

The Donner Summit

Heirloom

History and stories of the Donner Summit Historical Society and the most historically significant square mile in California.

November, 2023 issue #183



What's in Your Closet?

Every once in a while the Heirloom runs a feature, “What’s in Your Closet,” sharing recent contributions to the DSHS or “finds” we've acquired. This month and next and maybe the issue after that we’re sharing a couple of contributions that came our way in the summer. It took awhile to get to sharing because our editorial staff works some months ahead and so there was not Heirloom room until this month. We hope “What’s in Your Closet” will encourage others to contribute what they’ve had hiding in their closets or at least let us do some copying.

Sometimes it's just serendipity. The DSHS participated again in the State Park's annual Legacy Day in June. We got to meet a lot of people who showed their good taste by being interested in Donner Summit history. One of those was Jeanette Duff of Tahoe Donner. She said she had an album of Donner Summit pictures which we could have. We should do these events more often.

It turns out in the end that one album was really two albums that belonged to James Sherritt whose grandparents, Joseph and Isabella Gowling owned the Summit Hotel (see our indices for stories, newspapers articles, pictures, and ads for both Summit Hotels, both of which burned down). He’s also a local luminary with his name being on the road that has the DSPUD on it just west of the freeway in Soda Springs. He gave a speech to rotary in Truckee in 1949 about the history of Donner Summit, a partial version of which is in the July, '21 issue of the Heirloom. It's a comprehensive story which will gratify you on finding.

For some reason Sherritt gave his album to Edward A. Grey Jr. who was Jeanette’s father. He did that, perhaps, just because they were friends, Grey was interested in history and was also a member of Rotary. Grey lived in Lincoln but visited Donner Summit helping build the Boy Scouts' Camp Pahatsi on Donner Summit. He was in real estate and insurance. Jeanette has had the album for 22 years.

During our conversation about the album Jeanette said she had also given



Unidentified skier about 1910. Note the long skis, single pole and note the depth of the snow (that's the top of a telephone pole to the left. It looks like Mt. Disney in the background.

Story Locations in this Issue

Camp Pahatsi pg 1 Sherritt Lane in Soda Springs pg 1 Summit Hotel (many pages)

DONNER SUMMIT



Finding Your Way Through Donner Summit History

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

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

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

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

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Find us on 

 YouTube

copies of other pictures to Dave and Judy DePuy, also of Tahoe Donner, and who are interested and active in Truckee and Donner Summit history. They are also Jeanette's neighbors. There are many pictures of the Summit Hotel for obvious reasons.

Once we had the pictures we forwarded them on to George Lamson who can do amazing things in his digital photo lab - see later in this issue. We should note that since many of the pictures were taken about 1910, the photography must have been Jim's boy-hood hobby. Jim was born in 1903 and the hotel burned down in 1925.

The Sherritt Album



It turns out the geography has not changed much in a hundred years. Snowsheds crossing Donner Summit. Donner Lake is out of the picture to the left. Donner Pk. is to the right



Jim Sherritt, age 5 outside the Summit Hotel. Note the single pole instead of today's two poles.

Who Was Jim Sherritt?

James A. Sherritt from his obituary in the [Auburn Journal](#), January 17, 1973: "Mr. Sherritt was born at Truckee October 1, 1903, a third generation Californian. He was active in the livestock and timber business, and conducted large sheep operations in the Thermalands area of Placer County and the Soda Springs and Norden areas in Nevada and Placer Counties for many years." "He was a past president of the Truckee Rotary Club" as well as other civic organizations and was on the Board of Directors of the Tahoe Forest Hospital. Sherritt Lane on the west side of the freeway at the Soda Springs exit is named for him.



Jim Sherritt 1940, age 37



Heath Family on skis at the Summit Hotel about 1910. They are also single pole skiing in deep snow near the Summit Hotel.

Fenelon Heath was an historic figure around Soda Springs. He was the founder of the Lost Emigrant Mine down canyon and across from Snow Mountain. He had two children who perished in the upper North Fork, one from Scarlet Fever, the other drowning in the Falls near the original Soda Springs. Graves are on Cedars land well marked. Heath Falls and Heath Park were named for him, and there is a Pearl Peak and Pearl Lake near us, named for his daughter.

Later, he was the caretaker for The Cedars and is frequently mentioned in Josie Freeman's diary [in the DSHS archives].

Nick Chickering (Whose family owns the old Mark Hopkins Estate, the original Soda Springs



Men on the roof of the Summit Hotel.



Unidentified man showing depth of snow. Snowheds in the background. Jim Sherritt must have been really impressed by deep snow, just as we are, given the proportion of such pictures in his albums.

Unidentified couple exploring deep snow in front of the snowsheds. Note the snowshed chimney behind the couple





Unidentified guys out skiing using single poles instead of today's two poles. Note the upturned ends and the fashionable ski togs.



Snowsheds. Note the pickets to keep snow shovelers from falling off according to the caption.

West side Summit Hotel about 1910

Since the albums belonged to Jim Sherritt, since Mr. Sherritt is no longer with us, and given that the subjects are mostly the Summit Hotel and deep snow, we can speculate that Jim got a camera as a boy and went out taking pictures of what was near at hand.

Next month there will be more pictures but even then that won't be the whole collection. There are a lot of pictures of unidentified people, Jim knew them, we have no idea who they were - friends, hotel guests, passersby as the train stopped to allow passengers to get food? We'll never know.





West side Summit Hotel
about 1910



Unidentified skier with the Summit Hotel in the
background, right, and snowsheds in the back.



Unidentified skier noting snow depth. Mt. Disney
(formerly Mounts Hemlock and Red Top) in the
background.



Unidentified skier captioned, "A little help appreciated." Skiing in long skirts must be an art in itself.



This photograph was clearly not taken by Jim Sherritt but was in the album. This is a bridge of the Lincoln Highway crossing the Yuba River below Big Bend. The remnants are still there a few hundred yards west of the fire station.



Bud Horak, England's consul to San Francisco who spoke at a Truckee Rotary function, old time Summit Hotel clerk, and Jim Sherritt about 1940.

Unknown people except that Jim Sherritt is holding the Saturday Evening Post August 21, 1916, when Jim was 13 years old.

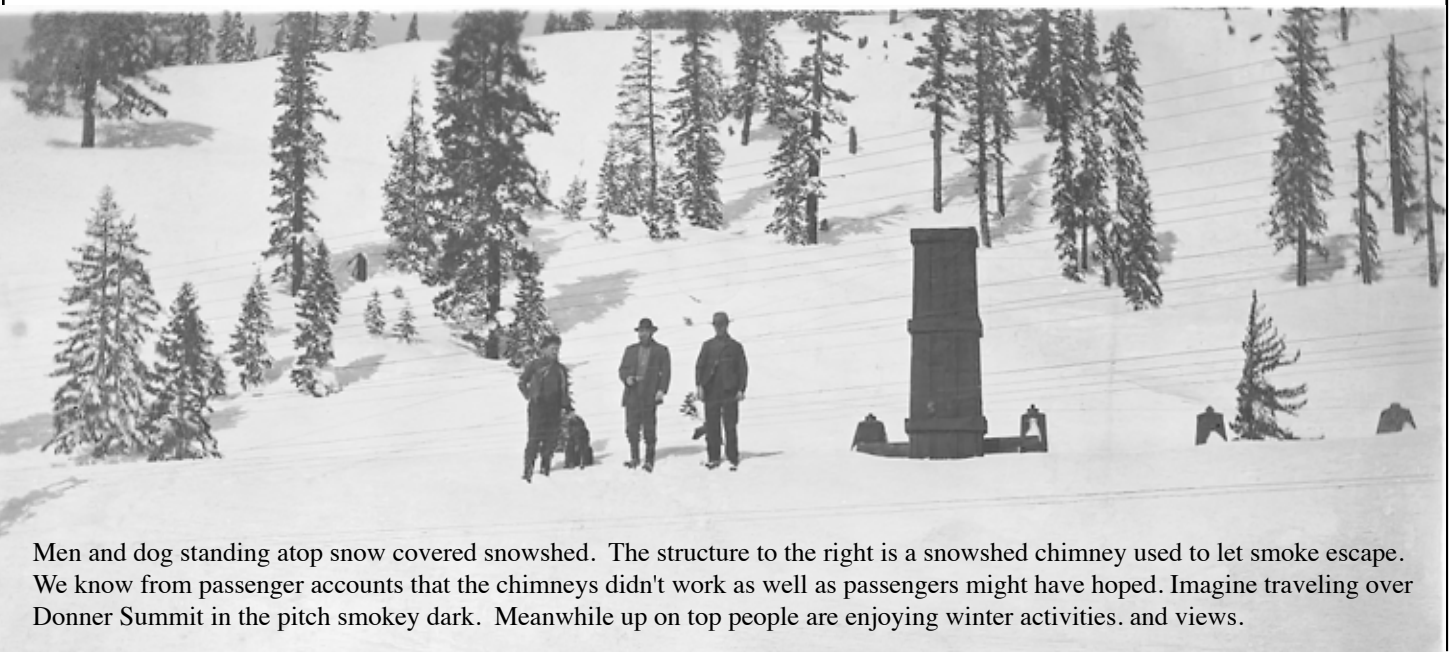


Crater Lake on Boreal Ridge



Picture captioned, "Guest house at [the original] Soda Springs."

That [picture] is almost a carbon copy of Mark Hopkins's log home built in 1873, but this one you sent must have burned down with the 1898 fire. Nick Chickering whose family owns the old Mark Hopkins Estate at the original Soda Springs.



Men and dog standing atop snow covered snowshed. The structure to the right is a snowshed chimney used to let smoke escape. We know from passenger accounts that the chimneys didn't work as well as passengers might have hoped. Imagine traveling over Donner Summit in the pitch smokey dark. Meanwhile up on top people are enjoying winter activities, and views.

Restoring Old Photos

Here at Donner Summit Historical Society we are always on the lookout for vintage photos of life at the Summit. We have to thank all of you that contribute your photos that enrich our collection. Unfortunately, due to time and the elements, most of the photos that we receive are not in great shape. Fortunately, today we have the digital tools that allow us to restore many of these snapshots in time to their original glory. Consider the low resolution photo, right, of a small buggy with three folks at the old Summit Hotel around 1910. Not only did the original photo suffer from tonal fading common to these old black and white photos, but it had also been damaged due to folding. Even worse it looks like someone had “colored” it with a magic marker.



Restoring this photo required the full toolbox. Using the AI tools available today we were able to double the resolution of the photo and add detail. The fading and tonal changes caused by age could be corrected using the power of Photoshop. Cleaning up the physical damage was more challenging and required the latest tools that could reconstruct the damaged parts of the photo. The result is a black and white photo that is very close to what it probably looked like when it was first printed around 1910. However, we were not done yet. The newest AI tools allowed us to add back the natural colors to the photo

to add even more realism to what the scene looked like in the early 1900's (See the next page). The restored black and white photo was then added to our curated collection and made available on our Flickr website (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/188645737@N03/albums>)..

George Lamson



Buggy outside the Summit Hotel with snowsheds in the background - note the chimney and the tunnel connecting the snowsheds to the hotel

Making History Colorful



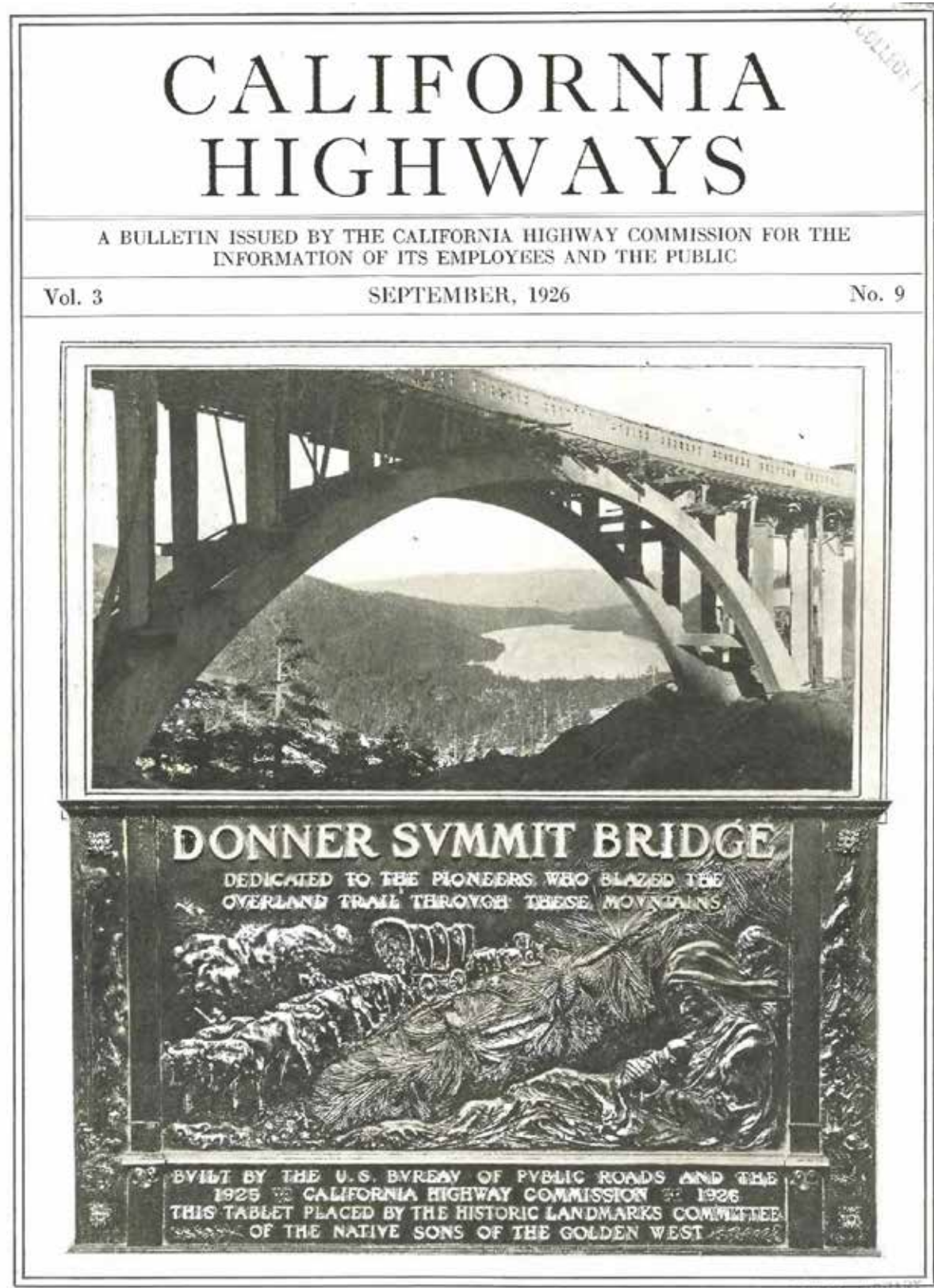
See description on the previous page.

Today, due to advances in computer graphics technology, there may be a solution to the color limitations of our historical black & white images. Computers are remarkably adept at manipulating photographic images. Algorithms developed for Artificial Intelligence (AI) and machine learning have been adapted to image technology to give almost magical results such as the colorization of black & white images. Algorithms are “trained” by looking at millions of color and black & white versions of photos to “learn” how to add back colors to a black & white image. The algorithms learn how to find a sky and make it blue, find a face and make it flesh colored, find a tree and make the leaves green. They develop highly sophisticated models that can do amazing transformations. Amazingly this technology is now available on desktop computers.

George Lamson

From the DSHS Archives

Donner Summit Bridge Dedication, 1926



Donner Summit Bridge Marks Evolution of Overland Trail

MARKING forcefully by its very boldness the evolution of the emigrant road of the pioneers into the great transcontinental highway of the present, Donner Summit bridge, near the crest of the Sierra in Nevada County, has been completed and opened to traffic. It is dedicated, "To the Pioneers who blazed the Overland Trail through these mountains." Descendants of survivors of the Donner party, the terrible tragedy the scene of which the bridge overlooks, joined with Native Sons of the Golden West and state and federal highway officials on August 22d in the formal unveiling of a memorial tablet on the spectacular structure.

High up amid the granite crags of the Sierra, Donner Summit bridge, a forest highway project, is one of the most unique structures on the state highway system of California. It spans a rocky chasm at an elevation of nearly 7,000 feet and was built to make possible a grade of not to exceed 7 per cent from Donner Lake to the Summit; eliminating for all time the 18 and 20 per cent grades of the old road, first projected in early days, and for years the most difficult section of the most important interstate connection to the East in northern California. The new state highway is the third road to be built up this rocky precipice.

Unusual Engineering Features.

Unusual engineering features of the bridge make it a distinctive structure. It has a handsome arch 110 feet in length with a depth of 70 feet, yet it is built on a compound curve and on a grade of 7 per cent. Its clear roadway width is twenty-four feet and its total length, including approaches, is 241 feet.

As a part of the lower approach span, there has been constructed an elevated observation platform twenty-five feet in length and seven feet wide, on a pedestal of which the memorial tablet of the Native Sons was placed. Here the motorist may enjoy, safely guarded from passing traffic, the marvelous view of the high Sierra and the Donner Lake basin which unfolds below. It was near this spot that the Donner party turned back in October, 1846, balked by snow in its attempt to cross the summit. Because of the historical significance of the spot, the

observation platform was deemed appropriate. A wide parking place for automobiles also has been provided near by.

Donner Summit bridge was built by the United States Bureau of Public Roads in accordance with plans furnished by the bridge department of the California Highway Commission. Funds came from federal appropriations for roads within the national forests. C. C. Gildersleeve was the contractor and C. S. Bruning resident engineer for the bureau. Cost of the bridge, including the features added after the contract was awarded, was approximately \$40,000.

Bridge Part of Larger Improvement.

The bridge, destined to become a well known stopping place on the Victory highway, is the outstanding feature of a larger improvement which includes the grading and surfacing of 6.9 miles of the state highway from Soda Springs to Donner Lake. This new section is now open to traffic, eliminating three dangerous grade crossings of the Southern Pacific railroad.

The section from the lake to the Summit, 3.2 miles, was graded by the California Highway Commission at a cost, including engineering, of \$212,500. It involved difficult construction largely through solid granite. The section from the summit to Soda Springs, 3.7 miles, was graded by the Bureau of Public Roads as a forest highway project at an approximate cost of \$120,000. Surfacing of both sections, 6.9 miles, was another forest project in charge of the bureau, the work costing approximately \$75,000; making a total expenditure for the improvement of the seven miles, including Donner bridge, of nearly a half million dollars.

The entire section has been built on high standards of alignment and grade and is of ample width to care for a heavy traffic. Besides eliminating three grade crossings and the steep and winding grades of the old road, the superior location of the new highway should permit opening of the route to traffic several weeks earlier in the spring.



Donner Summit or Rainbow Bridge "solved what was for years the most difficult section of the most important interstate connection to the East in northern California. The new state highway is the third road to be built up this rocky precipice."

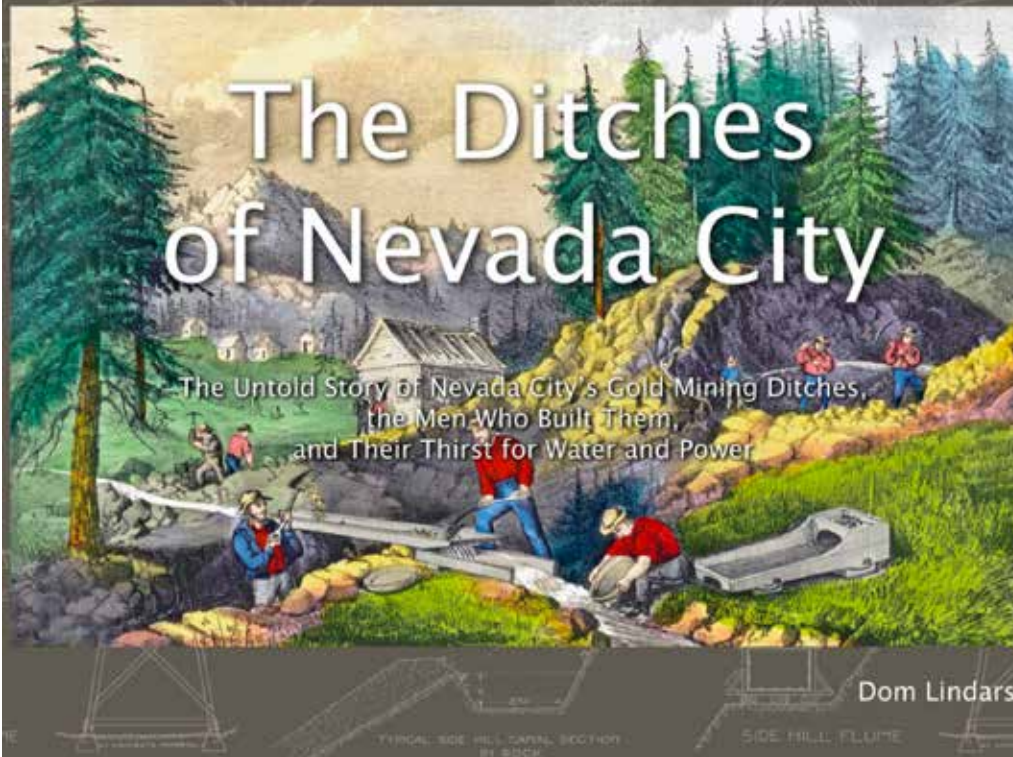
It has a distinctive structure, handsome arch, and was built on a compound curve with a 7% grade

Check out the [Heirloom](#) articles about the bridge in the 1/10, 9/20, and 12/08 editions

This edition of [California Highways](#) was found by George Lamson



NevadaCityHistory.com presents



Book Review

The Ditches of Nevada City The Untold Story of Nevada City's Gold Mining Ditches, the Men Who Built them, and Their Thirst for Water and Power

884 pages large format
Dom Lindars 2023

If you've poked around the Sierra foothills at all, outside of driving through, you've come across various canals and ditches moving water. These are the successors to a major 19th Century industry in the foothills that eventually grew to hundreds of miles of ditches and canals, first for placer mining with rockers and long toms, then to hydraulic mining until that was banned, then moving water for consumption by towns and irrigation, and finally for electrical generation. The remains of that industry are still around.

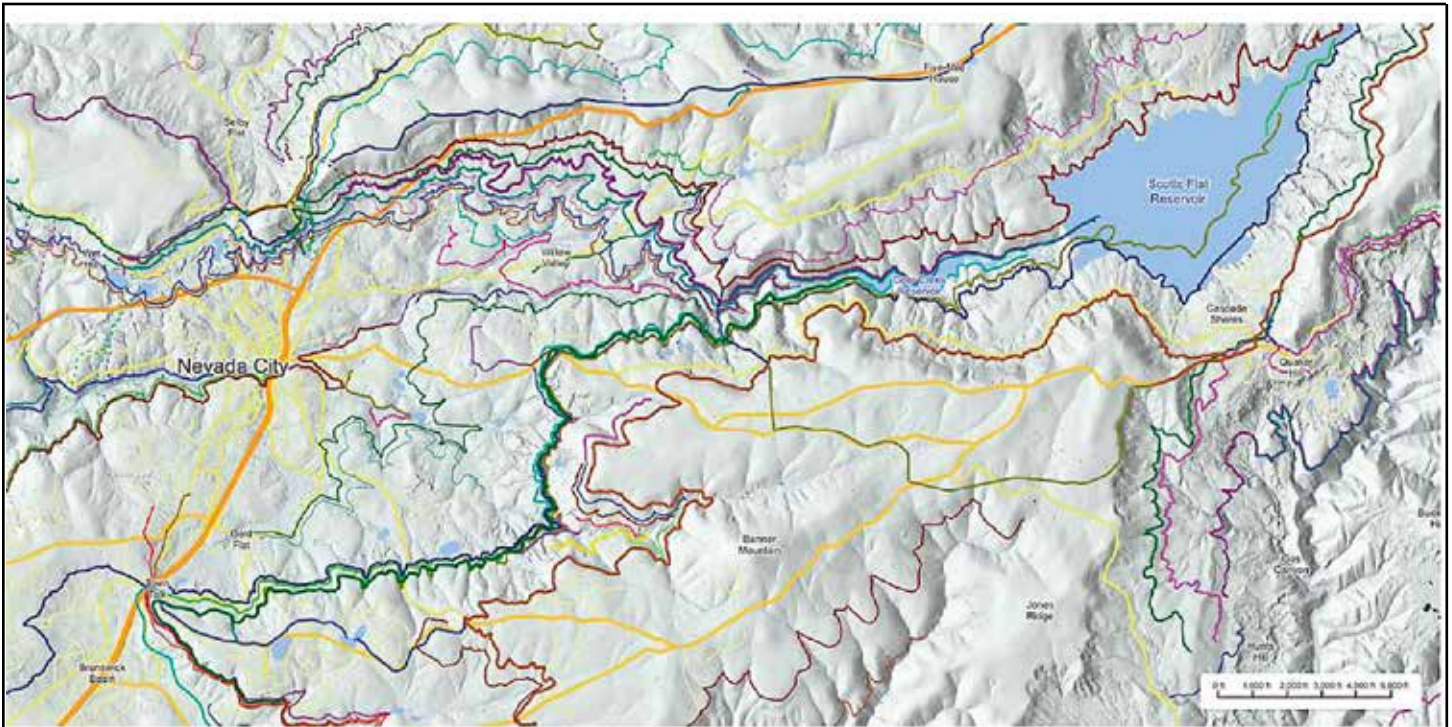
The Ditches of Nevada City is an amazing book. Its 884 pages are full of text of course, but also maps, historic and contemporary pictures, drawings, and newspaper quotes. This is probably not a book that you'll try to read straight through, even though that's what our book reviewers did. It is more of a reference book if you are interested in the canals and ditches or something you'd pick up to read short sections at a time.

One of the strengths of the book is the biographies that pop up from time to time. Here the history is humanized as the stories of various local pioneers are told. Some of the biographies are quite captivating.

Some Heirloom readers will be wondering about now why we have a review about Nevada City history which is far removed from Donner Summit (about 45 minutes). First, this book deserves it for the amazing amount of research that went into it. Here's just one example of how thorough Mr. Lindars was in his writing.

Charles Marsh is one of the biographies in the book. He built ditches, developed the first town water supply which included fire hydrants was one of the founders of the CPRR, worked with several water companies and commercial endeavors, belonged to various civic organizations, etc. The author included a picture of Marsh's house in Nevada City and one portrait of Marsh. We'd expect that. Then there is a picture of the Promontory Point, Utah at the driving of the golden spike in 1869. Lindars, the author, found Marsh in the crowd of hundreds and circled him in red.

Second, this book is in the Heirloom because there is a connection to Donner Summit. To begin with the ditches



A map showing the over 100 of the old ditches that are in the immediate vicinity of Nevada City.

were filled with water collected locally around Nevada City. As demand grew though, water companies moved up the mountain for new sources. The biggest water company was the So. Yuba Canal Co. The company owned a number of lakes on Donner Summit which impounded water in the winter and spring which was then released to run into the south Yuba River, then into Lake Spaulding and finally into ditches from the Spaulding dam to Nevada City and surroundings. As water was released from Spaulding it was also released from Kidd, Cascade, Devil's, and Van Norden Lakes providing continuity of the flow for downstream. In the case of Van Norden, as the water receded in the summer the grasses grew providing fodder for the sheep that arrived to the mountain meadow in late summer.

The final connection to the water system is Kidd Lake, named for one of the principals of the So. Yuba Water Co., G.W. Kidd (see the August '23 [Heirloom](#)).

The 19th Century was the "Golden Age of ditch construction." According to Governor Bigler in 1856, "vast canals have been constructed, ditches dug, dams built, and water-courses turned." This book delves into every one of the canals and ditches providing maps of each, a diagram of the size, who built the ditches and canals for whom, and for how much, and any

relevant court cases. Given the number of ditches and canals it boggles the mind that so much detail could be collected.

To get an idea of the comprehensive research that went into this book, the preface says, "The 75 maps and paths of over 200 ditches included in this book are based on more than 12,000 GPS reference points I took in the field and then nearly 100,000 hand-drawn points to trace 790 miles of all the old ditches. This does not include any of the Nevada Irrigation District's (NID) 461 miles of modern canal." See one comprehensive map of ditches and canals above.

Then the author, Dom Lindars, says, "Hidden in the shelves of the Searls Historical Library (the archive of the Nevada County Historical Society) and tightly folded up in legal binders are thousands of pages of handwritten courtroom testimony from lawsuits from the late 1850's and 1860's. After photographing hundreds of those pages and spending days of careful transcription and annotating, I was able to piece together the full story of nearly every ditch I had found. The tales extracted from the important ditch trials created a framework for this book. Then, as I meticulously cross-referenced these basics with thousands of newspaper articles, plus genealogical records from Ancestry.com, the full story of the ditches, and the people who worked on them, were revealed."

George Kidd:* pg 441 vividly describes the trip west to the promised land of gold, saying, "Hard was the long and slow journey with ox teams, through Indians, and cholera, and scurvy, and mountain fever, and dysentery, and deserts, and death, and short grass, and exhaustion, and doubt." George reached Sacramento by the end of September 1849.

*Readers will remember that the August, '23 [Heirloom](#) had an article about Capt. Kidd.

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Messrs. DE WITT KITTLE & CO.]

RANDOLPH M. COOLEY, 88 Wall Street, Tontine Building.

Advertisement from around 1850, for fast passage from Boston to San Francisco on the new purpose-built clipper ship *California*.

Source: [Wikipedia](#).

The book starts with brief but lucid historical and geological background of California as well as prospecting in Nevada City and the wider area making use of quotes, visuals, and photographs. Interesting facts add to the story for example that at one time Nevada City was "the third largest city in California, after San Francisco and Sacramento."

To enliven the facts there are interesting quotes about life at the time. Benjamin P. Avery, later one of the editors of the [San Francisco Daily Evening Bulletin](#), was prospecting there at the time. In 1856 he wrote, "In October 1849, I arrived at Caldwell's store, the only trading post on Deer Creek at that time. I found it a square canvas shanty, stocked with whisky, pork, mouldy biscuit and ginger bread; the whisky four bits a drink, the biscuits a dollar a pound."

Because much of the gold was found "beyond the river sand-bars and creeks beds" and "nn fact, most deposits were not close to running water," miners first had to haul their dirt to the water. The book is about resolving that and bringing the water

to the dirt via ditches and canals (and even a few flumes). This is what the author has been working on in his research and rediscovered "through painstaking research combined with GPS surveying and a little software engineering." He rediscovered the ditches and the stories that went with them.

The water in the ditches served Long Toms. The winter of 1849-50 was heavy and so there was plenty of water but the following years brought drought which meant more ditches carrying more water. This brought the construction of reservoirs to supply the ditches and keep them running. Here we get a lot of information about ditches.

We also get a lot of quotes about life at the time and the disappointments of many. Echoing the sentiments of many Nevada City miners, Eli Cook, in a letter to his wife on January 25, 1851, wrote: "There has been a good many new discoveries & rich mines higher up in the Mountains and will be a great rush to them in the spring. In fact the

"Looking back at later records and news of the late 1850s, it is around this time that a new character appeared on the scene. He was a wealthy, forceful and rather short man that would guide the course of the water companies for decades to come. His name was George Washington Kidd, often known as Captain Kidd. He was a well-known merchant of Nevada City, having been in partnership with Jesse Wall in a groceries..."

whole country is full of gold but takes time to find it and hard work to get it out. A great many become discouraged and say if they had money to take them home they would go.

“But I think in a country where a man can [get] 5 or 6 dollar a day for common labor is not the worst in the world. However I would advise no one who is comfortable at home to come to this country. He might be disappointed and blame me if I should so advise him.”

Peter Decker, on December 6, 1850, echoed the miners' sentiment and his quote: “Many people have left and are daily leaving for other diggings. Feather River [in the Sacramento Valley] and vicinity will next spring be the place for thousands to crowd to and who can foretell the fate or doom of overdone Nevada. Houses were built without number and now no house in town would bring a third of the original cost. All, or nearly so, are labeled "For Sale" or 'To Let', etc.”

Later in 1867, Edwin Bean summarized the situation: “Without water from the clouds the ditches could furnish but little. A dry season was, to use an Irishism, the rainy season of 1850-51. Hundreds of miners became disgusted and left the place. There was general depression, goods went down in price, and merchants ‘went up’ for all they were worth.”

Gold mining techniques and their efficiencies are also covered: panning, rocker or cradle, Long Tom, sluice boxes, and then hydraulic mining and then the various improvements of

Dan Rich had a house near Devil's Pk. while he worked on the dams for summit lakes and the snow there would often reach 10 to 25 feet deep. In the spring of 1859, before the spring thaw had set in, he and another man attempted to reach his house using snowshoes. They found it, but the snow there averaged about 14 feet deep, completely covering the house. They were able to get into it, though, by climbing down the chimney. They then dug a tunnel out so they could use the front door. Residents of Donner Summit know this sort of thing.

WHAT HYDRAULIC MINING IS DOING FOR THE COUNTRY.



A cartoon from *The Sacramento Bee*, by George F. Keller, from July 1881, ridiculing the hydraulic mining industry. It shows the walled city of Marysville, drowned animals, submerged orchards and buildings, families leaving, and sunken ships unable to navigate, all while the fat-cat miners watch from afar. Also, note the Chinese workers at one of the monitors, criticizing the couple of mines that employed them. Source: [Center for Sacramento History](http://CenterforSacramentoHistory.org).

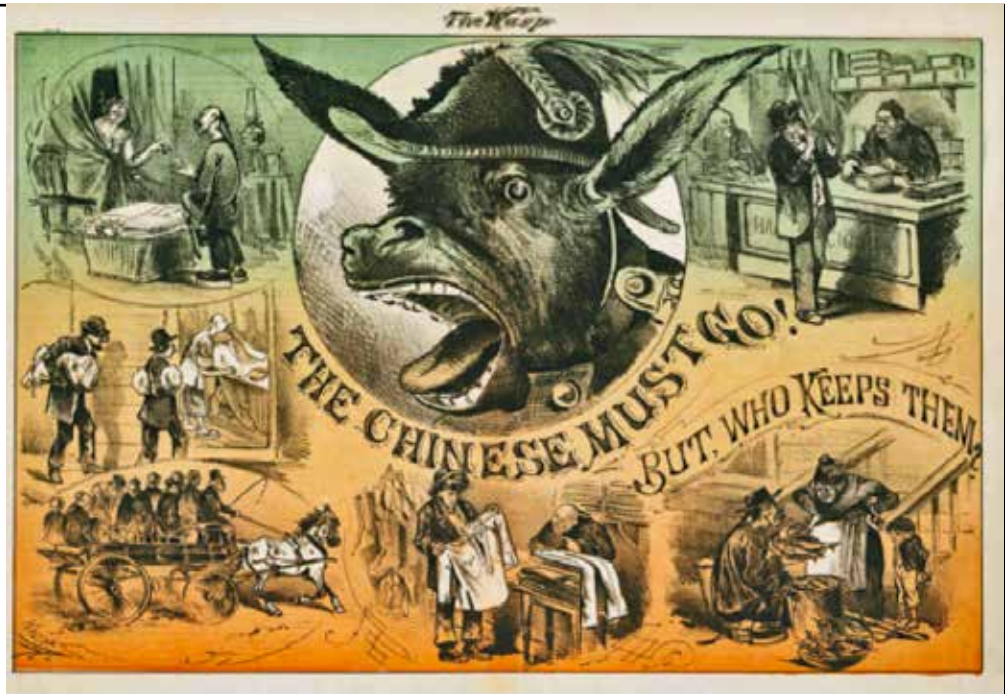
the latter.

Each ditch or canal has its own story and Lindars tells them all and the stories include fights over water rights, who got to build what where and who controlled what, arguments over monopoly, contemporary racism, the effects of hydraulic mining and its end (a particularly interesting section), the dawn of electricity, the burning of Nevada City every couple of years (and human nature's part in preventing solutions for years) and eventual solutions.

The biographies are a strength of the book. All of the short biographies are interesting, humanizing the history for example this story about Aaron Sargent:

He “became worried that his promotion of Whig policies would get him into trouble with the enthusiastic and vocal southern Democrats of the Young America newspaper started by William Morris

Stewart. Bob Davidge, its editor, threatened to shoot Sargent because of his views. This was technically, after all, still the Wild West. Stewart had warned Davidge off, calling Sargent ‘the most dangerous man in town to fool with.’ As a crowd gathered, Aaron's friend, Nevada County judge David Belden, stepped up and drew his pistol and said he wanted to demonstrate his shooting skills. Belden shot rapidly at various card targets, emptying his gun and hitting a card with each bullet. Finally, he announced that as a single man with nothing to lose, he would be happy to talk to anyone who didn't like Aaron Sargent. This was the end of any talk of violence against Sargent and the words of the Nevada Journal. Davidge later had the dubious distinction of having deserted from both the Union and Confederate armies during the Civil War. He died in February 1864, while rotting in prison in Nashville for murder and desertion.”



“The Chinese Must Go! But, Who Keeps Them?” A political cartoon by George Frederick Keller from *The Wasp* magazine, May 11, 1878. The jackass represents the anti-Chinese rhetoric of white labor in San Francisco. Still, it noted that the consumer support of laundry services, shoemakers and cigar makers helped the Chinese industries survive.

Source: [Wikimedia](#).

That’s fun stuff.

The book is available as an e book for Kindles at \$49.95 and perhaps by the time this appears in the Heirloom the hard copy will be available (149.95)

Details on building a flume in case you are in need of one. A mile of flume required 1,300 pounds of 3-inch nails, 400 pounds of 3¼-inch nails, 1,075 pounds of 3½-inch nails, 450 pounds of 4-inch nails, 100 pounds of 5-inch nails, and 100 pounds of 6-inch nails. This amount added up to a staggering 200,000 nails in a mile of flume.

AI and the DSHS

We've been doing the Heirloom on Donner Summit for 15 years almost, 182 issues, thousands of pages, hundreds of stories, and thousands of pictures. Donner Summit is that rich, no wonder people say it is the most historically significant square mile in California and maybe the entire Western United States. Even so, we've been worrying for some time what happens when we run out of stories. Then Artificial intelligence arrived months ago, and being a cutting edge historical society, we thought we'd explore. AI arrived for most people in the spring and that's when we asked Google Bard what to do. It took awhile to get into the Heirloom because we work months ahead.

After only a few seconds Google Bard had a reply.

In including that here, we thought you just might be interested in the reply but also that we are so current.

Second, you might have suggestions.

Congratulations on publishing 182 issues of the Heirloom! [Imagine - AI can be enthusiastic.] That's a huge accomplishment. I can imagine that it's challenging to come up with new stories after so many issues. Here are a few suggestions:

- Reprint classic stories. There are many classic stories that are still enjoyable to read today. You could reprint stories that are set in Donner Summit or the surrounding area, or you could reprint stories that are just generally well-written and enjoyable.
- Feature local authors. There are many talented writers in the Donner Summit area. You could feature their work in your magazine. This would be a great way to support local artists and to showcase the diversity of writing talent in the area.
- Run interviews with local people. You could interview people who live, work, or play in Donner Summit. This would be a great way to learn more about the community and to share the stories of the people who live there.
- Run articles about local events. You could run articles about upcoming events in Donner Summit. This would be a great way to inform people about what's going on in the community and to encourage them to get involved.
- Run columns about local topics. You could run columns about a variety of topics that are of interest to people in Donner Summit. This could include columns about local history, local politics, local businesses, and more.

I hope these suggestions help you to keep the Heirloom going strong for many years to come.

Part II

Perhaps a month before the above, we asked Chat GPT, another AI application, about Donner Summit being the most historically significant square mile in California and it had the temerity to suggest that there are other places in the running for that title too. So you can see AI is not necessarily accurate. They call that, in the world of AI, "hallucinating."

Helping the Future - Your Responsibility

Help future historians. Especially with the advent of digital cameras and "selphies" people are taking more and more pictures of people. A lot of people have boxes of old photos and slides they've been saving for decades. When you pass and someone else gets the photos and donates them to a worthy institution like the DSHS will future historians have labels, annotations, or captions to identify the subject? Please get busy with your archives.

Donner Summit Historical Society

www.donnersummithistoricalsociety.org

Membership

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

- new membership
- Renewing membership
- Individual Membership \$40
- Family Membership \$60
- Friend \$100
- Sponsor \$250
- Patron \$500
- Patron \$500
- Benefactor \$1000

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

Date _____

Name(s) _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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

You can also go to our website and use PayPal or a credit card.

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

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