

Founded July 24, 1968 and  
designated a 501(c)(3) in July 1971



**Truckee Donner Historical Society**  
P.O. Box 893  
Truckee, CA 96160  
530-582-0893  
[www.truckeehistory.org](http://www.truckeehistory.org)

# ECHOES FROM THE PAST

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

DECEMBER 2014 ISSUE 4

Dear Membership:

It is that time to express for what the Society is Thankful.

Above all, we are thankful to all of our members for their continued interest in keeping this a viable society. Volunteers and the donations have made this enterprise a success. So to that point we all say a Major Thank You. We are thankful to everyone who worked as a docent this year to keep the jail open so many hours. Because of you we brought in over \$500.00 more than last year. We also received two major donations directed at just the jail, so we will be continuing our improvements in our displays.

We also have received a generous donation from the McGlashan Family to assist in our efforts to professionally preserve our artifacts. Without this type of support we could not possibly survive. We are thankful that we have been blessed with so many artifacts and memories that provide a knowledge base for all those that ask questions of us. We have received so many wonderful items this year, the complete time capsule from the Hobart Mills School, a chair that traveled with the Donner Party, the last flag to fly over the *USS Donner* and the model of the ship, photos of the fire that destroyed the Sierra Tavern and the Drug Store in 1920s, and so many more items.

We are Thankful for the chance to preserve artifacts from the construction in Brickelltown. There are so many items to now be available to other researchers to piece together Truckee's Past. We look forward to the spring when we, once again, will be on site to gather parts of our history.

So on behalf of the Truckee Donner Historical Society, we say Thank You and please join us on January 15 for the next set of history talks at the Truckee Veteran's Hall. This new series is titled : *Truckee Railroad History Alive!*

Chaun Mortier

## 2015 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### January 15

*Truckee Railroad History Alive! Series,*  
The Human Side of the 1952 Snowbound  
Streamliner, *City of San Francisco*  
Presenter - Dr. Barbara Czerwinski  
7 p.m., Vet's Hall

### February 19

*Truckee Railroad History Alive! Series,*  
Lake Tahoe Railway and Transportation Company  
Presenter - Jerry Blackwill  
Truckee Donner Railroad Society  
7 p.m., Vet's Hall  
(More event info on page 2)

### March - TBA 3 day event

*Truckee Railroad History Alive! Series*  
Train Expo and Lumber/Timber & Trestles  
Presenter - Nelson VanGundy

### Thursdays 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Joseph Research Cabin open to the public  
(also available by appointment)  
Old Museum Jail (private tours available by  
appointment only; wear your jacket - it's cold)

**Fourth Thursday each month, 2:30 p.m.**  
Truckee Donner Historical Society Board meeting

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Echoes From The Past Newsletter

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Truckee Donner Historical Society ("TDHS") Board meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of each month at 2:30 p.m. at the Joseph Research Library at 10115 Donner Trail Road, Truckee. Board meetings are open to the public.

TDHS does not accept responsibility for the accuracy of the information in these articles. TDHS retains the right to republish submitted material. Please contact TDHS for permission to use any content in this publication.

Continued from page 1 **CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

**January 15th program, 7 p.m., Veterans Hall**

Truckee's history is replete with stories of the railroads and dealing with the "storm king." The story of the 1952 snowbound streamliner, City of San Francisco is one of the monumental stories of the Sierra that captured the nation's attention at the time.

Truckee played a key role in the rescue operations. Dr. Czerwinski will present the highlights of what became a successful rescue from the perspective of those who were part of the rescue efforts and/or surviving family members and their stories of passengers and rescue workers.

**February 19th program, 7 p.m. Veterans Hall**

Did you know at one time you could ride a train from Truckee to Lake Tahoe? At the Truckee depot, you'd board a passenger car nicknamed the "Rattler." The train would take you up along the Truckee River to a railroad pier at Tahoe City. Upon arrival, you would step off the train, walk across the pier and board a steamer that sailed all the way around Lake Tahoe. Upon your return to Tahoe City, you could spend the rest of your week at the first class Tahoe Tavern resort hotel and casino.

Come hear the fascinating story of how Duane L. Bliss, William Seth Bliss, Walter D. Bliss, Duane L Bliss, Jr., and Frank Titus built and ran this tourist system laying the foundation for Lake Tahoe's present day tourist industry.

On February 19, 2015 Jerry Blackwill, also a fellow TDHS member, and also of the Truckee Donner Railroad Society, will give this presentation on the Lake Tahoe Railway and Transportation Company at Veterans Memorial Hall, 10214 High Street, Truckee.

**LITTLE KNOWN TRUCKEE FACTS**

\* In 1968, the New York Times reported that the Soviet Union was secretly trying to acquire three U.S. banks in Northern California, one of which was in the Lake Tahoe region, purportedly to gain access to advanced American technology; see link (<http://nyti.ms/1BSFvdX>)

\* In 1980 a Truckee dispatcher was sent to portray a dispatcher on a "CHiPS" TV episode in a public relations agreement between the CHP and the show's producers.

**TRUCKEE HISTORY ALIVE! PROGRAM**

If you missed any of the *Truckee History Alive!* series in March with Captain John Sutter (David Fenimore) appearing, in June with Virginia Reed Murphy (Cathryn Fairlee), or in September with Caleb Greenwood (Frank X. Mullen), please take note of photos posted online of these events. Link (<http://bit.ly/Wy6Dwh>) to some of the photos taken for the Virginia Reed Murphy program; for Caleb Greenwood, link (<http://bit.ly/1rHy2YB>). If you would like to subscribe to our TDHS eNews, please visit our website at [www.truckeehistory.org](http://www.truckeehistory.org) and sign up to receive future emails.

Editors Note: In the last September 2014 Issue 3 was the start of Tom Macaulay's Truckee Ice Company article. This is the continuation of that article.

## TRUCKEE ICE COMPANY AT MARTIS CREEK

Continuing ice wars had resulted in several attempts at combinations to control production and prices. In 1883 after "ruinous competition" in San Francisco <sup>12</sup> all of the producing companies in the Truckee basin joined together to form Union Ice Company of San Francisco. (This was not The Union Ice Company which came along in 1882.) Officers of the various producing companies held positions in the new Union Ice Company, and Thomas McAulay was superintendent of San Francisco operations. By 1885 he had quarreled with other managers in the company and resigned to join the new Truckee Ice Company.

The winter of 1884 was bad for the ice men. Storms and high water limited the ice harvest. By October of 1885 all of the ice houses were empty <sup>13</sup>. In early January of 1886, the *Truckee Republican* reported the outlook was for a splendid harvest <sup>14</sup>. January was cold with temperatures below zero and ice harvests were pushed. By the end of the month snow had stopped the harvest with rains compounding the troubles of the ice men <sup>15, 16</sup>. As a result of snow and rain only about two thirds of a crop was harvested <sup>17</sup>.

The San Francisco Bulletin reported on the Truckee ice harvest saying that five companies were harvesting ice. Four were in a pool, but the fifth, Truckee Ice Company, was not <sup>18</sup>.

Truckee Ice Company participated in the 1885-1886 harvest, although not without some problems. McAulay instituted a new, different pay scale for his crews resulting in a walkout by some of the men <sup>19</sup>. McAulay stood his ground and soon a full crew was at work on the pond.

By the end of 1886 McAulay had left the Truckee Ice Company to help found the Tahoe Ice Company at Winsted. In November of 1886 he filed suit against the Truckee Ice Company, claiming that he had expended \$28,200.54 of his own money in developing the plant, but

had only been paid \$27,065.30 leaving a balance of \$1,125.29. The Truckee Ice Company petitioned the court to move the suit to San Francisco, to McAulay's disadvantage. The petition was granted. The court records were destroyed in the 1906 fire, so we do not know the final disposition of the case.

In 1887 a telephone line was established between Truckee and the ice works at Martis Creek. It also served the Tahoe Ice Company at Winsted <sup>20</sup>.

In May of 1888, A.W. Sisson and C.W. Crocker sold the Truckee Ice Company site to Sisson Crocker & Co., who had succeeded Sisson Wallace & Co. <sup>21</sup>. In October of the same year, Sisson Crocker & Co. sold the site to the Truckee Ice Company <sup>22</sup>. On March 3, 1902, the Truckee Ice Company sold this land to the Union Ice Company <sup>23</sup>.

The Truckee Ice Company continued to operate in the Truckee basin with reports of harvests each year. In 1891 Union Ice Company acquired direct control of the Truckee Ice Company. After that time the plan was referred to as Union Ice Co., Truckee Ice Co., or Martis Creek. Ice harvests were reported until 1985 <sup>24</sup>, and the property was listed in the Nevada County Assessor's list until 1904. Note 25. The corporate charter was suspended in 1901 <sup>26</sup>.

The last years of the Truckee Ice Co. are obscure, as is the case many of the other ice companies. At the end of the annual ice harvests the small companies and their harvests tended to be ignored. The last harvest was seldom noticed because no one realized that if it was the last one. When ice was not harvested in the following season it was not news nor was it considered important.

Truckee Ice Co. was only one of many companies that brought fame and fortune to some and helped to make Truckee basin ice famous throughout the Pacific Coast. When it no longer harvested ice, it was a bit of history of little interest to local people, much to the sadness of modern historians.

*Continued on page 4*



Echoes From The Past Newsletter

*Truckee Ice Company continued from page 3*

Notes from Macaulay's article Truckee Ice Company

12. Union Ice Company records, 12/31/1881
13. Nevada State Journal 10/27/1885; 3/2
14. Truckee Republican 1/6/1886; 3/2
15. Truckee Republican 1/20/1886
16. Truckee Republican 1/22/1886
17. Truckee Republican 9/2/1898; 2/2
18. Truckee Republican 1/16/1886; 3/2
19. Truckee Republican 1/16/1886; 3/2
20. Truckee Republican 12/8 1887 and 12/10/1887
21. Nevada County Clerk, Deed Book 71 p. 327. 5/1/1888
22. Nevada County Clerk, Deed Book 70, p. 477, 10/16/1888
23. Nevada County Clerk, Deed Book 97, p. 351, 3/28/1902
24. Nevada County Mining Review, 1/1/1895
25. Nevada County Assessor list 12/31/1904
26. California State Archives file 14617, 11/30/1909

**HAPPENINGS ON SPRING STREET**

The treasure hunt on Spring Street starts with changes occurring in the area of Spring Street, Jibboom Street and Donner Pass Road. As a part of the Brickelltown Streetscape project, there are many, many changes happening in the old section of town including the creation of a sitting plaza on the corner of Donner Pass Road and Spring Street. For those of us in the History World this is a modern era return to an old style pleasure. Our beloved Eagle (Victory Eage) will rest in this area for all to see again and it will draw many to just enjoy the old town feel.

But the most surprising thing to come out of this improvement was the discovery of unexpected treasures we started finding during construction. Having come to an agreement with the Town of Truckee and the construction crew, we have been able to gather over 650 pieces of artifacts to be studied from just the Spring Street Project and what little that has been done at the Old Jail Museum so far.

The intersection (Fig 1) was once the site of part of the original China Town with the first brick and mortar building approximately where Spring Street is today. After the fire of 1868, one intelligent Chinese Man, Fong Lee, built his two stores of Brick while a majority of the remaining business owners still used the cheaper wood. Over the many reincarnations of this area there were also livery stables, and blacksmith

shops. In later years there were vehicle garages in this area - the latter being attested to by the Town when they found, not one, but four old fuel tanks buried on Jibboom and Spring Streets (Fig 2). We were also able to chronicle fire evidence at what was the site of the original Donner Garage (Fig 2) and Sierra Tavern (Figs 3, 4 and 5).

All items have been photographed by Greg Zirbel and indexed for further study. But the pride of the excavation work was all the Chinese pottery shards that were located. Many of the manufacture stamps are not ones we have in our current collection. Truckee has a rich history and the Chinese played a very significant part of that history. (Figs 6, 7 and 8)

We look forward to the Spring when the rest of the Brickelltown Streetscape Project continues as we will be on site once again to collect more of Truckee's History. (Fig 9).

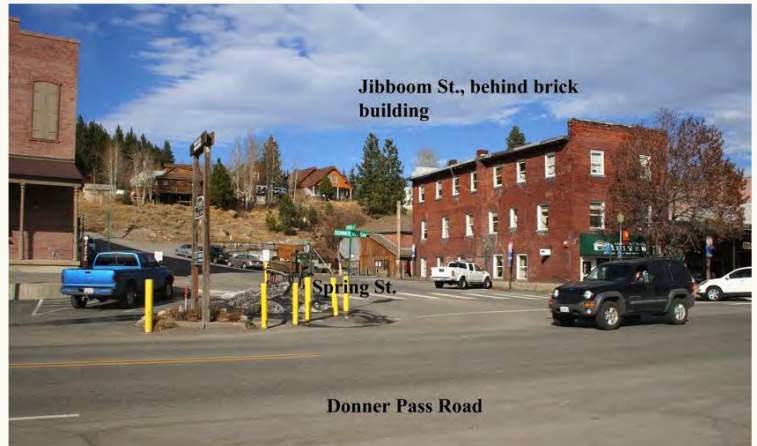


Figure 1 - intersection of Donner Pass Road and Spring Street; and Jibboom Street and Spring Street; photo taken November 28, 2001



Figure 2 - Truckee Garage would have been where intersection of Donner Pass Road and Spring Street is today; this is where the four buried fuel tanks were discovered





Figure 3 - Sierra Tavern before it was destroyed by fire



Figure 4 - evidence of fire at the site of the former Sierra Tavern; note the charred wood and evidence of degrading brick; discovered during excavation and work for the Brickelltown Streetscape Project



Figure 5 (left) - President Chaun Mortier noting more visual fire evidence at the site of the former Sierra Tavern; photo courtesy of Greg Zirbel



Figures 6, 7 and 8 - samples of various artifacts discovered during the Brickelltown excavation effort; presumed Chinese pottery

A HUGE thank you is extended to our volunteers Greg Zirbel, Barbara Czerwinski and Karl Pape for all their work in cataloguing and photographing this collection. This would not have been possible without your efforts.



## MONUMENT REDEDICATION

After many years of being stored at the Joseph Research Cabin and after two years of preparation, the Emigrant Trail Monument is back at the Truckee High School. It was originally set in 1929 by the Native Sons of the Golden West to commemorate Truckee's Past in the the passage of Emigrants coming out West.

Representatives from the Native Sons of the Golden West, Native Daughters of the Golden West, Truckee Donner Historical Society, Nevada County Board of Supervisors, Nevada County Historical Landmarks Commission, Truckee Tahoe High School District and E Clampus Vitus were all on site along with several members of the public to see this plaque returned to the Emigrant Trail.

We would like to send a special thank you to The Truckee Tahoe School District for all their help in seeing that this project was completed.

For more information about the monument, Donner Summit Historical Society prepared a detailed fact sheet about the monument, available at this link, <http://bit.ly/1vy27Mb>



Photos courtesy of Greg Zirbel.



In honor of the monument relocation and rededication at Truckee High School, November 2014, Linda Beeghly designed a celebration cake. She has also created other cakes to celebrate various historical landmarks. See this link, or <http://bit.ly/1yEtEur>.



## 2014 TDHS Accomplishments

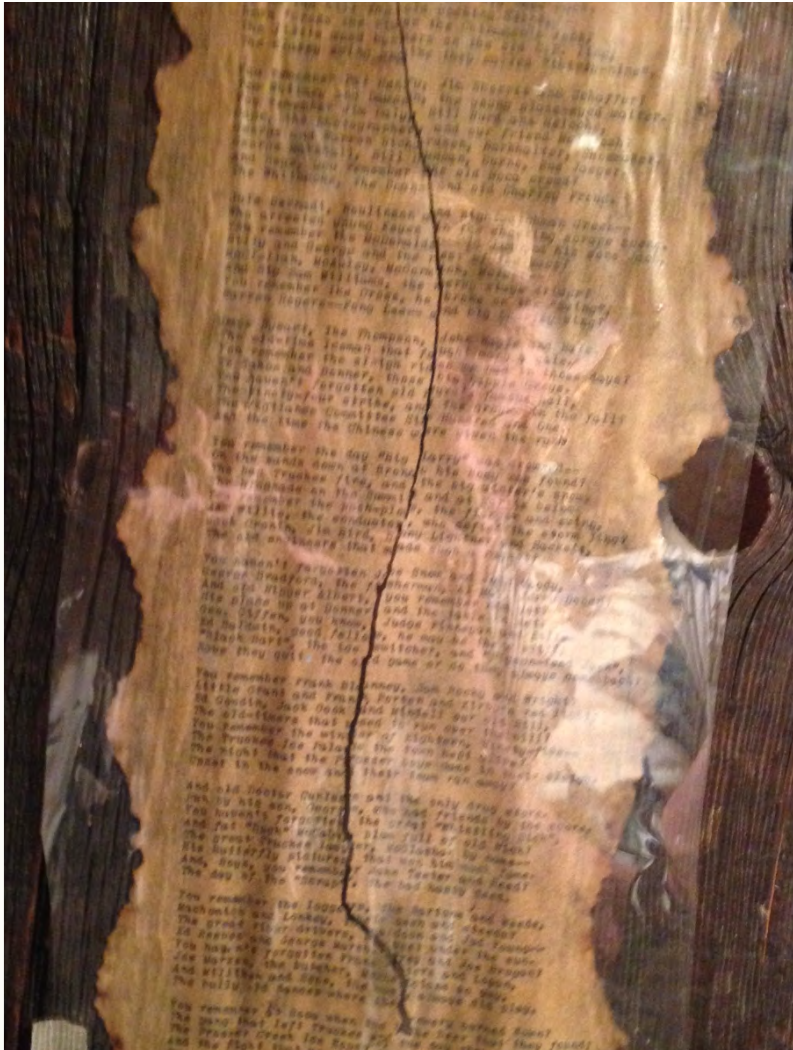
Hats off to all our volunteers who have dedicated their time, talents and energies to continue to serve the mission of preserving our rich Truckee history:

- \* The Donner Emigrant Trail plaque moved back to its rightful place at the Tahoe Truckee High School on Donner Pass Road and monument was rededicated Nov. 16 (see article at left)
- \* The TDHS Old Jail Museum was restained by the generous contribution from the C.A.T.T. organizations
- \* Created fillable Membership Application form for website and consolidated 501(c)(3) IRS determination letter for website
- \* Republication of *Echoes From the Past* newsletter
- \* Issued bi-monthly eNews eblast emails
- \* Captured emails from guest register at Old Jail Museum delineating visitors home states
- \* Co-sponsored three *Truckee History Alive!* series
- \* Cleaned up Schaffer Cemetery
- \* Negotiating with Donner Park Museum regarding display venue of McGlashan butterfly collection
- \* Opened new Jacob Teeter and Law History of Truckee exhibition
- \* Remodeled Jail Exhibit with new cabinet
- \* Maintained Old Jail Museum opening throughout summer including Truckee Thursdays and Saturdays; on July 5, 2014 there were 99 visitors!
- \* Participated in Truckee Day parade on July 4th
- \* Hosted Old Timers' Picnic in July
- \* Opened and maintained a presence in the Joseph Research Cabin weekly on Thursdays and on Sunday afternoons which enabled public visitation
- \* Coordinated visits to offsite historically significant venues including "Nick's Pond" (Wally Gelatt Memorial Pond); investigating "open space" interpretive area and suggesting enhancements to better appreciate this donation
- \* Met with HPAC anticipating any historical artifacts preceding Spring Street dig
- \* Rearranged Old Jail Museum wall hangings to accommodate additional plaques in the Memorial Garden
- \* Facilitated archaeological findings at the Spring Street excavation project (497 pieces) with fragments of apparent Chinese Pottery pieces
- \* Coordinated partnerships with area businesses to better reflect historical significance (Greg Zirbel Neetweets), Bar of America and three panoramas, and Alpine Mounting to finish TDHS photo orders



**TRUCKEE DOGGEREL \***

Have you visited the Old Jail Museum and seen this laminated dedication to the Truckee-ites of yesteryear? Wondered what the words actually said. A link is below to a typewritten version of the plaque. Enjoy. Note the last date - written in January 1, 1917! Photo courtesy of Ron Rettig.



\* Wonder what a "doggerel" is? Crudely or irregularly fashioned verse, often of a humorous or burlesque nature. Here is a link (<http://bit.ly/1s3ABGv>) to the translation of the Doggerel.

*Please get involved with your Truckee Donner Historical Society (TDHS). The only way we can offer programs and events is if YOU, as a volunteer, step up and get involved. TDHS is an all-volunteer, 501 (c)(3) organization so any and all donations are gratefully appreciated and tax deductible. Our mailing address is Truckee Donner Historical Society, P.O. Box 893, Truckee, CA 96160.*

**FLORISTON - FORGOTTEN NAME UPDATE**

Update to prior story about town of Floriston. In the Spring 2012 issue of Echoes, Tom Macaulay's article on Forgotten Names and Ghosts Along the Truckee River, [link, http://bit.ly/OOZFik](http://bit.ly/OOZFik) (p. 7), this Editor was curious about the area and found this dedication sign.



*continued from page 5 - Spring Street*

The Brickelltown Streetscape Project continues and the TDHS is actively engaged in preserving artifact finds for further study as we continue to act as stewards to maintain the legacy of the Truckee Donner area.



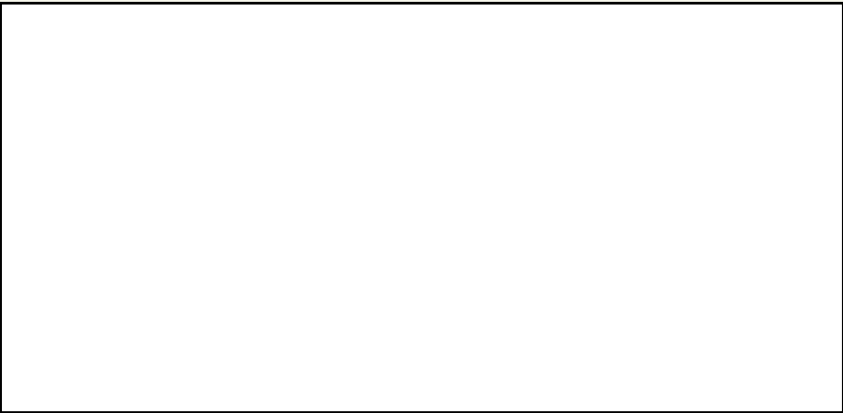
Figure 9 - view looking south towards the two intersections, Jibboom Street and Spring Street, and Spring Street and Donner Pass Road; note the brick building on the left; photo courtesy of Greg Zirbel

**Unless otherwise noted, all photos courtesy of Truckee Donner Historical Society.**



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Contact me on ways I can volunteer  Are you willing to docent at the Old Jail Museum? Yes / No

Areas of Special Interest and/or Comments/Suggestions:

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