

Echoes from the Past

TRUCKEE DONNER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Founded July 24, 1968 as a 501(c)(3)

WINTER 2012

President's Corner

ISSUE 1

By: Chelsea Walterscheid

I would like to thank everyone who helped with the 3rd Annual Historical Haunted Walking Tour, held last October. With over 60 volunteers making this even successful, we were able to raise over \$9,000. This was possible based on record ticket sales and proceeds from a prize packed raffle that took place at Moody's Bistro & Lounge, the tour's host sponsor.

The Historical Haunted Walking Tour started three years ago as a simple idea to partner two non-profits - the Truckee Donner Historical Society and Trails & Vistas - to raise money for the organizations while having fun teaching people about Truckee's incredibly entertaining past. Three women spent three weeks planning the first event and it has grown into quite an affair that now takes six months to put together. We could not produce this event without our faithful volunteers and for that I am very grateful. The money raised is split between the two non-profits. TDHS uses the proceeds to help with our ongoing preservation efforts. Mark your calendars for the 4th Annual Tour, October 18 and 19, 2012. Tickets will go on sale in August. For more information, visit truckeehistorytour.com or contact Sunshine Tahoe at (775) 527-4485.

I would also like to thank our Joseph Research Library volunteers, who spend may hours weekly keeping our research requests answered, projects in order and our day-to-day business

running smoothly. They are there every Thursday to help answer questions, find historic photos and research the numerous requests that pour into the Library. The Joseph Research Library is open to the public every Thursday from 10am-2pm.

We have a very productive, enthusiastic and eager Board of Directors who all work together towards a common goal: Preserving Truckee's History. Thank you everyone for making my job easier. I could not do it without you all.

SAVE the DATE: Old Timers' Picnic and Truckee Reunion is always the 3rd Saturday in July, rain or shine. See you at the Truckee River Regional Park on July 21, 2012 from 10am-4pm

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Winter came down to our home one night, Quietly pirouetting in on silvery-toed slippers of snow, And we, we were children once again. ~Bill Morgan, Jr.

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Membership Corner

Contribute more of your membership dollars towards our preservation efforts by signing up for our eBill services. You determine your payment method with annual eBill service reminders: Pay by Check (print the application and mail in your payment) or Pay by Credit/Debit Card (create a PayPal Subscription).

Either way, by signing up to receive an eBill annually you have taken action to increase the power of your membership dollars and contributed to helping the environment.

We thank you for taking action and being a valuable member of TDHS with your membership payments and involvement!

For membership questions contact Billie Cornell at bcornell@truckeehistory.org.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JUNE 9 - Civil War Dedication at the Truckee Cemetary

JUNE 16 - Summer Opening of the Old Jail Musuem. Join us for a Special Dedication and

Docent Welcome-Back Celebration
JULY 21 - Old Timers' Picnic at the Truckee Regioinal Park 10am

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Remembrances

This year we have lost several people dear to our cause. We would like to honor them, not only for their input to TDHS, but as friends who will be greatly missed. Our thoughts and prayers remain with their families and loved ones.

Donald Edward Colclough Aug. 1, 1937 - Dec. 13, 2011 Resident of Martinez, CA Donald E Colclough, 74, died Tuesday, December, 13, 2011 at his home in Martinez, California. Don spent time between his bay area home in Martinez and his cabin in Truckee. Don loved spending time and volunteering in Truckee.



One of his great passions was trains and he served as a member and docent at the Tahoe Donner Railroad Society. Don was also active in his parish church Corpus Christi Catholic Church in Tahoe City, California and he volunteered on the Truckee

Cemetery Board. He was also a member of the Tahoe Donner Historical Society and a docent for the Truckee Old Jail Museum. Donald Colclough is survived by his wife of 17 years, Sally Ann Rich Colclough as well as his children, Carol Caroompas, Philip Colclough and David Colclough.



Long-time Donner Lake resident **Laura (Bass) Horman** passed away peacefully on July 10, 2011, at the age of 95. She was a TDHS inaugural

board member in 1968. She was the wife of the late Daniel Horman. We will miss her.

Roy Denver Baker was born on Jan. 2, 1917. Mr. Baker lived in the Truckee area for 32 years with most of his years spent at his San Souci Resort on Donner Lake. He was an educator for the Truckee-Tahoe School District for 30 years, working as the librarian for the Truckee-Tahoe High School. He enjoyed family genealogy, learning about and sharing the history of the Baker/Lingar families. He was a history buff and was a member of the Truckee-Donner Historical Society. Mr. Baker passed away on Dec. 4, 2011, a month shy of his 95th birthday.



Jacqueline Titus, 88, a resident of Reno for 56 years, died Dec. 14, 2011 at St. Mary's Hospital. Jacqueline was born on March 8, 1923. She was a TDHS member and wife of Truckee native Frank L. Titus. Jacqueline and Frank celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary last April. She is survived by her loving husband Frank, their children Lisa (Norman) and F. Casey; grandchildren Karen and Nancy; great grandchild Jasmine.

Winter is the time for comfort, for good food and warmth, for the touch of a friendly hand and for a talk beside the fire: it is the time for home. ~Edith Sitwell

Forgotten Names and Ghosts along the Truckee River

By Tom Macaulay

This is the first installment of a three part column on the once busy communities between Truckee and Verdi, Nevada. The column is guest written by Tom Macaulay, who is Truckee's senior historian and has studied Truckee's history, especially the ice industry for many years. The next installment will be published in our Spring 2012 edition.

The Truckee River canyon between Truckee, California, and Verdi, Nevada, is an important link in America's transcontinental routes. Before 1844 it was unknown to America. In that year the Stevens-Murphy-Townsend party struggled through with their wagons. They were the only ones to do so because the steep walls and twisting course of the canyon were a nightmare for the exhausted party. In the spring of 1845, their guide, Old Caleb Greenwood, searched out a better route which became known as the Dog Valley route, still in use today. It was used by all immigrant parties on the Truckee Branch of the California Trail until 1868 when the Central Pacific Railroad (CPRR), part of the Transcontinental Railway, made regular traffic through the Truckee River canyon commonplace.

For many years the Truckee canyon was a thriving, vibrant commercial area with small towns and communities all along the tracks of the CPRR. The railroad defined and dominated the canyon. It carried supplies and passengers in and carried lumber, ice, and paper out. Gradually wagon roads and then motor roads, starting at Truckee and Verdi, at opposite ends of the canyon, worked their way in. Finally, in 1926 the last stretch of the Victory Highway, later Hwy-40, was completed between

Floriston and State Line, and the entire canyon was open to private vehicles. In 1964 the last phase of freeway work on I-80, which replaced Hw-40, was completed and the canyon assumed its present character.

Truckee and Verdi still flourish at the upper and lower ends of the canyon. However, all of the other towns, except Floriston, have disappeared, leaving only scattered ruins to mark their sites. Most of the names have disappeared from modern maps, and local residents who remember the names are unsure of the locations. For those who are interested in the history of the area, a journey down the canyon can still provide views of these forgotten sites which once meant so much.

Mileage mentioned in the article is in railroad miles from Truckee, derived from late 1800's railroad time tables (which give miles from Sacramento, not Truckee). They are accurate to the closest mile but cannot be compared to modern mileages. Highway or freeway miles are mentioned as such, and "Modern" refers to sites developed since the road thru the canyon was completed.

GLENSHIRE DRIVE. Modern. It follows Old Highway 40 from Truckee to the new subdivision of Glenshire, six highway miles from the Glenshire Drive turn off from Donner Pass Road near Truckee. It follows the CPRR and Truckee River and crosses the Glenshire Bridge over the CPRR and the Truckee River. A short distance beyond the bridge, old HWY-40 turns to the left, to the Flycaster's club. Down the canyon, below this point, Hwy-40 has been abandoned and farther down the canyon it has been overlaid by I-80. Glenshire Drive is a new road turning right from Hwy-40. It continues through Glenshire subdivision to meet another short section of old Highway 40, now called the Hirschdale road, between Boca and Hirschdale.

HALF DAM is a local name for a site on the river about two miles below Truckee on Glenshire Drive. It is the site of a dam started for the Gem Ice Works in 1894 but never completed. It is not visible unless you know just where to look.

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POLARIS is on the river three miles below Truckee. First called Proctor's and Winsted by the CPRR, it was the site of Tahoe Ice Company after 1886. The name was changed to Polaris by the National Ice Company in 1901 and there was a post office from 1901 to 1923. It was recently known to locals as "The Pink Palace" because the old headquarters building, later demolished, had been sheathed in pink asbestos shingles. The old ice pond, the best preserved in the canyon, is across the river from the highway and is easily visible from the extreme east end of Olympic Heights subdivision. The modern sanitary district sewer plant is just downstream.

OLD BUG STATION, Modern, is on the left side of Glenshire Drive about one mile below Polaris. It was abandoned when the new bug station was built west of Truckee at the Donner interchange.

The **OLD SITE BELOW POLARIS** was later used as the Forest Service Polaris campground. On the right of the campground, across the railroad, is a large flat which was the terminus of the Sisson-Wallace flume which served Hawthorne's mill, Samuel McFarland's mill, and Richardson Brother mill. Several bridges crossed the Truckee River here to provide access to CPRR side tracks and the Richardson Brothers' factory.

MARTIS CREEK is five miles below Truckee. Foot access via a difficult trail is from a parking area beyond the Glenshire bridge. Martis Creek enters the Truckee River from the South, but up river from Glenshire Bridge. The mouth of the creek was the site of the Truckee Ice Company after 1885. The old ice dam is still visible above the mouth of the creek, as are old stone building foundations. The upper reaches of Martis Creek were lumbered by the Richardson Brothers, George Schaffer, and the Truckee Lumber Company. The creek was also called Marty's Creek.

*In the next issue, we will
continue the trip down
the canyon!*



FLYCASTER'S is below Martis Creek, six plus miles below Truckee, on the Glenshire side of the river. It is private property, accessible by private road from old Hwy-40. The land was purchased from the CPRR and the buildings were purchased in 1906 from Dr. Zimmer, who had a tuberculosis sanitarium there, by the San Francisco Flycaster's Club. A road and bridge led across the Truckee River to Union Mills Station.

UNION MILLS is six plus miles below Truckee, a stop on the CPRR, across the Truckee River from Flycaster's. The Union Mills lumber mill may have been located in Union Valley, the location of modern Glenshire subdivision. The name Union Mills has been freely used for several sites, and the true, correct site of the mill has not yet been accurately determined. Very recently, the exact location of the Union Mills Station Site of 1913 was located.

GLENSHIRE is a modern subdivision in Union Valley, which also contains McKay Spring, Buck Spring and possibly the site of Union Mills. Stewart McKay of Truckee developed springs, a sawmill, and three small ponds for ice harvests and raising fish. Fish were for commercial sale as well as for sport fishing.

PROSSER CREEK enters the Truckee canyon FROM the left, seven miles below Truckee. The mouth was the terminus of lumber flumes for mills on Sage Hen and Alder Creeks, (Banner Mill, Parkhurst Flume, Nevada & California Lumber Co., Lonkey & Smith Flume), and Martin & Sweeney shingle mill. The Summit Ice Company, later part of Sierra Lakes Ice Company and Union Ice Company, harvested ice one half mile above mouth and was connected to the CPRR by a rail siding. The broken concrete dam still exists but floods have washed out the old side track. A store, lumber yard and telegraph office were at the mouth of the canyon.

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

The Old Jail Museum will be opening in June 2012. Contact Chelsea Walterscheid at cwalterscheid@truckeehistory.org for further information to learn how to sign up and be trained as an Old Jail Museum Docent.

The World's Smallest Woman Visits Truckee

By Barbra Schlumpf

One Thursday in October of 2010, Roy Baker arrived at the Joseph Research Library to donate some items to the Truckee Donner Historical Society. One of these items was a letter from Mr. John S. Stone of Fern Creek, Kentucky, who had been transcribing a journal written by his grandfather in the winter of 1890. Along with the letter were several transcribed pages of the journal.

The grandfather was a U.S. Navy doctor traveling to San Francisco. He became stranded in Truckee from January 17th to February 3rd, 1890 and described his experiences in his journal. The train on which the doctor was traveling became snow bound about 2 miles above Truckee, and the doctor was recruited to help care for the passengers who were ill. On January 24th, he wrote, "There is beginning to be considerable sickness on the train. Mrs. Jellison is better, but Mrs. McVean who was in the other car has been taken sick with diphtheria and the midget is very sick." On January 26th, the journal entry tells us, "Mrs McVean died today." On January 30th, he wrote, "The midget has died." His final entry from Truckee reads, "I am so glad to get away from Truckee, there were some days when I thought I was never to leave it alive."

The references to the "midget" intrigued our research historians. An internet search quickly revealed that "the midget" was Lucia Zarate, known as the world's smallest woman. Lucia was born in Mexico, probably around 1870. She was exhibited in various venues in the United States, and made her big debut in Philadelphia at the Centennial Exposition. In 1880, she left for a European tour with the

This article is dedicated to the memory of Roy D. Baker, who passed away on December 4, 2011. Roy D. Baker was born in Arkansas in 1917. He lived in Truckee for 32 years, working as the librarian at Truckee High School. Roy was the first president of the Truckee Donner Historical Society.



"Lilliputian Opera Company," accompanied by her parents. On February 26, 1881, she met Queen Victoria. Five years later, she appeared with P.T. Barnum's Great London Circus.

Returning to the United States, Lucia and her parents planned an exhibition in San Francisco. Little did they know that they were about to be caught in the "Great Snow Blockade of 1890." After a cattle train had gone off the tracks, 12 trains and 700 passengers from Truckee to Reno were snowbound. Lucia's train became stranded near Truckee on January 15th. The storm continued unabated until 25 feet of snow had fallen. Food and fuel were running low on the trains. Lucia was on a special diet; when her food ran out, she was given a can of food from Truckee. After eating it, she became sick and developed a fever. Her condition worsened and on January 28th, Lucia died. The blockade was lifted two days later, and her parents returned Lucia's body to Mexico for burial.

The story of Lucia Zarate, the world's smallest woman, was dramatized in the Truckee Donner Historical Society's Haunted History Tour in October 2011.

The famous Lilliputian, Lucia Zarate, her mother and another stranded passenger on the snowbound train of 1890. From the 2011 Historical Haunted Walking Tour.



Capers from the Clubhouse By Barbara Schlumpf



The "Clubhouse", better known as the Joseph Research Library, was donated to the historical society and moved to its present location on Donner Trail Road. The library is open to the public every Thursday from 10am until 2pm. Members of the public are encouraged to come in and see the resources that are available to those interested in the history of Truckee.

Our research team includes Chaun Mortier, Research Historian, Dennis Beeghly, Photo Archivist and Treasurer of the Society, Barbara Czerwinski, Research Assistant and Board Member, Barbara Schlumpf, Research Assistant and Recording Secretary of the Society, and Tom Macaulay, researcher and expert on Truckee's ice industry. In addition, Katie Holley remains our Research Librarian, although she cannot join us every week, due to work commitments.

The team is working on a wide variety of projects. We are doing photo archiving,

accessioning items that are donated to us, and doing numerous research projects. We handle many research requests from the public, including genealogy requests, and requests about the history of various buildings and historical events in Truckee. We assist authors and those working on thesis papers with their questions about Truckee and the surrounding area.

Our current projects include Chaun's work on the judicial history of Truckee, Tom's report on the history of street names, Barbara Czerwinski's research on the City of San Francisco snow blockade in 1952, as well as her work on the medical history of Truckee. Barbara Schlumpf is researching the history of fires and their impact on Truckee, and Dennis is our expert on railroad history and historic Truckee photos.

Another ongoing endeavor has been the accessioning of the Dick Joseph, John Corbett, and Roy Baker collections. The Hobart Mills collection from Joleen Torri has been completed and is now available to researchers.

Our Clubhouse Team invites interested members of the Historical Society, as well as the general public, to come in to see our books, files, and photos. Ask some questions, learn more about Truckee history, and perhaps help to support the Truckee Donner Historical Society by buying a book or photo. We hope to see you soon!

The Joseph Research Library is located on the west end of Meadow Park at 10115 Donner Trail Road, Truckee, CA 530-582-0893.



*The color of springtime is in the flowers; the color of winter is in the imagination.
~Terri Guillemets*

Membership Application | Renewal Form

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Contact me on ways I can volunteer () Are you willing to docent at the Old Jail? Yes / No
Areas of Special Interest and/or Comments/Suggestions: _____

Truckee Donner Historical Society

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