Dear Membership:

We are having a very active year for the Society. While many new docents have volunteered their time to keep the jail open to the public, we are still in need of more. We anticipate many more visitors this next season with the new sidewalk project underway and the proposed restaurant at the east end of Jibboom Street. We need to be able to take advantage of this increased foot traffic. It would also be wonderful if we could start having the museum open during the week.

We expanded the Old Timers' Picnic this year to include some historical displays from the Railroad Society, William Passmore Camp 25, Sons of Union Veterans and other participants.

We have created some wonderful partnerships with Alpine Mounting, Friends of the Library and the Truckee Donner Railroad Society to be able to expand the knowledge base of our wonderful town. Our partnership with the Friends of the Library has created a wonderful speaker program "Truckee's History Alive!" which has been well attended.

Truckee Donner History Society attended the 2014 Rib Fest, the Truckee Tahoe Air Fair and had a booth at the August 7th Truckee Thursdays.

We re-did the Constable Cell exhibit in the Old Jail Museum and upgraded the Titus Display, Ice Harvest and Hobart Mills. We have created a mini-exhibit at the Research Library for the USS Donner and the USS Truckee.

The Old Jail Museum was re-stained, cleaned and painted this year by the Parks Foundation on this project. We were involved in the new sidewalk project by the Town of Truckee and were given monies to improve the driveway and the garden area of the Old Jail Museum.

We have had many professionals in all types of fields come to us for their continued support of the Society and its goals of keeping the McCluskey butterfly collection in Truckee and available for viewing. We are currently working with the Sierra Parks Foundation on this project.

We are eternally grateful to all our members who each year dig a bit deeper and share with us so we may continue to grow and develop a stronger Society. We cannot keep this wonderful growth spur in place without all your support - be it monies or time. Last but by no means least, I need to give a heartfelt THANK YOU to all the wonderful volunteers that donate their time to the Society. Whether it is as a docent for the jail, a researcher at the Library, a worker bee for our many projects or activities, you are all an integral part of the heart and soul of the society. It is said that it takes a village to raise a child and in this case it takes a village to continue the growth of the Truckee Donner Historical Society and you are our Village. To anyone who may have a few hours a month and need to fill them please let us know and we will fit our needs around your schedule and interests.

I am honored to call myself your President. Thank you for your continued support.

Chaun L. Mortier
President

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sept. 18
Truckee History Alive! Series, 7 p.m., Vet’s Hall
September 23* - Membership Dinner at The Lodge Restaurant & Pub in Tahoe Donner 6 p.m.
* Please note the change in date from Sept. 10
(More event info on page 7)

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* Old Jail Museum Staining Project - p. 3
* Reno Iceman Returns to Truckee - p. 4
* Truckee Ice Company - p. 5
* Birdhouses Help Truckee's Past - p. 5
Roundhouse / Birdfeeder article continued from page 5

We have many wonderful artists in Truckee. Maybe it's the mountain air or the good water. The Historical Society has been the benefactor of this art on many occasions as can be seen in the Old Jail Museum with our collection of Raphael Jolly Paintings. The uniqueness of the talent never ceases to amaze us. To honor the artists that love Truckee so much that they preserve Truckee in their art, we bring you this for your pleasure. If you haven't seen Greg Zirbel's historical artwork please visit his website www.NeatTweets.biz.

The Third Roundhouse

When trains needed help getting over Donner Summit, this Southern/Central Pacific Roundhouse built in Truckee back in 1882 could house 22 locomotives that could help get the freight over the summit.

This birdfeeder model of the Roundhouse "houses" up to four gallons of seed. While the roof lifts straight off to allow easily fill the feeder, both the front and rear doors open to allow pass through the summit.

Historical tidbits: the square nails used as the door knobs on the West side of the birdhouse were salvaged from the oldest surviving farmhouse in Sonoma County, the Stone Farm house built in 1865 which now houses the offices of the Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation. On the east entrance door the old square nails were salvaged from the Truckee area. The metal roof is an old spare tire cover salvaged from the wreckage that's under the Rainbow bridge on Donner Summit. The Granite boulders outside the doors represent the Rocklin Granite with which the original building was constructed. For more details about the Third Roundhouse, please visit the History section of the Truckee Donner Historical Society's website. Also visit the Truckee Donner Railroad Society.

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

Editor's Note: For those researchers out there, this editor discovered accidentally that our own local Truckee Library on Levan Avenue has a two volume hard bound index of topics cited in historic records of the old Truckee Republican newspaper. We're talking the 1800s! It was interesting reading to explore more about one of the sources cited in Tom Macaulay's Truckee Ice Company article in this issue of Echoes and happened to stumble upon the binders. The Truckee Library binders indicate that while they were donated by Denny Dickinson to the Library, the indices were actually complied under Gordon Richard's direction. If you're looking for historic information, you might want to check these out. Of course, they complement the adjacent antiquated microfilm technology, but nonetheless, the articles are accessible, readable, and I'm told able to be printed. Check out the possibilities.

TRUCKEE HISTORY ALIVE! PROGRAM CONTINUES

If you missed either of the Truckee History Alive! series in March with Captain John Sutter (David Fenimore) appearing or in June with Virginia Reed Murphy (Cathryn Fairlig) take note of the third program in the series, September 18 with Frank X. Mullen as Caleb Greenwood at Veterans Hall at 7 p.m. Full details will be emailed to those on our TDHS eNews mailing list.

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Ice wars raged in the Truckee basin. The business had proved to be profitable, thus drawing more and more producers to the area. In years of poor weather there was a small crop, resulting in high prices. When the winter was cold, these same companies harvested large crops which they had to sell for whatever price they could command.

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Looking forward to hearing from our wonderful volunteers about exploring this unique opportunity.

Chaun Mortier
RENO ICE MAN RETURNS TO TRUCKEE

Just another glorious summer day at the Joseph Research Library with the “Reno Iceman,” Tom Macaulay and Dennis Beeghly, standing outside the TDHS Joseph Research Cabin. Photo courtesy of Barbara Czerwinski.

Want to get involved and unsure how? If you are in town, please make a trip to the Joseph Research Library any Sunday from Noon to 4 p.m. or Thursday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. located at 10115 Donner Trail Road, Truckee. Do you have time to volunteer from home on your computer please email info@truckeehistory.org. Or please visit http://neattweets.biz/.

Denny Dickinson, TDHS member and donor of books and maps, including a select computation of 13 articles related the Chinese in the Truckee area. Denny will be relocating to Santa Fe to be with family and work with the Habitat for the Humanities this month.

Dennis Beeghly is the TDHS’s treasurer extraordinaire. He lives in Sparks, NV and comes every week and until last October also brought Tom for the Thursday 10 to 2 research library openings. Dennis is also the railroad and photograph expert. He also builds museum exhibits (check out the Titus Family exhibit at the Old Jail Museum). Dennis’ wife, Linda, frequently makes decorative cakes for TDHS special events. It is worth attending these events just for a piece of her cake. Barbara Czerwinski and Billie Cornell

RESEARCH REQUEST OF JULY 8, 2014

Question: I recently was told this section of land is called the Polaris Tract and read a very small blurb on the Internet about an old town named Polaris. I would be interested in reading more and seeing any photos of the old buildings or ice works. Where is the best place to start looking?

This question caught researcher TDHS President Chaun Mortier’s interest and she too began to wonder about more details as she knows a great deal about the Tahoe Ice Company but just not that much about Polaris itself. So as Chaun learned, so shall our readers.

Polaris was a siding for the Central Pacific Railroad Company and was the shipping point for the natural ice harvested and stored by the Tahoe Ice Company and then the National Ice Company. The capacity of the Ice House at Polaris totaled 12,000 tons and the house was divided into three rooms. A crew of men working the ice was estimated between 60 to 100 men with wages 90 cents an hour and the crews worked a nine hour day. The last ice harvest occurred in the early 1920s.

The manager’s house was located on the north side of the river across from the Ice plant and is affectionately remembered by early Truckeeties as the “Pink Palace.” It was the last remnants of the ice industry and was razed in 1982.

Editors’ Note: Serendipitously, “Reno Iceman!” was visiting the Joseph Research Cabin just after this research request came in. As luck would have it, Reno Iceman Macaulay presented an unpublished article about the Truckee Ice Company. The article is published herein in part, to be continued in the next Echoes later this year.

TRUCKEE ICE COMPANY AT MARTIS CREEK

The Truckee Ice Company was incorporated on July 10, 1884 in San Francisco by M.L. Cheney, Clark W. Crocker, Thomas McAluy, George W. Scott, and A.W. Sisson. A letterhead for the company lists each man as a director and A.W. Sisson as President, C.W. Crocker as Vice President, G.W. Scott as Secretary and treasurer, and T. McAluy as Superintendent.

Superintendent McAluy was instructed to proceed to Martis Creek, Nevada County, and construct an ice works. The budget for this work was established at $30,000.

The Truckee Republican first reported on work at Martis Creek in June of 1885. Twenty men had steady employment constructing a substantial granite and concrete dam with a base of forty feet, a height of forty to fifty feet, and a length of 200 to 300 feet, one of the finest dams in that portion of the county. It would create a pond of not less than ten acres, favorably situated for ice purposes. The work, including ice houses, would be completed during the summer and the plan ready for ice harvests during the following winter.

Since the plan was located on the south side of the Truckee River, and the Central Pacific Railroad Road was on the north side, a railroad bridge would be built to provide access to the ice house.

The capacity was about 5,000 tons, making it one of the smallest plants in the Truckee basin.

There is no evidence that the railroad bridge was ever built. However, the Truckee River was bridged by the Flume of Sisson Wallace & Company, and this bridge may have been used by the Truckee Ice Company. This 32” V flume was built in 1872 and extended two and one quarter miles up Martis Creek. It was later extended to four miles.

The Richardson Brothers flume which was built in July 1874, one and one half miles long, connected with the Sisson Wallace flume, giving a total length of five and one half miles.

LITTLE KNOWN TRUCKEE FACTS

1 In 1882, Southern Pacific built a Roundhouse that could house 22 locomotives that helped to transport freight over Donner Summit. See photos below.

2 Elle Ellen built a water works comprising of a ditch and flume system from Alder Creek to Trout Creek to supply enough water to operate his three mile flume from his second sawmill (Tahoe Donner) to his lumber yard at the rail yard. c. 1877. Source: Nevada County Tax Records.

SOUTHERN PACIFIC ROUNDOUSE

(Above) Southern Pacific Roundhouse, Truckee, CA. c. 1920s. Photo courtesy of Truckee Donner Historical Society.

(Above) Truckee SPRR Roundhouse Birdhouse, designed by Greg Zirbel. Greg designs Historical Landmark Replica Birdhouses. For more information, please visit http://neattweets.biz/.
RENO ICE MAN RETURNS TO TRUCKEE

Just another glorious summer day at the Joseph Research Library with the “Reno Iceman,” Tom Macaulay and Dennis Dickinson and his wife Betty, Library Research Volunteer Denny Macaulay and TDHS Treasurer and Photo Archivist, Dennis Beeghly. Macaulay is TDHS’ historian emeritus and one of the foremost natural ice industry historians.

Want to get involved and unsure how? If you are in town, please make a trip to the Joseph Research Library any Sunday from Noon to 4 p.m. or Thursday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. located at 10115 Donner Trail Road, Truckee. Do you have time to volunteer from home on your computer please email info@truckeehistory.org. Or last but not least, leave a message at 530-582-0893 (Note: the phone number is only checked twice per week when the library is open).

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Editor’s Note: After a cursory review of some online articles, this editor located other references to Polaris in Tom Macaulay’s article, Forgotten Names Along the Truckee in the Winter 2012, p. 5. Issue 1 of the TDHS Echoes Newsletter; and this link (http://bit.ly/Wd8tAF) in the Tahoe Tribune, Dec. 19, 2001, also by Tom Macaulay, Ghosts in the Truckee River Canyon. Further, we discovered another Macaulay article entitled “Truckee and the Ice Harvest,” published in the first 1981 edition book Fire & Ice A Portrait of Truckee, pp. 32-37.

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Continued on page 6

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Continued from page 1

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Additional information:

Who: Frank X. Mullen
What: The third of the Truckee’s History Alive! Series for 2014
When: Thursday, Sept. 18th, 2014, at 7 p.m.
Where: Veterans Hall, 10214 High Street in Truckee
Why: To delight and enlighten the Truckee-Tahoe community with a local history program series
Contact: The Truckee Library 530-582-7846
How: Portrayal of Caleb Greenwood performed in Chautauqua-style.

In addition to the scheduled events listed in the Calendar of Events on page 1, there are several other events whose dates have not yet been set. Please check our website at www.truckeehistory.org for those dates to be announced. Those events may include:

* Railroad Society History Day
* Donner Hike
* Mystic Hike
* Field Trip to Pyramid Lake Tribe Museum

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I am honored to call myself your President.  

CHAUN L. MORTIER

PRESIDENT’S CORNER

SEPTEMBER 2014  ISSUE 3

CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Headquarters:  816 N. 14th St., Suite 209, San Francisco, CA 94111

THE TWENTY-FOURTH GREAT CALIFORNIA HISTORICAL CONVENTION

September 15-18, 2015  San Francisco, CA

For more information on the 2015 Great California Historical Convention, please see the website:

www.GCHC.org

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www.truckeehistory.org  |  info@truckeehistory.org  |  (530) 582-0893

We are a non-profit organization. $25 Sustaining $75 Contributing $100 Other Donation $_____

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Museum?  Yes / No

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