & 15, 2019



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QUESTIONS? CONTACT:
Bill Oudegeest 209-606-6859
info@donnerpartyhike.com

For more information and to sign up:
www.donnerpartyhike.com



Donner Party Hike

SEPTEMBER 14 & 15, 2019



PRODUCED BY DONNER SUMMIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY.



Margie Powell Illustrated* Hikes, 2019 August 10 & 11 9:30 AM each day

Margie Powell was the inspiration for the Donner Summit Historical Society. She was also the energy behind the founding. In her memory we've held annual Margie Powell hikes in August.

On this, our eighth year, we're going to go down Summit Canyon:

This hike is all downhill. We will park some cars at the end and then shuttle back uphill. This hike will start with an overview of Donner Summit history - the most historically significant square mile in California and maybe the entire Western United States. That overview has the most magnificent view! We'll talk about the firsts: first transcontinental railroad, first transcontinental highway, first transcontinental air route, first transcontinental telephone line, and the first wagon trains to California. We'll see ads painted on the rocks 100 years ago and we'll see petroglyphs incised into the granite 2-4,000 years ago. We'll have great views and lots of great stories. The hike is illustrated so there will be lots of old photographs.

Bring: lunch, snack, sunscreen, good shoes, a hat, a camera, and whatever else you need to go hiking. It's the same hike both days.

Although the hike is downhill there are rough spots and the route is three miles long.

Do not consider going on this hike unless you are nimble because there are parts where we'll have to scramble over some rocks since there is no trail.

The dates: August 10,11 9:30 AM each day. Meet at the Donner Ski Ranch parking lot.

*meaning lots of pictures

**Bring Hat, good shoes,
sunscreen, water, camera,
lunch, curiosity.**



Above: Margie Powell, 2011

Below: The first Margie Powell Hike in 2012 at the petroglyphs.



DONNER SUMMIT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

www.donnersummithistoricalsociety.org

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

DATE _____

NAME(S) _____

MAILING ADDRESS _____

____ New Membership
____ Renewing Membership

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

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

____ Individual Membership - \$30

____ 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.



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



Pick up or download the brochure at the DSHS at <http://www.donnersummithistoricalsociety.org/pages/brochures.html>



52 interpretive signs along Old 40
<http://www.donnersummithistoricalsociety.org/pages/20MileMuseum.html>