Form No. 10-300 (Rev. 10-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC
Donner Camp Sites

AND/OR COMMON
Donner Memorial State Park

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

__NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN
Truckee X VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
2nd

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
California	06	Nevada	057

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
__DISTRICT	X PUBLIC	__OCCUPIED	__AGRICULTURE	X MUSEUM
__BUILDING(S)	__PRIVATE	X UNOCCUPIED	__COMMERCIAL	X PARK
__STRUCTURE	__BOTH	__WORK IN PROGRESS	X EDUCATIONAL	__PRIVATE RESIDENCE
X SITE	**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**	**ACCESSIBLE**	__ENTERTAINMENT	__RELIGIOUS
__OBJECT	__IN PROCESS	X YES: RESTRICTED	__GOVERNMENT	__SCIENTIFIC
	__BEING CONSIDERED	__YES: UNRESTRICTED	__INDUSTRIAL	__TRANSPORTATION
		__NO	__MILITARY	__OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
California Department of Parks and Recreation/Alder Creek: U.S. Forest Service, Tahoe National Forest, Supervisor Robert G. Lancaster

STREET & NUMBER
Highway 49

CITY, TOWN
Sacramento/Nevada City __ VICINITY OF

STATE
California

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
Nevada County Hall of Records

STREET & NUMBER
Courthouse Square

CITY, TOWN
Nevada City

STATE
California

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings

DATE
1961

X FEDERAL __STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

CITY, TOWN
Washington,

STATE
D.C.

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
X EXCELLENT	__DETERIORATED	__UNALTERED	X ORIGINAL SITE
__GOOD	__RUINS	X ALTERED	__MOVED DATE_____
__FAIR	__UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The sites of the cabins where the Donner Party wintered are in three locations. Included within the Donner Memorial State Park are the sites of the Murphy Cabin and the Breen-Keseberg Cabin. Across U.S. Route 40 and about a half mile east is the site of the Reed-Graves Cabin. About 5 miles to the north on the Tahoe National Forest lies the Alder Creek of George and Jacob Donner. There each family built a separate tipi using the wagon tilt and brush.

All that remains of the dreadful camp is a large rock against which the Murphys built their cabin and the quiet of the forest. A plaque marks the rock. An heroic statue dedicated in 1918 and showing a pioneer family facing westward marks the site of the Breen-Keseberg Cabin. To the east is a modern building housing a museum. Across the highway and a short distance to the east is a simple white wooden cross marking the site of the Reed-Graves cabin.

The Alder Creek Camp, five miles north, is impressively natural and lonely. On a fine summer's day it is a lovely camping place, untroubled by modern intrussions save for simple interpretive signs put up by the Forest Service. Fine tall trees reach for the sky. A lush meadow stretches away to the east and the violet-purple of the mountains, seen at a distance, seem hardly threatening. Cut into the face of the land, the ruts of the Emigrant Trail are still visible. In winter, the snow can be as deep as a man on horseback is tall.

On the first of November 1846, the sites looked far different. The cabins were squat, hastily constructed, and rawer than the usual frontier cabins. Doors were the only openings, and they were covered with hides. The roofs were green poles placed across the log cribs and covered with tents, wagon tilts, or hides. The Breens had taken possession of a cabin already there; the Kesebergs built a lean-to to this. The other cabins were built double to save building one wall. Into these flimsy structures were packed 60 people - 19 men, 12 women, and 29 children, some so young as to be still at the breast. Around the cabins lay piles of belongings hurriedly unpacked from snow-bound wagons. A few half-starved cattle, horses, and mules staggered about, browsing on the trees, for the hay in the meadow was already deep under the snow. Many of the oxen had already been slaughtered and their quarters stacked like cord-wood, frozen stiff.

At the Alder Creek site, George and Jacob Donner had cut logs to build cabins after their November 3rd arrival, but it snowed, and they quickly abandoned the idea, settling for crude brush arbors covered with canvas, their coats, and any thing else they could find. This camp housed 21 people - six men, three women, and 12 children.

(Continued)

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
__PREHISTORIC	__ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	__COMMUNITY PLANNING	__LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	__RELIGION	
__1400-1499	__ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	__CONSERVATION	__LAW	__SCIENCE	
__1500-1599	__AGRICULTURE	__ECONOMICS	__LITERATURE	__SCULPTURE	
__1600-1699	__ARCHITECTURE	__EDUCATION	__MILITARY	__SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
__1700-1799	__ART	__ENGINEERING	__MUSIC	__THEATER	
X 1800-1899	__COMMERCE	__EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	__PHILOSOPHY	__TRANSPORTATION	
__1900-	__COMMUNICATIONS	__INDUSTRY	__POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	__OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		__INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1846-47

BUILDER/ARCHITECT N/A

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Scene of the snow-bound winter camps of the Donner Party, 1846-47, where tragedy and horror struck this group of 87 California-bound emigrants, these sites represent the worst disaster in the record of western migration. While many of the vicissitudes suffered by the Donner party before they went into winter camp were visited upon other migrants, never had so much gone wrong, so fatally, for any other group. When the stranded people were reduced to eating the flesh of their dead comrades, the final thrill of horror was added to a story of trial, heroism, greed, cowardice, and despair, that raised this venture to epic proportions.

HISTORY

In April of 1846 a well-equipped party of emigrants, led by Jacob and George Donner, set out from Illinois for California. All America was going west that year, and the Donners were joined by other travelers en-route. At South Pass on July 17, the train received word that Lansford W. Hastings would be waiting at Fort Bridger to escort them along a new and shorter route to California. Hastings' 1845 Emigrants' Guide to Oregon & California was well known to members of the train, so, despite the warning of a group of old mountain men, twenty wagons split off from the train and headed for Fort Bridger. George Donner was elected captain of the new train. They arrived at the log-cabin fort on July 28th. The famous old mountain man told them that Hastings' cut off would save them 350 or 400 miles. No bad canyons, trail mostly smooth, hard, and level. Only Digger Indians, and only one dry drive of around 40 miles.

Hastings had gone ahead with a wagon train because the season was getting short. He left directions to follow, and on the last day of July, the party set off in his tracks. Almost at once things began to go wrong. The track was much worse than any they had encountered before. At the place where the trail crossed the Weber River they found a letter from Hastings telling them that the trail in Weber Canyon was very bad. If they would camp where they were and send a messenger forward, he would come back and guide them. Their

(Continued)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRA. .ICAL REFERENCES

(See continuation sheet).

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY circa 260 acres (the three sites)

UTM REFERENCES (See continuation sheet.)

	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
A			
B			
C			
D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

(See continuation sheet.)

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Marilynn Larew, Historian

ORGANIZATION — DATE

Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service — March 1978

STREET & NUMBER — TELEPHONE

1100 L Street, NW. — (202) 523-5464

CITY OR TOWN — STATE

Washington, — D.C.

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL ___ STATE ___ LOCAL ___

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE — DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 10/12/83

ATTEST: — DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

((NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS))

((NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS))

((NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS))

((NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS))

By February 18, 1847, the camps bore a different aspect. Snow was piled high above the roofs. "Inclined planes led up from the cabins to the top of the snow, and up these slopes the dead bodies had been dragged with ropes since the starving people had not been able to lift them. Some bodies now lay upon the snow wrapped in quilts. Some of the hides which were being used for food were putrefied from having served as roofs of cabins and thus been kept warm on the inside. The emigrants were overwrought emotionally, and many seemed mentally unbalanced." (From George R. Stewart, Ordeal by Hunger, New York, 1971, p. 153.)

On April 13, the scene was still worse: "A scene of filth and mutilated corpses." (Ibid., p. 205). At the Donner's Alder Creek camp, "the rich property of the Donners lay scattered around everywhere. The melting of the snow and the spring freshets had flooded most of the camp, and sodden in the water lay books, bolts of cloth, tea and coffee, shoes, percussion caps, kitchen ware, and goods of all conceivable kinds which the Donners had hoped to use for themselves or to sell to advantage in California. A survey of the camp revealed worse things. At the entrance to the tent they found a large iron kettle, containing human flesh, cut up...Further search disclosed the body of George Donner carefully wrapped in a sheet, the last tender attention of his wife. But this care had not prevented the mutilation of the body. The head had been split open and the braine removed; flesh had also been taken for the kettle." (Ibid, p. 206).

All that is gone now. The last of the bodies was buried by the eastward-bound column under General Stephen Watts Kearny in June 1847. What they collected they buried under the Breen-Keseberg Cabin and then put the cabins to the torch. Nothing remains of the horror and the valor but the land and the mountains.

messenger returned 5 days later with bad news. In places the canyon was entirely impassible, but Hastings refused to come back. He had taken his train thru Weber Canyon without ever actually having been there before and had lost too much time. The messenger, James Reed, had explored a new way as he came back, and the party decided to take that route. The route proved to be thru a canyon choked with willow, alder, taspen 20 ft. high, entertwined with servic-berries and wild rose. Having cut their way thru that, they had mountains, the likes of which they had never seen before--The Wahsatch range--to cross, cutting road every inch of the way with only 31 men, some too old to do the hardest work. They used 21 days traversing 36 miles. It was now the 27th of August. They had become the rear guard of the year's migration.

With men and animals worn out they entered the valley of the Great Salt Lake and began the terrible 80 mile dry march in Utah. They lost oxen and had to leave wagons behind, but, although they were all worn and dehydrated, no lives were lost. Following Hastings' track again they drove west and then south around the Ruby Mountain, before turning north again. Finally on the last day of September they reached the westward flowing trickle of the Humbolt River and were back again on the main California trail. They had taken a harsh 125 mile detour which had pulled down men and animals, taken precious time (and time was running out), and the first faint fault lines of disentegration were beginning to show in the unity of the train. Temper already frayed grew worse and finally snapped. James Reed killed John Snyder in self defense but found himself banished from the train. The rot had begun to accelerate. Mr. Hardcoop, a 70 year old man, had wandered away and been left to die alone in the desert. The unit was atomizing before the joint fears of starvation and snow. The Humbolt Sink was a nightmare. Supplies were terribly low as they crossed the last desert and came to rest in the paradise of Trucker Meadows. Dangerously late in the season, failing in mind, body, and equipment, and running short of supplies, they still had the awesome Sierra Nevada to cross. On October 23 they began the cruel climb up the narrow canyon of the Truckee. At Truckee Lake (now Donner Lake), but a short march to the summit of the pass--three days at most--it began to snow. It was October 31st.

(Continued)

Unable to proceed they camped near the lake, hoping to be able to push on when the snow melted. The one cabin already there was appropriated by the Breen family. Keseberg built a lean-to to it. They built two other cabins, double ones, and huddled in them, hardly a wagon train any longer gathering, but a group of desparate individuals unable to cooperate and driven by terror.

The Donners had fallen behind, plagued by a broken axle. They never did reach the lake. Five miles back up the trail at a meadow beside Alder Creek they camped. Unable to build even the wretched cabins that sheltered the others, they threw up a pair of brush arbors covered by cloth and dug in.

And still the snow fell. Deeper and deeper. There was no game and most of the remaining cattle wandered off in the storm and perished.

What followed is the most terrible story in the annalsof the western migration--a very human blend of high heroism and utter degradation.

By December they were reduced to eating hides and bark. Each family group hoarded what they had with no thought of sharing. Four men had died and one was insane. Around the middle of the month fifteen of the strongest set out to cross the snow choked pass on foot. Caught in a blizzard, eight men died, and the others survived by eating the flesh of the dead. After an incredible 32-day journey the survivors arrived at Johnson's Ranch and safety. In turn the first of four reflief expeditions set out to rescue the stranded party..

Conditions back at the camps continued to deteriorate. The snow was nearly 10 feet deep. Eight more were dead, half of them toddlers. Sharing and community effort long since forgotten, the group hardly existed as a group any longer. Each family dug into its pitiful shelter and clutched the rapidly declining food supplies. Even the hides were getting scarce. With shudders and averted faces, some of the stranded had begun to subsist on the flesh of the dead.

The seven of the first relief expedition took 20 survivors out with them in February. Twelve were under the age of 16 and four were women. Only three lives were lost in reaching the central valley, but among those left behind, eight more died, including George and Tamsen Donner (Jacob had died in December; his wife Elizabeth died in March). Tamsen had refused to leave her dying

(Continued)

husband when the first relief expedition went--stayed and came to a mysterious end, possibly murdered by Lewis Keseberg. She was certainly eaten by him.

The second relief arrived in early March and was able to take out only eight, all but 2, children. Three died on the trek. The third and fourth relief expeditions lost no lives, and with the removal of the half-mad Lewis Keseberg, no human was left in the shambles at the lake and beside Alder Creek, but the look of the camps is almost impossible to describe. As the snow melted, many things stood revealed: ruined property, the carcasses of animals now rotting, hair, bones, and parts of human bodies. No writer of fiction could imagine a place of such horror.

Of the 23 men, 15 women, and 41 children who were trapped below the pass, 2/3 of the men died (and most died early), about 1/3 of the children died (beginning around the middle of the ordeal), but just 1/4 (4) of the women died (and most of them near the end), were the men inspired by their sense of responsibility and by the heroics of the age to over-exertion? Were food portions doled out equally in spite of size? Or was the reason physiological? Or psychological?

And what of the encredible heroism of the relief parties? To be sure, a money price was offered by Sutter, but they knew what they would have to endure, not once, but twice, to bring out the stranded emigrants. Thirty men chose to go against the mighty Sierras in full winter to the rescue. Four of the men had family there, the rest went to help strangers.

What of the party? It is one thing to say that 42 of them perished. Better to say that over half-47-survived hardships physical and psychological that make the blood run cold. That some of them ate human flesh to survive gives the story its peculiar fascination down the years, for that taboo runs strong in the human soul; that they survived at all is the highest kind of tribute to the indomitable human spirit. That is what we memorialize at the Donner sites--not the bickering, the petty selfishness of the party, but the will, now flickering, now flowing strong and hot--the will to survive.

And the cause of the disaster? Say bad judgement, bad information and still you have not explained it. It was the ill-fate, the bad luck of the draw, that more things went wrong--including an early and heavy winter in the Sierras--for the Donner Party than for any other recorded emigrant party.

Both the State park and the Alder Creek site are open during daylight hours. There is a well-designed museum at the State park.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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DATE ENTERED

C.F. McGlashan, History of the Donner Party, A Tragedy of the Sierra (Stanford, 1976).

Virginia Reed Murphy,"A Personal Narrative of the Overland Trip to California," reprint from Century Magazine, 1892.

George R. Stewart, Ordeal by Hunger, 2nd edition (New York, 1960).

Form No. 10-300a
(Rev. 10-74)

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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DATE ENTERED

Donner Camp Sites

UTM References

1. Murphy and Graves Cabin Sites (USGS 7.5' Truckee Quadrangle)

   A. 10.739615.4356400
   B. 10.739620.4356215
   C. 10.738620.4355835
   D. 10.738680.4356255

2. Alder Creek Camp (USGS 15' Truckee Quadrangle)

   A. 10.745450.4362650
   B. 10.744950.4361700
   C. 10.743875.4361650
   D. 10.743900.4363300

Verbal Boundary Description

1. Murphy Cabin Site - Donner Memorial State Park. The verbal boundary description is keyed to USGS Truckee Quadrangle, 7.5' Series. Beginning at the northeast corner of the Donner Memorial State Park boundary proceed along the boundary in a sourtherly then westerly then sourtherly direction circa 1,550' to a point circa 300' southeast of the Murphy Cabin site, thence in a westerly direction circa 400' to a point circa 300' to the southwest of the Murphy Cabin site, thence in a northerly direction in a straight line circa 1,100' to the north boundary of the Donner Memorial State Park, thence in an easterly direction along the State Park boundary circa 1,000' to the northeast corner of the State Park, the point of beginning.

2. Graves Cabin Site. The verbal boundary description is keyed to USGS Truckee Quadrangle, 7.5' Series. Beginning at a point on the southern edge of the U.S. Route 40 right of way circa 800' east of the Donner Memorial State Park exit from U.S. 40, proceed in a straight line in a southerly direction circa 500' to a point on the northern edge of Interstate Route 80 right of way, thence along the northern edge of the Interstate 80 right of way 725' to a point on the Donner State Park exit ramp from Interstate 80, thence in a northeasterly direction in a straight line circa 800' to the point of beginning. This boundary encloses in a triangle the Graves Cabin site.

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Donner Camp Sites

Verbal Boundary Description (continued).

3. Alder Creek Camp. The verbal boundary description is keyed to USGS Truckee Quadrangle, 15' Series. Beginning at the junction of Alder Creek and Prosser Creek proceed in a southerly then southwesterly then westerly direction following Alder Creek to the point where Alder Creek meets the "Old Railroad Grade" then along the "Old Railroad Grade" in an easterly then north then northwesterly direction to the point where the "Old Railroad Grade" meets the Tahoe National Forest Boundary almost at the center of section 26, T. 18 N., R. 16 E., thence north along the Tahoe National Forest Boundary to the point where the boundary meets Prosser Creek, thence following Prosser Creek in a southeasterly direction to the junction of Prosser Creek and Alder Creek, the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification.

The Donner camp sites were designated a national historic landmark in 1961 without boundaries. In drawing the boundary for the landmark, the sites of the Murphy Cabin and the Graves Cabin as well as the Alder Creek site of the Donner "Cabin" have been included in the landmark as non-contiguous units of the Donner Camp Site National Historic Landmark. All three sites are associated with the 1846-47 Donner party tragedy.

732 BOUNDARY DEFINITION

RECEIVED

Property Donner Camp Sites

State CA. Working Number NHL

6.1.78

TECHNICAL

Photos _____

Maps _____

CONTROL

OK 6.26.78

HISTORIAN

Seems to be all in order. Sape 1/18/79.

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN

ARCHEOLOGIST

OTHER

HAER

Inventory _____

Review _____

REVIEW UNIT CHIEF

Boundary Accept

BRANCH CHIEF

Shull

9-29-80

KEEPER

National Register Write-up _____ Send-back _____ Entered _____

Federal Register Entry _____ Re-submit _____

INT:2106-74

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service WASO No. 7

DONNER CAMP

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

TRUCKEE QUADRANGLE
CALIFORNIA
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)
SW/4 TRUCKEE 15' QUADRANGLE

1962 IV (DONNER PASS) 1:62 500

1962 I (TRUCKEE 1:62 500)

1962 I NE (BOCA)

Donner Camp Sites
USGS 7.5' Series - Tuckee Quadrangle
1955 Photorevised 1969
UTM
A. 10.739615.4356400
B. 10.739620.4356215
C. 10.738620.4355835
D. 10.738680.4356255

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and USC&GS

Topography from aerial photographs by multiplex methods
Aerial photographs taken 1953. Field check 1955

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on California coordinate system, zone 2
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 10, shown in blue

Revisions shown in purple compiled from aerial photographs taken 1969. This information not field checked

UTM GRID AND 1969 MAGNETIC NORTH DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

SCALE 1:24 000

CONTOUR INTERVAL 40 FEET
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR WASHINGTON, D. C. 20242
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

QUADRANGLE LOCATION

ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Heavy-duty
Medium-duty
Light-duty
Unimproved dirt
Interstate Route
State Route

TRUCKEE, CALIF.
SW/4 TRUCKEE 15' QUADRANGLE
N3915—W12007.5/7.5

1955
PHOTOREVISED 1969
AMS 1962 I SW—SERIES V895

INTERIOR—GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, WASHINGTON, D. C.—1971

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
REPRESENTED BY THE
DIRECTOR OF WATER RESOURCES

TRUCKEE QUADRANGLE
CALIFORNIA—NEVADA
15 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

Donner Camp Sites
(Alder Creek Camp)
USGS 15' Series - Tuckee Quadrangle
1955
UTM

A. 10.745450.4362650
B. 10.744950.4361700
C. 10.743875.4361650
D. 10.743900.4363300

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey

Control by USGS and USC&GS

Topography from aerial photographs by multiplex methods
Aerial photographs taken 1953. Field check 1955

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
10,000-foot grid based on California coordinate system, zone 2
and Nevada coordinate system, west zone
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks,
zone 10, shown in blue

Dashed land lines indicate approximate locations

UTM GRID AND 1955 MAGNETIC NORTH
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET

SCALE 1:62500

CONTOUR INTERVAL 80 FEET
DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACCURACY STANDARDS
FOR SALE BY U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, DENVER, COLORADO 80225, OR RESTON, VIRGINIA 22092
A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS AND SYMBOLS IS AVAILABLE ON REQUEST

QUADRANGLE LOCATION

ROAD CLASSIFICATION
Heavy-duty
Medium-duty
Light-duty
Unimproved dirt
U. S. Route
State Route

This area also partially covered by 1:24 000 scale maps of Boca, Truckee, and Martis Peak, 7.5 minute quadrangles, surveyed 1955.

TRUCKEE, CALIF.—NEV.
N3915—W12000/15

1955

AMS 1962 I—SERIES V795

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TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC: Donner Camp Sites

AND/OR COMMON: Donner Memorial State Park

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER:

__NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN: Truckee — X VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: 2nd

STATE: California — CODE: 06 — COUNTY: Nevada — CODE: 057

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
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__BUILDING(S)	__PRIVATE	X UNOCCUPIED	__COMMERCIAL	X PARK
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X SITE	**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**	**ACCESSIBLE**	__ENTERTAINMENT	__RELIGIOUS
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	__BEING CONSIDERED	__YES: UNRESTRICTED	__INDUSTRIAL	__TRANSPORTATION
		__NO	__MILITARY	__OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME: California Department of Parks and Recreation/Alder Creek: U.S. Forest Service, Tahoe National Forest, Supervisor Robert G. Lancaster

STREET & NUMBER: Highway 49

CITY, TOWN: Sacramento/Nevada City __ VICINITY OF — STATE: California

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.: Nevada County Hall of Records

STREET & NUMBER: Courthouse Square

CITY, TOWN: Nevada City — STATE: California

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE: National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings

DATE: 1961 — X FEDERAL __STATE __COUNTY __LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service

CITY, TOWN: Washington, — STATE: D.C.

7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
X EXCELLENT	__DETERIORATED	__UNALTERED	X ORIGINAL SITE
__GOOD	__RUINS	X ALTERED	__MOVED DATE_____
__FAIR	__UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The sites of the cabins where the Donner Party wintered are in three locations. Included within the Donner Memorial State Park are the sites of the Murphy Cabin and the Breen-Keseberg Cabin. Across U.S. Route 40 and about a half mile east is the site of the Reed-Graves Cabin. About 5 miles to the north on the Tahoe National Forest lies the Alder Creek of George and Jacob Donner. There each family built a separate tipi using the wagon tilt and brush.

All that remains of the dreadful camp is a large rock against which the Murphys built their cabin and the quiet of the forest. A plaque marks the rock. An heroic statue dedicated in 1918 and showing a pioneer family facing westward marks the site of the Breen-Keseberg Cabin. To the east is a modern building housing a museum. Across the highway and a short distance to the east is a simple white wooden cross marking the site of the Reed-Graves cabin.

The Alder Creek Camp, five miles north, is impressively natural and lonely. On a fine summer's day it is a lovely camping place, untroubled by modern intrussions save for simple interpretive signs put up by the Forest Service. Fine tall trees reach for the sky. A lush meadow stretches away to the east and the violet-purple of the mountains, seen at a distance, seem hardly threatening. Cut into the face of the land, the ruts of the Emigrant Trail are still visible. In winter, the snow can be as deep as a man on horseback is tall.

On the first of November 1846, the sites looked far different. The cabins were squat, hastily constructed, and rawer than the usual frontier cabins. Doors were the only openings, and they were covered with hides. The roofs were green poles placed across the log cribs and covered with tents, wagon tilts, or hides. The Breens had taken possession of a cabin already there; the Kesebergs built a lean-to to this. The other cabins were built double to save building one wall. Into these flimsy structures were packed 60 people - 19 men, 12 women, and 29 children, some so young as to be still at the breast. Around the cabins lay piles of belongings hurriedly unpacked from snow-bound wagons. A few half-starved cattle, horses, and mules staggered about, browsing on the trees, for the hay in the meadow was already deep under the snow. Many of the oxen had already been slaughtered and their quarters stacked like cord-wood, frozen stiff.

At the Alder Creek site, George and Jacob Donner had cut logs to build cabins after their November 3rd arrival, but it snowed, and they quickly abandoned the idea, settling for crude brush arbors covered with canvas, their coats, and any thing else they could find. This camp housed 21 people - six men, three women, and 12 children.

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Donner Camp Sites

By February 18, 1847, the camps bore a different aspect. Snow was piled high above the roofs. "Inclined planes led up from the cabins to the top of the snow, and up these slopes the dead bodies had been dragged with ropes since the starving people had not been able to lift them. Some bodies now lay upon the snow wrapped in quilts. Some of the hides which were being used for food were putrefied from having served as roofs of cabins and thus been kept warm on the inside. The emigrants were overwrought emotionally, and many seemed mentally unbalanced." (From George R. Stewart, Ordeal by Hunger, New York, 1971, p. 153.)

On April 13, the scene was still worse: "A scene of filth and mutilated corpses." (Ibid., p. 205). At the Donner's Alder Creek camp, "the rich property of the Donners lay scattered around everywhere. The melting of the snow and the spring freshets had flooded most of the camp, and sodden in the water lay books, bolts of cloth, tea and coffee, shoes, percussion caps, kitchen ware, and goods of all conceivable kinds which the Donners had hoped to use for themselves or to sell to advantage in California. A survey of the camp revealed worse things. At the entrance to the tent they found a large iron kettle, containing human flesh, cut up...Further search disclosed the body of George Donner carefully wrapped in a sheet, the last tender attention of his wife. But this care had not prevented the mutilation of the body. The head had been split open and the braine removed; flesh had also been taken for the kettle." (Ibid, p. 206).

All that is gone now. The last of the bodies was buried by the eastward-bound column under General Stephen Watts Kearny in June 1847. What they collected they buried under the Breen-Keseberg Cabin and then put the cabins to the torch. Nothing remains of the horror and the valor but the land and the mountains.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
__PREHISTORIC	__ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	__COMMUNITY PLANNING	__LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	__RELIGION	
__1400-1499	__ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	__CONSERVATION	__LAW	__SCIENCE	
__1500-1599	__AGRICULTURE	__ECONOMICS	__LITERATURE	__SCULPTURE	
__1600-1699	__ARCHITECTURE	__EDUCATION	__MILITARY	__SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
__1700-1799	__ART	__ENGINEERING	__MUSIC	__THEATER	
X 1800-1899	__COMMERCE	__EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	__PHILOSOPHY	__TRANSPORTATION	
__1900-	__COMMUNICATIONS	__INDUSTRY	__POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	__OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		__INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1846-47 BUILDER/ARCHITECT N/A

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Scene of the snow-bound winter camps of the Donner Party, 1846-47, where tragedy and horror struck this group of 87 California-bound emigrants, these sites represent the worst disaster in the record of western migration. While many of the vicissitudes suffered by the Donner party before they went into winter camp were visited upon other migrants, never had so much gone wrong, so fatally, for any other group. When the stranded people were reduced to eating the flesh of their dead comrades, the final thrill of horror was added to a story of trial, heroism, greed, cowardice, and despair, that raised this venture to epic proportions.

HISTORY

In April of 1846 a well-equipped party of emigrants, led by Jacob and George Donner, set out from Illinois for California. All America was going west that year, and the Donners were joined by other travelers en-route. At South Pass on July 17, the train received word that Lansford W. Hastings would be waiting at Fort Bridger to escort them along a new and shorter route to California. Hastings' 1845 Emigrants' Guide to Oregon & California was well known to members of the train, so, despite the warning of a group of old mountain men, twenty wagons split off from the train and headed for Fort Bridger. George Donner was elected captain of the new train. They arrived at the log-cabin fort on July 28th. The famous old mountain man told them that Hastings' cut off would save them 350 or 400 miles. No bad canyons, trail mostly smooth, hard, and level. Only Digger Indians, and only one dry drive of around 40 miles.

Hastings had gone ahead with a wagon train because the season was getting short. He left directions to follow, and on the last day of July, the party set off in his tracks. Almost at once things began to go wrong. The track was much worse than any they had encountered before. At the place where the trail crossed the Weber River they found a letter from Hastings telling them that the trail in Weber Canyon was very bad. If they would camp where they were and send a messenger forward, he would come back and guide them. Their

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messenger returned 5 days later with bad news. In places the canyon was entirely impassible, but Hastings refused to come back. He had taken his train thru Weber Canyon without ever actually having been there before and had lost too much time. The messenger, James Reed, had explored a new way as he came back, and the party decided to take that route. The route proved to be thru a canyon choked with willow, alder, taspen 20 ft. high, entertwined with servic-berries and wild rose. Having cut their way thru that, they had mountains, the likes of which they had never seen before--The Wahsatch range--to cross, cutting road every inch of the way with only 31 men, some too old to do the hardest work. They used 21 days traversing 36 miles. It was now the 27th of August. They had become the rear guard of the year's migration.

With men and animals worn out they entered the valley of the Great Salt Lake and began the terrible 80 mile dry march in Utah. They lost oxen and had to leave wagons behind, but, although they were all worn and dehydrated, no lives were lost. Following Hastings' track again they drove west and then south around the Ruby Mountain, before turning north again. Finally on the last day of September they reached the westward flowing trickle of the Humbolt River and were back again on the main California trail. They had taken a harsh 125 mile detour which had pulled down men and animals, taken precious time (and time was running out), and the first faint fault lines of disentegration were beginning to show in the unity of the train. Temper already frayed grew worse and finally snapped. James Reed killed John Snyder in self defense but found himself banished from the train. The rot had begun to accelerate. Mr. Hardcoop, a 70 year old man, had wandered away and been left to die alone in the desert. The unit was atomizing before the joint fears of starvation and snow. The Humbolt Sink was a nightmare. Supplies were terribly low as they crossed the last desert and came to rest in the paradise of Trucker Meadows. Dangerously late in the season, failing in mind, body, and equipment, and running short of supplies, they still had the awesome Sierra Nevada to cross. On October 23 they began the cruel climb up the narrow canyon of the Truckee. At Truckee Lake (now Donner Lake), but a short march to the summit of the pass--three days at most--it began to snow. It was October 31st.

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Donner Camp Sites

Unable to proceed they camped near the lake, hoping to be able to push on when the snow melted. The one cabin already there was appropriated by the Breen family. Keseberg built a lean-to to it. They built two other cabins, double ones, and huddled in them, hardly a wagon train any longer gathering, but a group of desparate individuals unable to cooperate and driven by terror.

The Donners had fallen behind, plagued by a broken axle. They never did reach the lake. Five miles back up the trail at a meadow beside Alder Creek they camped. Unable to build even the wretched cabins that sheltered the others, they threw up a pair of brush arbors covered by cloth and dug in.

And still the snow fell. Deeper and deeper. There was no game and most of the remaining cattle wandered off in the storm and perished.

What followed is the most terrible story in the annalsof the western migration--a very human blend of high heroism and utter degradation.

By December they were reduced to eating hides and bark. Each family group hoarded what they had with no thought of sharing. Four men had died and one was insane. Around the middle of the month fifteen of the strongest set out to cross the snow choked pass on foot. Caught in a blizzard, eight men died, and the others survived by eating the flesh of the dead. After an incredible 32-day journey the survivors arrived at Johnson's Ranch and safety. In turn the first of four reflief expeditions set out to rescue the stranded party..

Conditions back at the camps continued to deteriorate. The snow was nearly 10 feet deep. Eight more were dead, half of them toddlers. Sharing and community effort long since forgotten, the group hardly existed as a group any longer. Each family dug into its pitiful shelter and clutched the rapidly declining food supplies. Even the hides were getting scarce. With shudders and averted faces, some of the stranded had begun to subsist on the flesh of the dead.

The seven of the first relief expedition took 20 survivors out with them in February.. Twelve were under the age of 16 and four were women. Only three lives were lost in reaching the central valley, but among those left behind, eight more died, including George and Tamsen Donner (Jacob had died in December; his wife Elizabeth died in March). Tamsen had refused to leave her dying

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husband when the first relief expedition went--stayed and came to a mysterious end, possibly murdered by Lewis Keseberg. She was certainly eaten by him.

The second relief arrived in early March and was able to take out only eight, all but 2, children. Three died on the trek. The third and fourth relief expeditions lost no lives, and with the removal of the half-mad Lewis Keseberg, no human was left in the shambles at the lake and beside Alder Creek, but the look of the camps is almost impossible to describe. As the snow melted, many things stood revealed: ruined property, the carcasses of animals now rotting, hair, bones, and parts of human bodies. No writer of fiction could imagine a place of such horror.

Of the 23 men, 15 women, and 41 children who were trapped below the pass, 2/3 of the men died (and most died early), about 1/3 of the children died (beginning around the middle of the ordeal), but just 1/4 (4) of the women died (and most of them near the end), were the men inspired by their sense of responsibility and by the heroics of the age to over-exertion? Were food portions doled out equally in spite of size? Or was the reason physiological? Or psychological?

And what of the encredible heroism of the relief parties? To be sure, a money price was offered by Sutter, but they knew what they would have to endure, not once, but twice, to bring out the stranded emigrants. Thirty men chose to go against the mighty Sierras in full winter to the rescue. Four of the men had family there, the rest went to help strangers.

What of the party? It is one thing to say that 42 of them perished. Better to say that over half-47-survived hardships physical and psychological that make the blood run cold. That some of them ate human flesh to survive gives the story its peculiar fascination down the years, for that taboo runs strong in the human soul; that they survived at all is the highest kind of tribute to the indomitable human spirit. That is what we memorialize at the Donner sites--not the bickering, the petty selfishness of the party, but the will, now flickering, now flowing strong and hot--the will to survive.

And the cause of the disaster? Say bad judgement, bad information and still you have not explained it. It was the ill-fate, the bad luck of the draw, that more things went wrong--including an early and heavy winter in the Sierras--for the Donner Party than for any other recorded emigrant party.

Both the State park and the Alder Creek site are open during daylight hours. There is a well-designed museum at the State park.

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C.F. McGlashan, History of the Donner Party, A Tragedy of the Sierra (Stanford, 1976).

Virginia Reed Murphy,"A Personal Narrative of the Overland Trip to California," reprint from Century Magazine, 1892.

George R. Stewart, Ordeal by Hunger, 2nd edition (New York, 1960).

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(See continuation sheet).

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY circa 260 acres (the three sites)

UTM REFERENCES (See continuation sheet.)

	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
A			
B			
C			
D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

(See continuation sheet.)

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Marilynn Larew, Historian

ORGANIZATION — DATE

Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service — March 1978

STREET & NUMBER — TELEPHONE

1100 L Street, NW. — (202) 523-5464

CITY OR TOWN — STATE

Washington, — D.C.

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL ___ STATE ___ LOCAL ___

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

TITLE — DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST: DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

Form No. 10-300a
(Rev. 10-74)

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Donner Camp Sites

UTM References

1. Murphy and Graves Cabin Sites (USGS 7.5' Truckee Quadrangle)

   A. 10.739615.4356400
   B. 10.739620.4356215
   C. 10.738620.4355835
   D. 10.738680.4356255

2. Alder Creek Camp (USGS 15' Truckee Quadrangle)

   A. 10.745450.4362650
   B. 10.744950.4361700
   C. 10.743875.4361650
   D. 10.743900.4363300

Verbal Boundary Description

1. Murphy Cabin Site - Donner Memorial State Park. The verbal boundary description is keyed to USGS Truckee Quadrangle, 7.5' Series. Beginning at the northeast corner of the Donner Memorial State Park boundary proceed along the boundary in a sourtherly then westerly then sourtherly direction circa 1,550' to a point circa 300' southeast of the Murphy Cabin site, thence in a westerly direction circa 400' to a point circa 300' to the southwest of the Murphy Cabin site, thence in a northerly direction in a straight line circa 1,100' to the north boundary of the Donner Memorial State Park, thence in an easterly direction along the State Park boundary circa 1,000' to the northeast corner of the State Park, the point of beginning.

2. Graves Cabin Site. The verbal boundary description is keyed to USGS Truckee Quadrangle, 7.5' Series. Beginning at a point on the southern edge of the U.S. Route 40 right of way circa 800' east of the Donner Memorial State Park exit from U.S. 40, proceed in a straight line in a southerly direction circa 500' to a point on the northern edge of Interstate Route 80 right of way, thence along the northern edge of the Interstate 80 right of way 725' to a point on the Donner State Park exit ramp from Interstate 80, thence in a northeasterly direction in a straight line circa 800' to the point of beginning. This boundary encloses in a triangle the Graves Cabin site.

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Donner Camp Sites

Verbal Boundary Description (continued).

3. Alder Creek Camp. The verbal boundary description is keyed to USGS Truckee Quadrangle, 15' Series. Beginning at the junction of Alder Creek and Prosser Creek proceed in a southerly then southwesterly then westerly direction following Alder Creek to the point where Alder Creek meets the "Old Railroad Grade" then along the "Old Railroad Grade" in an easterly then north then northwesterly direction to the point where the "Old Railroad Grade" meets the Tahoe National Forest Boundary almost at the center of section 26, T. 18 N., R. 16 E., thence north along the Tahoe National Forest Boundary to the point where the boundary meets Prosser Creek, thence following Prosser Creek in a southeasterly direction to the junction of Prosser Creek and Alder Creek, the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification.

The Donner camp sites were designated a national historic landmark in 1961 without boundaries. In drawing the boundary for the landmark, the sites of the Murphy Cabin and the Graves Cabin as well as the Alder Creek site of the Donner "Cabin" have been included in the landmark as non-contiguous units of the Donner Camp Site National Historic Landmark. All three sites are associated with the 1846-47 Donner party tragedy.

First Release
Oct. 9, 1960

11/25/60

SITES AND BUILDINGS IN REGION FOUR ELIGIBLE FOR REGISTERED NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK STATUS

Theme IV, Spanish Exploration and Settlement

1. San Diego Presidio, San Diego, California. Commemorates the founding of the first mission in California. It marks the first permanent European settlement on the Pacific Coast of the United States. Site owned by the city of San Diego.

2. Royal Presidio Chapel, Monterey, California. For three-quarters of a century Monterey was the stronghold of Spanish-Mexican civilization on the Pacific Coast. It was the capitol of California from 1776 until shortly before the American occupation. The site is owned by the Catholic Church.

3. Santa Barbara Mission, Santa Barbara, California. Of the 21 California missions, Santa Barbara is outstanding for its unusual and continued vigor. It is also perhaps the best preserved. Site owned by the Catholic Church.

4. Carmel Mission, Monterey, California. The most important of the California Spanish missions from an ecclesiastical standpoint. It was the headquarters of the two great Franciscan Fathers, Padres Serra and Lasuen. Site owned by the Catholic Church.

Theme XI, The Advance of the Frontier, 1763-1830
Subtheme -- The Lewis and Clark Expedition:

5. Lemhi Pass -- Montana-Idaho. This site marks the spot where the Lewis and Clark Expedition crossed the Continental Divide, passing to the Pacific Slope of the Rocky Mountains. Owned by the Federal Government.

6. The Lolo Trail, Idaho. Along this famous buffalo trail of the Nez Perce, the Lewis and Clark Expedition was guided across the Bitterroot Range. Owned by the Federal Government.

2nd Release
Dec. 19, 1961

SITES AND BUILDINGS IN REGION FOUR ELIGIBLE FOR REGISTERED NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK STATUS

Theme XV, Westward Expansion and Extension of the National Boundaries to the Pacific, 1830-1898

Subtheme: The Texas Revolution and the War with Mexico, 1820-1853

7. Monterey Custom House, California. On July 7, 1846, Commodore John D. Sloat, commanding the Pacific squadron, raised the American flag over the Custom House at Monterey, the Capitol of California, and officially proclaimed the province as part of the United States. The building dates in part from 1827. State owned.

8. Larkin House, Monterey, California. Important for both historical and architectural values, this house was built by Thomas O. Larkin in 1834-1835 and became the first American consulate in Mexican California. Commodore Sloat, and General Stephen W. Kearney, the first military governor of California, resided in the Larkin House, causing it sometimes to be called the first American capitol of California. State owned.

9. Sonoma Plaza, Sonoma, California. On June 14, 1846, a group of 33 Americans seized Sonoma, home of General Vallejo who was a dominant figure in north California, and raised in the plaza their homemade Bear Flag as the symbol of independent California after electing William B. Ide as president of the newly proclaimed republic. This beginning of the Bear Flag revolt preceded news in California of the official breaking out of War with Mexico. State and private ownership.

Declared Eligible
Jan. 20, 1961

SITES AND BUILDINGS IN REGION FOUR ELIGIBLE FOR REGISTERED NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK STATUS

Theme I, Prehistoric Hunters and Gatherers

10. Iyatayet, Alaska. Located on Cape Denbigh, Norton Sound, this is one of the earliest sites yet found in Alaska. It is the type site for the Norton Culture which flourished from 500 B.C. to A.D. 300. Owned by U.S. Bureau of Land Management.

11. Ipiutak, Alaska. Located near the tip of the Point Hope Peninsula, this is a large spectacular Paleo-Eskimo site with house remains and elaborate burials. Owned by Native Village of Point Hope.

12. Leonard Rock Shelter, Nevada. Located near Lovelock, this stratified site provided evidence for three periods of prehistoric occupation in the Great Basin, the first beginning about 7,000 B.C. Owned by Southern Pacific Railroad.

13. Fort Rock Cave, Oregon. Located in Lake County, this cave yielded the famous Fort Rock sandals which are the oldest dated artifacts in the New World. It also indicated that Indians occupied Central Oregon at the time of the Newberry eruption of Mount Mazama. Owned by Mr. Ruben Long.

Theme V, Westward Expansion and Extension of the National Boundaries to the Pacific, 1830-1898.

Subtheme: Overland Migrations West of the Mississippi River

14. Donner Camp, California. Located in Nevada County, this is the site of the snowbound winter camp of the Donner Party, 1847-1848, in which tragedy struck this California-bound party of 89 people. Only 45 survived the ordeal, one of the worst episodes of overland migration. In a sense, it epitomizes the hardships and dangers encountered by those who made the overland crossing in those days. Donner Camp is a State Park.

15. Sutter's Fort, California. Located in Sacramento, the Fort and settlement were established by the Swiss, John A. Sutter, in 1839 on the Sacramento River. This post became the objective of nearly all westbound emigrants to California from the United States by way of the central and northern routes. Sutter was a generous benefactor to the emigrants, and his Fort and assistance proved an invaluable aid to the American settlement of California. Sutter's Fort has been restored and is now a State Historical Monument.

16. Warner's Ranch, California. This ranch, located 75 miles northeast of San Diego in San Diego County, was established by Jonathan T. Warner, an American citizen from Connecticut. The ranch was a famous place on the southern emigrant and wagon road into California. It was the first place the traveler could find shelter and food after enduring the hardships of the desert crossing, and almost everyone traveling by this route stopped here. Owned by the San Diego Water Company and leased to private ranchers.

17. Fort Hall, Idaho. Located in Bingham County, Fort Hall was established by Nathaniel Wyeth of Massachusetts in 1834. The post became one of the most famous of all landmarks and stopping places on the Oregon and California Trail. The Oregon and California Trails, westbound, separated near Fort Hall. The Fort was associated importantly with the fur trade, the overland migrations to Oregon and California, and the transportation and supply network to the Inland Empire and the gold mines of Montana. Located in the Fort Hall Indian Reservation, and under the jurisdiction of the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Declared Eligible
July 4, 1961

SITES AND BUILDINGS IN REGION FOUR ELIGIBLE FOR REGISTERED NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK STATUS

Theme XV, Westward Expansion and Extension of the National Boundaries to the Pacific, 1830-1898
Subtheme: The Mining Frontier

18. Bodie, California. One of the best preserved gold mining "ghost" towns of the Far West, the first strike here was in 1859. In the 1870's the town reached its peak with a population of about 10,000 people. One mine yielded nearly $15,000,000 in a 25-year period. Total output up to World War II, when mining was discontinued, is estimated at $70,000,000. Located in Mono County, only a few miles from Bridgeport and the high Sierra Nevada, the more than 100 surviving deserted buildings are unusually well preserved. The town is owned by the State of California. (To be a State Park)

19. Coloma, California. James Marshall, a foreman for John Sutter, discovered gold here on January 24, 1848, while building a sawmill tailrace. This resulted in the greatest series of gold strikes on the North American continent, and one of the greatest in the history of the world. The California gold rush followed in the wake of Marshall's discovery. At the time of the gold discovery there were only a few thousand Americans in California. The next year there were 100,000, and in 1850 California was admitted as a state. The California gold discovery had incalcuable consequences on the economic and political development of the United States. Located seven miles west of Placerville on California State Highway 49; the site is owned by the State of California and is a State Park.

20. Columbia, California. A gold town dating from 1850, Columbia today probably has more original buildings than any other town of the Mother Lode country. Its surrounding mining district yielded about $90,000,000 in gold. Unlike most of the gold camps, Columbia was never completely deserted. The site is located 60 miles east of Stockton, just off California State Highway 49, and four miles northwest of Sonora. The town is in private and state ownership, with a large portion being a State Park.

21. New Almaden, California. Here, in 1824, were discovered the first quicksilver deposits in North America. It is the oldest mine in California, and has been one of the four greatest sources of quicksilver in the world. It has yielded greater value than any mine in California and produces about one-third the mercury mined in the United States. Since 1927 the New Almaden mines have been active only intermittently. At present they are inactive. New Almaden is located 14 miles south of San Jose, California, and is in private ownership.

22. San Francisco Old Mint, California. A San Francisco branch mint was established in 1854 as a result of the discovery of gold in 1848. The added flood of silver from the Comstock Lode in Nevada in the 1860's necessitated enlargment of the mint and a new one, begun in 1869, was completed in 1874. It was placed on an independent basis and soon became the

principal mint in the United States and the chief Federal deposit for gold and silver produced in the western states. The building possesses architectural distinction and is considered a fine example of 19th century Federal building architecture. One of the few remaining structures in downtown San Francisco that survived the 1906 Fire, the former mint is located at Fifth and Mission Streets and is in Federal ownership (General Services Administration).

23. Virginia City, Nevada. Virginia City, the great community of the rich Comstock Lode, was the greatest silver strike in the United States. From their discovery in 1859 and during the next 20 years, the Virginia City mines yielded $300,000,000 in gold and silver. Largely because of the wealth, population, and influence that accompanied the exploitation of the Comstock Lode, Nevada became a territory in 1861 and a state in 1864. The great wealth of the mines resulted in many fine brick and stone buildings, rather than the usual board structures of a boom camp. Many of these buildings survive. Virginia City is located on Nevada Highway 17, 23 miles south of Reno, Nevada, and is in private ownership.

Theme XV -- Subtheme -- Great Explorers of the West

24. Chinook Point, Washington. The discovery of the Columbia River, in 1792, by the American, Captain Robert Gray, marked the climax of a long search for the legendary Great River of the West, and gave the United States a valid claim to the Northwest under international law. Chinook Point, overlooking the mouth of the river, is a salient landmark at the discovery site. It is located along U.S. Highway 101, within the bounds of Fort Columbia Historical State Park, and is owned by the State of Washington.

25. Walker Pass, California. The discovery of this pass by Joseph Walker, the famous mountain man, established a new route to California. Through this pass in 1843 Walker himself led the first emigrant wagon train into California. Later he guided part of Fremont's third expedition over the Sierra by way of this pass. Walker Pass, 5,250 feet in elevation, is located 60 miles northeast of Bakersfield, California, on State Highway 178, and is owned by the Federal Government (U.S.Bureau of Land Management).

Theme XV, Subtheme: Indian Affairs Supplement to Military & Indian Affairs

26. Cataldo Mission, Idaho. In 1848, Jesuit missionaries began construction of the Old Mission of the Sacred Heart, using only primitive tools and Indian labor. Completed in 1853, the structure is the oldest building in Idaho. The Mission played a successful role in educating Indians of Idaho. The peaceful influence of the Jesuits probably was partly responsible for the refusal of the Coeur d'Alene to join Chief Joseph during the 1877 Nez Perce War. The Mission is located about 20 miles east of Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, on U.S. Highway 10, and is owned and administrated by the Catholic Church.

Declared Eligible
Oct. 2 and Nov. 5, 1961

SITES AND BUILDINGS IN REGION FOUR ELIGIBLE FOR REGISTERED NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK STATUS

Theme XIII, Political and Military Affairs, 1830-1860

27. American and English Camps, San Juan Island, Washington.

This site commemorates the long series of boundary disputes between Canada and the United States over the location of the international boundary. Here, in 1859, disputes between citizens of the two countries came to a head in a colorful incident in which an American settler shot and killed a trespassing pig belonging to a Hudson's Bay Company officer. Succeeding series of events resulted in military and naval occupation of San Juan Island by a British force to the north and an American force to the south. War was averted, however, when it was agreed to submit the boundary dispute to arbitration by a disinterested third party, Emperor Wilhelm I of Germany, who heard the contentions of both sides and, in 1872, upheld the claims of the United States regarding San Juan Island. Remains of the English Camp, including a blockhouse, exist today adjacent to Garrison Bay. Ten miles south of the English camp, near the southern end and west coast of the island, are the fortifications of the American Camp. Both sites are owned by the State of Washington.

Theme XV: Westward Expansion and Extension of the National Boundaries to the Pacific, 1830-1898.

Subtheme: The Fur Trade

28. Fort Astoria, Oregon. Astoria is one of the most significant sites of the American Fur Trade symbolizing John Jacob Astor's great bid to break the British monopoly on the northwest trade. It commemorates the powerful commercial and political influences exerted by the fur trade interests. It also represents an important American claim to the Oregon Country, even though the effort made in 1811-1813 failed. The site of the original fort is located in Astoria, Oregon. Although most of the site has been completely covered by the modern city, a very small plot of ground at 15th and Exchange Streets, has escaped modern construction activity. This parcel of land is owned by the City of Astoria.

29. Fort Ross, California. Established in 1812, Fort Ross was the largest single Russian trade center south of Alaska. Founded as part of the Russian-American Company fur trading operation, it represented a strong attempt by Russia to gain control of California. Continuing expansion of the Russians in western North America was the direct cause of the Monroe Doctrine. Failure of the Fort Ross operation, both as a fur trading and agricultural colony, along with Spanish demands for Russian withdrawal resulted in sale of the holdings to John Sutter in 1841. Largely restored, and maintained as a State Historical Museum by the California Division of Beaches and Parks, Fort Ross is located on State Highway 1, 60 miles north of San Francisco, and is owned by the State of California.

Theme XV -- Subtheme -- Transportation and Communication

30. Pony Express Terminal, California. The Pony Express Terminal, located at 1006 Second Street, Sacramento, served as the original western terminal of the Pony Express from April 1860 to March 1861, and also is the office, 1858-1863, of the California State Telegraph Company, which helped to construct the first transcontinental telegraph line in 1860-61.

This two-story brick building, erected in 1853, was occupied by B. F. Hastings and Co., the State Library, the State Supreme Court, and Wells, Fargo and Co. In 1858 Wells Fargo moved out of the south portion of the structure, and this section was at once occupied by the Alta Telegraph Co. This latter company, reorganized in July 1860 as the California State Telegraph Company, served as the Sacramento agent of Russell, Majors, and Waddell's Pony Express from April 1860 to March 1861. Owned by Federal Urban Renewal Project.

31. Oak Grove Butterfield Stage Station, California. The Oak Grove station appears to be the only one still standing on the entire route of the Butterfield Overland Mail which operated between San Francisco and the two eastern termini, St. Louis, Missouri, and Memphis, Tennessee. The Oak Grove Stage Station is a well preserved, one-story adobe building, and the quaint, rambling structure still retains the atmosphere of old staging days. Located in San Diego County, California, on State Highway 79, the site has been marked by the State of California, and is in private ownership.

32. Big Four House, California. The Big Four Building, located at 220-226 K Street, Sacramento, was the first general offices of the Central Pacific Railroad. Here the "Big Four" -- Huntington, Stanford, Hopkins, and Charles Crocker, assisted by the engineer Theodore Judah, planned, financed, and built the western end (California to Utah) of the first transcontinental railway. Here also the "Big Four" obtained control of the Southern Pacific Railroad and began the construction of that line to southern California. The structure served as the general offices of the Central Pacific until 1873, when they were transferred to San Francisco. Owned by Federal Urban Renewal Project.

33. Fort Churchill, Nevada. Fort Churchill served as an important post from 1860 to 1867 on the Central Overland Mail Stage and the Pony Express. It also protected the first transcontinental telegraph lines. From 1861 to 1865, it was the main headquarters of all military posts in Nevada. Fort Churchill was abandoned in March, 1870, following which the adobe structures gradually dissolved. In 1935, under the supervision of the National Park Service, some of the buildings were reconstructed. Today only ruins of some 15 of the reconstructed structures remain. Located in Lyons County, on U. S. Highway 95, eight miles south of its junction with U.S.50, Fort Churchill is now a Nevada State Park.

34. Fort Ruby, Nevada. Established during the Civil War to protect the stage and telegraph facilities from Indian attacks, Fort Ruby was built in the fall of 1862. Near Fort Ruby, also, was the overland stage ranch, established to supply the stage line with grain and provisions. Fort Ruby was

occupied until 1869 when the transcontinental stage operations came to an end. Fort Ruby now consists of two original structures of the old Post. Both log buildings are in excellent condition. Located in White Pine County, Nevada, about 71 miles southeast of Elko, Fort Ruby is privately owned.

Declared Eligible
June 13, 1962

SITES AND BUILDINGS IN WESTERN REGION ELIGIBLE FOR REGISTERED NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK STATUS

Theme XXI, Political and Military Affairs, 1865-1900

Special Study: Alaska History

35. Erskine House, Kodiak. This structure, 15 rooms plus a large attic, constructed in 1793-94 to provide office and fur warehouse space, is the oldest Russian building still standing in the United States. Of frame construction, it is apparently in basically sound condition. It is owned by the Donnelley and Acheson Commercial Co. of Kodiak.

36. Old Sitka. Redoubt St. Michael or Old Sitka, 1799-1802, was the first European settlement on the Alexander Archipelago. It was burned to the ground by the vigorous, warlike Tlingit Indians in a surprise attack. It is owned by the State of Alaska and lies six miles north of modern Sitka.

37. St. Michael's Cathedral, Sitka. This structure dates from 1848-1850, and is regarded as the finest example of Russian architecture in the United States. The interior contains original and precious icons, religious books, and rich, ornamental gold and silver chalices. The walls display original elaborately decorated canvasses. The Cathedral is owned by the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of North America.

38. Russian Mission Orphanage, Sitka. This interesting example of Russian architecture dates from 1842. It has served as school and seminary, and contains the Bishop's Chapel or Church of the Annunciation. Little altered over the years, it is owned by the Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of North America.

39. American Flag Raising Site, Sitka. At this site on the afternoon of October 18, 1867, the Russian flag was lowered and the American flag raised, to symbolize the transfer to the new owner of sovereignty over the vast territory. A plaque marks where the flagpole stood in 1867, which then was in front of the Governor's House, "Baranov's Castle." The State of Alaska owns 1.4 acres at the site.

40. Fur Seal Rookeries (St.Paul Island), Pribilof Islands. The greatest single source of furs in the world, the Pribilof Island rookeries exhibit in living form today the fur resource that lured Russian, British, French, Spanish, and American fur hunters from the 18th century down to the present. The existing flourishing seal herds serve as an outstanding example of the international application of conservation principles, as embodied in the Convention of July 7, 1911, for their protection. The herds have several times been threatened with extinction due to indiscriminate hunting. The islands are owned by the U.S.Government and administered by the Fish and Wildlife Service of the Department of the Interior.

41. Skagway and White Pass. Skagway, founded in 1897, flourished as a result of the discovery of gold in the Upper Yukon Valley and Klondike. It lay on the direct route into the gold-bearing region and was a terminus for the White Pass and Yukon Route Railway, completed in July, 1900. About 100 buildings still stand which, taken together, provide the finest existing example of an Alaskan mining frontier town. White Pass, about 45 miles long, lies northeast of Skagway and is still traversed by the narrow-gauge railway. The pass attains a maximum elevation of 2886 feet and offers both scenic and historic values. Ownership of these areas is mixed, public and private.

Theme XIII - Political and Military Affairs, 1830-1860.

42. San Francisco Presidio, California. This military post has been important in California and West Coast history from the 18th century to the present. The first military establishment was built here by the Spanish in 1776 and it remained a most important seat of Spanish, and later Mexican, authority until after the War with Mexico when it passed to United States control. The United States built a strong, heavily gunned fort at Fort Point in the period from 1853-1861, on the site of one of three earlier Spanish forts. This brick and masonry fort, retired by the Army from active use in 1914, still stands. The Presidio is still the headquarters of the United States Army of the Pacific Coast, and has been such from 1849 to the present, with the exception of a six-year period between 1851-1857. The Presidio, encompassing an area of about 1,414 acres on the south side of the Golden Gate and San Francisco Harbor, is owned by the United States Army.

Declared Eligible
Dec. 29, 1962

SITES AND BUILDINGS IN WESTERN REGION ELIGIBLE FOR REGISTERED NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK STATUS

Theme XVI, Indigenous Peoples and Cultures
Special Study: Alaska Aboriginal Culture

43. Palugvik, Hawkins Island, Prince William Sound. This site marks the eastern range of Eskimo archeology in southern Alaska, and helps clarify the relationship of Eskimos to the Tlingit Indians.

44. Yukon Island, (Main Site), Kachemak Bay, Cook Inlet. This is the oldest and most continuously occupied of the Cook Inlet sites. These sites collectively led to the definition of the Kachemak Bay Culture. Kachemak Bay Culture is a generalized Eskimo culture type related both to that of Asiatic groups, and of the Salish Indians further south.

45. Chaluka, Unmak Island, Aleutian Chain. The Chaluka site is a large village mound which holds remains of all culture periods so far identified in this region. While work there is not yet complete, Chaluka promises the first careful stratigraphic treatment of a single large Aleutian site. The site is Federal ownership.

46. Gambell, St. Lawrence Island. The Gambell sites were the first in the greater Bering Strait region to be scientifically investigated and reported upon. Investigation of these sites first provided data on the sequence of cultures on St. Lawrence Island, and through this work the accumulated information on Eskimo prehistory could be reduced to chronological order. These sites are in Federal ownership.

47. Wales, Cape Prince of Wales, Seward Peninsula. The Wales sites include materials dating from around 600 to 800 A.D. up to recent times. A living Eskimo community in the area brings the local aboriginal cultural record up to the present day. The sites are in Federal ownership.

48. Birnirk, Point Barrow. The series of mounds at this site provided material by which the archeologists have been able to describe the development of Eskimo culture in this northernmost part of the United States from around A.D. 600 to present day.

Sitka National Monument is also significantly related to this theme.

Theme XVI -- Special Study -- Hawaii Aboriginal Culture

49. Wailua Complex of Heiaus, Island of Kauai. Located at the mouth of the Wailua River, this complex consists of a city of refuge, four important heiaus, royal birthstones, and sacrificial rock. This series

of heiaus and sacred sites forms one of the most important complexes of archeological sites in the Hawaiian Islands. The sites typify a long period of Hawaiian prehistory as well as many aspects of Hawaiian aboriginal culture.

50. Puu o Mahuka Heiau, Island of Oahu. Located on the north side of the island near Waimea, this is the largest heiau of Oahu. Since Oahu's greatest priests came from this district, it is probably also the most important single heiau in the Hawaiian Islands.

51. Huilua Fish Pond, Island of Oahu. The aboriginal people of Hawaii stored and raised fish for food. The Huilua pond, located on Kahana Bay, on the east coast of Oahu, is one of the last surviving ponds on this island. According to tradition, this picturesque pond was built by the menehunes for raising and storing fish.

52. Hokukano-Ualapue Complex, Island of Molokai. Located on the south coast of the island, this complex forms one of the most important and impressive exhibits in the State of Hawaii. It includes six important heiaus and two fine fish ponds.

53. Kaunolu Village Site, Island of Lanai. Located on the southwest cape of the island, this was once a typical vigorous Hawaiian fishing community. Its ruins represent nearly all phases of Hawaiian culture and are extremely well preserved.

54. Loaloa Heiau, Island of Maui. This temple, built on the southeast coast of the island, near Kaupo, is believed to have been constructed by King Piilani. It was the center and prime site of a cluster of sites around Kaupo. This complex of sites includes remains of villages and other heiaus.

55. Mookini Heiau, Island of Hawaii. This huge temple is located on the northern tip of the island near Upolu Point. The temple, one of Hawaii's largest, is a "luakini" or sacrificial heiau. Traditional Hawaiian history states that this heiau was constructed in the 11th century by Paa o, a famous priest who came into Hawaii from Tahiti. The birthstone of King Kamehameha I is located nearby.

56. Mauna Kea Adz Quarry, Island of Hawaii. Located on the top of Mauna Kea, this is the largest basalt adz quarry in the world. The adz was the single most important stone tool in Polynesia. To this quarry the ancient Hawaiians came to obtain the material needed for their stone artifacts.

57. Honokohau Settlement, Island of Hawaii. Located on the west coast of the island, just north of Kailua, this settlement preserves sites which date from prehistoric times to 1920. The sites are virtually intact and include 50 ancient house sites, four heiaus, three fish ponds, and a holua slide.

58. Keauhou Holua Slide, Island of Hawaii. Tobogganing on stone slides was a sport reserved for the chiefs. This slide is located at Keauhou on the west coast of the island, and is the best preserved and largest toboggan slide in the State. The slide served as the site of the "olympic games" of the Hawaiian people.

59. South Point Complex, Island of Hawaii. This area at the extreme southern point of the island contains a group of sites that document the longest and most complete record of human occupation in the Hawaiian Islands. It includes the Sand Dune site, which produced the earliest radiocarbon date (A.D. 124) in the State.

In addition, the following areas administered by the National Park Service also have features typifying this theme:

1. Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, Island of Hawaii.
2. Haleakala National Park, Island of Maui.
3. City of Refuge National Historical Park is significantly associated with this theme.

Theme XXI, Political and Military Affairs Since 1865
Special Study: Hawaii History

60. Cook Landing Site, Waimea, Island of Kauai. According to the best evidence available, Waimea Beach is the site where Captain James Cook, the English Explorer, first landed in the Hawaiian Islands on January 20, 1778. Captain Cook is remembered in history as the discoverer of the Hawaiian Islands. The site is owned in part by the State of Hawaii and in part with the county of Kauai.

61. Puukohola Heiau, Island of Hawaii. At this stone temple King Kamehameha the Great sacrificed Keoua, his chief rival for control of the Hawaiian Islands. This event occurred in the summer of 1791 and led to the unification of the Hawaiian Islands as a single kingdom. The site is privately owned.

62. Kamakahonu, Residence of King Kamehameha I, Island of Hawaii. In 1812 King Kamehameha I moved his residence from Honolulu to this site at Kamakahonu Cove. Here also his son Liholiho, abolished the Kapu system and the Hawaiian religion. The site is partly in private ownership; partly in State ownership.

63. Russian Fort, Waimea, Island of Kauai. In 1817 the Russian-American Company built this stone fort at the mouth of the Waimea River. The Russians were expelled, however, by King Kamehameha I and Hawaiian troops occupied the fort. The ruins of the fort commemorate the period of international rivalry for influence in the Islands. The site is privately owned.

64. Kawaiahao Church and Mission Houses, Honolulu, Island of Oahu. Beginning in the mid-1820's, Kawaiahao Church was virtually the State

church of the Hawaiian Kingdom, and it commemorates the importance of Protestant missionaries as a force in 19th century Hawaiian life and spreading American influence in the Islands. The Mission houses are related structures which commemorate this influence. The Kawaiahao Church is owned by the Congregational Church. The Mission structures are owned by the Hawaiian Mission Children's Society.

65. Lahaina (Historic District), Island of Maui. This town preserves the atmosphere of a mid-19th century seaport. It commemorates the 19th century period when the American whaling fleet visited the port and when American missionaries were an important influence in the Islands.

66. Sugar Mill at Koloa, Island of Kauai. The ruins of this sugar mill, on the former Ladd & Company's plantation, date from 1841-1842. Sugar first became important in the economy of Hawaii in 1835 and after 1836 sugar production became Hawaii's largest industry. The site is privately owned.

67. Iolani Palace, Honolulu, Island of Oahu. Iolani Palace was the royal residence of the last two rulers of the Hawaiian Kingdom, King Kalahaua and Queen Liliuokalani. It is the most important surviving symbol of Hawaiian independence. Transfer of sovereignty of the Islands to the United States took place on the palace steps on August 12, 1898. The palace is owned by the State of Hawaii and currently houses the State senate and legislature and the Governor's offices.

In addition, three sites in the National Park System also have associations with Hawaiian history. They are as follows:

1. City of Refuge National Historic Site
2. Hawaii Volcanoes National Park
3. Haleakala National Park

Theme XX, The Arts and Sciences: -- Subtheme: Literature

68. Hubert Howe Bancroft Ranch House, Spring Valley, San Diego County, California. Bancroft was the monumental historian of the western half of the American continent. He and his associates produced 39 volumes of history related to the West. He bought the ranch in 1885, and lived there until his death in 1918. Owned by Spring Valley Chamber of Commerce.

69. Jack London's Ranch, Glen Ellen, Sonoma County, California. One of the most spectacular American literary figures in the first decade of the 20th century. London purchased the 130-acre hill ranch in 1905, and here wrote several of his most significant novels. This is the setting for his book The Valley of the Moon. The area is now a State Historical Park including 49 acres of the original ranch, London's grave, the ruins of "the Wolf House," and a two-story stone building erected as a museum after his death. It is owned by the State of California.

70. John Muir House, Contra Costa County, California. John Muir, great nature writer, explorer and conservationist, settled on this ranch in 1880, at the age of 42. Much of his best writing was accomplished during his residence here. The site contains 5 acres of the original 800-acre ranch and two houses in which he lived for 10 and 14 years respectively. The houses are in excellent condition. The site is in private ownership.

71. Frank Norris Cabin, Redwood Retreat, Santa Clara County, California. Frank Norris, generally regarded as the most stimulating and militant of the early American naturalist writers and an exposer of sordid business practices, died at the age of 32. He and his wife built a two-room, one-story, log cabin near Redwood Retreat, a short time before his death. The cabin, surrounded by redwoods, is unchanged and intact. It is in private ownership.

72. "The Abbey," Joaquin Miller Home, Oakland, California. The Abbey was built by Cincinnatus Hiner "Joaquin" Miller in 1886, and here he lived until his death 27 years later. The home consists of three one-story, one-room frame structures joined together to form a single unit. It is well maintained and is operated as a museum. It is a California State Historical Landmark owned by the City of Oakland, California.

Declared Eligible
May 23, 1963

Sites and Buildings in Western Region Eligible For Registered National Historic Landmark Status

Theme XIX -- Conservation of Natural Resources

73. Old Mission Dam (Padre Dam), San Diego, California.

The Old Mission Dam was the first major irrigation-engineering project on the Pacific Coast of the United States. It was built between 1800 and 1817, along with a long aqueduct and flume which delivered water to San Diego Mission, the "Birthplace of California," which had been founded in 1769. The dam, of which enough remains still to impound some water, was about 220 feet long, 13 feet thick at the bottom and 12 feet or more high at its maximum. It is situated on City-owned land in Mission Gorge, on the San Diego River, about 13 miles northeast of Old Town, San Diego.

74. Lake Merritt Wild Duck Refuge, Oakland, California.

Created on March 18, 1870, Lake Merritt Wild Duck Refuge is the oldest legally established public wildlife sanctuary in the United States. Although located in the heart of downtown Oakland, this 160-acre saltwater lake attracts large numbers of migrating ducks. It is probably the most noted of the small wildlife sanctuaries maintained by local governments. Owned by City of Oakland.

75. Senator Francis G. Newlands' Home, 7 Elm Court, Reno, Nevada.

This large, two-story frame home still in excellent condition and little altered, was the home of Francis G. Newlands, who lived in Nevada from 1889 until his death in 1919. He served in the House from 1892 to 1903, and then in the Senate until his death at the age of 71. He is considered to be the "father" of the Reclamation (or Newlands) Act of June 17, 1902, which placed the Federal Government in the field of irrigation. From 1907 to 1919 he labored unsuccessfully to win Congress to support a multiple-purpose river development program for the entire nation. The Newlands home is privately owned, and used as a residence.

In addition to these three new sites, two other sites, already classified under other themes, have also been found eligible under Theme XIX. These sites are as follows:

1. John Muir House, Contra Costa County, California.

(Already classified as eligible under Theme XX - The Arts and Sciences, subtheme, Literature.)

John Muir, great nature writer, explorer, and conservationist, settled on this ranch in 1880, at the age of 42 and resided here until his death in 1914. It was during this period that Muir played a critical, leading, and vital role in the successful movements to create national forests and national parks. The site contains 5 acres of the original 800-acre ranch and the house in which he lived from 1890 to 1914. The site is in private ownership.

2. Fur Seal Rookeries, Pribilof Islands, Alaska.

(Previously classified as possessing exceptional value under Theme XXI--Special Study: Alaska History.)

The greatest single source of furs in the world, the existing flourishing herds of the Pribilof Islands serve as an outstanding example of the international application of the conservation principles, as embodied in the Convention of July 7, 1911, for their protection. The islands are owned by the United States Government and administered by the Fish and Wildlife Service of the Department of the Interior.

Two National Parks located in the Western Region have also been found to have important associations with the Theme XIX, Conservation of Natural Resources. They are:

1. Yosemite National Park, California.

Yosemite, world-famed for its scenic splendors, served as an important symbol and battleground in the cause of conservation from 1864 to 1913. Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove of Big Trees, established as a state park on June 30, 1864 and April 2, 1866, was the first grant made by the Federal Government from the public domain of land for purposes of preservation and recreation. Yosemite was also the first state park to be established in the United States.

Yosemite was the training ground of John Muir, the great naturalist, from 1868 to 1874. It was the center of battle from 1890 to 1906 to complete the national park by re-including the original 1864 state grant. Visited by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1903 and President Taft in 1909, Yosemite played an important role in the Roosevelt Conservation program. The park was also the scene of the famous battle and final defeat on the Hetch Hetchy Valley issue in 1913.

2. Olympic National Park, Washington.

Established originally as Mount Olympus National Monument on March 2, 1909 with 636,600 acres, for the purpose of protecting and preserving the habitat of the rare Olympic or Roosevelt Elk, the Monument became a national park on June 29, 1938. Mount Olympus, together with the National Bison Range in Montana, was one of the first two large federal areas to be set aside to protect big-game animals.

National Park areas in other Regions significantly associated with the theme include:

1. Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming, Montana, Idaho. Established by act of Congress, March 1, 1872, Yellowstone National Park was the first of the federal areas to be set aside and preserved by the U. S. Government for its scenic, scientific, and wildlife values.

2. Devils Tower National Monument, Wyoming. The first of the National Monuments to be set aside by the Federal Government under the Antiquities (or Lacey) Act of June 8, 1906, which authorized the President to preserve areas and public lands for their scientific or prehistoric interest, Devils Tower National Monument was established by proclamation of President Theodore Roosevelt, September 24, 1906.

3. Sagamore Hill, Theodore Roosevelt Home, Long Island, New York. President Theodore Roosevelt used his position in the White House to advance the conservation of natural resources in every way that he could. Roosevelt translated the ideas of other conservationists into federal policy, supported non-federal conservation undertakings, and personally galvanized widespread public support for conservation. Without Roosevelt's enthusiastic support as president, the conservation movement would not have achieved a fraction of what it did between 1901-1909.

Declared Eligible
Jan. 29, 1964

Sites and Buildings in Western Region Eligible For Registered National Historic Landmark Status

Theme XVI -- Hawaii Aboriginal Culture

76. Piilanihale Heiau, Hawaii. This is the largest heiau, or temple, in the Hawaiian Islands, about 340 by 425, built probably in the 16th century. Privately owned, located on the east coast of Maui, it is well preserved because of heavy vegetation, but also difficult to reach because of this growth.

Theme XVIII -- Travel and Communication

77. San Francisco Cable Cars, California. This method of urban transportation--cars moved by gripping moving underground cables--was pioneered in 1873 in San Francisco, to which it was especially well suited because of steep hills in the downtown area. At its maximum, eight companies operated 112 miles of track in San Francisco, and five other American cities had similar lines. About 10 miles are still in operation, all in San Francisco. Owned by the City of San Francisco.

Theme XXI -- Political and Military Affairs After 1865

78. Pearl Harbor Naval Base, Hawaii. Pearl Harbor, on the Island of Oahu, was one of the keys to the development of American Naval power in the Pacific after 1908, and is still today an active, major naval base. The U.S.S. Arizona Memorial, where over 1,100 men were entombed in the battleship sunk by the Japanese in their surprise attack of December 7, 1941, is a point of major visitor interest. Owned by U. S. Navy.

Theme XV - Westward Expansion, Subtheme: Mining Frontier

79. Assay Office, Idaho. The Assay Office at Boise, a two-story stone building erected by the U. S. Government in 1870-72 is a symbol of the importance that mining has played in the political, social, economic, and legal development of the Pacific Northwest. The site is owned by the Federal Government (U. S. Forest Service).

Theme XVIIb - Commerce and Industry

80. First Pacific Coast Salmon Cannery

Location: In Broderick, on the Yolo County side of the Sacramento River, opposite the fort of Sacramento's K Street. This was the former site of the first salmon cannery on the Pacific Coast. The cannery was developed by William and George Hume and Andrew Hapgood in 1864-1866, when they moved their cannery to the Columbia River. This is owned by Tallichet Enterprises, Inc., Broderick, California.

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

For Release JANUARY 20, 1961

SECRETARY SEATON RECOMMENDS ADDITIONAL SITES FOR HISTORIC LANDMARK STATUS

Secretary of the Interior Fred A. Seaton has recommended an additional 51 sites as being eligible for Registered National Historic Landmark status, it was announced today.

The sites possessing exceptional historic and archeological value are described in three new "theme studies" in the National Park Service series which eventually will cover all the major periods of human history in the United States. The three studies are: Prehistoric Hunters and Gatherers; The War for Independence; and a sub-theme under Westward Expansion and Extension of the National Boundaries, entitled: Overland Migrations West of the Mississippi River.

The Registry of National Historic Landmarks was approved by Secretary Seaton and established by the National Park Service in October 1960. Eleven theme studies covering the English, French, and Spanish Exploration and Settlement; the Development of the English Colonies, 1700-1775; The Advance of the Frontier, 1763-1830; Political and Military Affairs, 1783-1830; The Civil War, 1861-1865; and four subthemes under Westward Expansion and Extension of the National Boundaries, entitled: The Santa Fe Trail; the Cattlemen's Empire; Military and Indian Affairs; and The Texas Revolution and the War with Mexico, 1820-1853, were announced.

A total of 324 sites have been recommended, with 213 declared eligible for Landmark status and the remainder already in the National Park System or having received Federal recognition.

National Park Service Director Conrad L. Wirth said that the Registry of National Historic Landmarks is designed to recognize and endorse the preservation and protection of structures and sites now administered by States, other public agencies, or historical societies, and to encourage private owners of historic landmarks to maintain them.

The Registry is an outgrowth of the National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings program of the National Park Service. This program was authorized by the Historic Sites Act of 1935, which provided for a "survey of historic and archeological sites, buildings, and objects for the purpose of determining which possess exceptional value as commemorating or illustrating the history of the United States."

Administrators of sites found eligible for Landmark status may apply to the National Park Service for such recognition and will receive a certificate. Arrangements are also being made tc make available a suitable marker.

Descriptive summaries of the sites in the presently announced theme studies are attached. A list of themes under study is also attached. Additional studies will be announced from time to time. The various theme studies may be published later for public distribution. Only reading copies are currently available.

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Prehistoric Hunters and Gatherers

The Advisory Board has recognized 20 sites as having exceptional value. Nineteen of these, not administered by the National Park Service, are eligible to receive certificates as Registered National Historic Landmarks. They are:

1. Iyatayet, Alaska. One of the earliest sites yet found in Alaska. This is the type site for the Norton Culture which flourished from 500 B.C. to A.D. 300.

2. Ipiutak, Alaska. A large spectacular Paleo-Eskimo site with house remains and elaborate burials.

3. Double Adobe, Arizona. The first site where the early and distinctive Cochise Culture was recognized. It contained evidence of food gathering peoples who lived in the area about 5,700 B.C.

4. Ventana Cave, Arizona. Contained a deep stratified deposit showing human use during a period of about 5,000 years, ending in historical times.

5. Lindenmeier Site, Colorado. The first recognized and investigated Folsom camp site in the United States. A recent radiocarbon date places the Folsom occupation at this site at over 10,000 years ago.

6. Stallings Island, Georgia. Probably the most famous shell heap site in the deep Southeast, this site gave a knowledge of prehistoric Indians from the Archaic pre-pottery people through those who made the earliest pottery in the southeastern states.

7. Modoc Rockshelter, Illinois. A deep, stratified Archaic site. This is one of the oldest Archaic sites east of the Mississippi. Earliest occupation began around 8,000 B.C. Work here yielded clear indication of an Archaic occupation in the East as early as the early hunters of the West.

8. Graham Cave, Missouri. The first site to provide radiocarbon dates for an Archaic occupation in the time range previously considered typical of the Paleo-Indian stage. It presented the first association of fluted projectile points with spear points of Archaic type. The earliest occupation occurred around 9,700 years ago.

9. Signal Butte, Nebraska. This was the first Plains Middle Prehistoric site to be described. It provided much of the data necessary for determining the cultural sequence of the Northern Plains. The earliest occupation seems to have begun around 2,500 B.C.

10. Leonard Rock Shelter, Nevada. This stratified site provided evidence for three periods of prehistoric occupation in the Great Basin, the first beginning about 7,000 B.C.

11. Sandia Cave, New Mexico. This was the type site for Sandia points and was one of the first sites to provide evidence of man's occupation of North America at a time earlier than that of Folsom bison hunters.

12. Anderson Basin (Blackwater Draw), New Mexico. A well preserved section of a locality famous for its important archeological and palentological remains, this site has yielded Folsom points and the earlier Clovis type of human weapons in association with a variety of extinct mammal remains.

13. Folsom, New Mexico. Here scientists first made their dramatic find of man's weapons unquestionably associated with the bones of an extinct species of the bison. This evidence profoundly modified scientific thought about the antiquity of man in America.

14. Lamoka, New York. This is the type site of the Lamoka culture. It provided part of the basis for the initial definition of the Archaic stage in the Eastern United States.

15. Fort Rock Cave, Oregon. This cave yielded the famous Fort Rock sandals which are the oldest dated artifacts in the New World. It also indicated that Indians occupied Central Oregon at the time of the Newberry eruption of Mount Mazama.

16. Plainview, Texas. This is the type station for Plainview points. Excavations here demonstrated an association of the Plainview point with bones of an extinct bison species.

17. Danger Cave, Utah. Danger Cave is the most important of the Great Basin finds. It led to the formulation of the "Desert Culture" concept, and showed that early peoples of the Great Basin lived in an entirely different environment from that of the High Plains Paleo-Indian hunters. It indicated that weaving was known in America prior to 7,000 B.C.

18. Oconto Site, Wisconsin. This was a site where implements of the "Old Copper" Culture were found in association with human burials. It provided what appears to be an accurate date for the Old Copper Culture, and places this occupation of the Western Great Lakes region at roughly 6,000 to 7,000 years ago.

19. Horner Site, Wyoming. This is the type station for the Cody Complex which includes Scottsbluff and Eden points and the distinctive Cody knife. Radiocarbon dates indicate a period of occupation about 5,000 B.C.

In addition, one site recognized as having exceptional value has been accepted by the Secretary of the Interior as a donation from the National Geographic Society. This site is Russell Cave, Alabama.

The War for Independence

In the study of the War for Independence, thirty-two sites have been recognized as possessing exceptional value. Twenty-two of these, not administered by the National Park Service, are eligible to receive certificates as Registered National Historic Landmarks. They are as follows:

1. The Webb House, Wethersfield, Connecticut. This fine Colonial structure, built in 1752 by Joseph Webb, was the scene of the historic May, 1781, conference between Gen. George Washington and Count de Rochambeau, Commander of the American military forces in Newport, Rhode Island. The result was an agreement by which the French and American Allies marched south to cooperate with Admiral de Grasse's French fleet, to oppose and surround Lord Cornwallis, the British Commander in Virginia. The meeting may not have produced specific plans for the victorious Yorktown Campaign, but it laid the ground work leading to Cornwallis' defeat. Owned by the Connecticut Society, Colonial Dames of America, and open to the public.

2. The John Dickinson House, near Dover, Delaware. The restored Dickinson House is the surviving structure most eminently associated with the great writer so aptly termed the "Penman of the Revolution." In the patriotic literature of that struggle, Dickinson was as pre-eminent as was Washington in war, Franklin in diplomacy and Morris in finance. With the help of the National Society of the Colonial Dames of America, the State of Delaware restored the Dickinson House in 1952, and it is now exhibited to the public by the Delaware State Museum.

3. Bunker Hill Monument, Boston, Massachusetts. The famed Bunker Hill Monument, situated on Breed's Hill, commemorates the first full-scale action, on June 17, 1775, between American militia and British troops. The battle was a repulse for the raw American Army, but as a costly victory, it convinced the British Command that defeating the rebellious Colonists would not be easy. The courage of the American defenders at Bunker Hill has become a classic in American military history. The monument is owned by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and administered by the Metropolitan Commission of Boston.

4. Old North (Christ Episcopal) Church, Boston, Massachusetts. From the belfry of this church on the night of April 18, 1775, lanterns notified patriots on the opposite shore of the Charles River that British troops were beginning their march to Lexington and Concord, where they were engaged next day with the Minute Men in the opening skirmish of the American Revolution. Boston's oldest surviving church, this structure is one of the nation's most cherished landmarks, both historically and architecturally. Old North Church is owned by the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts and is open to the public.

5. Paul Revere House, Boston, Massachusetts. Although extensively restored, this colonial structure retains its original framework and, in addition to its significance as the home of the Revolutionary patriot, is important as downtown Boston's only surviving 17th century dwelling. Through its back door, Revere probably passed for his famous ride on the night of April 18, 1775, to warn the patriots in Lexington and Concord. The structure is owned and exhibited to the public by the Paul Revere Memorial Association.

6. Lexington Green, Lexington, Massachusetts. Here on the morning of April 19, 1775, occurred the short but momentous skirmish between the Minute Men and the British forces from Boston that initiated the armed struggle for American independence. Lexington Green is owned by the Town of Lexington, Massachusetts.

7. Buckman Tavern, Lexington, Massachusetts. Located on the east side of Lexington Green, the Buckman Tavern is the oldest of the Lexington inns and is the one most intimately associated with the famed opening struggle of the American Revolution. Owned by the Town of Lexington, it is leased to the Lexington Historical Society, which exhibits the building to the public.

8. Wright's Tavern, Concord, Massachusetts. A landmark more memorable and significant than is sometimes realized today is Wright's Tavern at the center of the Town of Concord. Built in 1747, it was the scene, within a few hours on April 19, 1775, of meetings by both Minute Men and British Redcoats. It was also associated in October 17, 1774, with the meeting of the Provincial Congress of Massachusetts, which gathered in the adjacent meeting house of the First Parish to prepare the way for the Revolution in Massachusetts. Wright's Tavern is owned by the Society of the First Parish, in Concord.

9. Monmouth Battlefield, near Freehold, New Jersey. The Battle of Monmouth on June 28, 1778, marked the combat debut of the American Army after the hard winter's training at Valley Forge. Washington failed at Monmouth to stop British movement across New Jersey after these forces left Philadelphia. But this last major battle in the north demonstrated that a new American Army, able to engage the British forces on equal terms, had been forged. The major scene of the battle, northwest of Freehold, New Jersey, retains much of its original character and is now largely privately-owned farm land.

10. Princeton Battlefield State Park, Princeton, New Jersey. Washington's victory at Princeton on January 3, 1777, had a generally encouraging effect on the American Revolution at a time when the spirits of the American people were at a very low ebb. This victory, coming so soon after Washington's Christmas night defeat of the British at Trenton in 1776, brightened the American cause and strengthened Washington's army. A New Jersey State Park on the southern edge of Princeton preserves the scene of the heaviest fighting on the Princeton Battlefield. State owned.

11. Washington Crossing State Parks, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. Washington's crossing of the Delaware on Christmas night 1776, for the brilliant raid on Trenton, was a crucial episode in the struggle for independence. By this daring act he carried the war to the enemy and gave the new nation and his often-defeated army a taste of victory at the war's lowest ebb. On the Pennsylvania side of the Delaware, the well-maintained State Park of approximately 500 acres preserves the site of the embarkation of Washington's main force. On the New Jersey side of the river is a 372-acre State Park preserving the scene of the landing above Trenton.

12. Bennington Battlefield State Park, New York. The American militia's victory at the Battle of Bennington, August 16, 1777, was a significant contribution to the defeat of Burgoyne's British Army at Saratoga, two months later. The 208-acre Bennington Battlefield Park includes the center of heaviest fighting on the high ground overlooking the little village of Walloomsac and affords a wide view of the battle terrain. The Park is administered by the New York State Education Department, Albany, N. Y.

13. Morris-Jumel Mansion, New York City. In addition to its distinction as the only important pre-Revolutionary house still standing in Manhattan, the Morris-Jumel Mansion is the major surviving landmark of the Battle of Harlem Heights, September 16, 1776. One major result of the battle was the restoration of the

offensive spirit of the American Army, after a succession of defeats and retreats. The Jumel House was Washington's headquarters from September 14 to October 18, 1776. The house was saved from demolition in 1903 when the City of New York purchased the property and by special legislation gave its care to the Washington Headquarters Association of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

14. Stony Point Battlefield Reservation, New York. By the action at Stony Point, July 16, 1779, Gen. George Washington asserted his grip on the Hudson and especially on West Point, "the key to the Continent." The Battle of Stony Point was the last major military action in the northern theater of war during the Revolution. This property, owned by the State of New York, is administered by State Conservation Department in cooperation with the American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society.

15. The Gundelo Philadelphia, New York. The United States Gundelo Philadelphia is the only surviving gunboat built and manned by American forces during the Revolutionary War. Further, it is one of the 15 small craft with which Benedict Arnold fought 29 British vessels in the battle off Valcour Island, Lake Champlain, October 11, 1776. The year of grace won by the building of Arnold's "fleet" and the battle off Valcour Island paved the way for the decisive American victory at Saratoga the following year. Privately owned, the vessel is now located on the west shore of Lake Champlain, on New York Route 22, in Essex County, N. Y.

16. Valcour Bay, New York. Benedict Arnold's daring fleet action off Valcour Island, in Lake Champlain, on October 11, 1776, had a far-reaching effect on the outcome of the War for American Independence. Although the Americans were defeated on the lake, their very presence and stubborn fighting proved to be a strategic victory. British invasion of the northern colonies was delayed while a fleet was built to engage Arnold's small flotilla. By the time the lake had been cleared of American vessels, the season was too far advanced to carry out the projected British movement to Albany. The site is marked by a small monument on the mainland about five miles south of Plattsburgh, N. Y., in view of the island. This was erected in 1928 by the New York State Education Department and the Saranac Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution.

17. Washington's Headquarters, Newburgh, New York. None of Washington's military headquarters during the War for Independence is of greater historical significance than the Hasbrouck House at Newburgh. Arriving at Newburgh on April 1, 1782, the Commander-in-Chief remained at the Hasbrouck House, save for occasional enforced absences, until August 19, 1783. This was a longer period than Washington spent at any other headquarters. Aside from its intimate association with Washington, the Hasbrouck House has the distinction of being the first historic site preserved by a state. The state obtained the property in 1850 for non-payment of debt. It is administered by the New York State Education Department, Albany.

18. Brandywine Battlefield Park, Pennsylvania. The Battle of Brandywine on September 11, 1777, was the only major clash of the two main armies during the campaign which resulted in the British capture of Philadelphia. Although defeated, Washington extricated his force in good order, and the Continentals demonstrated their ability to withstand the determined attack of British regulars. Brandywine Battlefield Park comprises 50 acres of rolling ground overlooking the main battle areas to the north and west. Owned by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the Park is administered by Brandywine Battlefield Park Commission.

19. Chew House (Cliveden), Germantown, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. This fine Georgian home is the most important surviving landmark of the hard-fought battle of Germantown, October 4, 1777. In that action, Washington's Army narrowly missed winning a significant victory over a large contingent of the British Army guarding the northwestern approaches to newly-occupied Philadelphia. It also proved to be a major influence in the consummation of the alliance with France that spelled final victory for the new American nation. The house is privately owned and is not open to the public except on special occasions.

20. Valley Forge State Park, Pennsylvania. No name in American history conveys more of suffering, sacrifice and triumph than Valley Forge. The bitter winter of 1777-1778 endured here by Washington's ragged, hungry troops saw the emergence of a real American Army, risen from the wreckage of the defeated force which staggered into the camp on December 19, 1777. The military training and discipline imposed at Valley Forge created a force which from that time on would meet its professional enemy on equal terms and at last defeat him. Owned by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the Park is administered by the Valley Forge Park Commission.

21. Camden Battlefield, South Carolina. The Battle of Camden, August 16, 1780, was the climax to a series of disasters which began with the fall of Charleston to Clinton's British army in May. Though a tactical defeat for the Americans, it brought Nathanael Greene to the American command. The Daughters of the American Revolution own 2 acres of the battlefield located 5 miles north of Camden, S. C., and the rest is owned by various private citizens.

22. St. John's Episcopal Church, Virginia. In St. John's Church on March 23, 1775, Patrick Henry delivered the stirring "Liberty or Death" speech which sounded a clarion call for his fellow Virginians. There, in the third great speech of his career, the speelbinding orator of the War for Independence attained a measure of undying fame. The church has been altered several times since 1772. The Church and southern half of cemetery is owned by the congregation of St. John's Episcopal Church; the northern half of cemetery, by the city of Richmond.

In addition, 10 sites are represented and interpreted in the National Park System as follows:

1. Cowpens Battlefield Site, South Carolina
2. Guilford Courthouse National Historical Park, North Carolina
3. Independence National Historical Park, Pennsylvania
4. Kings Mountain National Military Park, South Carolina
5. Minute Man National Historical Park Project, Massachusetts
6. Moore's Creek National Military Park, South Carolina
7. Morristown National Historical Park, New Jersey
8. Saratoga National Historical Park, New York
9. Statue of Liberty National Monument, New York
10. Yorktown Battlefield, Colonial National Historical Park, Virginia.

Overland Migrations West of the Mississippi River

In the study of Overland Migrations West of the Mississippi River, 16 sites have been recognized as having exceptional value in illustrating and commemorating the history of the United States. Nine of these, not administered by the National Park Service, are eligible to receive certificates as Registered National Historic Landmarks. They are as follows:

1. Emigration Canyon (at point of the Pioneer Monument), Utah. Brigham Young and his Mormon followers arrived at the Salt Lake Valley in 1847 by way of Emigration Canyon. Here at the mouth of the Canyon, now the east edge of Salt Lake City, there is a fine panoramic view of the land that was to be their home.. It is perhaps the best place to commemorate the long, history-making migration of the sect. Owned by the State of Utah.

2. Nauvoo, Illinois. The place from which the great Mormon migration westward to Utah began in 1846 following mob violence and persecution of the sect. By 1842 more than 10,000 Mormons had settled in Nauvoo, and it soon became the largest city in Illinois. Many of the structures originally built by and associated with the Mormon leaders of that time survive. Some of them are preserved by the Reorganized Church, others by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in Salt Lake City, and still others are privately owned.

3. Robidoux Pass, Nebraska. A significant landmark and campsite on the old Oregon and California Trail. The great migrations of the 1840's passed through it, and from its crest the westbound travelers had their first view of Laramie Peak, which most of them considered to be the Rocky Mountains.

4. Independence Rock, Wyoming. This huge rock-mass, rising like a monster out of the sagebrush plain near the Sweetwater River, became known as "the great registry of the desert" because of the large number of names and dates carved, painted, or written on it. It was one of the best known landmarks on the Oregon and California Trail.

5. South Pass, Wyoming. This was the long looked for crossing of the Continental Divide on the Oregon and California Trail, and as such was one of the great landmarks on the Trail. It also is the easiest passage of the Rocky Mountains, and was famous in the days of transcontinental animal-drawn transportation.

6. Donner Camp, California. Site of the snowbound winter camp of the Donner Party, 1847-1848, in which tragedy struck this California-bound party of 89 people. Only 45 survived the ordeal, one of the worst episodes of overland migration. In a sense, it epitomizes the hardships and dangers encountered by those who made the overland crossings in those days.

7. Sutter's Fort, California. The Fort and settlement established by John A. Sutter in 1839 on the Sacramento River which became the objective of nearly all westbound emigrants to California from the United States by way of the central and northern routes. Sutter was a generous benefactor to the emigrants and his Fort and assistance proved an invaluable aid in the American settlement of California. Sutter's Fort has been restored and is now a State Historical Monument.

8. Warner's Ranch, California. This ranch, 75 miles northeast of San Diego, established by Jonathan T. Warner, an American citizen from Connecticut was a famous place on the southern emigrant and wagon road into California. It was the first place the traveler could find shelter and food after enduring the hardships of the desert crossing, and almost everyone traveling by this route stopped there. Owned by the San Diego Water Company and leased to private ranchers.

9. Fort Hall, Idaho. Established by Nathaniel Wyeth in 1834 and one of most famous of all landmarks and stopping places on the Oregon and California Trail. The Oregon and California Trails, westbound, separated at Fort Hall. The Fort was associated importantly with the fur trade, the overland migrations to Oregon and California, and the transportation and supply network to the Inland Empire and the gold mines of Montana. Located in the Fort Hall Indian Reservation, and under the jurisdiction of the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs.

The National Park Service presently administers several federally owned areas associated with Overland Migrations West of the Mississippi River. The seven established areas in the National Park System are the following:

1. Death Valley National Monument, California
2. Fort Laramie National Monument, Wyoming
3. Fort Union National Monument, New Mexico
4. Fort Vancouver National Monument, Washington
5. Lassen Volanic National Park, California
6. Scotts Bluff National Monument, Nebraska
7. Whitman National Monument, Washington

85852

Letter February 3, 1961 to owner of Donner Camp, California notifying him of eligibility of Landmark status, signed by Acting Director Scoyen.

Owner: Hon. Edmund G. Brown; Governor of California, Sacramento, California.

Letters also sent to: Sen. Thomas H. Kuchel, 1-20-61
Sen. Claire Engle, 1-20-61
Cong. Harold T. Johnson, 1-20-61

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Sacramento 14

Inter-Departmental Communication

To: Charles W. Johnson
Departmental Secretary
Governor's Office
State Capitol
Sacramento, California

Date: Feburary 28, 1961

File No.

Subject: Registry of National Historic Landmarks

From: Department of Natural Resources
Division of Beaches and Parks

We were gratified to learn that the National Park Service is considering the registration of four historic landmarks in California. The description enclosed in their communication to the Governor concerning the Larkin House and the Monterey Custom House are entirely acceptable to our staff; however, there is some question on Donner Camp and Sutter's Fort.

We wonder at the wisdom of memorializing the Donner party any more than has already been done. It is fairly well accepted among leading historians that the Donner party was a victim of their own bad judgment and some historians refer to the memorialization of the Donner party as a monument to idiocy. While it is true thye suffered a great ordeal in the winter of 1846-47, there actually was no need for this to have occurred. It would be rather difficult to select a significnat area to memorialize this group for they camped all over the valley--the Donner family itself camped on a hillside near Prosser Creek some four or five miles from Truskee, while the Murphys and other members of the party camped right at the shore of Donner Lake. We believe that possibly the area might be registered by the National Park Service as a memorial to all emigrants who passed the shores of Donner Lake on their way west rather than to one specific party. The State Park System, as you no doubt know, is right now working on plans for a museum at Donner Memorial State Park which is intended to tell the story of the emigrants.

The description of Sutter's Fort is substantially correct, with the exception of the last paragraph which states "The State restored the Fort in the period 1891-1893, retaining its original form, with shops, storerooms, and barracks, and using the remaining adobe bricks as far as possible". This is not entirely true. The Native Sons of the Golden West in 1890 raised a fund of $20,000 with which they purchased two blocks of land upon which the Fort stood, and restored the Fort to its present appearance, except for the central building which is the only original and was restored by the Division of Beaches and Parks. In 1925 the Fort

became State property and was operated by the Department of Finance. The Division of Beaches and Parks accepted the responsibility for maintenance and operation of Sutter's Fort in 1947. Subsequent research and archeological investigations have indicated that the Fort walls are not in their original location and are not exactly as they appeared in Sutter's time.

I think before either Sutter's Fort or Donner Camp is registered by the National Park Service that perhaps further investigation and consultation between the National Park Service and our staff of the Division of Beaches and Parks should take place, so that a combined effort will result in as accurate and informational distribution as possibly can be obtained.

I am enclosing herewith the forms requested of us by the National Park Service.

Charles A. DeTurk, Chief

Encl.

COPY

Edmund G. Brown
Governor

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Governor's Office
Sacramento

March 14, 1961

MAR 23 1961

Honorable E. T. Scoryen
Acting Director
National Park Service
United States Department
of the Interior
Washington 25, D. C.

Donner Camp

Dear Mr. Scoryen:

I am enclosing some information prepared by Mr. Charles A. DeTurk, Chief of California's Division of Beaches and Parks, which relates to some of the historical monuments in California. I am also enclosing a copy of his memorandum to me concerning the registry of national historic landmarks.

I do hope that members of your staff will contact Mr. Charles DeTurk so that the California listing can be accurate and complete.

Sincerely

EDMUND G. BROWN, Governor

Enclosures

REGION FOUR
180 New Montgomery Street
San Francisco 5, California

158

July 26, 1961

Mr. Charles A. DeTurk, Chief
California Division of Beaches and Parks
1125 Tenth Street
Sacramento 14, California

Dear Mr. DeTurk:

In previous correspondence with Director Wirth you have indicated the desire of the Division of Beaches and Parks to have certificates designating as Registered National Historic Landmarks the following sites:

Donner Camp
Larkin House
Sutter's Fort
Old Custom House, Monterey

We are now in a position to supply, without cost, bronze markers, 17" x 18", designating these properties as Registered National Historic Landmarks. Although we are under the impression, from earlier correspondence and from your discussions with Regional Historian Hussey, that you would like to have markers as well as certificates for these sites, we would much appreciate a written statement to that effect to clear our records. Thank you very much.

Sincerely yours,

(Sgd.) Russell K. Grater

Russell K. Grater
Acting Regional Chief of Interpretation

Copy to: Director (2)

February 7, 1962

L58

Memorandum

To: Director

From: Acting Assistant Regional Director, Region Four

Subject: Registry of National Landmarks: Plaques for Fort Ross and Donner Camp, California

We have just been informed by the California Division of Beaches and Parks that the State plans to hold formal Registered Landmark dedication ceremonies at Fort Ross in mid-August, 1962 (exact date to be determined later), and at Donner Pass on September 9, 1962.

We therefore request that high production priorities be given to the bronze markers for these two sites. They should be shipped to this office by the following dates:

1. Fort Ross, California - August 1
2. Donner Camp, California - September 1

(Sgd.) Bennett L. Gale

Acting Assistant Regional Director

In duplicate

May 10, 1962

L58

Memorandum

To: Director

From: Acting Assistant Regional Director, Region Four

Subject: National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings:
Bronze Markers for Fort Ross and Donner Camp, California

We have been informed that the State of California plans to hold formal Registered National Landmark dedication ceremonies for Fort Ross on August 18, and for Donner Camp on or about Labor Day. If the bronze plaques cannot be delivered to this office prior to those dates, is there any possibility that authority can be granted to have the markers cast here? The Division of Beaches and Parks, which wishes to have the markers in place for the ceremonies has volunteered to cast these two markers if such a procedure is appropriate.

(SGD) James V. Lloyd

Acting Assistant Regional Director

In duplicate

June 7, 1962

L58-CHA

Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Region Four

From: Acting Chief Historian

Subject: National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings: Landmark Plaques for Fort Ross and Donner Camp, California

We have received Acting Assistant Regional Director Lloyd's memorandum of May 10 requesting information on the status of the Landmark Plaques for the above sites. Both plaques were ordered from Lorton Prison Industries on May 23. We note that the Landmark ceremony at Fort Ross is scheduled for August 18, and at Donner Camp for a date on or about Labor Day. At this time there is only one plaque ahead of these two on Lorton's manufacturing list. Hence we feel sure that the plaques for Fort Ross and Donner Camp will be available by the dates indicated in Mr. Lloyd's memorandum. We will ship them to you as soon as we receive them.

Acting Chief Historian

Copy to: Mr. Littleton

WDLogan:gb

July 20, 1962

L58-CHA

Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Western Region

From: Acting Chief, Division of History and Archeology

Subject: National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings: Shipment of Landmark Plaques for Donner Camp and Fort Ross

We are shipping the Landmark bronze plaques for Donner Camp and Fort Ross to you by Railway Express as you directed. Please let us know when you have received the plaques.

/s/ Charles W. Porter III

Acting Chief, Division of History and Archeology

Copy to: Mr. Littleton

JOLittleton:mg

C O P Y

Mr. Conrad L. Wirth, Director
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Mr. Wirth:

As the owner (or owners) of Donner Memorial State Park (name of site) located in

Truckee	Nevada & Placer	California
(City)	(County)	(State)

(I,we) hereby make formal application for a certificate designating this historic property as a Registered National Historic Landmark.

1. Fully conscious of the high responsibility to the Nation that goes with the ownership and care of a property classified as having exceptional value and worthy of Registered National Historic Landmark status (I,we) agree to preserve, so far as practicable and to the best of (my,our) ability, the historical integrity of this important part of the national cultural heritage.

2. Toward this end, (I,we) agree to continue to use the property only for purposes compatible with its historical character.

3. (I,we) also agree to permit an annual visit to the property by a representative of the National Park Service, as a basis for continuing Landmark status.

4. If for any reason the three conditions mentioned above cannot continue to be met, it is agreed that the Registered National Historic Landmark status shall cease and that until Landmark status is restored by the Secretary of the Interior, the Registered National Historic Landmark Certificate will not be displayed.

Sincerely yours,

Chief, Division of Beaches & Parks

Sent to Region IV 6/21/61

July 30, 1962

Donner Camp
x Fort Ross

L58

Memorandum

To: Director

From: Assistant to the Regional Director, Western Region

Subject: National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings:
Landmark Plaques for Donner Camp and Fort Ross

We wish to acknowledge the receipt of the Registered National Historical Landmark bronze plaques for Donner Camp and Fort Ross, California. They came safely to hand today.

(sgd) Bennett T. Gale

Assistant to the Regional Director

In duplicate

C O P Y

HAROLD T. (BIZZ) JOHNSON
2D DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

HOME ADDRESS:
423 GROVE STREET
ROSEVILLE, CALIFORNIA

OFFICE ADDRESS:
1031 HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, D.C.

DISTRICT OFFICE:
205 VERNON STREET
ROSEVILLE, CALIFORNIA

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D. C.

COMMITTEES:
PUBLIC WORKS
SUBCOMMITTEES:
FLOOD CONTROL
RIVERS AND HARBORS
INTERIOR AND INSULAR AFFAIRS
SUBCOMMITTEES:
IRRIGATION AND RECLAMATION
NATIONAL PARKS
PUBLIC LANDS
SELECT COMMITTEES:
INTERSTATE HIGHWAYS
REAL PROPERTY ACQUISITION

LNP
L58

AUG 28 3 30 PM

August 27, 1962

No ans seems necessary
Mrs Brandon evidently
sent this to Mr. Wirth
before the dedication.
J.L. 9/27/62

Mr. Conrad Wirth, Director
National Park Service
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Mr. Wirth:

It was with great pleasure that I learned that you will be able to visit California and take part in the ceremonies dedicating the newly constructed Emegrant Trail Museum at Donner Memorial State Park. As you are well aware, this has been designated by the Secretary of the Interior as a place of national historic importance. The historic lore of the Donner Pass area has made this region worthy of such an important designation.

Representatives of both the great State of California and our neighboring State of Nevada will be participating in this affair. The E. Clampus Vitus, the oldest social organization in California, will be holding an initiation at the time of the dedication and the annual trek of the Emigrant Trail Wagon Train will be at Donner Camp at this time. I am including a copy of an article from the Bee which will give you some of the additional information concerning the program.

In accordance with our conversation, I would like to mention two things about the dedication. First of all, the museum is unique because working with Mr. Charles A. DeTurk, the State Director of Parks and Recreation, I was able to obtain donations of material from many of the pioneer firms in the Mother Lode area. For example, the Georgia-Pacific Corporation has provided American Elm for the finishing of the Audio Visual room which I am proud to say will be dedicated in my honor.

While I was a Member of the California State Senate, the idea of establishing such a memorial to the courage and fortitude of the pioneers. I authored and introduced the legislation which authorized construction of this museum and was instrumental in obtaining final approval of this legislation by the California State Legislature.

Subsequently, I was elected to Congress, but because of my great interest in this specific project, I continued to work with the state and local people on this matter and finally received approval a little over a year ago from the State Public Works Board for actual construction. Through the cooperation of the pioneer firms of California, construction of this museum has moved ahead at a remarkable speed and at relatively little cost.

These are points you wanted me to cover in my memo to you and I certainly appreciate your participating in the ceremony which I believe is very important to all of California. It is my understanding that the regional office of the National Park Service will see that the placque and certificate are at the site for the dedication. I also am sure that the State and local sponsors will welcome any regional representatives which you may wish to have at the ceremony.

Told Mr Barnes you are having Region pick you up 8/28

Mr. Clyde Newlin of the State Division of Beaches and Parks is arranging for your transportation from Reno and Truckee and your return. He will pick you up at your hotel and will return you to Reno in time for whatever East-bound flight you must catch.

Again may I express my deep personal appreciation for the effort which you have made to participate in this important ceremony.

Sincerely yours,

HAROLD T. (BIZZ) JOHNSON
Member of Congress

J:Bc

Proj. Donner Park

Planning Session Is Set For Dedication Of Museum

Bee June 3

TRUCKEE, Nevada Co. — Final plans for the dedication of the new Emigrant Trail Museum on Donner Memorial State Park September 8th and 9th will be completed Thursday in a noon meeting in Smarts of the committee from the Truckee Donner Chamber of Commerce.

Tentative plans for the dedication were made at a meeting last week. Chairman of that session was Chamber Manager N. F. Dolley.

Historical organizations, various horsemen's groups, square dancers and other groups will take part in the parade and celebration on the park. Bands from Stead Air Force Base, Nev., and the Indian school in Carson City, Nev., will be invited to participate and a street dance and barbecue are planned.

An initiation ceremony, conducted by William Bull Meek-William Morris Stewart Chapter of E Clampus Vitus, also will be a part of the two day celebration. Clamper units from Quincy, Plumas County; Placerville, El Dorado County, and Genoa, Nev., will be invited to participate.

One of the outstanding features of the museum event will be the participation of the Truckee Donner Horsemen, who will assemble in Reno September 6th and bring a wagon train over the old Emigrant Trail, stopping at the Donner Camp on Prosser Creek, just north of Truckee, where a public outdoor breakfast will be served the morning of September 9th. The group will continue to the state park and sponsor the barbecue that evening.

Robert Payne, Nevada City, Nevada County, historian, will be master of ceremonies during the brief dedication services and will select speakers for the occasion.

Both Governor Edmund G. Brown of California and Governor Grant Sawyer of Nevada have indicated they will attend

Mr. Littleton

Background Notes on Donner Camp, California

No site or monument anywhere, connected with the westward movement of the American people, evokes such emotion-charged memories as does Donner Camp. Eighty-nine California-bound emigrants came to this place late in October of 1846; by December, marooned in the heavy snow, they were reduced to eating leather and the bark of trees; before the first relief party reached them on February 19, 1847, many had died and some of these who survived had tasted their flesh. Only 45 survived the terrible winter ordeal. Suffering is only part of the story, however. There was also a notable measure of heroism; rescue came because a "Forlorn Hope" group of 15 of the bravest members of the party set out to California for help in December. Only 7 of them lived, but aid was obtained.

The State of California owns the site and administers Donner Memorial State Park through its Division of Beaches and Parks. Heroic-sized figures of pioneer mother, father and child are seen on the Monument to the Pioneers. The monument is 22 feet high: this was the depth of the snow at Donner Camp in the winter of 1846-1847. A large granite boulder still survives which is believed to have formed the back of the fireplace of one of the Donner Party huts. The most heavily traveled branch of the Emigrant Trail to California passed through this place, and in 1959 the State was planning to preserve the section of the Trail leading from the park to the crest of Donner Pass (Sierra Nevada).

Donner Camp was recognized as a National Historic Landmark on January 20, 1961, under Theme XV, Westward Expansion (Great Westward Migrations), of the National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings. The Landmark certificate was sent June 27, 1961. The bronze marker was sent on July 20, 1962, and will be a feature of the ceremonies this fall.

John P. Bloom
Historian
August 29, 1962

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

IN REPLY REFER TO:

September 10, 1962

9-12
Price
Kahler
(copy sent to Mr Wirth 9/11 ram)

SEP 13 1962

9/11
Personal

Memorandum

To: Director
Through: Regional Director, Western Region RM

From: Assistant to the Regional Director, Western Region

Subject: Designation of Donner Camp as a Registered National Historic Landmark and Dedication of Emigrant Trail Museum

In accordance with our telephone discussion of September 8, I presented the certificate and marker designating Donner Camp a Registered National Historic Landmark on Sunday afternoon, September 9, at the Donner Memorial State Park. Before making the presentation I said I had talked with you the night before and that you had asked that I give the group the following message:

> "I am very sorry that weather conditions make it impossible for me to meet with you to designate Donner Camp a Registered National Historic Landmark. I am equally disappointed that I cannot join in honoring Congressman Bizz Johnson who, as a member of the Interior and Insular Affairs Committee, has taken such an active part in recognizing and preserving these evidences of our historic heritage. Secretary Udall asked me to express his appreciation also of the Congressman's achievements and we are both delighted that the audio-visual room of this fine new museum is being dedicated to Bizz Johnson."

The dedication of the Emigrant Trail Museum followed and Joseph Houghteling, Chairman California State Park Commission, then dedicated the Harold T. (Bizz) Johnson audio-visual room. The Congressman couldn't get away from Washington for the dedication but Mrs. Johnson was there and acknowledged the honor to Bizz.

It was a good ceremony and State Park people told me approximately 2,000 attended. I am sorry that you missed it.

Bennett T. Gale
Assistant to the Regional Director

Copy to: Director, c/o Supt., Dinosaur

September 14, 1962

L58-CHA

Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Western Region

From: Acting Chief Historian

Subject: Designation of Donner Camp as a Registered National Historic Landmark

We greatly appreciated Assistant Regional Director Gale's memorandum of September 10 telling us of the presentation of the certificate and marker for Donner Camp at Donner Memorial State Park. We have already sent a copy of this memorandum to Mr. Wirth who is away from the Office at this time, so that he might know of the fine representation you made for him and the Secretary at these ceremonies.

Mr. Gale is to be congratulated upon the success of this occasion.

/S/ CHARLES W. PORTER III
Acting Chief Historian

Copy to: Mr. Littleton

JOLittleton:mg

JOHN V. TUNNEY
CALIFORNIA

A[illegible] n Office FWP
For info only

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

October 5, 1972 Nancy D.

To: Department of the Interior
Congressional Liaison
C Street between 18th and 19th Streets, N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20240

Enclosure from: PAURA, Miss Jamie
1627 Duvall Drive
San Jose, California 95130

Re: Rock Quarry near Donner State Park.

I forward the attached for your consideration. I would appreciate receiving any information you may wish to submit that will be helpful to me in reporting back to my constituent.

Please return the enclosed correspondence.

Thank you for your time and effort.

Sincerely,

JOHN V. TUNNEY
United States Senator

DEPT. OF INTERIOR
OCT 10 9 57 AM '75
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

Reply to:

Senator John V. Tunney
1415 New Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510
Attn: Miss Jeri Thomson

CA-2407

JVT ADM
LA LEG

SEP 15 4 31 PM '72

CASE REF
PRESS REQ

Dear Senator Tunney,

I am writing to you I am dissatisfied about the rock quarry near Donner State memorial Park that is taking over and ruining public land. The noise is above regulation Standards and the smell is tremendous.

We had a wonderful time except one thing spoiled it, the quarry. It never stops except on Sunday and not for long.

It is taking over the immigrant trail which should be a historical landmark.

There is also a need for land planning. There is so many condominiums and such being built that there will be nothing left to see. The park will not look historical. Please do something about it.

Sincerely
Miss Jamie Pauba

148

H30-PHH

NOV 8 - 1972

Hon. John V. Tunney
United States Senate
Washington, D.C.

Dear Senator Tunney:

Thank you for your inquiry in behalf of Miss Jamie Paura who is concerned that the historical integrity of Donner Memorial State Park in California is being affected by the operation of a quarry.

The national historical significance of Donner Memorial State Park has been recognized through the designation of Donner Camp National Historic Landmark. As a national landmark, the park is listed in the National Register of Historic Places and is protected by the procedural safeguards of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (P.L. 89-665) in the event of Federal activity that may affect its integrity. We are not aware that there is any Federal involvement in the development that Miss Paura observed. However, we will forward a copy of her letter to Mr. William Penn Mott, Jr., Director of the California Department of Parks and Recreation, State Resources Agency, Post Office Box 2390, Sacramento, California 95811. As State Liaison Officer for the National Register program, Mr. Mott will be able to determine if the procedures of Section 106 will assist in the preservation of Donner Camp's historical integrity. Further, by virtue of his position in the State government, Mr. Mott may know of State or local remedies for any infringement on the State park. Because of his organizational responsibilities for the National Register program and his proximity to the scene, he is the official who may best be able to suggest a satisfactory solution to the problems affecting Donner Memorial State Park.

CL-2407

BASIC FILE RETAINED IN PHH
HP-California, Rock Quarry near
Donner State Park

We appreciate your interest and that of Miss Paura in historic preservation and hope that this information will be helpful to you.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ Robert M. Utley

Director

Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

(constituent's letter returned)
Enclosure

cc:
Mr. William Penn Mott, Jr.
Director, Department of Parks
and Recreation
State Resources Agency
Post Office Box 2390
Sacramento, California 95811)w/c of inc.

CL
Director-Western Region)w/c of inc.
LI
PHH (2))
DDG)
PHR)
PHHS)
LOS)

FNP:DAClary:dlm:11-1-72

RECORDING REQUESTED BY

AND WHEN RECORDED MAIL TO

TRUCKEE DONNER HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P. O. Box 893
Truckee, Calif. 95734

65526-tr

1049 404

OFFICIAL RECORDS
RECORDED AT REQUEST OF

JUN 13 1979

AT — MIN. PAST 9 O'CLOCK A M
NEVADA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA
FEE: [signature] RECORDER

#17823

SPACE ABOVE THIS LINE FOR RECORDER'S USE

The undersigned grantor(s) declare(s):
Documentary transfer tax is $ none
(X) computed on full value of property conveyed, or
( ) computed on full value less value of liens and encumbrances remaining at time of sale.

Grant Deed

ORDER NO.

FOR A VALUABLE CONSIDERATION, receipt of which is hereby acknowledged,
Truckee Investors, a partnership

hereby GRANT(S) to
Truckee-Donner Historical Society of Truckee, California

the following described real property in the
County of Nevada, State of California:

An Easement hereby dedicated to the Truckee-Donner Historical Society of Truckee, California for purposes of displaying the historical Donner Trail Cross and Graves' Cabin Marker and more particularly described as follows:

BEGINNING at the northeast corner of that parcel shown in Book 7 of Surveys at Page 66 in the office of the Recorder of the County of Nevada; thence South 83° 25' 40" West, 20.00 feet along the northerly line of said parcel; thence South 01° 58' 05" East, 20.00 feet; thence North 83° 25' 40" East, 20.00 feet to the easterly line of said parcel; thence North 10° 58' 05" West, 20.00 feet to the Point of Beginning. Containing 399 square feet, more or less.

Together with the right of public access to these facilities, said access to be from Donner Pass Road adjacent to the above described parcel, said easement shall be abandoned if the referenced monuments are officially removed by the Truckee-Donner Historical Society.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF Nevada } SS.

AND TRUST
A TICOR COMPANY

On June 4, 1979,
before me, the undersigned, a Notary Public in and for said State, personally appeared
James P. Bezzerides

known to me
to be one of the partners of the partnership that executed the within instrument, and acknowledged to me that such partnership executed the same.

WITNESS my hand and official seal.

Signature Patricia E. Chatfield

OFFICIAL SEAL
PATRICIA E. CHATFIELD
NOTARY PUBLIC-CALIFORNIA
Principal Office in NEVADA County
My Commission Expires March 23, 1982

Dated June 4, 1979

Truckee Investors, by:
James P. Bezzerides
Partner

COUNTY OF } SS.
On before me, the undersigned, a Notary Public in and for said State, personally appeared

, known to me
to be the person whose name subscribed to the within instrument and acknowledged that executed the same.

WITNESS my hand and official seal.

Signature

ITC—16—7-69-A

Mail Tax Statements to Return Address Above

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

AUG 10 1983

IN REPLY REFER TO:

Mr. Robert McComber
Sierra Area Manager
California Department of Parks
and Recreation
P.O. Box 549
Truckee, California 95734

Re: Donner Camp Site
Truckee,
Nevada Cty., CA

Dear Mr. McComber:

The National Park Service has been working to establish boundaries for all National Historic Landmarks for which no specific boundary was identified at the time of designation and therefore are without a clear delineation of the amount of property involved. The benefits now afforded such properties by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as well as the possible application of other statutes, make it essential that we define specific boundaries for each Landmark.

In accordance with the National Historic Landmark program regulations, the National Park Service notifies owners, public officials and other interested parties and provides them with an opportunity to make comments on the proposed boundaries. We are requesting your comments on the proposed boundary for the Landmark stated above and described in the enclosed form.

National Historic Landmark designation has several possible implications, most of which derive from the automatic listing of Landmarks in the National Register of Historic Places. Landmarks are eligible to be considered for Federal grants-in-aid for historic preservation. All Landmarks receive limited protection through comments by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation on the effect of federally funded, assisted, or licensed undertakings on historic properties.

A Landmark property which is depreciable may be subject to certain provisions of the Tax Reform of 1976, as amended by the Revenue Act of 1978 and the Tax Treatment Extension Act of 1980, and the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981. These Acts contain provisions intended to encourage the preservation of depreciable historic structures by allowing favorable tax treatments for rehabilitation, and to discourage destruction of historic buildings by eliminating certain Federal tax provisions for demolition of historic structures. Beginning January 1, 1982, the Economic Recovery Tax Act replaces the rehabilitation tax incentives available under prior law with a 25% investment tax credit for rehabilitations of certain historic commerical, industrial and residential rental buildings. This can be combined with a 15 year cost recovery period for the adjusted basis of the historic building. Historic buildings with certified rehabilitations receive additional tax savings because owners are allowed to reduce the basis of the building by one half the amount of the credit. The Tax Treatment Extension Act of 1980 includes provisions regarding charitable contributions for conservation purposes of partial interests in historically important land areas or structures.

Section 9 of the Mining in National Parks Act of 1976 allows the Secretary of the Interior to request comments from the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation on any surface mining activity that might irreparably damage a National Historic Landmark. If a Landmark contains coal resources, certain provisions of the Surface Mining and Control Act of 1977 make it less likely that surface mining of the coal will be permitted by the State or Federal government.

We will be happy to receive any comments you care to make on the proposed boundaries within 60 days of the date of this letter. Please address your reply to Jerry L. Rogers, Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places, National Park Service, Washington, D.C. 20240, Attention: Chief of Registration.

Because National Historic Landmarks possess significance for all Americans, they are among the most important of the tangible reminders of our country's rich heritage. Designation honors both the Landmarks themselves and the individuals and organizations who have worked to preserve them.

We are pleased to inform you of the status of the pending National Historic Landmark boundary delineation and look forward to your reply. If you have any questions, our staff will be happy to assist you (202-343-9536).

We appreciate your interest in the National Historic Landmark program and your cooperation in this project.

Sincerely,

Carol D. Shull

Carol D. Shull
Chief of Registration
National Register of Historic Places
Interagency Resources Division

Copies sent to public officials, SHPO and property owners.

STATE OF CALIFORNIA—RESOURCES AGENCY

GEORGE DEUKMEJIAN, *Governor*

STATE HISTORICAL RESOURCES COMMISSION
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
POST OFFICE BOX 2390
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA 95811
(916) 445-8006

September 2, 1983

Ms. Carole D. Schull, Chief of Registration
National Register of Historic Places
Interagency Resources Division
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1100 L Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Ms. Schull:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on boundaries for National Historic Landmarks.

The State Historic Preservation Officer for California has no comment on the following:

Donner Campsite, Truckee, Nevada County
Old United States Mint, San Francisco, San Francisco County
"C. A. Thayer" (Lumber Schooner), San Francisco, San Francisco County

We suggest the property owner for the "C. A. Thayer" be corrected. The ship is now under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, San Francisco.

Sincerely,

Sandra J. Elder
Assistant Executive Secretary

J-1777H

H32 (413)

SEP 13 1983

Ms. Sandra J. Elder
State Historical Resources Commission
Department of Parks and Recreation
P.O. Box 2390
Sacramento, California 95811

Dear Ms. Elder:

Thank you for your letter September 2, 1983, regarding the boundaries proposed by the National Park Service for the Donner Campsite, the Old United States Mint and the "C.A. Thayer" (Lumber Schooner) in California.

We appreciate your taking the time to review the proposed boundaries for these National Historic Landmarks. Your letter will be made part of the permanent record. When the comment period ends and all comments have been reviewed, you will be sent letters notifying you of the final approval of the boundaries.

We appreciate your interest in the National Historic Landmarks Program.

Sincerely,

Carol D. Shull (Sgd.)

Carol D. Shull
Chief of Registration
National Register of Historic Places
Interagency Resources Division

bcc: 413-Gordon
Reading File
Record Center

FNP:KGordon:mdj:09/14/83:343-9536

Sys. 8 (NHL) #10076

Basic File Retained in NR

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

IN REPLY REFER TO:

OCT 17 1983

Mr. Zane G. Smith
Regional Forester
Pacific Southwest Region
U.S. Forest Service
630 Sansome Street
San Francisco, California 94111

Re: Donner Camp Site
Truckee,
Nevada Cty., CA

Dear Mr. Smith:

We are pleased to inform you that the boundary proposed for the above property has been formally established by the National Park Service. The property is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is eligible for the benefits of listing described in earlier correspondence. We gave careful consideration to the comments we received and in some cases the documentation or boundary has been revised if the National Park Service concurred with the comments. The date of the Keeper of the National Register's signature on the enclosed form is the date the boundary was formally established.

We appreciate your cooperation and interest in the National Historic Landmarks program.

Sincerely,

Carol D. Shull

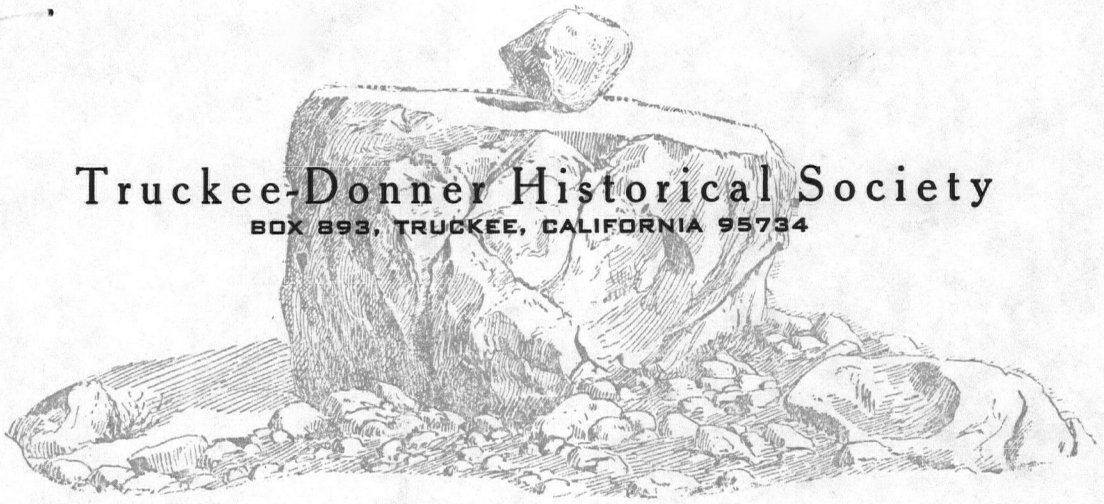
Carol D. Shull
Chief of Registration
National Register of Historic Places
Interagency Resources Division

Enclosure

Copies sent to public officials, SHPO and property owners.

Truckee-Donner Historical Society

BOX 893, TRUCKEE, CALIFORNIA 95734



The Rocking Stone

Grey's Cabin 1863

Emigrant Trail

Ancient Indian Caves

Old Jail Used 1875-1964

Hand Prints in Stone

Ancient Dance Circle

Natural Rock Profile of Big Chief

Petroglyphs

Indian Arrowheads

Donner Trail

Donner Memorial State Park and Museum

McKay's Granite Grave

The Grave's Family Cabin Site 1847

Old Lumber Mill Sites

Wooden Memorial Donner Cross

Natural Rock Profile of Donner

Donner Camps Alder Creek

Old Meadow Lake Dam 1857

Indian Ceremonial Rock

Donner Lake Site of the Donner Party Tragedy

October 17, 1983

Mr. Jerry L. Rogers
Keeper of the National Register
of Historic Places
National Park Service
Washington, D.C. 20240

Attention: Chief of Registration

Dear Sir,

We have read your last communication on the Donner Camp Site, and feel it is very good. However, there is one change that you might note.

When the freeway through Truckee was built, it was built over the Graves' Cabin Site. The plaque marking the Cabin Site was moved at that time into the weeds alongside the highway.

In 1927, a white cross was erected 195 feet north of the plaque by the Truckee Chamber of Commerce.

Due to local construction, the bronze plaque and the cross both have to be moved. As you can see by the enclosed Grant Deed, this will be their last move. The new site will be on Donner Pass Road (Old Highway 40), and will be accessible to the public 24 hours a day. There will also be an informational sign on the site telling the story behind the plaque and the white cross. The white cross is about 10 feet tall.

Sincerely,

Dwayne Haddock

Dwayne Haddock
Vice President

DH:af
Enclosure

Gordon

United States Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
R5
630 Sansome Street
San Francisco, CA 94111

Reply to: 2360

Date: October 19, 1983

Carol D. Schull
Chief of Registration
National Register of Historic Places
USDI - National Park Service
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Ms. Schull:

This responds to your letter of August 10 concerning the establishment of boundaries for National Historic Landmarks in general, and the Donner Camp Site, Truckee, Nevada City, California, in particular.

The following comments pertain specifically to the "Alder Creek Camp" portion of the subject property since it is within lands administered by the Tahoe National Forest.

We recommend that the boundaries for the Alder Creek Camp be changed to read as follows:

UTM

A. 10. 742700. 4362225
B. 10. 743000. 4362225
C. 10. 743000. 4361950
D. 10. 742700. 4361950

Verbal Description

Beginning at the junction of State Highway 89 and the road to the Forest Service Donner Camp Picnic area proceed on a bearing of 46° E for 400 meters, thence on a bearing of 170° for 275 meters, thence on a bearing of 270° for 300 meters to State Highway 89, thence along Highway 89 to the point of beginning.

Should you have any questions, please let me know at (FTS) 556-4175. I would appreciate being informed of any further action that may be taken in this case.

Sincerely,

Donald S. Miller

DONALD S. MILLER
Preservation Officer

DEC 2 1983

RECEIVED
OCT 25 1983

CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL LANDMARKS SERIES

Edited by Vernon Aubrey Neasham

DONNER MONUMENT or PIONEER MONUMENT

Registered Landmark #134

by

George Walcott Ames, Jr.

for

State of California, Department of Natural Resources
Division of Parks

Berkeley, 1936

Written under auspices of Works Progress Administration
District #8, Project #65-3-3218, Symbol #1873

DONNER MONUMENT OR PIONEER MONUMENT

Cold and hunger! The twin bugbears of the early emigrants who crossed the mountain chains into Pacific Coast territory. Many were the pioneers who bore scars, both mental and physical, to their desthbeds from the ordeals undergone in the mountain passage. In the long trek from the Mississippi west to the coast, theactual labor of crossing the plains and hills was enough to wear down the strength of the hardiest. The continued fatigue caused by driving and walking was wearying. Adding to this the back-breaking labor of road making over the rough crags and draws for the heavy, lumbering wagons, the people's resistance was weakened considerably. Mental worries, caused especially by Indian threats, were not conducive to the building of a reserve of energy which could be drawn upon when the need came.

The Sierra Nevada mountains at the end of the trail were the final barrier which had to be surmounted by the worn-out emigrants before they passed into the "promised land." Nature made its passage from the east as difficult as possible, for the eastern slope is far more rugged and precipitous than the comparatively gentle approach from the west. Thus, in many cases, it was almost the undoing of the parties; it was well nigh the proverbial last straw added to the weight of their weariness. Among those who did find it too much for their small resources was the Donner party.

On the morning of July 20, 1846, an emigrant train near the Little Sandy River turned to the left of the main trail and followed the less worn track to the southwest. In this group there were only twenty wagons. They had just seen the main part of the train with which they had journeyed from Independence, Missouri, across the plains, disappear up the trail to the right and northwest. That track was the regular trail which led to Fort Hall and on to California and Oregon. The split had been caused by a letter which had been brought to the train a few nights before. It had told of a "cut-off" from the old route which would save three hundred miles and which was much easier to travel than the old one. It was signed by Lansford W. Hastings.

Hastings was a name well known to prospective travelers to California in that period. He had made several trips to the coast and had published a book describing California and Oregon and the routes to these places. In fact, his volume had had quite a bit to do with the interest taken in the Pacific Coast. When his letter reached the emigrants, it carried, therefore, considerable weight, especially since it declared that he would wait at Fort Bridger and guide them personally over the new way. While most of the party had not been so impressed as to take chances on a new and untried trail, the owners of twenty wagons were willing and turned off.

---

1. A. W. North, "The cut-Off" in Sunset, the Pacific monthly, XXXV, 6; 1095-1097.

The people who made up the personnel of the group were a curious mixture of personalities, but no more so than those forming any train of early emigrants. Extremely diverse also were their occupations and trades. Nearly all were:[2]

> substantial people, farmers and business men seeking a new field of endeavor. Many of them were surprisingly well-to-do . . . But, curiously enough, their good qualities were not the best for the immediate problem. From the very journey which they made must indeed be called pioneers, but they cannot be called frontiersmen; They were merely country-folk and townspeople of the middle-west, not mountainmen . . . Many of them had never seen a mountain . . . Moreover, they were lacking in all sorts of skills needful to one who would cope successfully with the strange new environment.

George Donner, who was chosen as captain of the little party, was a farmer from Illinois. Although he had a predisposition to wander, he had acquired considerable property and owned three wagons in the twenty. Sixty-two years of age, he left numerous children at home, and was still able to take five girls with him. The three youngest of these were children by his third wife, Tamsen, who accompanied him on the long journey to new territory. With him went also his elder brother, Jacob Donner. In the three wagons of Jacob rode his wife, two stepsons, and five children. Included in the group were three bachelor teamsters.

---

2. G. R. Stewart, Jr. Ordeal by hunger, the story of the Donner party, 23-24. Chapter II gives an excellent sketch of the members of the party.

The second most noteworthy family was that of James Frazier Reed. Only forty-six, he had achieved some success in business, but recent reverses had caused him to change his field of endeavor. Three wagons carried his goods, one of them being an index of the style in which he maintained his family of five. It was built on truly impressive lines for it was almost gigantic in size, having steps, a real room "amidships", two decks, the higher of which served as a sleeping chamber, and a sheet iron stove. His wife had a servant girl to help with the work, while there was a man to assist in the camp work in addition to three teamsters. His family of five and himself were not too popular with the rest of the train except the Donners, whom they had known before leaving. This dislike seems to have come from the display of wealth and also the fact that there was a little of the aristocrat about the Reeds. For all that, however, Reed was influential enough so that the party was often referred to as the Reed-Donner party.[3]

Most numerous of all the families was the group formed by Mrs. Murphy, her seven daughters, two sons-in-law with their broods. The total number was thirteen. They were from Tennessee and Missiouri but were not well off as were the Reeds and Donners.

---

3. E. Bryant, <u>What I saw in California</u>, 250.

William Eddy, his wife and two children, were from Illinois. If any could make a claim to "frontiersmanship", Eddy was the most qualified, for he was the best hunter and the best versed in frontier arts. The distinction has been made that the Reeds, Donners, Murphys and Eddys may well have looked upon the other families as being almost foreigners.

Patrick Breen and his family of eight were Irish, although naturalized American citizens. Starting from his farm in Iowa, he was able to take a relatively large number of animals which stood him in good stead later on. Three wagons freighted his belongings. Traveling with the Breens but driving his own conveyance was Patrick Dolan, bachelor, the comedian of the whole train.

In all probability the best educated man in the company was Lewis Keseberg who had come to the United States from Westphalia only two years before. He spoke four languages and was apparently well off. With him traveled his wife and two children. However, he was even more unpopular than Reed, and it seems, with more cause. Not only did the travelers think that he beat his wife, but he had been caught, in company with another German, robbing a Sioux burying platform. Forced to return the buffalo robes which had wrapped the dead Indian, he had been banished from the train for a time.

Apparently wealthy also, and envied by the less bejewëled women, was Mrs. Wolfinger who with her husband constituted the other German family. There were three other Germans and one

Fleming who either drove for Keseberg or consorted with the German families. Three more unattached men completed the roster of the company, Antonio, a "Spaniard" from New Mexico; Halloran, a consumptive, who asked and was given accomodations in the Donner wagons at the camp on the Little Sandy, and Stanton, a young man interested in geology and botany, who was going to California to rehabilitate his depleted fortunes.

Eight days after leaving the main group, the Donner party reached Fort Bridger where Hastings was supposed to be waiting to guide them over the new route. He had gone on with another party of emigrants who had gradually gathered from the overland traffic. Since the season was getting late, that company had not delayed, but Hastings had left instructions for any late arrivals to follow. Bridger and his partner assured Donner that the road was good and hard, with few grades and no difficult canyons to cross. So encouraged was the party that it stopped for four days to make needed repairs and recuperate. Four new recruits joined here, Jean Baptiste, a young half-breed who boasted of much knowledge concerning the Indians and the route, and William McCutchen, his wife and baby.

When the party left the fort, they again had a chance to avoid Hastings' cut-off because the old Oregon trail which had been used before the Greenwood short cut (which the main party had followed) again led off to the right. But there was no hesitation and the Donner party was started on its fateful journey to the Salt Lake Basin. Following the tracks made by Hastings' party which had preceded them, they traveled without

incident to the opening of the Weber gorge.[4] Already, however, the emigrants were beginning to doubt the bright promises about the excellence of the road, because for several days it had been the roughest over which they had traveled, more difficult than even the continental divide.

At the crossing of the Red Fork of Weber River, they came upon a letter in a split stick which was stuck up in the road. It was from Hastings and declared that the route followed by the first party down Weber Canyon was more difficult than had been anticipated. He not only feared that his own party would be unable to negotiate the path but he advised that the late comers make camp and send a messenger after him or go through the passes to the south of Weber Canyon. Consternation reigned in the Donner party. Finally it was resolved that Reed, Stanton and McCutcheon would follow the first party and attempt to get Hastings to return and guide them, while the rest went into camp.[5]

Four days went by without word, then on the fifth day, when worry was telling on the nerves of the campers, a man rode into camp. It was Reed, and he did not have pleasant news. The three

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4. The best maps for tracing out the route are the U. S. topographical series. Stewart, Ordeal, has several small sketch maps which give a good idea, but the route has never been traced completely as yet.

5. Most writers follow Thornton, Oregon and California in 1848, in saying that Pike went in place of McCutchen, but Reed, in his article in the Pacific Rural Press of March 25 and April 1, 1871, declares that McCutchen accompanied him. Stewart follows Reed.

had found the train ahead camped on Great Salt Lake but the going had been so bad that McCutchen's and Stanton's horses were exhausted and they had had to stay on the other side of the mountains. The trail was so difficult, Reed declared, that the Donner party, having only a few men, would be unable to use it. Hastings had absolutely refused the return and guide them by a new route. He had, however, returned to a high peak and from there had pointed out in general the trail. Reed had come back over it on his return, making blazes to guide them, but it also was rough and would require roadmaking in many places. A vote made them decide to follow Reed's new route across the Wahsatch mountains.

There were only about thirty-six miles of extremely rough country to cross, but it took them twenty-one days to do it. They had to hew a path through thickets and small forests; they had to bridge ravines; they had to cut roads out of the hillsides. Two divides were crossed. Not only did it cause a strain on nerves but it drained the men of reserve strength which was sorely needed later. Worst of all, however, was the delay; the season was getting late and the people knew it. During the struggle, soon after they started, they were joined by three wagons under Franklin Graves. He, his son, his son-in-law, and a driver were a welcome addition to the road builders. His family, thirteen in all, increased the total in the train to eighty-seven. Also, a searching party had been sent after Stanton and McCutchen, who were found in a semi-starved state,

just ready to kill their mounts.[6]

From August 28 to September 2, the party traveled from the mountains to the edge of Salt Lake Desert. Road conditions must have seemed heavenly after the country just crossed. It was during this part of the journey that Luke Halloran, the consumptive, died. He was buried in a coffin of wagon-floor boards. At the edge of the desert they came upon a board lying in the road, covered with bits of tattered paper, while other pieces lay scattered on the ground. It was evidently a message left for them but something had torn it to shreds. A feeling of dismay pervaded the company until Tamsen Donner sat down and began to piece it together. The news it gave was even more disheartening, for it declared that there were two days and nights of hard driving to the next pasture and water. This gave them an indication that what they had been told about a short thirty-five mile dry drive was wrong. After a day spent in rest and preparation, all the vessels possible were filled with water and the drive was begun.

Directly in their path, beyond a dry valley, lay a range of hills which could be crossed only through a pass a thousand feet above the plain. Beyond this lay another valley, even more arid than the last, with another chain of hills to cross before reaching the salt desert. From there it was possible to see the op-

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6. North, The cut-off has interesting material on this mountain crossing but should be checked for details with Stewart, or Bryant.

posite side only on a clear day. As soon as the train reached the salt plains, it began to dissolve into units based upon heaviness of load and strength of teams. Soon the company was stretched across the plain in a line several miles long. It was only on the third day that the sink marking the middle of the desert was reached. There the heavy wagons were especially handicapped because they broke through the salt crust and sank into soft sand which oozed brine. On the fourth day, the oxen were so weak that progress was very slow indeed. The Reeds and the Donners were far behind the leaders, by at least thirty miles. Reed went ahead to look for water but did not reach it until after a half day's ride. As he returned he passed most of the people walking and driving their animals, having left their wagons to be brought up later. All of the people finally were through, but there was serious loss. Thirty-six yoke of oxen were missing at first, although enough were found later so that only four wagons had to be abandoned - two of Reed's, one of George Donner's and one of Keseberg's. Reed had suffered the heaviest because in a stampede all his animals had gotten away, and only an ox and a cow were recovered. Finally managing to borrow two oxen, he continued with the big family wagon.[7]

However, the outlook was dreary, for even with seven days' rest the animals wereweak. Another dry drive of forty miles caused some to be abandoned. After that trip it was decided someone would

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7. Thornton, Oregon and California, 103-107.

have to be sent ahead to bring back supplies, for there was not going to be enough to get them to California. McCutchen and Stanton were chosen and rode off ahead.

The party had been following the tracks of Hastings' caravan ever since leaving the edge of Salt Lake and the feeling was getting very high concerning that gentleman and his misleading statements. They were beginning to doubt whether he knew the route, from the way it wound around the mountains, first south then north. On September 30, they finally arrived at the junction of the main route. They had spent-half of July, allof August and September in crossing a "cut-off", and now they were the last caravan by many days on the trail to California.

The tracks led down the Humboldt. The pasturage being poor at that time of year, the party's members agreed to split, with the Donners, whose cattle were in best condition, going ahead about a day's journey. No rest was possible because it was October and the snow might fly any time. Even though the animals were too weak to make much progress, marches were forced, and as a result men's tempers grew short. As a result of a flare-up of rage between Reed and Snyder, Grave's driver, Snyder was killed.[8] Regardless of the protestations of his family, Reed was banished from the train by a vote of the company. In fact, for a time it was touch and go whether he was to be hanged to a wagon tongue. Next day he left for California.

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8. For a consideration of this fight see footnote to chapter 6, page 313, in Steward, Ordeal.

Again the road began to get rougher as the party followed down the Humboldt toward the sink. Stretches of sand made for heavy hauling also, which wore out the animals as much as mountain traveling. Another danger was evident during all that part of the trip, danger from Indians. Even though Eddy was shot at with arrows, while hunting, the natives were not ocurageous enough to attack the people, but they did steal or wound the cattle. Seldom, if ever, did the arrows kill the oxen outright but the creatures were weakened so that they had to be abandoned. Then, between Humboldt sink and the Truckee River, lay another and the last stretch of desert. The only water at the end of the first day's drive was a bitter hot spring. Another pull of a day and night finally brought them to the Truckee River and water.

A change had come over the company, not only in physical appearance but in temperament. Many cattle were gone and what were left were mere skeletons held together by tight stretched skin. There were not fourteen wagons in the whole train. Hardkoop had had the skin on his feet burst and could not keep up with the train. On a sandy stretch he had been inadvertantly left behind, and although the others pleaded, Breen and Graves, the only ones who had horses, refused to lend them for a searching party. Eddy had been forced to abandon his wagon, and he and his wife carried the two children across the last desert. When

the little ones were about to die of thirst, he had to threaten Breen, who had a cask in his wagon, to obtain enough water to revive them. Wolfinger had also been obliged to abandon his conveyance, and with two other Germans had stayed behind to cache his possessions. Incidents such as Eddy's threat to Breen showed the progress of the breakdown of morale.

Rest was not for them, however, even though they had won again over the desert. The days were passing and winter was almost upon them. Rough going up the valley of the Truckee did not aid their flagging spirits. On the second day, Reinhardt and Spitzer, the two who had stayed to assist Wolfinger, caught up with the caravan. They told a story of Indian attack and burning goods, in which Wolfinger lost his life. His wife collapsed when she heard the news, but the others eyed the two with suspicion for somehow the tale did not ring true.[9]

Three more days passed, and starvation was just around the corner. But as they toiled up the rough trail, three riders and seven pack horses suddenly appeared. It was Stanton coming back from Fort Sutter with supplies and two Indian vaqueros as drivers. McCutchen had been worn out and had taken sick at Sutter's. Stanton also had news of Reed and Herron, a driver who joined the fugitive from the Donner contingent when he had been banished. They were nearly starved when they caught up with some of Hastings' group in Bear Valley. Stanton had found early snow on the summit but the pass was still open.

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9. C. F. McGlashan, History of the Donner party, a tragedy of the Sierras. 49-54.

Next day they arrived at Truckee meadows, where they camped for five days. Several reasons prompted them to take this rest, the most important of which was the conditions of the animals. Even though they were afraid of the weather -- it was threatening and snow was on all the mountains around -- yet the oxen were so worn out that it was extremely improbable they could negotiate the rough, steep pull to the summit without rest. Also, Stanton had learned at Sutter's that the pass was usually open until the middle of November. He advised recruiting for a few days. On the very first day there occurred an incident which cast a gloom over the whole company. Pike, one of Mrs. Murphy's sons-in law, was accidentally shot and killed by his brother-in-law, Foster. While he was being buried snow fell around them.[10]

Those who had the best conditioned animals, which were the Breens, left camp first. The others followed at different times, with the Donners last. A further delay caused by a broken axle kept this last group far behind. By the thirty-first, the Breens together with Dolan, the Kesebergs, and the Eddys, camped not far from the cabin which the Breens were later to occupy during the winter. This cabin had been built several years before and served as a landmark on the trail. Snow was an inch deep, preventing the cattle from grazing.

Next morning this party pushed on toward the pass but they never reached it. Snow five feet deep blocked the trail at least three miles below the summit. The oxen could not go ahead, nor could the men follow the hidden trail. Discouraged, they about-

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10. Thornton, Oregon and California, 119-120.

faced and returned to the cabin, of which the Breens took possession while the others just camped. That night there arrived a second group of the company, comprising Stanton and his Indians, the Murphys, the Graves family and the Reeds. Camp was extremely uncomfortable because of the rain which fell in sheets. So bad was the torrent that the Breens were driven from the cabin to the wagons.

Hoping that the rain would have washed the snow away, next morning Stanton with some of the people -- others were so disheartened that they refused to move -- attempted again to reach the pass. But the rain higher up fell as snow and near the lake it was three feet deep. Finally it was apparent that the wagons would have to be abandoned, and progress made with the animals alone. Much delay was caused by the indecision of many as to what they wanted to include in the packs. After a few miles of killing work, making trails, it was evident that even the Indians could not follow the hidden trail. Stanton and one vaquero, thereupon, went ahead feeling for the covered way and at last reached the summit. For the second time Stanton -- a man who had not ties with the company -- returned to aid them when he could have saved himself. When he and his companion did get back they found confusion reigning among the resting emigrants. Most had either unpacked and camped or were in the process of it, being helped by the oxen which were rubbing off their burdens against the trees. A few ofthe emigrants wanted to push on, but the most just gathered about the

fire in the lethargy of exhaustion. So camp was made in the best possible manner, which was merely resting around the fire. When dawn broke they knew it was too late; they had delayed too long. During the night a foot of new-fallen soft snow had been added to the trail.[11]

It was only after half a day of toil that they made their track to the cabin at the foot of the lake which was to bear the name of their party in after years. There was only one thing to do, and that was to make the best preparations for the winter which were possible under the circumstances. Even though the personnel were not frontiersmen, yet they were hardy and were used to working with their hands. Soon two new cabins were constructed and the one already built repaired somewhat. Made of logs, the two new ones were flat-roofed, having as covering hides, wagon canvases, anything to make them waterproof. Also, both were double, thus utilizing both sides of one wall. Against the original, still occupied by the Breens, Keseberg fashioned a sort of lean-to. "The original cabin stood about a quarter of a mile from the outlet of the lake; one of the others was a hundred and fifty yards up the stream and the third stood isolated a good half-mile farther down."[12] In the upstream shelter the Eddys and the Murphys took refuge. The Reeds and their teamsters, Stanton and the two Indians, occupied half of the other, while

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11. McGlashan, History, 57-60.
12. Steward, Ordeal, 106.

the Graves family took possession of the opposite side. Probably Mrs. McCutchen and her baby were with the latter.

The Donners had not been able to reach the cabins when the snow began to fall, and were forced to set up a camp independently. Although some logs were cut, snow and lack of man-power hindered the building of cabins. Instead, tents and brush shelters were hurriedly erected, one each for the two families, and a "sort of wigwam" for the four drivers across the little creek. Mrs. Wolfinger was with the George Donner family. In that camp there were twenty-one people, six men, three women and twelve children, while the establishments at the head of the lake housed sixty, nineteen men -- eighteen years and older -- twelve women and twenty-nine children.

One worry obsessed them all -- food. Practically all of the supplies, including those brought by Stanton, were exhausted by the time the camps were established. A little sugar, tea and coffee were left, but the salt was nearly gone. The main provision was to be the animals, oxen, cows, horses and mules. Some were slaughtered immediately; others were left to browse on the bare spaces in the valley which began to show after the snow melted. The Breens were the best off because they had lost fewest on the trip. On the other hand, Eddy had just one animal, while Mrs. Reed, who had her children and drivers to feed, did not have a single ox. There was no thought of pooling resources, and in the attempt on the part of those who had little to buy meat, hard

bargains were driven by those who had.the most. Mrs. Reed had to promise two for one, when they should reach California. Then, after a few weeks had passed, during a storm a real disaster overtook them. Some of the cattle left unslaughtered strayed and were buried in the deep snow. With them disappeared the few horses and Captain Sutter's seven mules.[13]

At first there was probably some hope that hunting and fishing would augment the scanty stores. Of all the men Eddy could lay most claim to being a hunter, and he began soon after camp was fixed. The results of his first three days' endeavors netted one coyote and one owl. By that time the deer had left the heights to go below snow-line and most of the bears were in hibernation. However, on November 13, he secured two ducks. Then on the following day he was in luck, because he killed a grizzly bear, having to give the coup-de-grace with a club as his bullets had run out. The only other success recorded was a duck and a gray squirrel. After that, hunting activity seems to have stopped.

Fishing was even less of a success than hunting. Some efforts seem to have been made by the emigrants to entice the trout, but failure was the only result. Soon freezing weather and ice ended all attempts.

By the first of December there had been two attempts on the part of the snowbound emigrants to reach the pass. The first

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13. McGlashan, History, 60-63.

occurred early in the month when shortage of food indicated that something had to be done about reducing the number of active consumers. Thirteen men and two women started but the snow was so soft and deep that they had to return before the day was over. The second party got one day's journey away but again the snow was too deep. The people had to return, exhausted and weak, to the cabins and face further starvation.

On November 20, 1846, Patrick Breen began his famous diary which gives a skeleton sketch of events as they occurred. For the worries and suffering one must read between the lines, but it does give a vivid picture to the imaginative. Under the date December 6, he wrote:[14]

> The morning fine and clear
> now some cloudy wind S-E not much
> in the sunshine, Stanton and Graves
> manufacturing snow shoes for another
> mountain scrabble no account of
> mules.

Graves and Stanton were the only two who understood the use of snowshoes; most of the others had never even heard of them. They had plenty of rawhide for webbing; and for the frames there was ready-shaped wood. The oxbows made of hickory were strong, but too heavy. However, Graves continued to saw them into strips, so that tolerably good "shoes" were the result.[15] Before they were done, another storm, which lasted for five days, broke and

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14. P. Breen, "Diary of Patrick Breen" in Academy of Pacific Coast History, I. 274.
15. McGlashan, History, 65.

and brought about results which showed that it was absolutely necessary for the party to continue this time. There was to be no turning back, for it was during that storm that the first people collapsed from cold and malnutrition. Spitzer was the first to succumb.

Practically all of the adults who were able at the three lone cabins decided to go in the desperate attempt to cross the summit. They included the Fosters, Mrs. Pike, and their young brothers, "Lem" and "Bill", Graves, his two daughters Mrs. Fosdick and Mary, Mr. Fosdick, Mrs. McCutchen, Antonio, Burger, Patrick Dolan, Eddy, Stanton and his two Indians, seventeen in all. Their packs were light -- a blanket apiece, what they called six days' rations, several pistols, a light ax, and one rifle. In their weakened condition, however, it was as much as they could handle. Their departure, on the morning of December 16, was not happy because during the night young Williams had died.

Progress was slow. The shuffling line, unaccustomed to their clumsy foot-gear, did not get out of sight of the cabins by the end of the first day. The two young lads and "Dutch Charley" Burger had hoped that the snowshoes would pack the snow enough to allow them to walk without breaking through. But they soon discovered that it was not to be so easy and they had to flounder along behind. "Dutch Charley" and "Bill Murphy turned back, but "Lem" stuck with the party. At night they fashioned him a pair

a pair of makeshift shoes out of some pack saddles which they found along the way. The second day they reached the pass and camped a little west of it. A new enemy appeared on the third day -- snowblindness. Stanton was the most affected, which, together with the cold wind, caused him to drop farther and farther behind, finally struggling into camp an hour after the others.

The fourth day, snow squalls continued, but on the fifth it was clear and cold. Each day Stanton had taken extra time to reach the others after they had camped. On the morning of the sixth day, he remained by the fire when the others left, telling them he would be along shortly, but he never arrived at camp that night.

After his guiding hand was lifted, the party lost its way and bore south into the rough country of the American River rather than the comparatively easy Bear Valley. The Indians upon whom the burden of guidance lay became completely befuddled, with no blame to themselves. They were plainsmen and had traveled the trail only once and that in the opposite direction, with no snow. Two more days passed as they floundered on, going in the general direction of safety. It was then that they first began to consider eating the only food that was at hand. How were they to get it? Many wild proposals were voiced, but they finally staggered on, waiting for someone to die. A storm engulfed them in its icy folds; they had to camp and build a fire. Antonio, the Mexican,

was the first to die. During the night one of them lost the hatchet while he was cutting wood and despair was upon them. Not long after this calamity one of the Indians blundered and knocked the fire from its supports, putting it out in the snow. Eddy knew of a device which would keep them from freezing, but they were so dispirited and exhausted that before he could force them to carry out his plan Graves had died. Eddy made them all sit on a blanket in a circle and then covered them with the rest of the wraps. Soon the snow cut off the wind and kept in the slight heat of their bodies; they were at least safe from freezing.

There they stayed for more than thirty hours. During that time Patrick Dolan became crazed and escaped outside, where he stripped and raved. Later he came back and was pulled inside, where he soon died. Lemuel Murphy also became delirious but they held him down. He did not die until after the storm ceased. When they got out they succeeded in setting fire to a pine tree after much effort. Then they took the last step and roasted strips of flesh from Dolan's body. At first the Indians refused such food but on the second day they also ate.

For three days they stayed in camp, resting, and drying the flesh for packing. Then they set out once more, and for six days struggled over ridges and through valleys. On the second day they had glimpsed the green valley of the Sacramento and hope had thrilled them. But it was a long way off; their feet were so

swollen and cracked that most of them left blood-stained tracks at every step. When food ran out they looked with greedy eyes on the two Indians. Eddy warned these two and they left the party.

Something had to be done because Fosdick was so weak he had been able to march only a mile or so the day before. Eddy took the gun and said he was setting out to find food; although the women entreated him not to go, he persisted. Mary Graves, thinking she was strong enough, accompanied him. Soon they came upon fresh deer tracks, and following them caught sight of a big buck. Eddy was so weak and unnerved that he had difficulty in drawing a bead on the animal. Finally a shot rang out. The deer ran, but it was only about two hundred yards. First drinking the blood, they dragged the carcass to a bare space -- they were far enough down in the foothills so that the snow lay only in patches -- where they could build a fire and eat.

Next morning Eddy went back to find the others. Fosdick, who had been left behind, had died but his wife had managed to survive without a fire. Part of his flesh was removed and dried, as was the deer meat. The country was extremely rough and the going was slow, although there was no snow to impede the party. On the second day provisions ran out again. Foster, who had been failing, became almost violent and proposed killing first Mrs. McCutchen and then the others. Over this he and Eddy had a fight which the women stopped. Next day they came upon the two Indians, who had run away from camp, so exhausted they could not rise. Foster, over Eddy's

verbal but not physical objections, shot them. Eddy and the three women not of Foster's family now camped apart, because they considered him a dangerous maniac. For three days these people had only grass to eat, but on the twelfth of January they came upon tracks and soon stumbled into a Digger Indian rancheria. The only food available was acorn mush, which the Indians generously shared with the starving wanderers. Eddy could not retain it on his weakened stomach, however, and had to continue eating grass. For five days they were passed from village to village getting weaker and weaker. Finally, Foster and the five women lay down and refused to move. Eddy went on, half-led, half-dragged, by two Indians. When he reached Johnson's ranch he collapsed, but kindly hands fed him and brought in his companions. Seven were left out of the original party of fifteen which had crossed the pass thirty-three days before.[16]

There for the first time they learned of the relief train which Reed and McCutchen had led two months before. When Reed arrived at Sutter's Fort, October 28, he immediately asked Sutter for supplies, which were granted. On the last day of October, Reed and McCutchen, who had entirely recovered from his illness, started back with provisions. Obtaining extra supplies and mounts at Johnson's ranch, they made their way toward the mountains with thirty horses and one

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16. Stewart, Ordeal, and McGlashan, History, both give good accounts of this terrible trip.

mule, with two Indians to act as drivers. The two fathers were somewhat discouraged from the beginning because they knew that the early snows were much lower in the hills than usual. When they reached Bear Valley, they found snow a foot deep. It was in that valley that they hoped to meet the rest of the company, for according to all calculations they should have passed the summit some time since. Instead of the train, however, they found only a couple, Jotham Curtis and his wife, who had separated from another group and had decided to winter there. Their provisions were gone, their cattle had run away, and they were roasting their dog when Reed and McCutchen arrived. The two left one driver, some supplies and horses at Curtis' camp and then pushed on toward the head of the valley. Rain and sleet did not make traveling easier. Getting out of the valley took a whole day and during the night the Indian deserted with some horses. McCutchen followed him to Curtis' camp but found that both natives had gone. He turned and retraced his steps. Next day it was not long before they had to abandon all pack animals because of the depth of the snow. A few miles farther they left their mounts and pressed ahead on foot. At each turn and hill they hope to see smoke from the camp fires but every time they were disappointed. Finally, when not more than twelve miles from the summit, they had to stop. They could go no farther, and sick at heart, they turned about. Picking up the Curtises on the way they returned to Fort Sacramento (Sutter's Fort). There Sutter advised Reed to go to Yerba Buena, because the Mexican war had drained the valley of

men.[17]

Eddy found that the situation was not improved when he attempted to gather a party for relief. High wages (three dollars a day) were offered by the army commander at the fort, but only three men volunteered. Government pay was too uncertain of such a project. However, when Sutter and Alcalde Sinclair declared that they would be responsible, four more men joined. Preparations were made and Sutter sent his launch to Yerba Buena to contact Reed. The latter had had hard luck. With the war activities around the Bay he had been forced to stay in San Jose. When communications were once more established, he could do nothing until after to so-called Battle of Santa Clara, for it was not until then that the danger from the Californians was over. As soon as possible, he appealed to the authorities for assistance. From the mass meeting held, 700 dollars was collected, which with the aid of the sailors from the fleet was soon increased to 1,300 dollars. Also, a committee was appointed to take charge of collecting supplies. Before they were sent, news of the snowshoe party arrived which gave the true facts and difficulties to be confronted. The committee decided that since the situation was so serious a more systematic effort must be made than on quick trip. It was decided that a semi-permanent camp would have to be established half-way, from which relief parties as well as the starving emigrants could be supplied.

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17. H. H. Bancroft, History of California, V, 538.

Encouraging news came from Sonoma where McCutchen had been working. Caleb Greenwood, old mountain man, had been induced to lead a party, while General Vallejo and other influential citizens contributed freely with money and horses. A few men enlisted also, but the lack of available volunteers, owing to the war, still handicapped efforts. Among those who did volunteer, however, was Selim Woodworth, Passed Midshipman, United States Navy, who was on furlough. He was to take a schooner with supplies up the Feather River to Hardy's ranch, a short distance from Johnson's, while Reed and Greenwood gathered resources in Napa Valley. They would reunite at Hardy's.[18]

In the meantime, the seven men who had volunteered at Sutter's, due to the efforts of Eddy, had been busy preparing to make the trip on their own account. At Johnson's ranch, which was the jumping off place for all the activities, they slaughtered and dried beef, and ground flour for packing. The party which left on February 4 had grown to fourteen, although some of them were going merely to take care of the horses. Their names are worthy of being recorded, Aquilla Glover, Sept Moultry, Joseph Sels -- who also had an alias of Joe Foster, -- John and Daniel Rhodes, M. D. Ritchie, "Dan" Tucker and his son George, Jotham Curtis, "Ned" Coffeemeyer, Adolph Brueheim, Joseph Verrot, William Coon, a half-wit, and Eddy. On the very first day they ran into heavy rain which was unceasing for two days and nights. Forced to camp, they had to lose yet

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18. Bancroft, California, V. 538-540; Stewart, Ordeal, Chap. 17.

another day drying out the supplies. So bad were the trails that it took them another two days to reach Mule Spring, where they built a lean-to to house most of the provisions and sent the horse back down the valley. This was necessary as the snow was four feet deep at the camp. Four men were dropped from the party at that spot -- Eddy and Verrot to take the horses, George Tucker and Coon to watch camp.[19]

Next morning the others of the party started over the snow, each with a pack consisting mostly of food. It took from Wednesday to Friday to make Bear Valley where they spent a day resting and getting ready for the final ordeal. On Sunday, three men, Curtis, Ritchie, and Brusheim, refused to go any farther; but the seven set out. So deep was the snow and so difficult the way that it took them from Sunday to Friday to reach the pass, cross it, an finally arrive at the cabins.

At first they were not certain that they had arrived at the spot they wereseeking because where they expected to see the cabin they saw only an expanse of snow. A spontaneous shout brought fro a hole in the snow a woman who tottered as she struggled toward th Then other figures appeared. They were like living skeletons, for the flesh was wasted from their bones. Food was distributed to them, but in small amounts; after a night of rest the rescuers wer able to see the terrible conditions which obtained in the damp hovels.

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19. Bancroft, California, V. 538-539.

The state of things at the cabins had grown steadily worse after the departure of the snowshoe party. Even with the withdrawal of that number of persons, each cabin contained five to eleven people. As the snow grew deeper and deeper with each succeeding storm the cabins grew darker and more damp. One authority has described them:[20]

> Buried beneath the snow, the cabins were dim and damp caves. The flickering fires lighted them uncertainly. The kettles where hides and bones were boiling steamed almost without ceasing . . . All were unkempt and unbathed. Everyone spent much of the time in bed wrapped in blankets and quilts which had not been sunned in months. Even the cold weather failed to keep down the vermin. The sick looked haggardly at those who could still move about. The starved babies were too weak to cry. The smells mingled -- boiling hides, babies, sickness, unwashed bodies, filth.

As the snow became deeper, another cause of suffering crept upon the helpless people -- cold. The men, who were growing weaker all the time from lack of proper diet, had a hard time wading through the soft snow. In addition, when felled the trees often disappeared from sight, which increased the difficulties two fold. Probably there was no real danger from freezing because the covering of snow acted as a protective blanket.

Fire was necessary, however, for cooking. Hides were the main source of food, although the Breens and a few others were

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20. Stewart, Ordeal, 168.

able to keep a small amount of lean beef with which they varied the hide diet. It was quite a task to prepare the hides. Cut into convenient strips, the hide was singed. Then it was scraped clean, and boiled. It took hours of boiling to soften the strips sufficiently. When done it was soft and pulpy. The kettle was removed from the fire and the mess allowed to cool, whereupon it turned into a glutinous mass. It was sickening but slightly nutritious. Some of the people, even though they were starving, had difficulty in eating the stuff. To cap the climax, there was no salt. There was one additional foodstuff. Bones, which had been thrown to the dogs, were eagerly sought. Long boiling of them would at least flavor the hot water even though the broth was not sustaining. Continued cooking would soften the bones so that they could be chewed. Often they would be toasted brown and then consumed.

Little was done except wood gathering, cooking and praying. The last was especially true in the cabin of the Breens, who were Roman Catholics. There was not much visiting done; in fact, it occurred so seldom that Breen called members of the other cabins strangers. "Saw no strangers today from any of the shantys."[21] If one did make a visit, it was likely to have unforeseen results. Milt Elliot and Noah James had gone to visit the Donner camp December 9. Soon after they started a storm blew up and finally

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21. Breen, Diary, 275.

Milt returned, December 30. James had had to stay with the Donners because they were so badly off with sick and dead that there were only one or two left who could do the work.

Another matter which shocked the rescue party was the number who had died. At the Donner tents there were Jacob Donner, Sam Shoemaker, James Smith and Reinhardt, while at the lake cabins these had died: Burger, Lewis Keseberg - a baby - Landrum Murphy, the McCutchen baby, Mrs. Eddy and her baby, Catherine Pike - a baby - and Milt Elliot.

Three of the rescuers left immediately on arrival for the Donner encampment, returning in two days with six refugees, Noah James, Mrs. Wolfinger and four of the older children. Not much could be done to make the twelve left more comfortable although a tree was cut for cooking and heating purposes. Jean Baptiste was frantic to go but was persuaded to stay since he was the only able-bodied man in camp. Seventeen were to go from the cabins: Mrs. Reed and her four children, Eliza Williams, two of the older Breen boys, Billy Graves and two of his sisters, Mrs. Keseberg and her baby Ada, Mary and William Murphy, John Denton, and little Naomi Pike whom John Rhodes was to carry in a blanket. Of the twenty-three to leave, three were men, four were women and seventeen were children.[22]

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22. Bancroft, California, V. 534.

Monday morning, the party started. It was apparent almost immediately that little Tommy Reed, three years old, could not keep up with the rest. After two miles, he gave out completely and his sister Patty was almost as exhausted. They had to be taken back. However, Mrs. Reed made Glover promise on his honor as a Mason to return and get them. Then Glover and Moultry retraced their steps with the two children. At the Breens, they received a rough welcome and it took some persuading to get them to accept the two. The men did not tell Mrs. Reed of the reception granted her children. Provisions were still short, because the men were counting on two caches made on the trip in. During the night some famished soul stole the rawhide thongs on Coffeemeyer's snowshoes and ate them.

When they arrived next day at the first cache they found that some animals had destroyed all the supplies. Next morning the two strongest men, Moultry and Coffeemeyer, and the two weakest, Glover and Daniel Rhodes, pushed on ahead toward the next cache. The other three rescuers were left to bring on the emigrants as fast as possible. Almost as soon as they had started, Denton found he could go no farther. Sick and weak then he left the cabins, the snow soon finished him. There was nothing to do but leave him. They made him as comfortable as possible, building a fire, and cutting plenty of wood, leaving nearly all of the remainder of their food and wrapping him in a blanket; there could be only one end. That night little Ada Keseberg died.

For three days they struggled on, never making more than eight miles a day. The men were worried constantly with the threat of storm, but it continued to hold off. On the third day Moultry and Coffeemeyer struggled into camp with full packs; they had made a fast trip. They had found the second cache unrobbed, but the amount of food seemed pitifully small. Next morning, after they had covered about four miles, a line of men suddenly appeared ahead. It was Reed with a relief party. After his reunion with his wife and children he told them that he had met Glover and Rhodes on the trail so that he knew they were coming. Also he told them their troubles were over because he had left a cache in Bear Valley; at Mule Springs there was a camp and there they would probably find Woodworth and Greenwood. Behind these, Captain Kern, the commanding officer at Fort Sacramento, had established another camp. Behind Kern were Johnson's ranch and Yerba Buena with supplies being forwarded constantly.[23] Reed did not stop longer than to distribute some food; then he and his party disappeared up the trail. The refugees went on and in six more days they were at Sutter's. There was a sad note in their happiness, for one death occurred after they reach the camp at Bear Valley, young William Hook. He ate too much when they first arrived but a swallow of tobacco juice helped him; during the night he sneaked again to the provisions and stuffed himself. He died in the morning.

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23. Stewart, Ordeal, 202-204.

Reed and his party of ten made the trip to the cabins in two days by taking advantage of the packed trail and the frozen crust. Three, Cady, Stone and Clark, went ahead and reached the cabins the second night. However, they saw ten Indians about the hut, and as they had not guns they stayed out of sight in the snow. Next morning they went in, distributing a little food, and then Clark and Cady continued to the Donner tents. The Breens were still fairly well off, and no one had died. Here at last Reed was able to hold his two youngest children in his arms once more. In the Murphy cabin the dirt and filth were indescribable, and a new horror had been added. The body of Milt Elliot had been dug up and had been nearly consumed. The rescuers attempted to clean up the damp holes while they made plans for the return.

The state of affairs at the Donners' were even worse. They had eaten several of their dead. Reed moved one of the tents and made the people as comfortable as possible before leaving. Tamsen Donner, although able to go, refused to leave her husband and children; therefore only three were taken, "Sol" Hook, Mary and Isaac Donner. Cady, Stone and Jean Baptiste stayed with the other eight because it was expected that Woodworth would arrive in a few days.[24]

From the lake, nearly everybody was to go; Reed's children, all the Breens and the Graveses, in all fourteen. There was left only Keseberg, old Mrs. Murphy, her son Simon, little James Eddy and George Foster. Stone remained to take care of them.

[illegible]shan, History, 165.

From the very first -- they left in the middle of the day, March 3 -- Reed and the rescuers did not seem to be able to impress the necessity for hurrying on the minds of the refugees. They were almost apathetic; there were only three adults besides the men on the relief party. So slow was the party that it took a day and a half to reach the foot of the pass. Reed was worried. Food was running short. The weather had been fine for nearly a month but clouds were beginning to blow up again. Woodworth had not appeared either, nor was there any likelihood that he would. Reed was beginning to suspect that such was the case, although he had not seen what his wife had when she reached the camp in Bear Valley. Although there were only patches of snow on the ground, when the party straggled into camp Woodworth was having two men massage his feet with snow for fear of frostbite. Reed knew that something must be done so he sent three men on ahead to get food from the caches. The same day the party was finally prodded over the pass and camped at the head of the Yuba River where several other parties had bivouacked. There platforms were ready-built, together with piles of wood already cut.

The storm arrived that night, icy wind and snow. To protect the shivering refugees by the fire, Reed and his men made a windbreak of tree brenches stuck in the snow. All the next day it continued storming and all the next night. It was that night which was the worst. Reed fell completely exhausted during his watch and the fire slipped from the foundation. After

prodigious effort, a blaze was rebuilt, whereupon McCutchen and a companion began work on Reed. Some time passed before he was brought back to consciousness. Still the storm continued, finally blowing itself out about noon, March 8.

When the storm was over, the people were in bad condition mentally as well as physically. Mrs. Greves and her children were too weak to move. No one had eaten for twenty-four hours. The Breens were too apathetic to move. Patrick absolutely refusing. He declared he would rather die by the fire. Eight started out to make their way as best they could -- the four men, the two Reed children, "Sol" Hook and Mary Donner. Isaac Donner haddied during the storm. Mary had to be returned to the fire because of a burned foot. March 10, at night, just before camping, they met a party from Woodworth's camp. They at least were saved and they learned that the three men sent ahead at the pass had arrived after a terrible experience with the storm. The caches had been robbed -- the second only partly -- and that was the reason the men had not returned.[25]

With the party which met Reed were Eddy and Foster, who had recovered enoughto go back after their children. It was only because of their prodding that Woodworth had been forced to go even one day's journey into the snow. After returning to Woodworth's camp, because no one would volunteer to go with Eddy and Foster after the Breen and Greves families or undertake the

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25. McGlashan, History, chapter 15.

trip to the lake, five men finally agreed to venture into the snow once more. Of the five, two were to cross to the cabins with the two fathers, and three were to return with any of the Breens and Graveses who were left alive.

On the afternoon of the second day, they came upon a huge pit in the snow. Where the fire had melted it at the bottom were the Breens, apparently comfortable but still strangely apathetic, Mary Donner and three Graves children. During the wait, Mrs. Graves and her young son Simon had died. Mrs. Breen had secreted some sugar, tea and seeds, which had lasted only a short time, and the skeletons of two babies and Mrs. Graves' mutilated body told the rest of the story. The three men who were to take back the survivors had not counted on so many being left alive and two of the men felt that Breen was strong enough to take in his own family. John Starks refused, however, to desert any part of the group. The others insisted and finally went on ahead with Mary Donner and the littlest Graves baby, leaving Starks to carry Johathan Graves and shepherd the eight other refugees. Eddy, Foster and their two companions turned toward the pass.

Leaving early in the morning, the four men reached the cabins about two hours before noon. But for the two fathers, while it was the end of the uncertainty, it was terrible. Both James Eddy and George Foster were dead -- and eaten. To make matters worse, it seems that Keseberg boasted about it to Eddy, who almost killed him on the spot.

There was no time for anything, however, except for preparations for the return. Eddy and Foster found at the cabins, in addition to Mrs. Murphy and Keseberg, Tamsen Donner and her three little girls. Their being there explained the principal happenings at the lake after Reed's departure. Almost as soon as he had left, Stone left the cabins and went to the Donner tents. Clark was out hunting but Cady was there. They must have told Mrs. Donner that they were leaving because she promised them valuables if they would take her three girls with them. They agreed, but when they reached the lake they left the children with Mrs. Murphy and disappeared. In all probability they stayed in one of the deserted cabins during the storm. They turned up next at one of Reed's camps after passing the Breens and Graveses in their snow-pit. After their departure Mrs. Donner worried about her children and sent Clark to the cabins to get the news. His report told of the desertion of Cady and Stone; she arrived soon afterwards at the cabin herself. [25]

Eddy and Foster could not take old Mrs. Murphy and evidently Keseberg was too helpless to move. The three little girls were to go but Tamsen refused. Even though she knew her husband was dying from an infection in his hand, and her little nephew was almost dead -- Mrs. Jacob Donner had died several days previously -- she felt her duty lay with them. So each man had one child to carry -- the three Donner girls and young Simon Murphy. By noon

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25. Houghton, Donner party, 107-114.

they were ready for the back trail, and reached the foot of the pass by evening. There they found Clark and Jean Baptiste, who in the absence of Tamsen Donner had deserted her husband and nephew, Clark had left the child but brought away a full pack of "booty". [26]

Although the traveling was hard work, it was not dangerous and it was not long before they came upon Starks and his group. He was having a difficult time. Often he would carry two children forward for a mile or so and then return for another load. At about the time the two parties joined forces, they met a relief band from the valley. Glover, Moultry and Coffeemeyer had returned and shamed Woodworth into advancing once more. But he would not go to the lake. A week later everybody was safe at Sutter's. Woodworth sent out one more group but they turned back at Bear Valley.[27] Of those who had won through, only the Graves baby died.

California seemed to lose interest in the last refugees in the mountains and it was more than a month before another party was gotten together. This was more of the nature of a salvage than it was a rescue party, because nearly all hope for the last four people had been abandoned. Spring floods and Indians would ruin the goods if someone did not salve them soon, so Fallon "Le Gros" gathered six men to go with him.

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26. Houghton, Donner party, 123-127.
27. See Stewart's opinion and account of this band, Stewart, Ordeal, 254-255.

Traveling was easy because the snow was almost as hard as the ground and four days after leaving Johnson's ranch they reached the lake cabins. Finding no one around but some Digger Indians, they left for the Donner camp where they began to dry out the most valuable of the goods. Two things bothered them; they could find no money and they had found a strange trail -- not an Indian's -- which led to and from the camp. Next day three of the men followed the mysterious trail. Since it wandered, they finally went directly to the cabins; therethey found Keseberg the maker of the trail. He told them that Mrs. Murphy died some days after Eddy and Foster left; that a few days later Tamsen Donner staggered into the cabin half-frozen, saying her husband and nephew had died. He put her to bed but next morning she also was dead. When the men found about $225 in Keseberg's waistcoast they began to think that he might have murdered her. Later they forced him to dig up another $275 from the place where he had hidden it. He declared that Mrs. Donner had given it to him to give to the little girls. On April 21, the party started toward Bear Valley, each of the seven carrying a hundred-pound pack. With their return, the journey of the Donner party was completed and the last person accounted for.[28]

So ends the tale of sacrifice, love, toil, horror, and avarice which is the story of the Donner party. It would not have been if the characters had not been human, too human; it is,

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28. Bryant, What I saw in California, 262-263.

because they failed to control their emotions and actions. Yet some parts of the tale are so heroic that it is not hard to forget the sordid episodes.

Although the story was complete with the emergence of Keseberg from the mountains, there is one last phase of it -- that is the acts of veneration by succeeding generations. Now there is a bronze statue of four figures, representing a pioneer family, which was erected on what is thought to be the site of the Breen cabin. The inscription reads "In commemoration of the Pioneers who crossed the plains to settle California. Erected under the auspices of the Native Sons of the Golden West and the Native Daughters of the Golden West. Dedicated June 6, 1918."[29] A bronze tablet also marks the site of the Graves cabin. These mute reminders are all that recall to the parties of gay tourists the tragic occurrences which happened to that party of pioneers who crossed '46.

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29. H. E. Rensch, Historic spots of California: Valley and Sierra counties.

APPENDIX

List of people in the Donner party. It is taken from Stewart, Ordeal, 299-300.

Antonio.

Breen family, Patrick; his wife Margaret; their children: John, Edward, Patrick Jr., Simon, Peter, James Isabella.

Burger, Karl ("Dutch Charley"), teamster for Keseberg.

Denton, John

Dolan, Patrick

Donner family (George), George; his wife Tamsen; their children: Frances, Georgia, Eliza; George Donner's children by a former wife: Elitha and Leanna.

Donner family (Jacob), Jacob; his wife Elizabeth; their children: George, Mary, Isaac, Samuel, Lewis. Elizabeth Donner's children by a former husband: Solomon Hook and William Hook.

Eddy family, William; his wife Eleanor; their children: James, Margaret.

Elliot, Milford (Milton or Milt.) teamster for Reed.

Fosdick, see Graves family.

Foster, see Murphy family.

Graves family, Franklin; his wife Elizabeth; their unmarried children: Mary, William, Eleanor, Lavina, Nancy; Jonathan, Franklin Jr., Elizabeth. A son-in-law, Jay Fosdick; his wife Sarah Graves Fosdick.

Halloran, Luke.

Hardkoop, _____

Herron, Walter, teamster for Reed.

Hook, see Donner Family (Jacob).

James, Noah, teamster for Donner.

Jean Baptiste (Trubode)

Keseberg family, Lewis; his wife Phillipine; their children: Ada, Lewis Jr.

McCutchen family; William; his wife Amanda; their child, Harriet.

Murphy family; Lavina; her unmarried children; John, Landrum, Mary, Fennel, William, Simon. Two sons-in-law: Foster, William, his wife Sarah Murphy Foster; their child George. Pike, William; his wife Harriet Murphy Pike; their children, Naomi, Catherine.

Pike, see Murphy family.

Reed family; James; his wife Margaret; their children; Martha, James Jr. Thomas, Margaret Reed's child by a former husband, Virginia Backenstoe, known as Virginia Reed.

Reinhardt, Joseph

Shoemaker, Samuel, teamster for Donners.

Smith, James, teamster for Reed.

Snyder, John, teamster for Graves.

Spitzer, Augustus

Stanton, Charles

Williams, Baylis, hired man for Reed, his sister Eliza hired girl for Reed.

Wolfinger family, Wolfinger's first name unknown; his wife, name also unkown.

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10-317
(Sept. 1957)

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS

1. STATE: California

2. THEME(S). IF ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE, WRITE "ARCH" BEFORE THEME NO.: Theme XV, Westward Expansion (Great Westward Migrations)

3. NAME(S) OF SITE: Donner Camp

4. APPROX. ACREAGE: 1 sq. mile

5. EXACT LOCATION (*County, township, roads, etc. If difficult to find, sketch on Supplementary Sheet*): U. S. Highway 40, just east of Donner Pass

6. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PRESENT OWNER (*Also administrator if different from owner*): State of California

7. IMPORTANCE AND DESCRIPTION (*Describe briefly what makes site important and what remains are extant*)

The story of the Donner Party, which endured terrors few other frontier groups in history were faced with, is perhaps the most tragic story in the annals of overland migration. Caught by winter in the Sierra Nevada, the party displayed such qualities of heroism, unselfishness and raw courage as to add a new epic to the annals of the American frontier. The monument erected on the site of their winter camp stands as a memorial to the sufferings and privations experienced by almost every party of emigrants bound for Oregon or California.

In the spring of 1846 a well-supplied party of emigrants, led by Jacob and George Donner, set out from Illinois for California. They were joined by other pioneers en route. Although advised by experienced travelers to remain on the established route, 89 members under Captain George Donner, turned off the Oregon Trail near the Little Sandy River east of Fort Bridger, Wyoming, determined to save time by following the Hastings cutoff.

Following the instructions of Lansford Hastings, the party encountered immediate difficulties in attempting to use Hasting's path through the Wasatch Mountains, but after 30 days struggled down into the valley of the Great Salt Lake. Both men and animals were much reduced in strength, and autumn was at hand before the company began the fearful crossing of the desert. Through misfortune and inefficiency both, cattle were lost and wagon after wagon had to be left behind. Women and children were compelled to walk. The caravan, almost exhausted, then faced the crossing of the Sierra Nevada.

On October 23, dangerously late in the season, the party began the cruelly difficult climb up the narrow canyon of the Truckee River. When at Donner Lake only a single day's journey from the crest, a storm blocked the passes. The attempt to push ahead was futile, and the next day a new storm blew in, lasting for several days.

8. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES (*Give best sources; give location of manuscripts and rare works*)

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9. REPORTS AND STUDIES (*Mention best reports and studies, as, NPS study, HABS, etc.*)

10. PHOTOGRAPHS * ATTACHED: YES ☐ NO ☐	11. CONDITION	12. PRESENT USE (*Museum, farm, etc.*)	13. DATE OF VISIT
	No remains	State Historical Monument	4/1959

14. NAME OF RECORDER (*Signature*)	15. TITLE	16. DATE
W. C. Everhart (Sgd.) William C. Everhart	Historian	6/1959

* DRY MOUNT ON AN 8 X 10½ SHEET OF FAIRLY HEAVY PAPER. IDENTIFY BY VIEW AND NAME OF THE SITE, DATE OF PHOTOGRAPH, AND NAME OF PHOTOGRAPHER. GIVE LOCATION OF NEGATIVE. IF ATTACHED, ENCLOSE IN PROPER NEGATIVE ENVELOPES.

(IF ADDITIONAL SPACE IS NEEDED USE SUPPLEMENTARY SHEET, 10-317a, AND REFER TO ITEM NUMBER)

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 16—74016-1

Form 10-317a
(Sept. 1957)

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS
SUPPLEMENTARY SHEET

This sheet is to be used for giving additional information or comments, for more space for any item on the regular form, and for recording pertinent data from future studies, visitations, etc. Be brief, but use as many Supplement Sheets as necessary. When items are continued they should be listed, if possible, in numerical order of the items. All information given should be headed by the item number, its name, and the word (cont'd), as, 6. Description and Importance (cont'd) . . .

STATE	NAME(S) OF SITE
California	Donner Camp

When it finally subsided, the animals were gone, and the Donner party was hopelessly trapped.

The ordeal which followed was a terrible one. In crude shelters built of wagon canvas and brush, the survivors huddled against the cold. The snows deepened with successive storms; the scant food stores were quickly exhausted. By December they were reduced to eating leather and the bark of trees. Four men had died and one was insane. At that point 15 of the bravest set out to seek help. Caught in a storm, many died; the living subsisted on the flesh of the dead.

But seven of the "Forlorn Hope" finally reached aid, and on February 19 the first of several relief parties reached the stranded wagon train. The sufferings of those who remained behind rivaled those of the Forlorn Hope, and they too had been reduced to eating the flesh of the dead. Of the 89 who turned off from the Oregon Trail to test the "short cut," only 45 survived.

Dominating Donner Memorial State Park at Donner Lake, on U. S. Highway 40, is the Monument to the Pioneers. Atop a lofty stone base, whose height of 22 feet represents the depth of snow at the original camp, are the heroic-sized figures of a pioneer father, wife and child. There are no remains except for a granite boulder which served as the rear of the fireplace in one of the huts. The California Division of Beaches and Parks is planning for the preservation of a section of the Emigrant Trail which leads from the park to the crest of the Sierra at Donner Pass.

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 16—74029-1

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

The National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings

Donner Camp, California

Donner Camp is the site where a California-bound group of emigrants, led by Captain George Donner, made a winter camp in the high Sierras, only one day's travel from the crest, in late October 1846, when caught by an early winter snow storm. The storm was followed by another one and the party was marooned in deep snow and cold weather.

In their effort to survive, the party of 89 members built rude shelters of wagon tops and brush. By December the people were eating leather and the bark of trees after their food supplies had been exhausted. Some had already died and one man went insane. Seven of fifteen who set out for help reached the California settlements and on February 19, 1847, the first of several relief parties arrived at the Donner Camp. Some members of the fifteen who had set out for help and also of those who remained behind had resorted to eating human flesh - the flesh of the dead - in their desperate efforts to survive. Of the 89 who had made up the Donner Party only 45 survived the terrible winter ordeal.

The Donner Party's troubles began when it left a large wagon train of emigrants east of Fort Bridger, turned off the Old Oregon and California Trail, and took the Hastings Cutoff through the Wasatch Mountains of Utah. They lost valuable time there and crossed the Utah desert badly worn, losing wagon after wagon and many of their cattle. Almost exhausted, and with the season far advanced, the party finally arrived at the Sierras, and on October 23 began the ascent of the mountains by the narrow canyon of the Truckee River. Then, just short of the summit, disaster overtook them. The fate of the Donner Party is one of the worst in the records of overland migrations, and it epitomizes the hardships and dangers encountered by those who made the overland crossing in those days.

The State of California owns the site, and through its Division of Beaches and Parks administers the Donner Memorial State Park. A Monument to the Pioneers, its height of 22 feet representing the depth of snow at the Donner Camp of 1846-1847, has heroic sized figures of a pioneer father, mother, and child. A large granite boulder still survives which is said to have formed the back part of the fireplace in one of the original huts. United States Highway 40 passes the site.

Form 10-317
(Sept. 1957)

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

REVISED

NATIONAL SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS

1. STATE: California

2. THEME(S). IF ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE, WRITE "ARCH" BEFORE THEME NO.: XV - Overland Migrations

3. NAME(S) OF SITE: Donner Camp

4. APPROX. ACREAGE: 346 Acres

5. EXACT LOCATION (*County, township, roads, etc. If difficult to find, sketch on Supplementary Sheet*)
Nevada County. U.S. Highway 40, 2.6 miles west of Truckee

6. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PRESENT OWNER (*Also administrator if different from owner*)
State of California, State Division of Beaches and Parks

7. IMPORTANCE AND DESCRIPTION (*Describe briefly what makes site important and what remains are extant*)

Scene of the snowbound winter camp of the Donner Party, 1846-47, where tragedy and horror struck this group of 89 California-bound people, this site, in a sense, epitomizes the hardships and dangers encountered and overcome by all who made the overland crossing to the Pacific in the 1840's and 50's.

In April of 1846 a well-equipped party of emigrants, led by Jacob and George Donner, set out from Illinois for California. They were joined by other pioneers en-route. Although advised by experienced travelers to remain on the established main trail, 87 members under Captain George Donner, turned off the main trail near Little Sandy River east of Fort Bridges, Wyoming, on July 20, 1846, determined to save time by following the Hastings' Cutoff - a route that had not actually been established.

Following the instructions of its promoter, Lansford Hastings, the party encountered immediate difficulties on Hastings' path in the Wasatch Mountains where they were forced to hew a 40-mile wagon road. After 30 days they struggled into the valley of the great Salt Lake. Both men and animals were much reduced in strength, and autumn was at hand before the company began the fearful crossing of the 80-mile desert in Utah. Through misfortune and perhaps inefficiency, oxen were lost and 4 wagons had to be abandoned. Ten days more were lost before the Donner Party rejoined the main California trail on the Humboldt River in Nevada on September 26, discovering that they had marched 125 miles farther than if they had stayed on the main trail via Fort Hall, and also that they were far behind the last emigrant party bound for California.

The caravan, almost exhausted, now faced the greatest obstacle on the trail--the crossing of mighty Sierra Nevada. On October 23, dangerously late in the season, the party finally began the cruelly difficult climb up the narrow canyon of the Truckee River. When at Donner (then Truckee)Lake, only 2 or 3 days' wagon trip from the summit of Truckee (Donner) Pass, a heavy snow storm began on October 31. The

(Continued on next page)

8. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES (*Give best sources; give location of manuscripts and rare works*)

See Page Two.

9. REPORTS AND STUDIES (*Mention best reports and studies, as, NPS study, HABS, etc.*)

None

10. PHOTOGRAPHS* ATTACHED: YES ☒ NO ☐	11. CONDITION	12. PRESENT USE (*Museum, farm, etc.*)	13. DATE OF VISIT
1224, 1229	No Remains	State Park	Apr. 19, 1959

14. NAME OF RECORDER (*Signature*)	15. TITLE	16. DATE
Charles W. Snell — Charles W. Snell	Reg.Chief, Br.Historic Sites	Oct. 21, 1963

*DRY MOUNT ON AN 8 X 10½ SHEET OF FAIRLY HEAVY PAPER. IDENTIFY BY VIEW AND NAME OF THE SITE, DATE OF PHOTOGRAPH, AND NAME OF PHOTOGRAPHER. GIVE LOCATION OF NEGATIVE. IF ATTACHED, ENCLOSE IN PROPER NEGATIVE ENVELOPES.

(IF ADDITIONAL SPACE IS NEEDED USE SUPPLEMENTARY SHEET, 10-317a, AND REFER TO ITEM NUMBER)

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 16—74016-1

Form 10-317a
(Sept. 1957)

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS
SUPPLEMENTARY SHEET

This sheet is to be used for giving additional information or comments, for more space for any item on the regular form, and for recording pertinent data from future studies, visitations, etc. Be brief, but use as many Supplement Sheets as necessary. When items are continued they should be listed, if possible, in numerical order of the items. All information given should be headed by the item number, its name, and the word (cont'd), as, 6. Description and Importance (cont'd) . . .

STATE	NAME(S) OF SITE
California	Donner Camp

7. Continued:

attempt to push ahead was futile, and the next day a new storm blew in, lasting for several days.

At two points, near the lake and farther back on the trail, the men built log cabins, hoping that the snow would melt, or that they could get through the winter by killing game or their surviving cattle. The violent storms continued, piling snow deeper and deeper. There was no game and the cattle wandered off and perished in the storms.

The ordeal that followed was a terrible one, revealing the heights to which heroism and unselfishness could rise as well as the degradation to which human nature could fall.

By December the Donners were reduced to eating leather and the bark of trees. Four men had died and one was insane. About December 12, fifteen of the bravest set out to seek help. Caught in a storm, 8 died and some of the living subsisted on the flesh of the dead.

After a 32-day journey over the snow covered mountains, the seven survivors of the "Forlorn Hope" finally reached aid at Johnson's Ranch. On February 19, 1847, the first of four truly heroic relief parties completed the difficult and dangerous return trip to the stranded wagon train. The sufferings of those who remained behind rivaled those of the Forlorn Hope, and some of these, too, had been reduced to eating the human flesh of the dead. The last survivors did not get out until April 17, 1847. Of the 87 who turned off to follow Hastings' Cutoff, only 47 survived.

Present Appearance: Donner Memorial State Park contains the 1846-47 winter camp site of the Donner Party. Near U. S. Highway 40 stands the huge Monument to the Pioneers, erected in 1918. Atop its lofty stone base, whose height of 22 feet represents the depth of the snow at the original camp, are the heroic-sized bronze figures of a pioneer father, wife and child facing west. Although there are no remains of the Donner cabins, the historic scene is otherwise preserved intact. A new visitor center interprets the epic story. Donner Memorial was established as a State Park in 1928 and now includes 346 acres.

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 16—74029-1

Form 10-817a
(Sept. 1957)

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL SURVEY OF HISTORIC SITES AND BUILDINGS
SUPPLEMENTARY SHEET

This sheet is to be used for giving additional information or comments, for more space for any item on the regular form, and for recording pertinent data from future studies, visitations, etc. Be brief, but use as many Supplement Sheets as necessary. When items are continued they should be listed, if possible, in numerical order of the items. All information given should be headed by the item number, its name, and the word (cont'd), as, 6. Description and Importance (cont'd) . . .

STATE	NAME(S) OF SITE
California	Donner Camp

8. Bibliographical References:

Hubert H. Bancroft, History of California (7 vols., San Francisco, 1886) V; Patrick Breen, "Diary of Patrick Breen, One of the Donner Party," Academy of Pacific Coast History Publications, I (1910); Eliza P. Donner Houghton, The Expedition of the Donner Party and Its Tragic Fate (Chicago, 1911); Charles F. McClashan, History of the Donner Party; a Tragedy of the Sierra (Los Angeles, 1920); George R. Stewart, Ordeal by Hunger, The Story of the Donner Party (New York, Revised 1960); George R. Stewart, The California Trail (New York, 1962).

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 16—74029-1

Donner Lake. A view of the rugged terrain in which the Donner party was caught by winter snows. View is from Donner Pass; the campsite was near Donner Lake.

11-5

Donner Memorial. Monument in memory of the Donner party, in Donner Memorial State Park.

Placer Co.?
Nevada Co.?

Interviewer: Karen [illegible]don Date: _____

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK BOUNDARY PROJECT

PROPERTY: Name: Donner Camp Site

Address:

Truckee (vic.) California Nevada
City State County

LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS:

CITY		COUNTY	
Name:		Name:	Robert H. Wilder
Title:		Title:	Chairman Board of Supervisors
Address:		Address:	201 Church Street Nevada City, CA 95959
Source/Date:		Source/Date:	Sherry McKenzie (916) 265-1480 5/14/83

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT: 14 ~~(based on [illegible])~~

REPRESENTATIVE: Norman D. Shumway
1203 Longworth HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

Source/Date: CD - 4/25 ; Shumway - 5/2

SENATORS: Alan Cranston
112 Hart SOB
Washington, D.C. 20510

Pete Wilson
613 Dirksen SOB
Washington, D.C. 20510

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER:

Dr. Knox Mellon State Historic Preservation Officer
Office of Historic Preservation Department of
Parks & Recreation P.O. Box 2390
Sacramento CA 95811

COMMENTS:

Notice Letter Mailed: 8/10/83
(Date)

Comment Period Ends: 10/10/83
(Date)

PROPERTY OWNERS: Name(s)/Address(es):

① Zane G. Smith
Regional Forester
Pacific Southwest Region
U.S. Forest Service
630 Sansome Street
San Francisco CA 94111

② Robert McComber
Sierra ~~Sierra~~ Area Manager
California Department of Parks & Recreation
P.O. Box 549
Truckee, CA 95734

Source/Date: Forest Service - Jerry Sinclair (8-556-6983)
KG - 8/9 CA - Warren Beers - (916) 587-3841

REGISTRY OF NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS

BIENNIAL VISIT REPORT

Date: **October 7, 1969**

Visited by: **Acting Ch.Park**
Natls. Roland V. Johnson

1. Location: **Donner Memorial State Park**

2. Theme: **Overland migrations**

3. Owner

   a. When designated **State of California**

   b. Present: **(X)** Same

   ( ) New

4. Use:

   a. When designated **State Park**

   b. Present: **(X)** Same

   ( ) Changed as follows:

REGISTRY OF NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS

BIENNIAL VISIT REPORT

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5. Plaque and Certificate: Location and condition

   a. Plaque **On large rock near Visitor Center**

   b. Certificate **In Visitor Center Lobby**

6. Physical condition

   a. When designated **Excellent**

   b. Present: (**X**) Excellent; ( ) Good; ( ) Fair; ( ) Poor

   Comments: **None**

REGISTRY OF NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS

BIENNIAL VISIT REPORT

---

7. Special Problems: **None**

8 Suggestions Offered: **None**

NATIONAL LANDMARKS

VISIT REPORT

Donner Memorial State Park

1. Site:

   a. Donner Memorial State Park, Nevada County, California

   b. Registered; plaque dated June 1961.

2. General Background:

   a. Richard L. Vance, Chief Park Naturalist
   Lassen Volcanic National Park, Mineral, California (916) 595-4444

   b. The site was visited on June 2, 1977. Mr. Bob Adkisson, Supervisory Ranger and State Park Ranger Steve Moore were contacted.

3. Ownership:

   a. The site is owned by the State of California and is managed by the Department of Parks and Recreation.

   b. The area managers were very cooperative and enthusiastic about the program.

4. Land Use and Integrity:

   a. The area is a state park and visited by many travelers in Northern California. The visitor center is well designed and maintained. There is also a campground in the vicinity.

   b. The site's integrity is well preserved.

5. Threats:

   As a unit of the California State Park System, it is well protected and maintained. There did not appear to be any serious problems.

6. Natural Values:

   The area is maintained in a fairly natural way so that the native flora is preserved. Through the years there has been normal natural attrition.

7. Other Corrections:

None

8. Plaque and Certificate:

The plaque is embedded in a rock at the beginning of the trail to the monument.

The certificate is hung on a wall at the entrance of the Visitor Center.

9. Special Problems:

None

10. Suggestions Offered to Owner:

None

11. Recommendation:

It should be retained as a registered landmark.

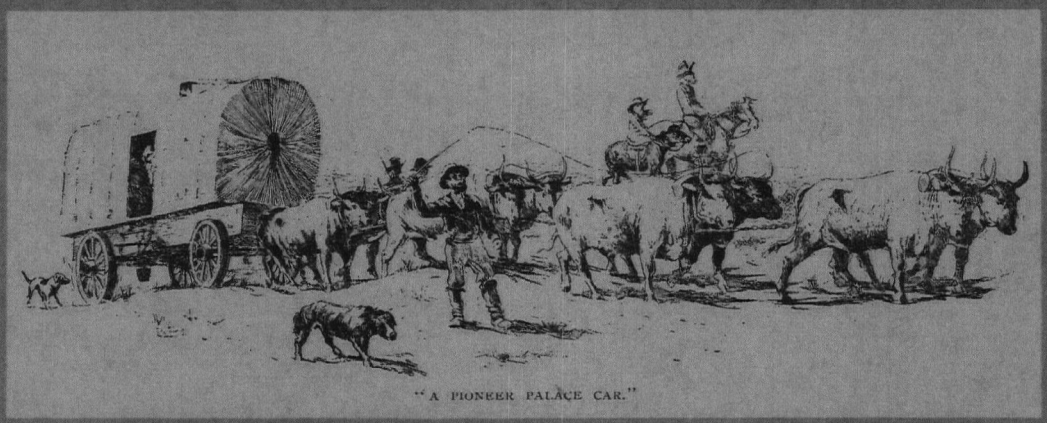
Richard L. Vance — 7-1-77

Richard L. Vance
Chief Park Naturalist

Date

$2.00

ACROSS THE PLAINS IN THE DONNER PARTY (1846-47)



"A PIONEER PALACE CAR."

A PERSONAL NARRATIVE OF THE OVERLAND TRIP TO CALIFORNIA.

by

Virginia Reed Murphy.

with illustrations
by Frederick Remington
and others

DONNER PARTY MEMORIAL, SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

EDITOR'S PREFACE

VIRGINIA E. REED.
(Mrs. J. M. Murphy.)
1880.

Our author, then Virginia Reed, age 12, left Springfield, Illinois the bright spring morning of April 14, 1846 with her family plus 25 fellow emigrants.

On May 29th, in Kansas, her grandmother died and was buried on the trail.

In July in Wyoming her pony could not keep up and was left.

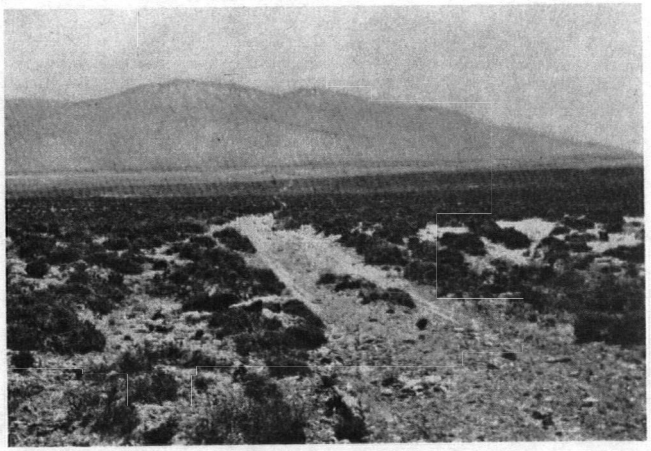
In September in Utah her family lost its oxen and had to abandon a wagon with their possessions.

In October, in Nevada, her father killed a man and was banished from the train.

Just before November, her party finally reached Donner Lake, but too late to cross the Sierra Nevada before winter. As a result, 13 of those who started with her from Springfield, and 29 more who joined her along the way, never did cross those mountains.

This is her story, recalled 45 years later at the request of the editor of *Century*, a national magazine of that day, and reprinted here with the original illustrations and some additional ones. It is a story that immediately became a permanent part of the American epic.

William R. Jones



Emigrant Trail across Skull Valley

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: Aside from author Virginia Reed Murphy and *The Century* magazine, which contributed the original text and the illustrations by Frederick Remington, gratitude is expressed to the following for their contributions: California Department of Parks and Recreation, Utah State Historical Society, Nevada Historical Society, Bancroft Library of the University of California, and Western History Room of the Denver Public Library. Gary Hurelle of the National Park Service drew the map in the center, and personnel at Donner Lake State Park (in California) and Fort Laramie National Historic Site (in Wyoming) reviewed the materials.

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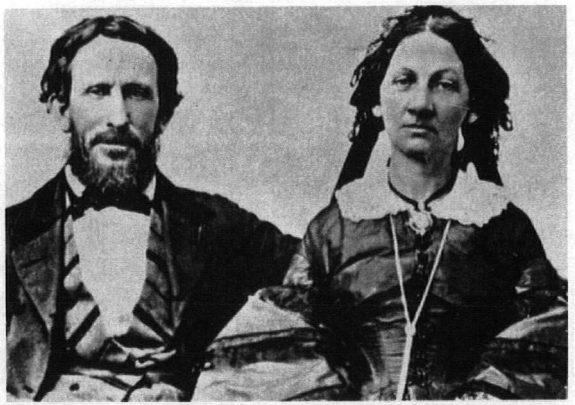
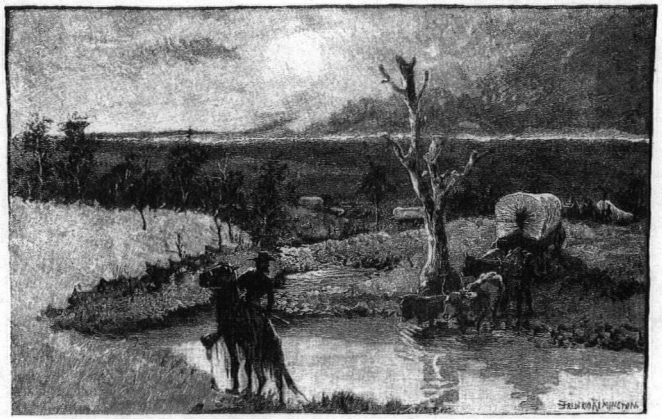


The author's parents and (below) initials of her father carved in rock at Alcove Springs, Kansas, near the start of their fateful trip.

I WAS a child when we started to California, yet I remember the journey well and I have cause to remember it, as our little band of emigrants who drove out of Springfield, Illinois, that spring morning of 1846 have since been known in history as the "Ill-fated Donner party" of "Martyr Pioneers." My father, James F. Reed, was the originator of the party, and the Donner brothers, George and Jacob, who lived just a little way out of Springfield, decided to join him.

All the previous winter we were preparing for the journey—and right here let me say that we suffered vastly more from fear of the Indians before starting than we did on the plains; at least this was my case. In the long winter evenings Grandma Keyes used to tell me Indian stories. She had an aunt who had been taken prisoner by the savages in the early settlement of Virginia and Kentucky and had remained a captive in their hands five years before she made her escape. I was fond of these stories and evening after evening would go into grandma's room, sitting with my back close against the wall so that no warrior could slip behind me with a tomahawk. I would coax her to tell me more about her aunt, and would sit listening to the recital of the fearful deeds of the savages, until it seemed to me that everything in the room, from the high old-fashioned bedposts down even to the shovel and tongs in the chimney corner, was transformed into the dusky tribe in paint and feathers, all ready for the war dance. So when I was told that we were going to California and would have to pass through a region peopled by Indians, you can imagine how I felt.

Our wagons, or the "Reed wagons," as they were called, were all made to order and I can say without fear of contradiction that nothing like our family wagon ever started across the plains. It was what might be called a two-story wagon or "Pioneer palace car," attached to a regular immigrant train. My mother, though a young woman, was not strong and had been

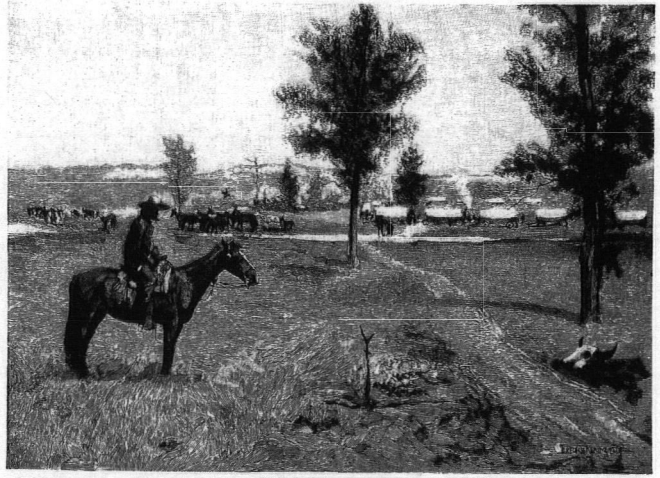


CROSSING WATER TO ESCAPE A PRAIRIE FIRE.

in delicate health for many years, yet when sorrows and dangers came upon her she was the bravest of the brave. Grandma Keyes, who was seventy-five years of age, was an invalid, confined to her bed. Her sons in Springfield, Gersham and James W. Keyes, tried to dissuade her from the long and fatiguing journey, but in vain; she would not be parted from my mother, who was her only daughter. So the car in which she was to ride was planned to give comfort. The entrance was on the side, like that of an old-fashioned stage coach, and one stepped into a small room, as it were, in the centre of the wagon. At the right and left were spring seats with comfortable high backs, where one could sit and ride with as much ease as on the seats of a Concord coach. In this little room was placed a tiny sheet-iron stove, whose pipe, running through the top of the wagon, was prevented by a circle of tin from setting fire to the canvas cover. A board about a foot wide extended over the wheels on either side the full length of the wagon, thus forming the foundation for a large and roomy second story in which were placed our beds. Under the spring seats were compartments in which were stored many articles useful for the journey, such as a well filled work basket and a full assortment of medicines, with lint and bandages for dressing wounds. Our clothing was packed — not in Saratoga trunks — but in strong canvas bags plainly marked. Some of mama's young friends added a looking-glass, hung directly opposite the door, in order, as they said, that my mother might not forget to keep her good looks, and strange to say, when we had to leave this wagon, standing like a monument on the Salt Lake desert, the glass was still unbroken. I have often thought how pleased the Indians must have been when they found this mirror which gave them back the picture of their own dusky faces.

We had two wagons loaded with provisions. Everything in that line was bought that could be thought of. My father started with supplies enough to last us through the first winter in California, had we made the journey in the usual time of six months. Knowing that books were always scarce in a new country, we also took a good library of standard works. We even took a cooking stove which never had had a fire in it, and was destined never to have, as we cachéd it in the desert. Certainly no family ever started across the plains with more provisions or a better outfit for the journey; and yet we reached California almost destitute and nearly out of clothing.

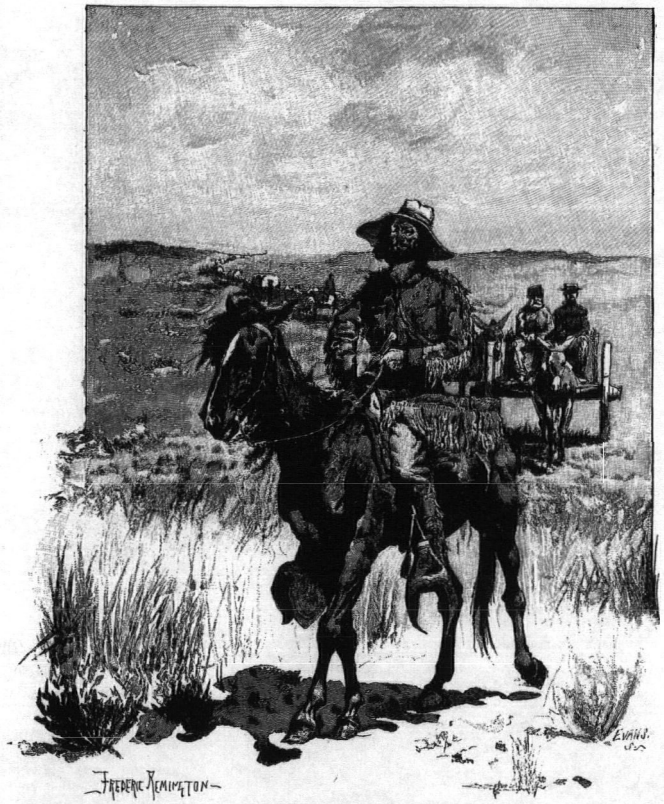
The family wagon was drawn by four yoke of oxen, large Durham steers at the wheel. The other wagons were drawn by three yoke each. We had saddle horses and cows, and last but not least my pony. He was a beauty and his name was Billy. I can scarcely remember when I was taught to sit a horse. I only know that when a child of seven I was the proud owner of a pony and used to go riding with papa. That was the chief pleasure to which I looked forward in crossing the plains,



AN EMIGRANT ENCAMPMENT.

to ride my pony every day. But a day came when I had no pony to ride, the poor little fellow gave out. He could not endure the hardships of ceaseless travel. When I was forced to part with him I cried until I was ill, and sat in the back of the wagon watching him become smaller and smaller as we drove on, until I could see him no more.

ABANDONED.



ON THE WAY TO THE PLATTE.

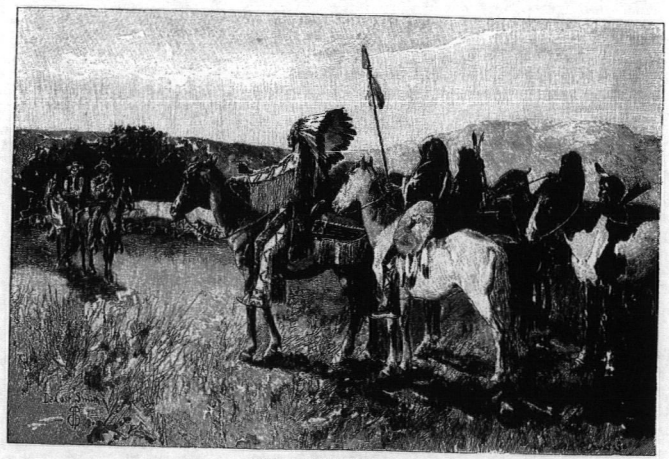
Never can I forget the morning when we bade farewell to kindred and friends. The Donners were there, having driven in the evening before with their families, so that we might get an early start. Grandma Keyes was carried out of the house and placed in the wagon on a large feather bed, propped up with pillows. Her sons implored her to remain and end her days with them, but she could not be separated from her only daughter. We were surrounded by loved ones, and there stood all my little schoolmates who had come to kiss me good-by. My father with tears in his eyes tried to smile as one friend after another grasped his hand in a last farewell. Mama was overcome with grief. At last we were all in the wagons, the drivers cracked their whips, the oxen moved slowly forward and the long journey had begun.

Could we have looked into the future and have seen the misery before us, these lines would never have been written. But we were full of hope and did not dream of sorrow. I can now see our little caravan of ten or twelve wagons as we drove out of old Springfield, my little black-eyed sister Patty sitting upon the bed, holding up the wagon cover so that Grandma might have a last look at her old home.

That was the 14th day of April, 1846. Our party numbered thirty-one, and consisted chiefly of three families, the other members being young men, some of whom came as drivers. The Donner family were George and Tamsen Donner and their five children, and Jacob and Elizabeth Donner and their seven children. Our family numbered nine, not counting three drivers — my father and mother, James Frazier and Margaret W. Reed, Grandma Keyes, my little sister Patty (now Mrs. Frank Lewis, of Capitola), and two little brothers, James F. Reed, Jr., and Thomas K. Reed, Eliza Williams and her brother Baylis, and lastly myself. Eliza had been a domestic in our family for many years, and was anxious to see California.

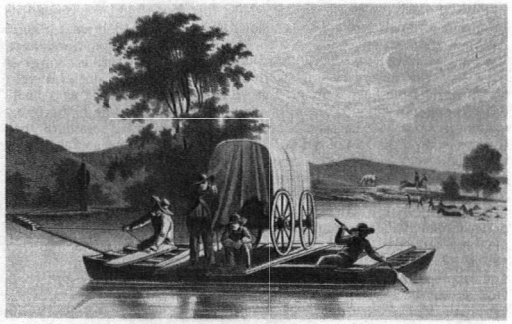
Many friends camped with us the first night out and my uncles traveled on for several days before bidding us a final farewell. It seemed strange to be riding in ox-teams, and we children were afraid of the oxen, thinking they could go wherever they pleased as they had no bridles. Milt Elliott, a knight of the whip, drove our family wagon. He had worked for years in my father's large saw-mill on the Sangamon River. The first bridge we came to, Milt had to stop the wagon and let us out. I remember that I called to him to be sure to make the oxen hit the bridge, and not to forget that grandma was in the wagon. How he laughed at the idea of the oxen missing the bridge! I soon found that Milt, with his "whoa," "haw," and "gee," could make the oxen do just as he pleased.

Nothing of much interest happened until we reached what is now Kansas. The first Indians we met were the Caws, who kept the ferry, and had to take us over the Caw River. I watched



A POWWOW WITH CHEYENNES.

them closely, hardly daring to draw my breath, and feeling sure they would sink the boat in the middle of the stream, and was very thankful when I found they were not like grandma's Indians. Every morning, when the wagons were ready to start, papa and I would jump on our horses, and go ahead to pick out a camping-ground. In our party were many who rode on horseback, but mama seldom did; she preferred the wagon, and did not like to leave grandma, although Patty took upon herself this charge, and could hardly be persuaded to leave grandma's side. Our little home was so comfortable, that mama could sit reading and chatting with the little ones, and almost forget that she was really crossing the plains.



CROSSING OF THE PLATTE MOUTH OF DEER CREEK.

Grandma Keyes improved in health and spirits every day until we came to the Big Blue River, which was so swollen that we could not cross, but had to lie by and make rafts on which to take the wagons over. As soon as we stopped traveling, grandma began to fail, and on the 29th day of May she died. It seemed hard to bury her in the wilderness, and travel on, and we were afraid that the Indians would destroy her grave, but her death here, before our troubles began, was providential, and nowhere on the whole road could we have found so beautiful a resting place. By this time many emigrants had joined our company, and all turned out to assist at the funeral. A coffin was hewn out of a cottonwood tree, and John Denton, a young man from Springfield, found a large gray stone on which he carved with deep letters the name of "Sarah Keyes; born in Virginia," giving age and date of birth. She was buried under the shade of an oak, the slab being placed at the foot of the grave, on which were planted wild flowers growing in the sod. A minister in our party, the Rev. J. A. Cornwall, tried to give words of comfort as we stood about this lonely grave. Strange to say, that grave has never been disturbed; the wilderness blossomed into the city of Manhattan, Kansas, and we have been told that the city cemetery surrounds the grave of Sarah Keyes.

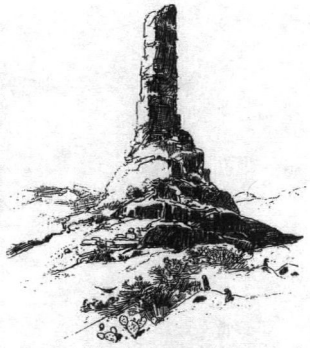
As the river remained high and there was no prospect of fording it, the men went to work cutting down trees, hollowing out logs and making rafts on which to take the wagons over. These logs, about twenty-five feet in length, were united by cross timbers, forming rafts, which were firmly lashed to stakes driven into the bank. Ropes were attached to both ends, by which the rafts were pulled back and forth across the river. The banks of this stream being steep, our heavily laden wagons had to be let down carefully with ropes, so that the wheels might run into the hollowed logs. This was no easy task when you take into consideration that in these wagons were women and children, who could cross the rapid river in no other way. Finally the dangerous work was accomplished and we resumed our journey.

The road at first was rough and led through a timbered country, but after striking the great valley of the Platte the road was good and the country beautiful. Stretching out before us as far as the eye could reach was a valley as green as emerald, dotted here and there with flowers of every imaginable color, and through this valley flowed the grand old Platte, a wide, rapid, shallow stream. Our company now numbered about forty wagons, and, for a time, we were commanded by Col. William H. Russell, then by George Donner. Exercise in the open air under bright skies, and freedom from peril combined to make this part of our journey an ideal pleasure trip. How I enjoyed riding my pony, galloping over the plain, gathering wild flowers! At night the young folks would gather about the camp fire chatting merrily, and often a song would be heard, or some clever dancer would give us a barn-door jig on the hind gate of a wagon.

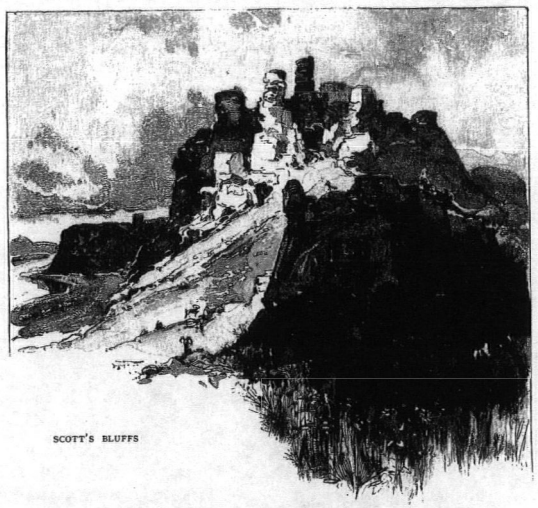
Traveling up the smooth valley of the Platte, we passed Court House Rock, Chimney Rock and Scott's Bluffs, and made from fifteen to twenty miles a day, shortening or lengthening the distance in order to secure a good camping ground. At night when we drove into camp, our wagons were placed so as to form a circle or corral, into which our cattle were driven, after grazing, to prevent the Indians from stealing them, the camp-fires and tents being on the outside. There were many expert riflemen in the party and we never lacked for game. The plains were alive with buffalo, and herds could be seen every day coming to the Platte to drink. The meat of the young buffalo is excellent and so is that of the antelope, but the antelope are so fleet of foot it is difficult to get a shot at one. I witnessed many a buffalo hunt and more than once was in the chase close beside my father. A buffalo will not attack one unless wounded. When he sees the hunter he raises his shaggy head, gazes at him for a moment, then turns and runs; but when he is wounded he will face his pursuer. The only danger lay in a stampede, for nothing could withstand the onward rush of these massive creatures, whose tread seemed to shake the prairie.

A HERD OF BUFFALOES AT THE PLATTE.

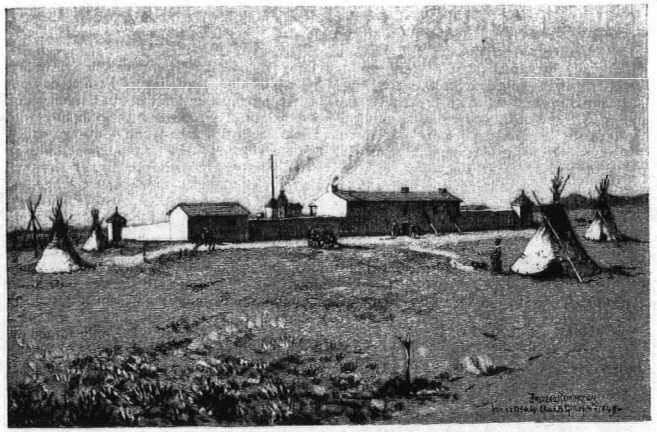
Antelope and buffalo steaks were the main article on our bill-of-fare for weeks, and no tonic was needed to give zest for the food; our appetites were a marvel. Eliza soon discovered that cooking over a camp fire was far different from cooking on a stove or range, but all hands assisted her. I remember that she had the cream all ready for the churn as we drove into the South Fork of the Platte, and while we were fording the grand old stream she went on with her work, and made several pounds of butter. We found no trouble in crossing the Platte, the only danger being in quicksand. The stream being wide, we had to stop the wagon now and then to give the oxen a few moments' rest. At Fort Laramie, two hundred miles farther on, we celebrated the fourth of July in fine style. Camp was pitched earlier than usual and we prepared a grand dinner. Some of my father's friends in Springfield had given him a bottle of good old brandy, which he agreed to drink at a certain hour of this day looking to the east, while his friends in Illinois were to drink a toast to his success from a companion bottle with their faces turned west, the difference in time being carefully estimated; and at the hour agreed upon, the health of our friends in Springfield was drunk with great enthusiasm. At Fort Laramie was a party of Sioux, who were on the war path going to fight the Crows or Blackfeet. The Sioux are fine-



CHIMNEY ROCK, ON THE NORTH PLATTE



SCOTT'S BLUFFS



FORT LARAMIE IN 1849.

looking Indians and I was not in the least afraid of them. They fell in love with my pony and set about bargaining to buy him. They brought buffalo robes and beautifully tanned buckskin, pretty beaded moccasins, and ropes made of grass, and placing these articles in a heap alongside several of their ponies, they made my father understand by signs that they would give them all for Billy and his rider. Papa smiled and shook his head; then the number of ponies was increased and, as a last tempting inducement, they brought an old coat, that had been worn by some poor soldier, thinking my father could not withstand the brass buttons!

On the sixth of July we were again on the march. The Sioux were several days in passing our caravan, not on account of the length of our train, but because there were so many Sioux. Owing to the fact that our wagons were strung so far apart, they could have massacred our whole party without much loss to themselves. Some of our company became alarmed, and the rifles were cleaned out and loaded, to let the warriors see that we were prepared to fight; but the Sioux never showed any inclination to disturb us. Their curiosity was annoying, however, and our wagon with its conspicuous stove-pipe and looking-glass attracted their attention. They were continually swarming about trying to get a look at themselves in the mirror, and their desire to possess my pony was so strong that at last I had to ride in the wagon and let one of the drivers take charge of Billy. This I did not like, and in order to see how far back the line of warriors extended, I picked up a large field-glass which hung on a rack, and as I pulled it out with a click, the warriors jumped back, wheeled their ponies and scattered. This pleased me greatly, and I told my mother I could fight the whole Sioux tribe with a spy-glass, and as revenge for forcing me to ride in the wagon, whenever they came near trying to get a peep at their war-paint and feathers, I would raise the glass and laugh to see them dart away in terror.

A new route had just been opened by Lansford W. Hastings, called the "Hastings Cut-off," which passed along the southern shore of the Great Salt Lake rejoining the old "Fort Hall Emigrant" road on the Humboldt. It

was said to shorten the distance three hundred miles. Much time was lost in debating which course to pursue; Bridger and Vasques, who were in charge of the fort, sounded the praises of the new road. My father was so eager to reach California that he was quick to take advantage of any means to shorten the distance, and we were assured by Hastings and his party that the only bad part was the forty-mile drive through the desert by the shore of the lake. None of our party knew then, as we learned afterwards, that these men had an interest in the road, being employed by Hastings. But for the advice of these parties we should have continued on the old Fort Hall road. Our company had increased in numbers all along the line, and was now composed of some of the very best people and some of the worst. The greater portion of our company went by the old road and reached California in safety. Eighty-seven persons took the "Hastings Cut-off," including the Donners, Breens, Reeds, Murphys (not the Murphys of Santa Clara County), C. T. Stanton, John Denton, Wm. McClutchen, Wm. Eddy, Louis Keseburg, and many others too numerous to mention in a short article like this. And these are the unfortunates who have since been known as the "Donner Party."

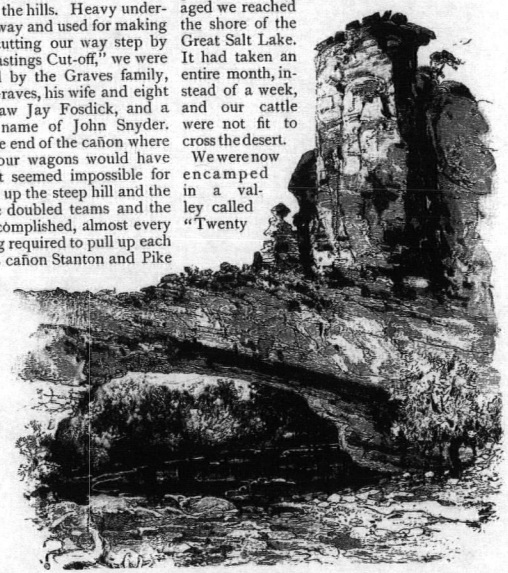
On the morning of July 31 we parted with our traveling companions, some of whom had become very dear friends, and, without a suspicion of impending disaster, set off in high spirits on the "Hastings Cut-off"; but a few days showed us that the road was not as it had been represented. We were seven days in reaching Weber Cañon, and Hastings, who was guiding a party in advance of our train, left a note by the wayside warning us that the road through Weber Cañon was impassable and advising us to select a road over the mountains, the outline of which he attempted to give on paper. These directions were so vague that C. T. Stanton, William Pike, and my father

A PERIL OF THE PLAINS.

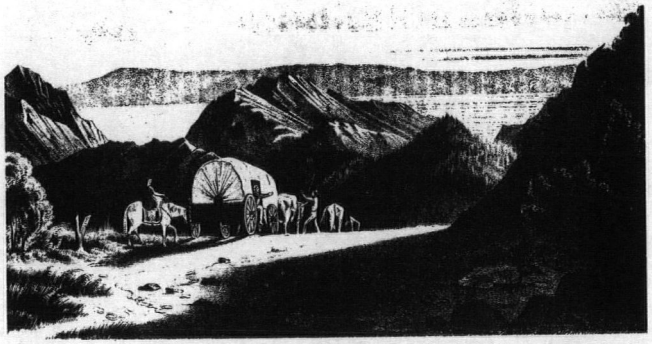
rode on in advance and overtook Hastings and tried to induce him to return and guide our party. He refused, but came back over a portion of the road, and from a high mountain endeavored to point out the general course. Over this road my father traveled alone, taking notes, and blazing trees, to assist him in retracing his course, and reaching camp after an absence of four days. Learning of the hardships of the advance train, the party decided to cross towards the lake. Only those who have passed through this country on horseback can appreciate the situation. There was absolutely no road, not even a trail. The cañon wound around among the hills. Heavy underbrush had to be cut away and used for making a road bed. While cutting our way step by step through the "Hastings Cut-off," we were overtaken and joined by the Graves family, consisting of W. F. Graves, his wife and eight children, his son-in-law Jay Fosdick, and a young man by the name of John Snyder. Finally we reached the end of the cañon where it looked as though our wagons would have to be abandoned. It seemed impossible for the oxen to pull them up the steep hill and the bluffs beyond, but we doubled teams and the work was, at last, accomplished, almost every yoke in the train being required to pull up each wagon. While in this cañon Stanton and Pike came into camp; they had suffered greatly on account of the exhaustion of their horses and had come near perishing. Worn with travel and greatly discouraged we reached the shore of the Great Salt Lake. It had taken an entire month, instead of a week, and our cattle were not fit to cross the desert.

A BIT OF ROUGH ROAD.

We were now encamped in a valley called "Twenty



NATURAL BRIDGE ON LA PRÊLE RIVER.



FIRST VIEW OF GREAT SALT LAKE
This summit is probably "Big Mountain," crossed by the Donner Party on August 20, 1846.

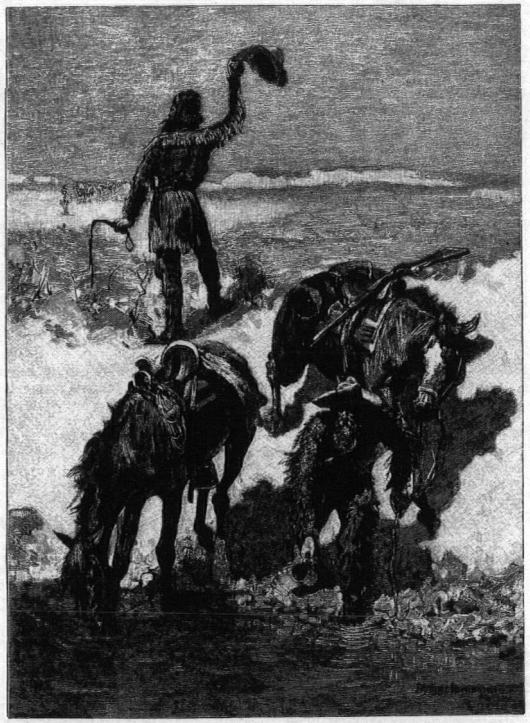
Wells." The water in these wells was pure and cold, welcome enough after the alkaline pools from which we had been forced to drink. We prepared for the long drive across the desert and laid in, as we supposed, an ample supply of water and grass. This desert had been represented to us as only forty miles wide but we found it nearer eighty. It was a dreary, desolate, alkali waste; not a living thing could be seen; it seemed as though the hand of death had been laid upon the country. We started in the evening, traveled all that night, and the following day and night — two nights and one day of suffering from thirst and heat by day and piercing cold by night. When the third night fell and we saw the barren waste stretching away apparently as boundless as when we started, my father determined to go ahead in search of water. Before starting he instructed the drivers, if the cattle showed signs of giving out to take them from the wagons and follow him. He had not been gone long before the oxen began to fall to the ground from thirst and exhaustion. They were unhitched at once and driven ahead. My father coming back met the drivers with the cattle within ten miles of water and instructed them to return as soon as the animals had satisfied their thirst. He reached us about daylight. We waited all that day in the desert looking for the return of our drivers, the other wagons going on out of sight. Towards night the situation became desperate and we had only a few drops of water left; another night there meant death. We must set out on foot and try to reach some of the wagons. Can I ever forget that night in the desert, when we walked mile after mile in the darkness, every step seeming to be the very last we could take! Suddenly all fatigue was banished by fear; through the night came a swift rushing sound of one of the young steers crazed by thirst and apparently bent upon our destruction. My father, holding his youngest child in his arms and keeping us all close behind him, drew his pistol, but finally the maddened beast turned and dashed off into the darkness. Dragging ourselves along about ten miles, we reached the wagon of Jacob Donner. The family were all asleep, so we children lay down on the ground. A bitter wind swept over the desert,

GREAT DESERT TO THE WEST OF SALT LAKE.

chilling us through and through. We crept closer together, and, when we complained of the cold, papa placed all five of our dogs around us, and only for the warmth of these faithful creatures we should doubtless have perished.

At daylight papa was off to learn the fate of his cattle, and was told that all were lost, except one cow and an ox. The stock, scenting the water, had rushed on ahead of the men, and had probably been stolen by the Indians, and driven into the mountains, where all traces of them were lost. A week was spent here on the edge of the desert in a fruitless search. Almost every man in the company turned out, hunting in all directions, but our eighteen head of cattle were never found. We had lost our best yoke of oxen before reaching Bridger's Fort from drinking poisoned water found standing in pools, and had bought at the fort two yoke of young steers, but now all were gone, and my father and his family were left in the desert, eight hundred

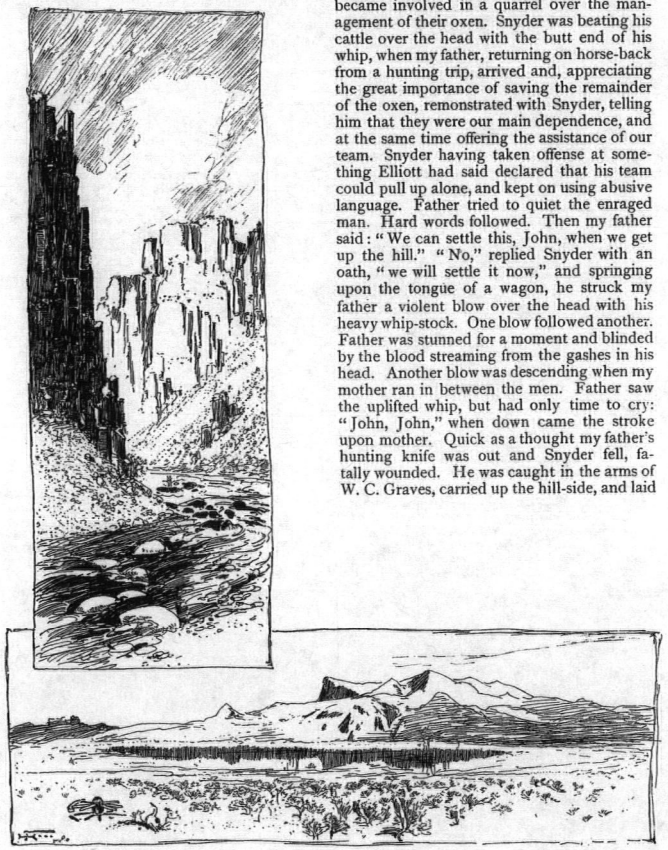
A DESPERATE SITUATION.



WATER!

miles from California, seemingly helpless. We realized that our wagons must be abandoned. The company kindly let us have two yoke of oxen, so with our ox and cow yoked together we could bring one wagon, but, alas! not the one which seemed so much like a home to us, and in which grandma had died. Some of the company went back with papa and assisted him in cacheing everything that could not be packed in one wagon. A cache was made by digging a hole in the ground, in which a box or the bed of a wagon was placed. Articles to be buried were packed into this box, covered with boards, and the earth thrown in upon them, and thus they were hidden from sight. Our provisions were divided among the company. Before leaving the desert camp, an inventory of provisions on hand was taken, and it was found that the supply was not sufficient to last us through to California, and as if to render the situation more terrible, a storm came on during the night and the hill-tops became white with snow. Some one must go on to Sutter's Fort after provisions. A call was made for volunteers. C. T. Stanton and Wm. McClutchen bravely offered their services and started on bearing letters from the company to Captain Sutter asking for relief. We resumed our journey and soon reached Gravelly Ford on the Humboldt.

I now come to that part of my narrative which delicacy of feeling for both the dead and the living would induce me to pass over in silence, but which a correct and lucid chronicle of subsequent events of historical importance will not suffer to be omitted. On the 5th day of October, 1846, at Gravelly Ford, a tragedy was enacted which affected the subsequent lives and fortunes of more than one member of our company. At this point in our journey we were compelled to double our teams in order to ascend a steep, sandy hill. Milton Elliott, who was driving our wagon, and John Snyder, who was driving one of Mr. Graves's, became involved in a quarrel over the management of their oxen. Snyder was beating his cattle over the head with the butt end of his whip, when my father, returning on horse-back from a hunting trip, arrived and, appreciating the great importance of saving the remainder of the oxen, remonstrated with Snyder, telling him that they were our main dependence, and at the same time offering the assistance of our team. Snyder having taken offense at something Elliott had said declared that his team could pull up alone, and kept on using abusive language. Father tried to quiet the enraged man. Hard words followed. Then my father said: "We can settle this, John, when we get up the hill." "No," replied Snyder with an oath, "we will settle it now," and springing upon the tongue of a wagon, he struck my father a violent blow over the head with his heavy whip-stock. One blow followed another. Father was stunned for a moment and blinded by the blood streaming from the gashes in his head. Another blow was descending when my mother ran in between the men. Father saw the uplifted whip, but had only time to cry: "John, John," when down came the stroke upon mother. Quick as a thought my father's hunting knife was out and Snyder fell, fatally wounded. He was caught in the arms of W. C. Graves, carried up the hill-side, and laid



THE HUMBOLDT PALISADES.— THE HUMBOLDT SINK.

on the ground. My father regretted the act, and dashing the blood from his eyes went quickly to the assistance of the dying man. I can see him now, as he knelt over Snyder, trying to stanch the wound, while the blood from the gashes in his own head, trickling down his face, mingled with that of the dying man. In a few moments Snyder expired. Camp was pitched immediately, our wagon being some distance from the others. My father, anxious to do what he could for the dead, offered the boards of our wagon, from which to make a coffin. Then, coming to me, he said: "Daughter, do you think you can dress these wounds in my head? Your mother is not able, and they must be attended to." I answered by saying: "Yes, if you will tell me what to do." I brought a basin of water and sponge, and we went into the wagon, so that we might not be disturbed. When my work was at last finished, I burst out crying. Papa clasped me in his arms, saying: "I should not have asked so much of you," and talked to me until I controlled my feelings, so that we could go to the tent where mama was lying.

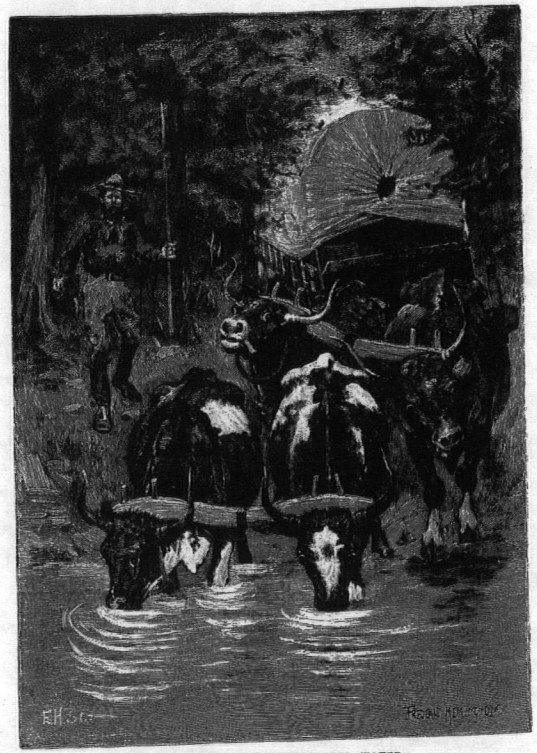
We then learned that trouble was brewing in the camp where Snyder's body lay. At the funeral my father stood sorrowfully by until the last clod was placed upon the grave. He and John Snyder had been good friends, and no one could have regretted the taking of that young life more than my father.

The members of the Donner party then held a council to decide upon the fate of my father, while we anxiously awaited the verdict. They refused to accept the plea of self-defense and decided that my father should be banished from the company and sent into the wilderness alone. It was a cruel sentence. And all this animosity towards my father was caused by Louis Keseburg, a German who had joined

our company away back on the plains. Keseburg was married to a young and pretty German girl, and used to abuse her, and was in the habit of beating her till she was black and blue. This aroused all the manhood in my father and he took Keseburg to task — telling him it must be stopped or measures would be taken to that effect. Keseburg did not dare to strike his wife again, but he hated my father and nursed his wrath until papa was so unfortunate as to have to take the life of a fellow-creature in self-defense. Then Keseburg's hour for revenge had come. But how a man like Keseburg, brutal and overbearing by nature, although highly educated, could have such influence over the company is more than I can tell. I have thought the subject over for hours but failed to arrive at a conclusion. The feeling against my father at one time was so strong that lynching was proposed. He was no coward and he bared his neck, saying, "Come on, gentlemen," but no one moved. It was thought more humane, perhaps, to send him into the wilderness to die of slow starvation or be murdered by the Indians; but my father did not die. God took care of him and his family, and at Donner Lake we seemed especially favored by the Almighty as not one of our family perished, and we were the only family no one member of which was forced to eat of human flesh to keep body and soul together. When the sentence of banishment was communicated to my father, he refused to go, feeling that he was justified before God and man, as he had only acted in self-defense.

Then came a sacrifice on the part of my mother. Knowing only too well what her life would be without him, yet fearful that if he remained he would meet with violence at the hands of his enemies, she implored him to go, but all to no avail until she urged him to remember the destitution of the company, saying that if he remained and escaped violence at their hands, he might nevertheless see his children starving and be helpless to aid them, while if he went on he could return and meet them with food. It was a fearful struggle; at last he consented, but not before he had secured a promise from the company to care for his wife and little ones.

My father was sent out into an unknown country without provisions or arms — even his horse was at first denied him. When we learned of this decision, I followed him through the darkness, taking Elliott with me, and carried him his rifle, pistols, ammunition and some food. I had determined to stay with him, and begged him to let me stay, but he would listen to no argument, saying that it was impossible. Finally, unclasping my arms from around him,

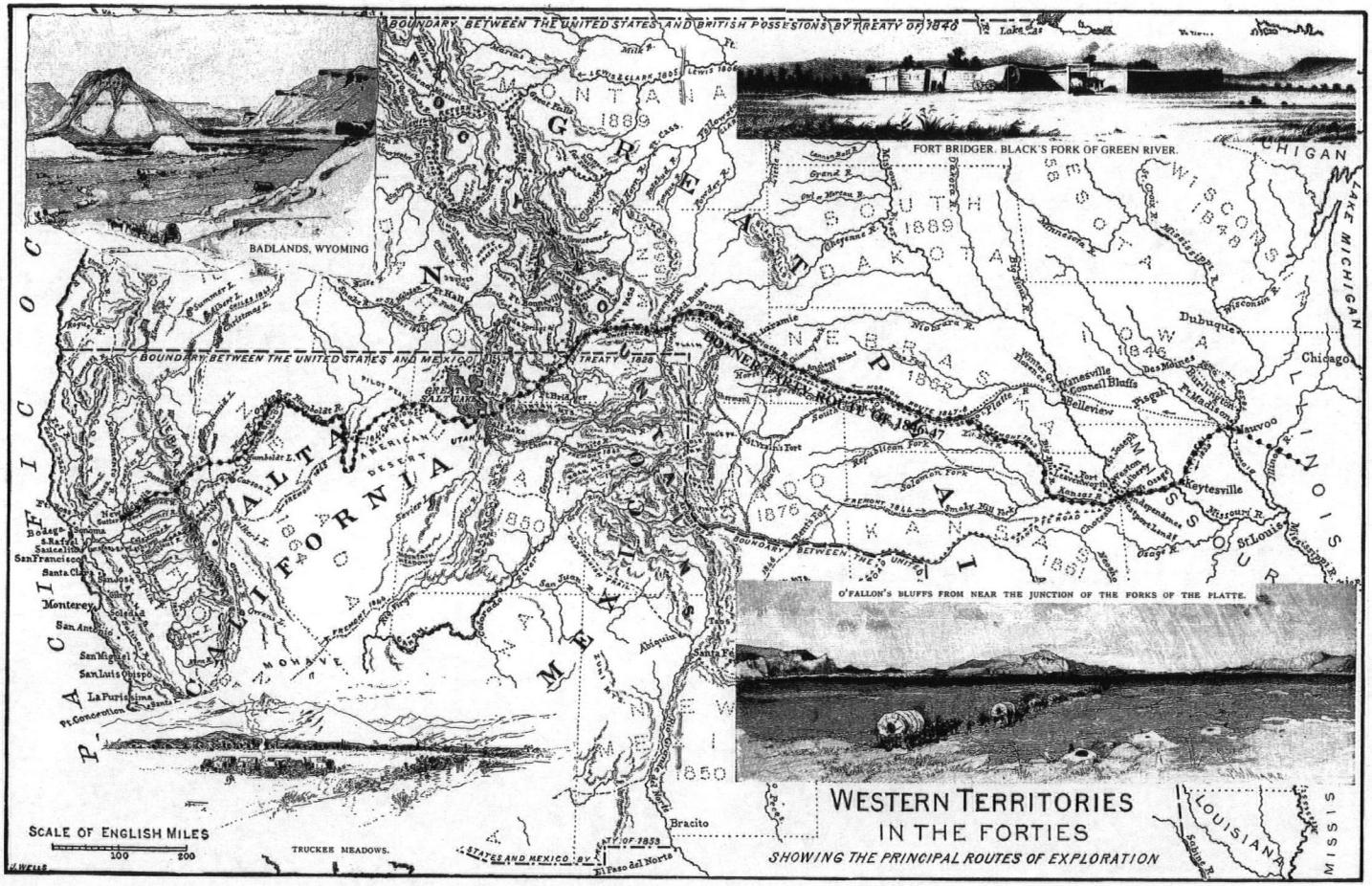


THIRSTY OXEN STAMPEDING FOR WATER.

he placed me in charge of Elliott, who started back to camp with me — and papa was left alone. I had cried until I had hardly strength to walk, but when we reached camp and I saw the distress of my mother, with the little ones clinging around her and no arm to lean upon, it seemed suddenly to make a woman of me. I realized that I must be strong and help mama bear her sorrows.

We traveled on, but all life seemed to have left the party, and the hours dragged slowly along. Every day we would search for some sign of papa, who would leave a letter by the way-side in the top of a bush or in a split stick, and when he succeeded in killing geese or birds would scatter the feathers about so that we might know that he was not suffering for food. When possible, our fire would always be kindled on the spot where his had been. But a time came when we found no letter, and no trace of him. Had he starved by the way-side, or been murdered by the Indians?

My mother's despair was pitiful. Patty and I thought we would be bereft of her also. But


BOUNDARY BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND BRITISH POSSESSIONS BY TREATY OF 1846
BOUNDARY BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND MEXICO BY TREATY 1848
BOUNDARY BETWEEN THE TO UNITED
BADLANDS, WYOMING
FORT BRIDGER. BLACK'S FORK OF GREEN RIVER.
O'FALLON'S BLUFFS FROM NEAR THE JUNCTION OF THE FORKS OF THE PLATTE.
TRUCKEE MEADOWS.
SCALE OF ENGLISH MILES
100 200
WESTERN TERRITORIES
IN THE FORTIES
SHOWING THE PRINCIPAL ROUTES OF EXPLORATION
MONTANA
1889
NORTH DAKOTA
1889
SOUTH DAKOTA
1889
NEBRASKA
1867
IOWA
1846
WISCONSIN
1848
MICHIGAN
LAKE MICHIGAN
ILLINOIS
MISSOURI
KANSAS
1861
COLORADO
1876
NEW MEXICO
1850
UTAH
1850
CALIFORNIA
1850
GREAT SALT LAKE
GREAT AMERICAN DESERT
OREGON
1859
PACIFIC OCEAN
LOUISIANA
Lake Sup.
Lake Mich.
Chicago
Dubuque
Keytesville
St Louis
Bracito
El Paso del Norte
Santa Fé
Monterey
San Francisco
Santa Clara
San Jose
San Antonio
San Miguel
San Luis Obispo
La Purisima
Pt Concepcion
Bodega
Sonoma
San Rafael
Sausalito
Colorado R.
Missouri R.
Platte R.
Arkansas R.
Rio Grande
Yellowstone R.
Columbia R.
Snake R.
Green R.
Grand R.
Cheyenne R.
Wisconsin R.
Des Moines R.
Illinois R.
Mississippi R.
Red R.
Saline R.
Kansas R.
Smoky Hill Fork
Republican Fork
Solomon Fork
Fort Leavenworth
Fort Kearney
Fort Laramie
Fort Hall
Fort Bridger
Council Bluffs
Bellevue
Nauvoo
Alton
Preston
Liberty
Independence
Westport
Oregon
Santa Fe
Chihuahua
Mohave
Humboldt L.
Great Salt Lake
Pilot Peak
Truckee R.
Carson R.
Walker L.
Owens L.
Mono L.
Tulare L.
Sutter's Fort
Sacramento
Stockton
Benicia
Monterey
Pt Concepcion
San Luis Obispo
San Miguel
San Antonio
Santa Clara
San Jose
San Francisco
Bodega
Sonoma
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Sausalito
Colorado R.
Gila R.
Rio Grande
Pecos R.
Canadian R.
Arkansas R.
Missouri R.
Platte R.
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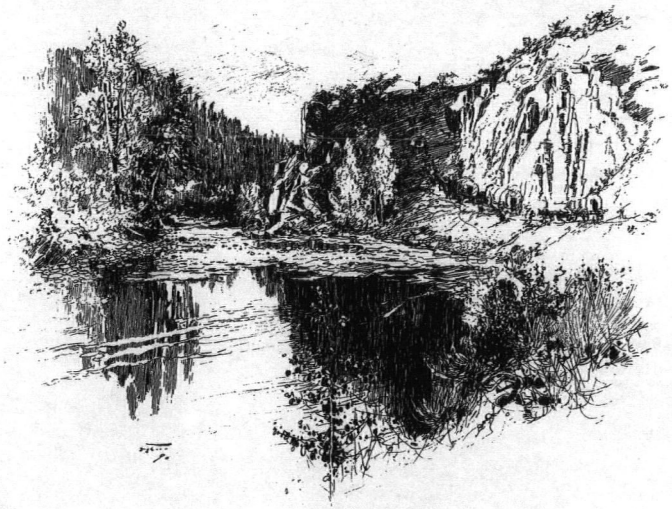
Stockton
Benicia

life and energy were again aroused by the danger that her children would starve. It was apparent that the whole company would soon be put on a short allowance of food, and the snow-capped mountains gave an ominous hint of the fate that really befell us in the Sierra. Our wagon was found to be too heavy, and was abandoned with everything we could spare, and the remaining things were packed in part of another wagon. We had two horses left from the wreck, which could hardly drag themselves along, but they managed to carry my two little brothers. The rest of us had to walk, one going beside the horse to hold on my youngest brother who was only two and a half years of age. The Donners were not with us when my father was banished, but were several days in advance of our train. Walter Herron, one of our drivers, who was traveling with the Donners, left the wagons and joined my father.

On the 19th of October, while traveling along the Truckee, our hearts were gladdened by the return of Stanton, with seven mules loaded with provisions. Mr. McClutchen was ill and could not travel, but Captain Sutter had sent two of his Indian vaqueros, Luis and Salvador with Stanton. Hungry as we were, Stanton brought us something better than food — news that my father was alive. Stanton had met him not far from Sutter's Fort; he had been three days without food, and his horse was not able to carry him. Stanton had given him a horse and some provisions and he had gone on. We now packed what little we had left on one mule and started with Stanton. My mother rode on a mule, carrying Tommy in her lap; Patty and Jim rode behind the two Indians, and I behind Mr. Stanton, and in this way we journeyed on through the rain, looking up with fear towards the mountains, where snow was already falling although it was only the last week in October. Winter had set in a month earlier than usual. All trails and roads were covered; and our only guide was the summit which it seemed we would never reach. Despair drove many nearly frantic. Each family tried to cross the mountains but found it impossible. When it was seen that the wagons could not be dragged through the snow, their goods and provisions were packed on oxen and another start was made, men and women walking in the snow up to their waists, carrying their children in their arms and trying to drive their cattle. The Indians said they could find no road, so a halt was called, and Stanton



TRUCKEE CAÑON.

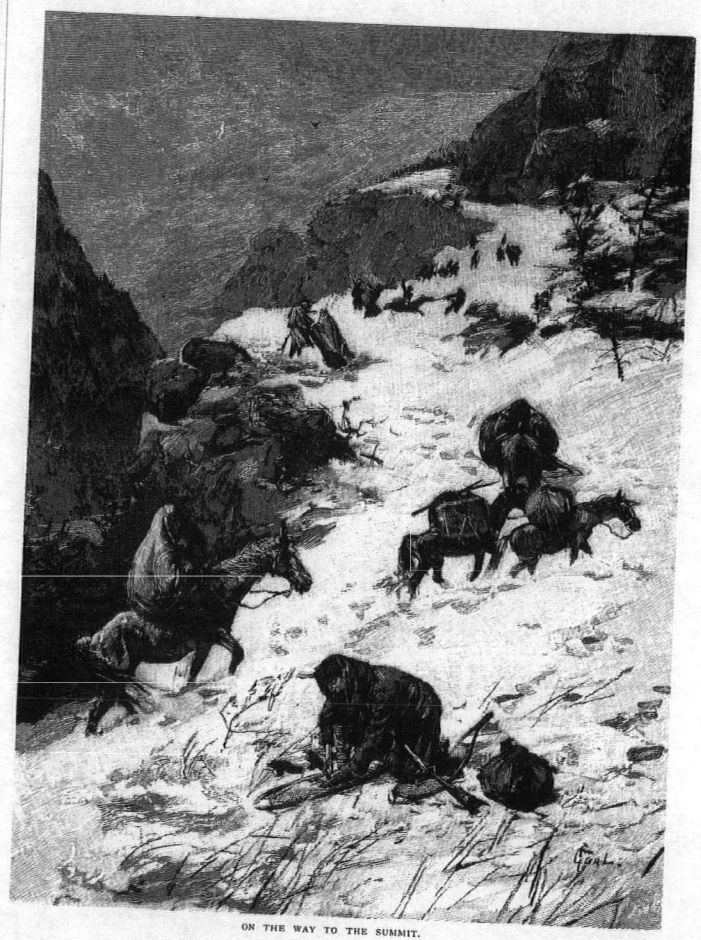
DONNER LAKE, FROM THE OLD SACRAMENTO TRAIL.

went ahead with the guides, and came back and reported that we could get across if we kept right on, but that it would be impossible if snow fell. He was in favor of a forced march until the other side of the summit should be reached, but some of our party were so tired and exhausted with the day's labor that they declared they could not take another step; so the few who knew the danger that the night might bring yielded to the many, and we camped within three miles of the summit.

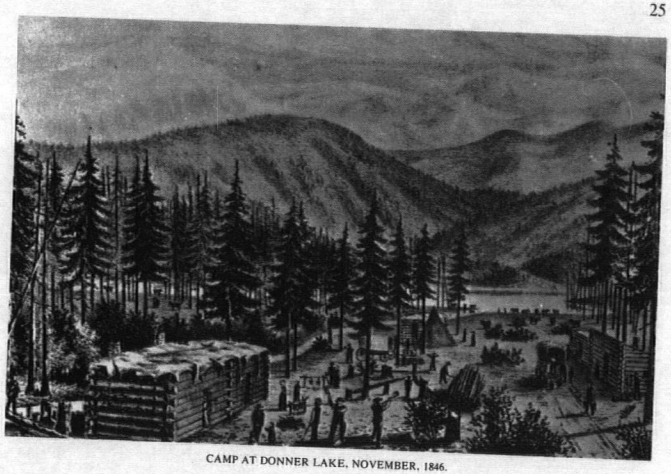
That night came the dreaded snow. Around the camp-fires under the trees great feathery flakes came whirling down. The air was so full of them that one could see objects only a few feet away. The Indians knew we were doomed, and one of them wrapped his blanket about him and stood all night under a tree. We children slept soundly on our cold bed of snow with a soft white mantle falling over us so thickly that every few moments my mother would have to shake the shawl — our only covering — to keep us from being buried alive. In the morning the snow lay deep on mountain and valley. With heavy hearts we turned back to a cabin that had been built by the Murphy-Schallenberger party two years before. We built more cabins and prepared as best we could for the winter. That camp, which proved the camp of death to many in our company, was made on the shore of a lake, since known as "Donner Lake." The Donners were camped in Alder Creek Valley below the lake, and were, if possible, in a worse condition than ourselves. The snow came on so suddenly that they had no time to build cabins, but hastily put up brush sheds, covering them with pine boughs.

Three double cabins were built at Donner Lake, which were known as the "Breen Cabin," the "Murphy Cabin," and the "Reed-Graves Cabin." The cattle were all killed, and the meat was placed in snow for preservation. My mother had no cattle to kill, but she made arrangements for some, promising to give two for one in California. Stanton and the Indians made their home in my mother's cabin.

Many attempts were made to cross the mountains, but all who tried were driven back by the



ON THE WAY TO THE SUMMIT.



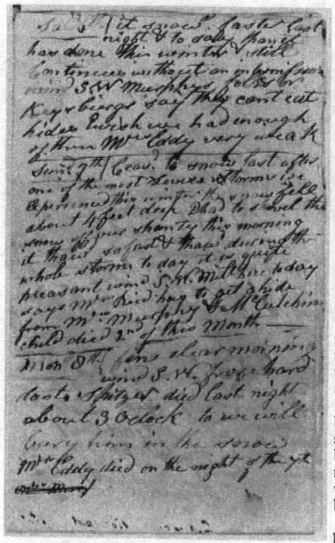
CAMP AT DONNER LAKE, NOVEMBER, 1846.

pitiless storms. Finally a party was organized, since known as the "Forlorn Hope." They made snow-shoes, and fifteen started, ten men and five women, but only seven lived to reach California; eight men perished. They were over a month on the way, and the horrors endured by that Forlorn Hope no pen can describe nor imagination conceive. The noble Stanton was one of the party, and perished the sixth day out, thus sacrificing his life for strangers. I can find no words in which to express a fitting tribute to the memory of Stanton.

The misery endured during those four months at Donner Lake in our little dark cabins under the snow would fill pages and make the coldest heart ache. Christmas was near, but to the starving its memory gave no comfort. It came and passed without observance, but my mother had determined weeks before that her children should have a treat on this one day. She had laid away a few dried apples, some beans, a bit of tripe, and a small piece of bacon. When this hoarded store was brought out, the delight of the little ones knew no bounds. The cooking was watched carefully, and when we sat down to our Christmas dinner mother said, "Children, eat slowly, for this one day you can have all you wish." So bitter was the misery relieved by that one bright day, that I have never since sat down to a Christmas dinner without my thoughts going back to Donner Lake.

The storms would often last ten days at a time, and we would have to cut chips from the logs inside which formed our cabins, in order to start a fire. We could scarcely walk, and the men had hardly strength to procure wood. We would drag ourselves through the snow from one cabin to another, and some mornings snow would have to be shoveled out of the fireplace before a fire could be made. Poor little children were crying with hunger, and mothers were cry-

DIARY OF PATRICK BREEN
(February 6-8, 1847



Satd 6th it snowed faster last night & today than it has done this winter & still Continues without an intermission wind S.W. Murphys folks or Keysburgs say they cant eat hides. I wish we had enough of them Mrs. Eddy very weak

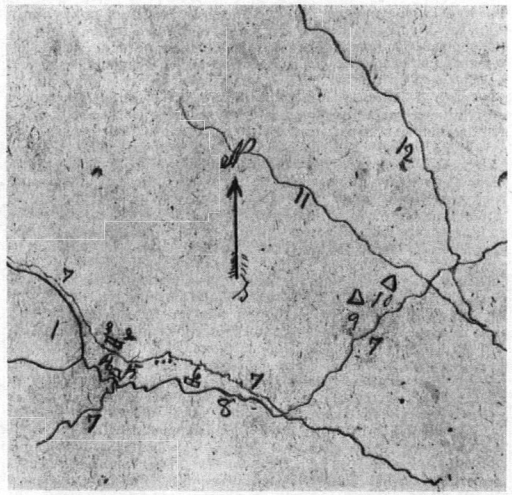
Sund. 7th Ceased to snow last [night] after one of the most Severe Storms we experienced this winter the snow fell about 4 feet deep I had to shovel the snow off our shanty this morning it thawed so fast & thawed during the whole storm. today it is quite pleasant wind S.W. Milt here today says Mrs. Reid has to get a hide from Mrs. Murphy & McCutchins child died 2nd of this month.

Mond 8th fine clear morning wind S.W. froze hard last [night] Spitzer died last night about 3 o clock to [day?] we will bury him in the snow Mrs. Eddy died on the night of the 7th.

ing because they had so little to give their children. We seldom thought of bread, we had been without it so long. Four months of such suffering would fill the bravest hearts with despair.

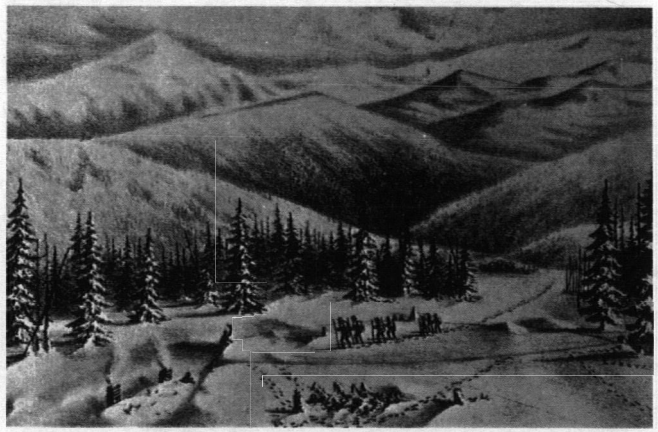
During the closing days of December, 1846, gold was found in my mother's cabin at Donner Lake by John Denton. I remember the night well. The storm fiends were shrieking in their wild mirth, we were sitting about the fire in our little dark home, busy with our thoughts. Denton with his cane kept knocking pieces off the large rocks used as fire-irons on which to place the wood. Something bright attracted his attention, and picking up pieces of the rock he examined them closely; then turning to my mother he said, "Mrs. Reed, this is gold." My mother replied that she wished it were bread. Denton knocked more chips from the rocks, and he hunted in the ashes for the shining particles until he had gathered about a teaspoonful. This he tied in a small piece of buckskin and placed in his pocket, saying, "If we ever get away from here I am coming back for more." Denton started out with the first relief party but perished on the way, and no one thought of the gold in his pocket. Denton was about thirty years of age; he was born in Sheffield, England, and was a gunsmith and gold-beater by trade. Gold has never been found on the shore of the lake, but a few miles from there in the mountain cañons, from which this rock possibly came, rich mines have been discovered.

Time dragged slowly along till we were no longer on short allowance but were simply starving. My mother determined to make an effort to cross the mountains. She could not see her children die without trying to get them food. It was hard to leave them but she felt that it must be done. She told them she would bring them bread, so they were willing to stay, and with no guide but a compass we started—my mother, Eliza, Milt Elliott and myself. Milt wore snow shoes and we followed in his tracks. We were five days in the mountains; Eliza gave out the first day and had to return, but we kept on and climbed one high mountain after another only to see others higher still ahead. Often I would have to crawl up the mountains, being too tired to walk. The nights were made hideous by the screams of wild beasts heard in the distance. Again, we would be lulled to sleep by the moan of the pine trees, which seemed to sympathize with our loneliness. One morning we awoke to find ourselves in a well of snow. During the night, while in the deep sleep of exhaustion, the heat of the fire had melted the snow and our little camp had gradually sunk many feet below the surface until we were literally buried in a well of snow. The danger was that any attempt to get out might bring an avalanche



1. Lake
2. Old Cabin
3. Keseberg's addition
4. Big Rock
5. Murphy's Cabin
6. Grave's Cabin
7. Roads
8. Donner Creek
9, 10. Donner tents
11, 12. Creeks

MAP OF DONNER PARTY CAMPS BY A SURVIVOR, W.C. GRAVES, 18 YEARS OLD IN 1847.



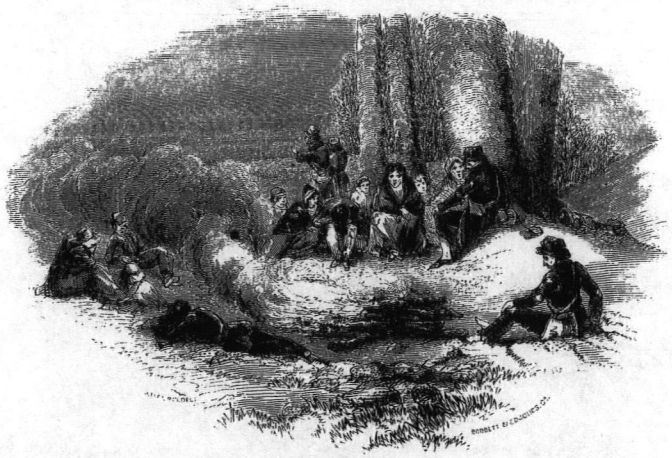
ARRIVAL OF THE FIRST RELIEF PARTY ON FEBRUARY 19, 1847

upon us, but finally steps were carefully made and we reached the surface. My foot was badly frozen, so we were compelled to return, and just in time, for that night a storm came on, the most fearful of the winter, and we should have perished had we not been in the cabins.

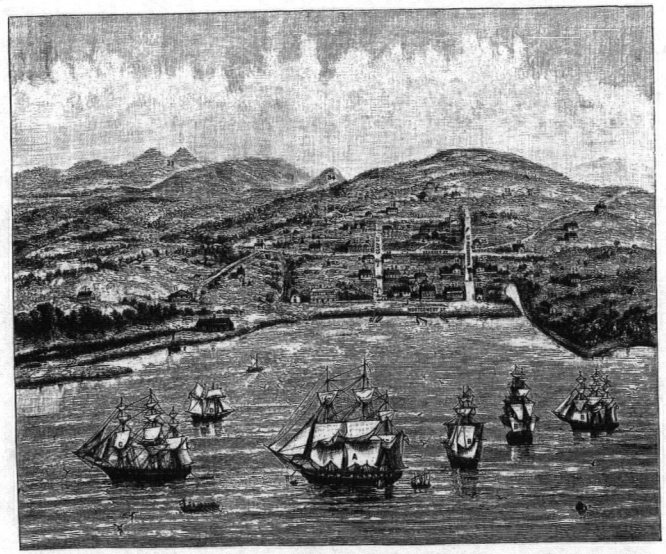
We now had nothing to eat but raw hides and they were on the roof of the cabin to keep out the snow; when prepared for cooking and boiled they were simply a pot of glue. When the hides were taken off our cabin and we were left without shelter Mr. Breen gave us a home with his family, and Mrs. Breen prolonged my life by slipping me little bits of meat now and then when she discovered that I could not eat the hide. Death had already claimed many in our party and it seemed as though relief never would reach us. Baylis Williams, who had been in delicate health before we left Springfield, was the first to die; he passed away before starvation had really set in.

I am a Catholic although my parents were not. I often went to the Catholic church before leaving home, but it was at Donner Lake that I made the vow to be a Catholic. The Breens were the only Catholic family in the Donner party and prayers were said aloud regularly in that cabin night and morning. Our only light was from little pine sticks split up like kindling wood and kept constantly on the hearth. I was very fond of kneeling by the side of Mr. Breen and holding these little torches so that he might see to read. One night we had all gone to bed — I was with my mother and the little ones, all huddled together to keep from freezing — but I could not sleep. It was a fearful night and I felt that the hour was not far distant when we would go to sleep — never to wake again in this world. All at once I found myself on my knees with my hands clasped, looking up through the darkness, making a vow that if God would send us relief and let me see my father again I would be a Catholic. That prayer was answered.

On his arrival at Sutter's Fort, my father made known the situation of the emigrants, and Captain Sutter offered at once to do everything possible for their relief. He furnished horses and provisions and my father and Mr. McClutchen started for the mountains, coming as far as possible with horses and then with packs on their backs proceeding on foot; but they were finally compelled to return. Captain Sutter was not surprised at their defeat. He stated that there were no able-bodied men in that vicinity, all having gone down the country with Frémont to fight the Mexicans. He advised my father to go to



THE CAMP OF DEATH.



YERBA BUENA (SAN FRANCISCO) IN MARCH. 1847.

Yerba Buena, now San Francisco, and make his case known to the naval officer in command. My father was in fact conducting parties there — when the seven members of the Forlorn Hope arrived from across the mountains. Their famished faces told the story. Cattle were killed and men were up all night drying beef and making flour by hand mills, nearly 200 pounds being made in one night, and a party of seven, commanded by Captain Reasen P. Tucker, were sent to our relief by Captain Sutter and the alcalde, Mr. Sinclair. On the evening of February 19th, 1847, they reached our cabins, where all were starving. They shouted to attract attention. Mr. Breen, clambered up the icy steps from our cabin, and soon we heard the blessed words, "Relief, thank God, relief!" There was joy at Donner Lake that night, for we did not know the fate of the Forlorn Hope and we were told that relief parties would come and go until all were across the mountains. But with the joy sorrow was strangely blended. There were tears in other eyes than those of children; strong men sat down and wept. For the dead were lying about on the snow, some even unburied, since the living had not had strength to bury their dead. When Milt Elliott died,— our faithful friend, who seemed so like a brother,— my mother and I dragged him up out of the cabin and covered him with snow. Commencing at his feet, I patted the pure white snow down softly until I reached his face. Poor Milt! it was hard to cover that face from sight forever, for with his death our best friend was gone.

On the 22d of February the first relief started with a party of twenty-three — men, women and children. My mother and her family were among the number. It was a bright sunny morning and we felt happy, but we had not gone far when Patty and Tommy gave out. They were not able to stand the fatigue and it was not thought safe to allow them to proceed, so Mr. Glover informed mama that they would have to be sent back to the cabins to await the next expedition. What language can express our feelings? My mother said that she would go back with her children — that we would all go back together. This the relief party would not permit, and Mr. Glover promised mama that as soon as they reached Bear Valley he himself would return for her chil-

MRS. BRINN IN TRIBULATION.

dren. Finally my mother, turning to Mr. Glover said, "Are you a Mason?" He replied that he was. "Will you promise me on the word of a Mason that if we do not meet their father you will return and save my children?" He pledged himself that he would. My father was a member of the Mystic Tie and mama had great faith in the word of a Mason. It was a sad parting — a fearful struggle. The men turned aside, not being able to hide their tears. Patty said, "I want to see papa, but I will take good care of Tommy and I do not want you to come back." Mr. Glover returned with the children and, providing them with food, left them in the care of Mr. Breen.

With sorrowful hearts we traveled on, walking through the snow in single file. The men wearing snow-shoes broke the way and we followed in their tracks. At night we lay down on the snow to sleep, to awake to find our clothing all frozen, even to our shoe-strings. At break of day we were again on the road, owing to the fact that we could make better time over the frozen snow. The sunshine, which it would seem would have been welcome, only added to our misery. The dazzling reflection of the snow was very trying to the eyes, while its heat melted our frozen clothing, making them cling to our bodies. My brother was too small to step in the tracks made by the men, and in order to travel he had to place his knee on the little hill of snow after each step and climb over. Mother coaxed him along, telling him that every step he took he was getting nearer papa and nearer something to eat. He was the youngest child that walked over the Sierra Nevada. On our second day's journey John Denton gave out and declared it would be impossible for him to travel, but he begged his companions to continue their journey. A fire was built and he was left lying on a bed of freshly cut pine boughs, peacefully smoking. He looked so comfortable that my little brother wanted to stay with him; but when the second relief party reached him poor Denton was past waking. His last thoughts seemed to have gone back to his childhood's home, as a little poem was found by his side, the pencil apparently just dropped from his hand.

Captain Tucker's party on their way to the cabins had lightened their packs of a sufficient quantity of provisions to supply the sufferers

on their way out. But when we reached the place where the cache had been made by hanging the food on a tree, we were horrified to find that wild animals had destroyed it, and again starvation stared us in the face. But my father was hurrying over the mountains, and met us in our hour of need with his hands full of bread. He had expected to meet us on this day, and had stayed up all night baking bread to give us. He brought with him fourteen men. Some of his party were ahead, and when they saw us coming they called out, "Is Mrs. Reed with you? If she is, tell her Mr. Reed is here." We heard the call; mother knelt on the snow, while I tried to run to meet papa.

When my father learned that two of his children were still at the cabins, he hurried on, so fearful was he that they might perish before he reached them. He seemed to fly over the snow, and made in two days the distance we had been five in traveling, and was overjoyed to find Patty and Tommy alive. He reached Donner Lake on the first of March, and what a sight met his gaze! The famished little children and the death-like look of all made his heart ache. He filled Patty's apron with biscuits, which she carried around, giving one to each person. He had soup made for the infirm, and rendered every assistance possible to the sufferers. Leaving them with about seven days' provisions, he started out with a party of seventeen, all that were able to travel. Three of his men were left at the cabins to procure wood and assist the helpless. My father's party (the second relief) had not traveled many miles when a storm broke upon them. With the snow came a perfect hurricane. The crying of half-frozen children, the lamenting of the mothers, and the suffering of the whole party was heart-rending; and above all could be heard the shrieking of the storm King. One who has never witnessed a blizzard in the Sierra can form no idea of the situation. All night my father and his men worked unceasingly through the raging storm, trying to erect shelter for the dying women and children. At times the hurricane would burst forth with such violence that he felt

LEAVING THE WEAK TO DIE.

MEETING OF PATTY AND HER FATHER

alarmed on account of the tall timber surrounding the camp. The party were destitute of food, all supplies that could be spared having been left with those at the cabins. The relief party had cached provisions on their way over to the cabins, and my father had sent three of the men forward for food before the storm set in; but they could not return. Thus, again, death stared all in the face. At one time the fire was nearly gone; had it been lost, all would have perished. Three days and nights they were exposed to the fury of the elements. Finally my father became snow-blind and could do no more, and he would have died but for the exertions of William McClutchen and Hiram Miller, who worked over him all night. From this time forward, the toil and responsibility rested upon McClutchen and Miller.

The storm at last ceased, and these two determined to set out over the snow and send back relief to those not able to travel. Hiram Miller picked up Tommy and started. Patty thought she could walk, but gradually everything faded from her sight, and she too seemed to be dying. All other sufferings were now forgotten, and everything was done to revive the child. My father found some crumbs in the thumb of his woolen mitten; warming and moistening them between his own lips, he gave them to her and thus saved her life, and afterward she was carried along by different ones in the company. Patty was not alone in her travels. Hidden away in her bosom was a tiny doll, which she had carried day and night through all of our trials. Sitting before a nice, bright fire at Woodworth's

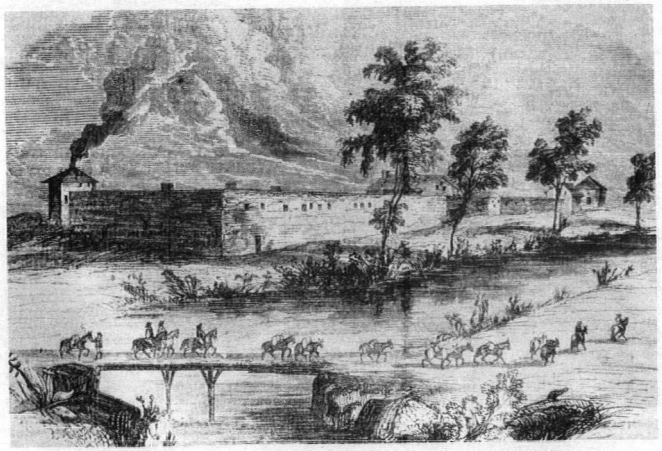
JOHN A. SUTTER

PATTY'S DOLL

Camp, she took dolly out to have a talk, and told her of all her new happiness.

There was untold suffering at that "Starved Camp," as the place has since been called. When my father reached Woodworth's Camp, a third relief started in at once and rescued the living. A fourth relief went on to Donner Lake, as many were still there — and many remain there still, including George Donner and wife, Jacob Donner and wife and four of their children. George Donner had met with an accident which rendered him unable to travel; and his wife would not leave him to die alone. It would take pages to tell of the heroic acts and noble deeds of those who lie sleeping about Donner Lake.

Most of the survivors, when brought in from the mountains, were taken by the different relief parties to Sutter's Fort, and the generous hearted captain did everything possible for the sufferers. Out of the eighty-three persons who were snowed in at Donner Lake, forty-two perished, and of the thirty-one emigrants who left Springfield, Illinois, that spring morning, only eighteen lived to reach California. Alcalde Sinclair took my mother and her family to his own home, and we were surrounded with every comfort. Mrs. Sinclair was the dearest of women. Never can I forget their kindness. But our anxiety was not over, for we knew that my father's party had been caught in the



VIEW OF CAPTAIN SUTTER'S FORT NEAR SACRAMENTO CITY, CALIFORNIA, 1846.

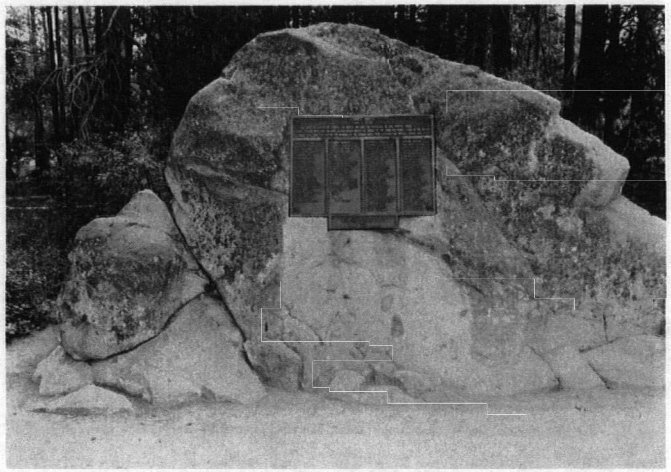
storm. I can see my mother now, as she stood leaning against the door for hours at a time, looking towards the mountains. At last my father arrived at Mr. Sinclair's with the little ones, and our family were again united. That day's happiness repaid us for much that we had suffered; and it was spring in California.

Words cannot tell how beautiful the spring appeared to us coming out of the mountains from that long winter at Donner Lake in our little dark cabins under the snow. Before us now lay, in all its beauty, the broad valley of the Sacramento. I remember one day, when traveling down Napa Valley, we stopped at noon to have lunch under the shade of an oak; but I was not hungry; I was too full of the beautiful around me to think of eating. So I wandered off by myself to a lovely little knoll and stood there in a bed of wild flowers, looking up and down the green valley, all dotted with trees. The birds were singing with very joy in the branches over my head, and the blessed sun was smiling down upon all as though in benediction. I drank it in for a moment, and then began kissing my hand and wafting kisses to Heaven in thanksgiving to the Almighty for creating a world so beautiful. I felt so near God at that moment that it seemed to me I could feel His breath warm on my cheek. By and by I heard papa calling, "Daughter, where are you? Come, child, we are ready to start, and you have had no lunch," I ran and caught him by the hand, saying, "Buy this place, please, and let us make our home here." He stood looking around for a moment, and said, "It *is* a lovely spot," and then we passed on.

Donner Lake, just 22 years after that fateful winter, was served by the transcontinental railroad in 1869. In this 1879 view, wagon road, telegraph, and hotel were also present. Note, however, the snowsheds on the rail line (upper part of view) and the steep pitches of roofs designed to cope with the severe snowfalls here.

Tall stumps at site of Donner camp at Alder Creek, indicating approximate depth of snow when cut.

Before leaving Donner Lake with a rescue party, Mrs. Graves cached her gold coins. But a few days later she died while crossing the mountains, and the secret passed with her. Her lost hoard was discovered on the north shore of the lake in 1891.



The face of this rock formed the north end and the fireplace of the Murphy cabin. General Stephen W. Kearny, on June 22, 1847, buried under the middle of the cabin the bodies found in the vicinity. The plaque bears the names of the members of the Donner Party.

THE DONNER PARTY

FAMILY GROUPS — **DEATHS**

BREEN-DOLAN — (four wagons). From Keokuk, Iowa, Patrick and Margaret Breen, both 40; their seven children, John, 14; Edward, 13; Patrick, Jr., 11; Simon, 9; Peter, 7; James, 4; Isabella, 1. Patrick Dolan, 40, of Keokuk. *The entire Breen family survived. Dolan perished with the snowshoe party.* 1

DONNER — (six wagons). From Springfield, Ill, George, 62, and Tamsen Donner, 45; their three children, Frances, 6; Georgia, 4; Eliza, 3. Donner's daughters by a previous marriage, Elitha, 14, and Leanna, 12. *All five girls survived; George died at Alder Creek and Tamsen at the lake camp.* 2

From Springfield, Ill., Jacob, 65, and Elizabeth Donner, 45; their five children, George, 9; Mary, 7; Isaac, 5; Samuel, 4; Lewis, 3. Elizabeth Donner's sons by a previous marriage, Solomon, 14, and William Hook, 12. *The parents, Samuel, and Lewis died at Alder Creek; Isaac Donner and William Hook perished with the relief parties.* 6

Employees — Noah James, 20; Samuel Shoemaker, 25. *Shoemaker died at Alder Creek.* 1

EDDY — (one wagon). From Belleville, Ill., William H., 28, and Eleanor Eddy, 25; their two children, James, 3, and Margaret, 1. *Mrs. Eddy and the children died at the lake camp.* 3

GRAVES-FOSDICK — (three wagons). Franklin Graves, Sr., 57, and Elizabeth Graves, 47; their nine children, Mary, 20; William, 18; Eleanor, 15; Lovina, 13; Nancy, 9; Jonathan, 7; Franklin Ward Graves, Jr., 5; Elizabeth, 1; Sarah, 22, and her husband Jay Fosdick, 23. *Franklin Graves, Sr., and Fosdick died with the snowshoe party. Mrs. Graves and Franklin Ward Graves, Jr., died with the relief parties. The baby Elizabeth died after reaching Sutter's Fort.* 4

Employee — John Snyder, 25, *slain in knife fight with Reed.* 1

KESEBERG — (two wagons). From Berleburg, Westphalia, by way of Ohio, Louis, 32, and Philippine Keseberg, 23; their two children, Ada, 3, and Louis, Jr., 1. *Louis, Jr., perished at the lake camp, and Ada died with a relief party.* 2

Employee — Karl Burger, 30, from Germany; *died at the lake camp.* 1

MCCUTCHEN — (no wagons). From Missouri, William, 30, and Amanda McCutchen, 24; their child, Harriet, 1. *The baby died at the lake camp.* 1

MURPHY-FOSTER-PIKE — (two wagons). From St. Louis, Lavina Murphy, 50; her seven children, Landrum, 15; Mary, 13; Lemuel, 12; William, 11; Simon, 10; Sarah, 23, her husband William M. Foster, 28, and their child, George, 4; Harriet, 21, her husband William M. Pike, 25, and their children, Naomi, 3, and Catherine, 1. *Mrs. Murphy, Landrum, Catherine Pike, and George Foster died at the lake camp. Lemuel perished with the snowshoers. Pike was shot to death accidentally.* 6

REED — (Three wagons). From Springfield, Ill., James Frazier, 46, and Margaret Reed, 32; their three children, Martha (Patty), 8; James, Jr., 5; Thomas, 3; and Virginia Backenstoe Reed, 13, Mrs. Reed's daughter by previous marriage; also Sarah Keyes, Mrs. Reed's mother. *Sarah Keyes died on the trail in Kansas; otherwise the entire Reed family survived.* 1

Employees — Milton Elliott, 28; Walter Herron, 25; James Smith, 25; Baylis Williams, 24; his half-sister, Eliza Williams, 25. *Elliott and Williams died at the lake camp, Smith at Alder Creek.* 3

WOLFINGER — (one wagon). From Germany, Mr. and Mrs. Wolfinger, about the age of the Kesebergs. *Wolfinger apparently slain by Reinhardt and Spitzer.* 1

MISCELLANEOUS

ANTONIO, a young herder from New Mexico, traveling with Donners and Reeds. *Perished with snowshoers.* 1

JOHN DENTON, 28, Sheffield, England, traveling with Donners. *Died with relief party.* 1

LUKE HALLORAN, 25, Missouri, traveling with Donners; *died after party's escape from Wasatch Mountains.* 1

HARDCOOP, past 60, a Belgian from Cincinnati, traveling with Kesebergs. *Left to die on desert.* 1

LUIS AND SALVADOR, Indians from Sutter's Fort. *Members of snowshoe party shot to death by Foster.* 2

AUGUSTUS SPITZER AND JOSEPH REINHARDT, about 30, from Germany; one wagon. *Spitzer perished at lake camp, Reinhardt at Alder Creek.* 2

CHARLES TYLER STANTON, 35, Chicago, traveling with Donners. *Died with snowshoers.* 1

JEAN BAPTISTE TRUBODE, a young teamster from New Mexico, picked up by Donners. 0

Survived, 47; perished, 42.

ROSTER OF LIFE

Ages are given in parentheses for individuals who were children in 1847, even though their portraits show them as adults. Sex is indicated (M or F) for adults.

James F. Reed

SURVIVORS WHO LEFT THE TRAIN EARLY

Walter Herron. (M)
William McCutcheon. (M)
Hiram Miller. (M)

Mary Graves

SURVIVOR OF BANISHMENT

James F. Reed. (M)

Mrs. Margaret W. Reed

SURVIVORS OF THE EXPEDITION OF FORLORN HOPE (SNOWSHOE PARTY-DECEMBER)

William H. Eddy. (M)
William Foster. (M)
Amanda McCutcheon. (F)
Sarah Murphy Foster. (F)
Harriet Murphy Pike. (F)
Sarah Graves Fosdick. (F)
Mary Graves (F)

W.C. Graves

Patty Reed

SURVIVORS OF THE FIRST RELIEF EXPEDITION (FEBRUARY)

Mrs. Margaret Reed. (F)
James Reed Jr. (5)
Virginia Reed. (12)
Elitha Donner. (14)
Leanna Donner. (12)
Eliza Williams. (F)
Noah James. (M)
Edward Breen. (13)
Simon Breen. (9)
Mary Murphy. (13)
William Murphy. (11)
Naomi Pike. (3)
Mrs. Phillipine Keseberg. (F)
William Graves (M)
Mrs. Wolfinger (F)
Lovina Graves. (13)
Eleanor Graves. (15)

Georgia Donner

Lewis Keseberg

SURVIVORS OF THE SECOND RELIEF EXPEDITION (EARLY MARCH)

Patrick Breen (M)
Solomon Hook. (14)
Mary Donner (7)
Patty Reed (8)
Thomas Reed. (3)
Patrick Breen. (M)
Isabella Breen. (1)
Nancy Graves. (9)
Margaret Breen (F)
John Breen (14)
Patrick Breen, Jr. (11)
James Breen (4)
Peter Breen (7)
Jonathan Graves. (7)
Elizabeth Graves (Jr.). (1) (died at Sutter's Fort)

Eliza Donner

Patrick Breen

SURVIVORS OF THE THIRD RELIEF EXPEDITION (MID-MARCH)

Simon Murphy (10)
Frances Donner. (6)
Georgia Donner (4)
Eliza Donner (3)
John Baptiste Trubode. (M)

John Breen

Margaret Breen

SURVIVOR OF THE FOURTH RELIEF EXPEDITION (MID-APRIL)

Lewis Keseberg

Edward Breen

Patrick Breen Jr.

Peter Breen

Isabella Breen

James Breen

Simon Breen

ROSTER OF DEATH

Ages are given in parentheses for individuals who were children in 1847. Sex is indicated (M or F) for adults.

Of the 23 men, 15 women, and 41 children who reached Donner Lake; over 2/3 of the men died (and most died early), about 1/3 of the children died (beginning in the middle of the ordeal), but just 1/4 of the women (or 4) died (and most died near the end of the entrapment). Were the men inspired by the heroics of the age and by their natural impatience to over-exertion? Were food portions doled out equally in spite of size? Or was the reason physiological? Or was it psychological?

ON THE TRAIL

Sarah Keyes. (F)
Luke Halloran. (M)
John Snyder. (M)
Mr. Hardcoop. (M)
Mr. Wolfinger. (M)
William N. Pike. (M)

AT THE DONNER LAKE-ALDER CREEK CAMPS IN DECEMBER

Jacob Donner. (M)
Baylis Williams. (M)
James Smith. (M)
Samuel Shoemaker. (M)
Joseph Rhinehart. (M)
Charles Burger. (M)

Charles Stanton

ON THE EXPEDITION OF THE FORLORN HOPE (SNOWSHOE PARTY-DECEMBER)

Charles Stanton. (M)
Jay Fosdick. (M)
Patrick Dolan. (M)
Franklin Graves, Sr. (M)
Lemuel Murphy. (12)
Antonio. (M)
Luis. (M)
Salvador. (M)

AT THE DONNER LAKE-ALDER CREEK CAMPS IN JANUARY AND FEBRUARY

Landrum Murphy. (15)
Lewis Keseberg Jr. (1)
Eleanor Eddy. (F)
Margaret Eddy. (1)
Augustus Spitzer. (M)
Milton Elliott. (M)
Harriet McCutcheon. (1)
Catherine Pike. (1)

ON THE FIRST RELIEF EXPEDITION (FEBRUARY)

William Hook. (12)
Ada Keseberg. (3)
John Denton. (M)

AT THE DONNER LAKE-ALDER CREEK CAMPS IN MARCH

George Foster. (4)
James P. Eddy. (3)
Elizabeth Donner. (F)
George Donner. (M)
Lewis Donner. (3)
Samuel Donner. (4)
Lavina Murphy. (F)
Tamsen Donner. (F)

ON THE SECOND RELIEF EXPEDITION (EARLY MARCH)

Mrs. Elizabeth Graves (F)
Franklin Ward Graves Jr. (5)
Isaac Donner. (5)

ON THE THIRD AND FOURTH RELIEF EXPEDITIONS

no deaths

AT SUTTER'S FORT

Elizabeth Graves. (1)

Track of Donner Party across Great Salt Lake Desert, oxen bones, and abandoned wagons.

ROSTER OF RELIEF PARTIES

MEMBERS OF FIRST RELIEF

Aquila Glover.
R. Moutrey.
Joseph Sells.
John Rhodes.
Daniel Rhodes.
Captain Reasin P. Tucker.
Edward Coffeymire.

SECOND RELIEF

James Reed.
Hiram Miller.
Britt Greenwood.
Howard Oakley.
Charles Stone.
John Turner.
Matthew Dofar.
Charles Cady.
Nicholas Clark.
William McCutchen.

(Selim E. Woodworth, Joseph Gendreau and others went partway and guarded supplies in camp.)

Nicholas Clark

William McCutchen

THIRD RELIEF

James P. Eddy.
William Foster.
John Stark.
William Thompson.
Howard Oakley.
Hiram Miller.
Charles Stone.

FOURTH RELIEF

Captain Fallon.
Captain Reasin P. Tucker.
John Rhodes.
Edward Coffeymire.
Keyser.
Jo Foster.

Running gear of a Donner Party wagon abandoned in Great Salt Lake Desert

It is as the commonplace or typical just distorted that the Donners must be seen. Beyond Fort Laramie every stretch of the trail they traveled, at some time during the history of emigration, saw one or another party just escaping disaster, and a number of stretches saw some parties not altogether escaping it. Just west of the Salt Desert the Donners crossed the trail of the Bartleson party of 1841, who had no trail at all across the Sierra, wandered lost for weeks in the mountains, starving, and just contrived to live till they could reach the universal succorer, John Augustus Sutter. The cabin which some of the Donner party camped in at the foot of Truckee Lake had been built two years before, in November, 1844, by the Stevens-Murphy party in the fear that they might have to spend the winter in the snow. One member of that party, Moses Schallenberger, did in fact spend the winter in that cabin alone. . . . Finally, there is not much difference between dying of starvation in the snow and dying of exhaustion, as some of their former companions had done before they reached Truckee Lake, or dying of pneumonia in the Oregon rains, as others of their former companions did a month after the Donners turned back from the divide. Death on the trail was a hazard of emigration. You took your chances. Our concern with the Donners comes from the fact that the common chance turned against them.

Bernard DeVoto,
The Year of Decision:1846
Houghton Mifflin

The DONNER PARTY

DONNER MEMORIAL STATE PARK

THE DONNER PARTY

The United States was only seventy years old, and growing fast. Tales of the wonders of California were beginning to filter back to the East; no one doubted that this Mexican state would soon become part of the Union. Better yet, the news was out that a wagon could go directly to California over the new California Trail.

Among the many who could not resist the tales of sunshine, warm winters, and bountiful land were brothers George and Jacob Donner, prosperous Illinois farmers in their 60s. In April 1846 they and their families headed west in six wagons, accompanied by their friend James Reed, a wealthy cabinetmaker, and his family. They joined a stream of people of all sorts, rich and poor, bound for California.

By early summer, this stream had reached the plains west of the Mississippi River. As Tamsen Donner, George Donner's wife, wrote to a friend, the journey so far had been both beautiful and pleasant. But at a fork in the trail beyond South Pass (Wyoming), the

stream divided. Several families wanted to try the 350-mile "shortcut" via Fort Bridger advocated by explorer Lansford Hastings.

George Donner was elected wagonmaster of the group that chose to follow Hastings' advice, so it became known as the Donner Party. It eventually numbered 20 wagons and 89 people — among them the Irish-born Breen family, the Murphys, the Graves, and the family of Lewis Keseberg, a well-educated German who spoke four languages.

As it turned out, the "shortcut" was no timesaver. The group wore itself out hacking a 36-mile road through the Wahsatch Mountains wilderness; next, most of the oxen and cattle were lost on a desolate, waterless 80-mile trek across the Great Salt Lake Desert, and some wagons had to be abandoned. By the time the party returned to the main California Trail in eastern Nevada, they were a full three weeks behind the wagon train they had left.

Truly alone, the party turned from a cooperative group into a cluster of bickering families, and James

Reed knifed a man in a heated argument. Though he had killed in self-defense, sentiment ran high against Reed and he was banished from the party to go ahead to California alone. From necessity, his wife and children stayed with the group.

Late October found the Donner Party in Truckee Meadows (Reno) – exhausted, demoralized, bitter, harassed by Paiute Indians, and out of food. Then Charles Stanton, a bachelor who had gone ahead to obtain provisions, arrived from Sutter's Fort (Sacramento) with seven pack mules loaded with beef and flour. He also brought news of a very difficult mountain crossing ahead, so the group rested for nearly a week to gather strength.

The delay proved fatal. Winter came early that year to the Sierra Nevada, and by the time the party reached Donner Lake there was snow on the ground. The George and Jacob Donner families became snowbound while stopped to fix a broken wagon axle at Alder Creek, six miles from the lake; the rest of the party made three tries to cross Donner Pass but finally had to admit defeat.

THE CAMP

Still hoping that a thaw would open the pass, the group at the lake nevertheless settled in for the winter. The Murphys built a cabin against a large boulder, while the Breens and Kesebergs partitioned an existing cabin into two rooms, one for each family. The Reeds and Graves built a two-room log cabin further downstream and the Donners, with snow swirling about them, built two teepee-style hide-covered brush shelters against trees.

Food was again scarce, and efforts at hunting and fishing in the snowy mountains were unsuccessful. Families with the most provisions could hardly be induced to share with the less fortunate; individual instincts for survival were already showing.

In December, with snow getting steadily deeper, ten men and five women left the camp on crude snowshoes made from oxbows and rawhide strips, carrying only six days' skimpy rations. They were making a desperate attempt to get to Sutter's Fort. Five days out, Stanton – the only one who knew the route – became exhausted and snowblind; to avoid delaying the group, he stayed behind to die. The others quickly became lost and sat out a three-day

Christmas storm huddled under blankets to keep from freezing. Four more died and, with no other food, the rest ate their bodies.

One month later, two men and all five women, all extremely emaciated, arrived at a settlement. They had survived on one deer and the bodies of those who had failed.

THE RESCUERS

Relief was slow in coming for the Donner Party. There was a war going on, and men to take food into the snowy mountains were hard to find. Finally, in late February, the first party of seven men reached the cabins buried in the snow at Donner Lake. Several half-starved people emerged as the rescuers approached, and one woman asked, "Are you men from California, or do you come from Heaven?" They had been reduced to eating the last of their oxhides and ox bones; several deaths from starvation had already occurred.

Gathering 21 able-bodied survivors, including some children, the rescue party started back west across the mountains. Having eaten all its food, this group was fortunate to meet a second party led by the once-banished James Reed. After a brief reunion with his wife, Reed pressed on to the cabins and was reunited with his young children on March 1.

At the Donner tents, Reed saw his old friend, George Donner, dying from a badly infected cut on the hand. And he saw evidences of cannibalism at both the cabins and the Donner camp.

Leaving five survivors at the cabins and six at the Donner camp, Reed started back with the rest; Tamsen Donner insisted on remaining with her ailing husband. Themselves reduced to starvation, Reed's party was forced to wait out another three-day blizzard at a spot later known as Starved Camp, scene of more deaths and cannibalism.

After the blizzard, Reed and the strongest members of the group pressed on and met a third relief party of four men at Emigrant Gap. These men, among them the two male survivors of the December snowshoers, continued on to Donner Lake to bring out the last able survivors. Of those who were still able to move about only Lewis Keseberg, who was suffering from a bad foot, and Tamsen Donner, still refusing to leave her husband, remained behind.

In April 1847 – only a year after the Donners had started out with such high hopes from Illinois – a last party came to salvage the emigrants' belongings. Keseberg alone was still alive; he had been subsisting for several days on Tamsen Donner's body.

The Donner story is a tragic page in the saga of westward migration. Poor judgment, heroic sacrifice, struggle for survival – and plain bad luck – all played their part. Though other parties had made it through Donner Pass intact, the winter of 1846-47 was one of the worst ever recorded in the Sierra; the base of the monument at Donner Memorial State Park, standing 22 feet high, shows the depth of the snow that trapped the travelers. Only 47 of the 89 members of the party, including the entire Breen and Reed families, survived the terrible ordeal; most of the survivors carried out their original intention of settling in California. The experience indelibly marked the lives of some of the survivors; for instance, Keseberg, hounded to the end of his life by accusations of having murdered Tamsen Donner, died a tormented half-crazed man.

For a more complete account of this historic episode, read these books, available at the Emigrant Trail Museum, Donner Memorial State Park:

Ordeal by Hunger, George R. Stewart; copyright 1936, 1960, Pocket Books, New York.

History of the Donner Party. Charles F. McGlashan; copyright 1880, 1940, Stanford University Press.

Donner Memorial State Park
P.O. Box 549
Truckee, California 95734

department of parks & recreation
State of California–the Resources Agency
P.O. Box 2390 ◦ Sacramento, 95811
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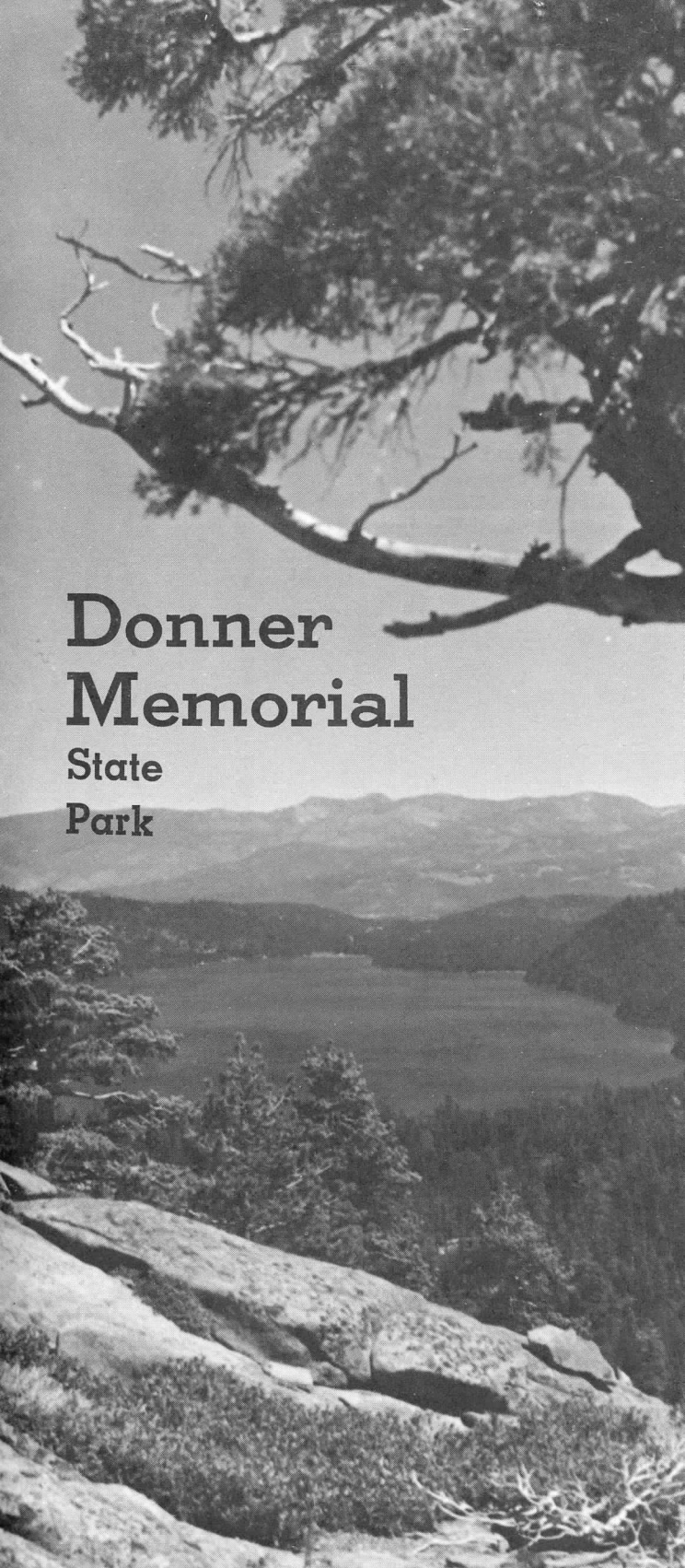

Donner
Memorial
State
Park

The park is located on the east edge of beautiful Donner Lake two miles west of Truckee in Nevada and Placer Counties at an altitude of 5,950 feet. The turnoff on Interstate 80 is well signed.

The Park

Donner Memorial State Park is the center of a grand vacation area. In the summer, the more popular activities are horseback riding, water skiing, fishing, boating, hiking, camping and picnicking. In the winter, skiing and other snow sports are popular in the general area. Squaw Valley State Recreation Area and Plumas Eureka State Park are not far from Donner, and both offer excellent winter sports and snowplay.

In the park there are 154 campsites and 50 picnic sites. It borders 8,500 feet of Donner Lake and has about 7,900 feet of Donner Creek frontage. Trout and kokanee challenge fishermen.

The park is dotted with lodgepole and Jeffrey pine, with some white and red fir at higher ele-

vations. Bird life is varied, and fauna includes deer, squirrels, chipmunks, porcupines, bear, raccoon, beaver. Because of the altitude there is no poison oak.

Hikers especially enjoy the park trails and those in the surrounding areas. Visitors are cautioned not to remove down wood which is part of the natural condition. Decayed vegetation forms humus which assists the growth of live trees and plants.

Fire danger is acute. Do not start fires except in assigned camp areas or fireplaces. State park regulations may be obtained from the ranger on duty.

Please observe caution and safety practices while boating, swimming, or fishing at Donner Lake.

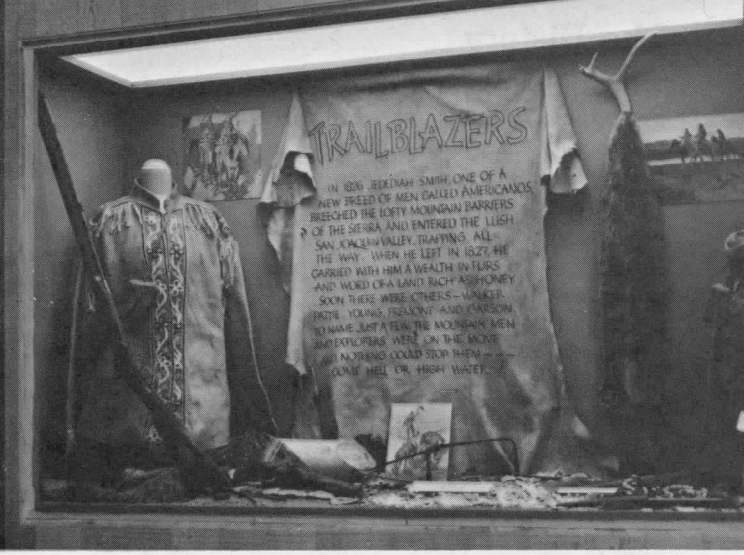
The Museum

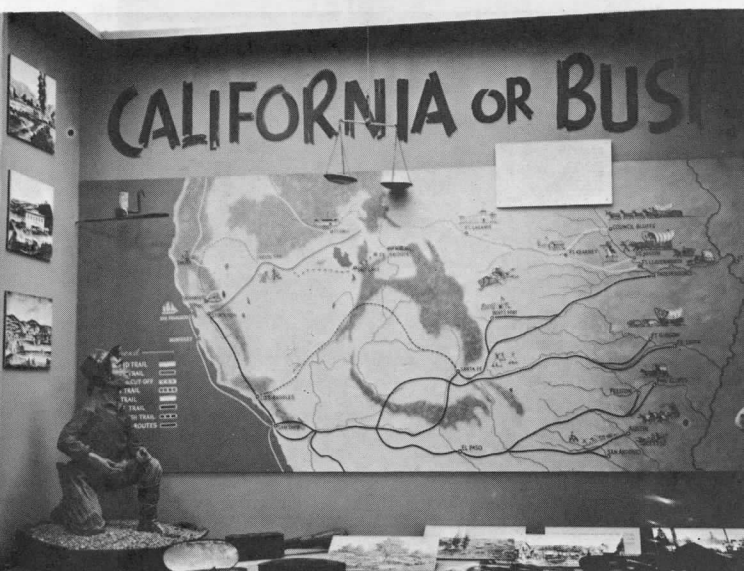
The Emigrant Trail Museum was designed to combine natural history with human history. The story is told of man's conquest of the Sierra Nevada and the dramatic story of the Donner Party. Relics of the Donner ordeal are on display.

The museum is the focal point for the park's historic background and serves as the hub for most of the interpretive trails through the park.

Also told is the story of the construction of the first transcontinental railroad and of the men who accomplished this feat. Pictured are the mountain man, the miner, the lumber industry supplying timbers for the snowsheds and mines, the persistent Chinese who built the railroad through the Sierra Barrier, the freighter, the settler, and the "Big Four" men of western railroad fame.

The geological story of the Sierra Nevada including the life zones, the climatic conditions, wildlife, and the Indians is related and depicted.


TRAILBLAZERS
IN 1826 JEDEDIAH SMITH, ONE OF A NEW BREED OF MEN CALLED AMERICANOS, BRECHED THE LOFTY MOUNTAIN BARRIERS OF THE SIERRA AND ENTERED THE LUSH SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY, TRAPPING ALL THE WAY. WHEN HE LEFT IN 1827, HE CARRIED WITH HIM A WEALTH IN FURS AND WORD OF A LAND RICH ASIDHONEY. SOON THERE WERE OTHERS — WALKER, PATTIE, YOUNG, FREMONT AND CARSON TO NAME JUST A FEW. THE MOUNTAIN MEN AND EXPLORERS WERE ON THE MOVE NOTHING COULD STOP THEM — COME HELL OR HIGH WATER.


CALIFORNIA OR BUST
EL PASO

The History

In April 1846, a wagon party set out from Springfield, Illinois, for California. Among its members were the organizers, George and Jacob Donner and James F. Reed, and their families. In May when the wagon train reached Independence, Missouri, others joined including the Breen family. There were about 100 persons going west from Illinois, Iowa, Tennessee, Missouri and Ohio.

That spring there had been a great westward movement of emigrants. The formation of the company known as the Donner Party was accidental. The gathering together of so many emigrants into one train was not occasioned by any preconcerted arrangement. In many instances small parties heard of a large train either ahead or behind and by hastening their pace or waiting for a few days they were able to join the larger groups.

Many wagons stayed with the Donner Party for only a portion of the journey and parted before reaching Donner Lake where one of the most heart-breaking tragedies of western pioneer history occurred.

Present at the June 6, 1918 dedication of the Donner Monument, which commemorates the ill-fated expedition, were Nevada Governor Boyle, Martha "Patty" Reed, Frances Donner, Eliza Donner, and California Governor Stephens.

The Donner Party became known as such when 20 wagons left the main train at Little Sandy River, Wyoming, July 20, 1846, and George Donner was elected captain.

Eight days after leaving the main train, the party reached Fort Bridger, where Lansford W. Hastings was to meet the train and act as guide over a cutoff believed to be a short route to California. However, due to the lateness of the season, Hastings formed another train and started out. The Donner Party at this point had a choice —take the Oregon Trail and rejoin the larger wagon train or follow Hastings, which they did.

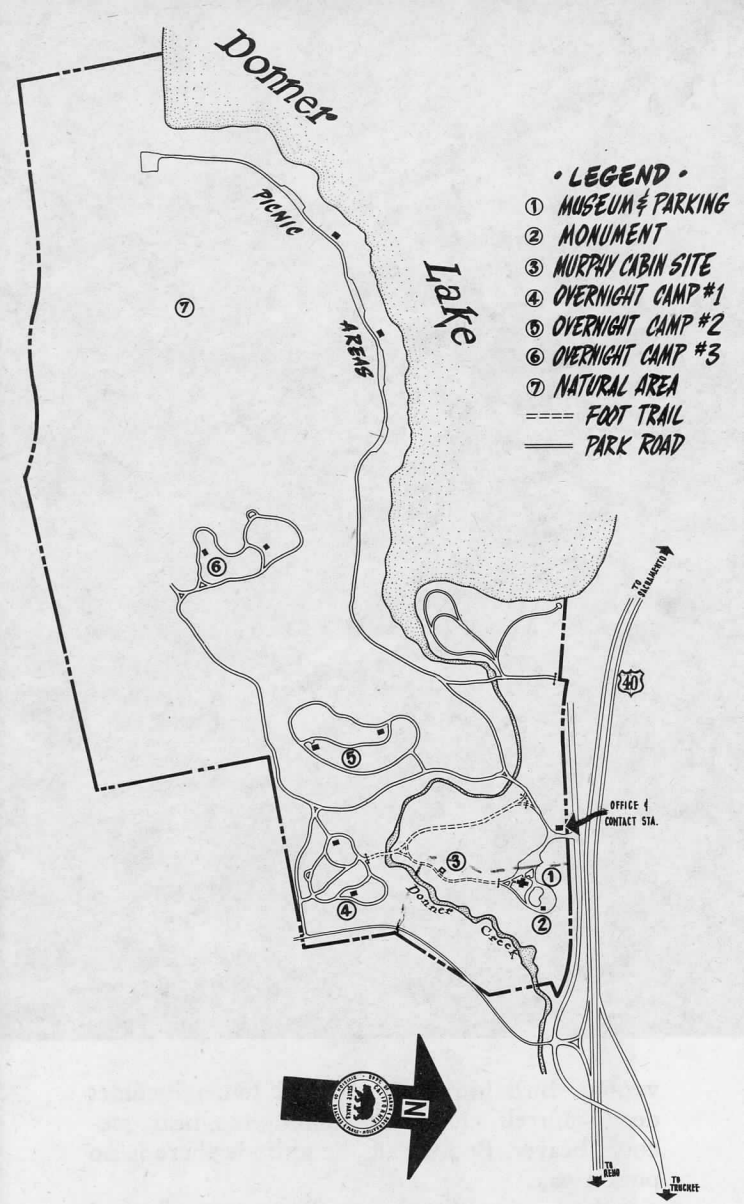
Hastings left a letter at the Red Fork crossing of Weber River stating that he found the Weber Canyon stretch of trail far worse than expected. Reed, who sought out Hastings, was advised to route the Donner Party differently. Hastings vaguely pointed out another trail across the Wasatch Mountains.

It was rough country. The party had to literally hack its way through, and at one point it took 21 days to cover 36 miles. The party arrived at the edge of the Salt Lake Desert early in September.

The desert took a heavy toll of oxen and wagons; household goods were abandoned to lighten the loads; tempers were short, and there was a growing concern for the future. Food was scarce. Stanton and McCutcheon were sent across the desert to get supplies at Sutter's Fort. Stanton, with two Indians and seven pack mules loaded with food, furnished by Captain Sutter, offered temporary relief to the party which by this time had reached the Truckee River (the present site of Wadsworth, Nevada).

Upon reaching the Sierra, winter closed in quickly and snow stopped the progress of the train. Shelters were hastily constructed. The Donner family, unable to reach the main group, set up camp independently on Alder Creek using tents and brush shelters.

Before rescue parties were able to reach the snowbound party in the early part of 1847, 42 persons had died on the trek to California—most of them in the winter snows either attempting to escape or in the miserable shelters. There were 47 survivors.



STATISTICS

Acres	**353**
Campsites	**154**
Picnic Sites	**50**
Elevation	**5,950**
Fishing	**Trout, Kokanee and Catfish**

State of California–Resources Agency
Department of Parks and Recreation

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