

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



What is this???? see p. 2



Truckee Donner Historical Society
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www.truckeehistory.org

ECHOES FROM THE PAST

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

JUNE 2016 ISSUE 2

Here it is Springtime again! I am very pleased to thank Village Nursery through our membership for their gracious donation of well over 85 plants and flowers to the Old Jail Museum Garden. All the plants have been planted and it seems most, if not all, are thriving. (see p. 2)

Within a few seasons we will have a flowering barrier from the street above us and our erosion problem has been eradicated by that planting and the creation of terraced levels to the west of the 'Apple Tree.' (see photo)

We were also given two beautiful birdhouses created by Greg Zirbel. (see p. 2)

I have to thank Greg Zirbel, Karl Pape, Ron Rettig for all their help and support to bring the garden to the state it is in now.

We have been spending a lot of time inside the Jail Museum preparing it for the season. We have already given several private and school tours and the new items on display have been very well received.

On a financial note, due to your continued support through memberships, donations and sales, our Profit and Loss Statement for 2015 was within \$25.00 of balancing out! We started a Money Market account which continues to grow. Barring any unforeseen expenses, we are within budget. And we have all of you to THANK. We have also greeted over 5,600 visitors to the Old Jail Museum.

Prior to being officially open for the season, we brought in over \$500 in donations while we were working on the exhibits. This was just from people stopping and wanting to see the museum. This has created discussion about possibly opening a few days early next spring if the weather is cooperating.

So all in all, we are moving along a very active 'stream' of events. I am very pleased to be continuing my Presidency and am proud of the Society. Marty's Café has again agreed to either cater or hold our membership meeting at the café. That will occur in September.

So to all, have a great spring/summer season and tell your friends to stop by the Old Jail Museum and see our new exhibit on Hobart Mills and the finding of the Time Capsule - or stop by on Thursdays at the Research Cabin.

Respectfully, Chaun Mortier, President



CALENDAR

Events will be posted online
at our website at this link

(<http://www.truckeehistory.org/tdhs-calendar-of-events.html>)

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Echoes From The Past Newsletter

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

TDHS does not accept responsibility for the accuracy of the information in these articles.

TDHS retains the right to republish submitted material. Please contact TDHS for permission to use any content in this publication.

Notice to Members

In 2015, the TDHS Board of Directors approved a change in membership renewal to reflect the Society's bi-annual renewal schedule - January or July. For specific details, please visit our website.



Photos of the Community Garden at the Old Jail Museum; (above left) "Jail Birds" birdhouse donated by Greg Zirbel



QR CODE or the squirley-looking black & white icon on the front page

Some of you may be familiar with these strange looking icons. The black & white crosshatched icon on the front page represents our new website at truckeehistory.org. If you have a "smart" phone or iPad with a 'QR Reader,' all you need do is scan your device OVER the icon and you should be directed to our website. And what would one use this for? On any printed material, you could 'scan any QR code' and be taken to their website immediately. In our case, you can go immediately to our truckeehistory.org website and see the Calendar for upcoming events.

SEEKING SUMMER DOCENTS FOR OLD JAIL MUSEUM

Summer is here and starting Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day, Truckee's Old Jail Museum will be open on the weekends, holidays and Truckee Thursdays - docent staff permitting. We are still looking for docents to give visitors jail tours, some of the history of the jail and museum and Truckee in general. You don't have to be an expert in the history. The Historical Society trains and mentors docents. If you are interested please call 530-582-0893 and tell us how to contact you or e-mail the "docent master," Karl Pape at kdpage@me.com.

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.

THE MEANING BEHIND THE NAME ESSEX

Beginning in the earliest days of Truckee, the term Essex has been used many time for businesses. Even our neighbors to the east used the term for a town. Essex in Washoe County no longer exists and from information located¹, it was in the Northwest area of Mount Rose. This was the home of the Essex Ice Company² and the Mutual Ice Company³. The town was located in the Verdi Area⁴.

In Truckee, the use of the term was originally for the Essex Saloon⁵. After the fire of July 28, 1868, Brazil Brickell, brother of E.J., built the Essex Saloon. It was located next to Burckhalter's Store on Front Street. As was the standard for the day, businesses or residences were on the second floor. An advertisement in the *Truckee Tribune* for September 1868, shows that Melvin W. Wilson, Dentist/Surgeon had an office in the Brickell House above the Essex Saloon. By October, 1868 it had changed hands and the proprietors were now "Stephens & Page."⁶ By December of 1868, a restaurant had been added to the rear of the saloon. Also in December it was reported that 52 of 72 buildings in Truckee were selling liquor.

By June of 1869 there were reports that the Essex Barber Shop had enlarged with the addition of the Essex Bathing House and the Essex Lodging house. It is unknown if these shops were all in the same area.

In January 1878, the saloon again changed hands and was now owned by Johnnie H. Richardson⁷. In the Month of June 1878, Ed Baldwin opened a fruit market in front of the saloon⁸.

Moving on to 1882, the Saloon again changed hands to a Charles Williamson who then added a stage and concert hall⁹. In November, the *Truckee Republican* reported Mr. Williamson had "gone below to procure women to entertain in Essex Hall."¹⁰ By December of that same year, Mr. Williamson had disbanded his troupe and the Saloon belonged to Ed Hussey and George Williard. This partnership did not last long and in October of 1883 only Mr. Williard was running the now, New Essex Saloon. The saloon closed in January of 1884 with all fixtures and stock sold at Auction.¹¹

Our tale of the Essex finds its way into 1887 when John Nagle reopened the Saloon.

This all goes to show a good name doesn't stay down for long. Oh, was does Essex mean? It is the name of County in England immediately north-east of London. The root is in the Old English Eastseaxe or East Saxons and has been around since AD 527. A good name with a long history. [See our website to see a 1946 California State Automobile Association map showing ESSEX.]

By Chaun Mortier | References:

1. <http://www.eachtown.com/places/Essex-historical;847682.html>
2. Daily Nevada State Journal, May 29, 1883
3. Reno Evening Gazette, April 9, 1879
4. Nevada Historical Society
5. W.F. Edwards, Tourist Guide & Directory, 1883, pg. 17
6. Truckee Tribune, October 3, 1868
7. Truckee Republican, January 12 1878
8. Truckee Republican, June 26, 1878
9. Truckee Republican, April 26 1882
10. Truckee Republican, November 15 1882
11. Truckee Republican, January 9, 1884

1867 TELEGRAPH INSULATORS

Somedays our research volunteers never quite know what they'll find. We discovered this image tucked away in an envelope from a "J.F.," postmarked September 1986, of a telegraph insulator with this note written on the back: "Brook's Pat. 1867 Telegraph Insulators. Paralleled the C.P.R.R. when it was built from 1863 to May 10, 1869. The word "DONE" was tapped on the telegraph at Promontory, Utah. See Photo of Meeting of the Railroads of the C.P.R.R. and the Union Pacific. This post and cross arm was a rare find. Found between Prosser Creek and Boca in a rocky area among the rocks on the north side of the railroad. You [TDHS] have one

of the Insulators in the museum [Cabin]." JF. For more information, please see the link below,



JOHN LAWRENCE CORBETT'S PHOTO COLLECTION

By Heidi Sprout

Over the past few years, several of our intrepid volunteer researchers, notably Ron Rettig and President Chaun Mortier, have been in the painstaking process of scanning and digitizing upwards of 7,000 images which were donated to the Truckee-Donner Historical Society (TDHS) when photographer John L. Corbett passed away in 1995. There are well over 10,000 images which were donated, so we are more than half-way through this monumental undertaking.

John L. Corbett was a local photographer here in Truckee in the 1960s - 1990s. While many of Corbett's photos in his *Sierra Sun* column "John Corbett's Historical Photo Album" were from other photographers from long ago, we stumbled on a few that are representative of life in Truckee in times gone by. If anyone out there can put a date on any of these images, we welcome your input.

Corbett was born in 1918 in Moscow, Idaho, and attended the University of California at Berkeley for a time - just long enough to learn what he needed to know for photography - and then dropped out. He was first introduced to photography when, at the age of 12, Kodak ran a promotional campaign and gave every 12 year old child a camera and a roll of film - for free. Among many part-time employment jobs using his photographic skills, he made: training films for the Army during World War II; color prints for Standard Oil's national fuel advertisements in the late 1940s; ran an 8 mm movie camera for Truckee High School's football team to analyze plays; and photographed food labels for national manufacturers cans. He also supervised the photo department of the U.S. Ordnance Department, wrote standard practice manuals, and helped develop a process to X-Ray shells and bombs. Corbett travelled California extensively making post cards and photographs for various ski areas and eventually became the photographer for Squaw Valley activities. He held an unquenchable interest in collecting arrowheads and held an extensive collection. Corbett taught local photography classes, and a host of other

odd jobs to support himself. He portrayed Uncle Sam in two decades of Truckee July 4th parades, and also portrayed Santa Claus at Truckee's Tree Lighting ceremony. Corbett also served as Grand Marshall for one of the July 4th parades. He served 14 years on the Tahoe Donner Public Utility District Board of Directors who honored him at a special ceremony at Tahoe Forest Hospital's Extended Care Center when he lost his two year battle with cancer.

While we do not have Corbett's photos available for public viewing online - yet - they are available at the Joseph Research Cabin to view. Here are several representative samples of his work - all taken of various Truckee places and events. There are more of Corbett's images uploaded to our website under Supplemental Content for this issue of ECHOES.

In future ECHOES, we hope to showcase other image collections from various donors.



John Corbett as Uncle Sam on Truckee's Fourth of July parade

Due to ever-increasing costs in printing and mailing, commencing in 2017, TDHS will no longer be mailing out our quarterly newsletter ECHOES FROM THE PAST. To receive our ECHOES newsletter in the future, please look for the latest ECHOES which will be posted on our website at this link

(<http://www.truckeehistory.org/newsletters-and-search-tools.html>) and, as a TDHS member, you will get an email so advising you of this availability.



1968 Re-Dedication of the Donner Memorial at Donner Memorial State Park - 50 years



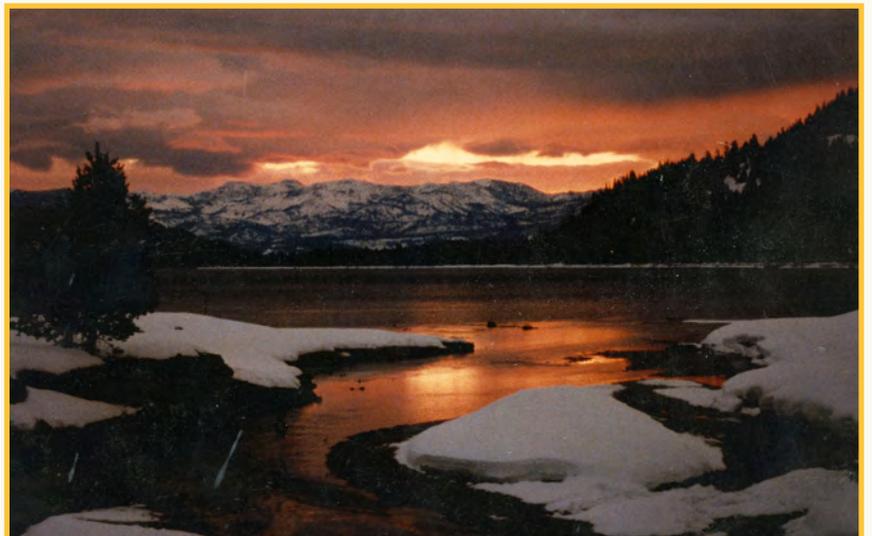
View of Donner Lake and Rainbow Bridge from high atop Donner Summit



License Plate garage, Karl Kuttel, at the foot of Hilltop, just below Cottonwood, on Brockway Road

(Right) Donner Lake Sunset

(Below) Snow sculpture



ELLE ELLEN'S CABINET REFINISHED

By Dennis Beeghly

One of the oldest mill men in the state of California was Elle Ellen, the owner of Trout Creek lumber mill, and the V flume that connected his mill with downtown Truckee.

A bit of Ellen's life history is in order. Ellen was born in 1823 in Hanover, Germany, and eventually landed in New Orleans in May 1845, where he resumed his cabinet-making work. In April of 1850, Ellen joined the 'tide of emigration' to California and wound up in El Dorado County for a time where he started a sawmill, but later established himself in Truckee in 1868. He built the third lumber mill that operated on the Truckee River. Ellen held a large contract with the Central Pacific Railroad for moving railroad ties and shed timber. He has been referred to as Truckee's "King of Lumber." Ellen suffered several destructive fires at his mills, and sadly, was not insured. Nonetheless, references to Ellen's determination reveal a man of "indefatigable perseverance that has carried him through business vicissitudes" and he lived a comfortable life in his later years.

While we do not know exactly where this cabinet was built, we are certain it belonged to Elle Ellen as his unique signature - *Elle Ellen Truckee* - appears underneath the marble top. Streamline Painting & Finishes of Reno, Nevada, painstakingly restored the mahogany cabinet over a period of 10 months. The cabinet was built with square nails. In 2013, the McCall family of Sparks, Nevada, donated the cabinet to the Truckee-Donner Historical Society when they discovered the signature. The McCalls were related to the family who owned the Ellen house before a fire destroyed the home. Later, the McCalls contacted us at the TDHS.

The cabinet is an extremely valuable historic treasure for TDHS as we have no other representative item from the Ellen home.



We thought you'd like to see a "before" and an "after" picture. | References:

* W.F. Edwards, *Tourists' Guide & Directory to the Truckee Basin*, 1883, p. 41

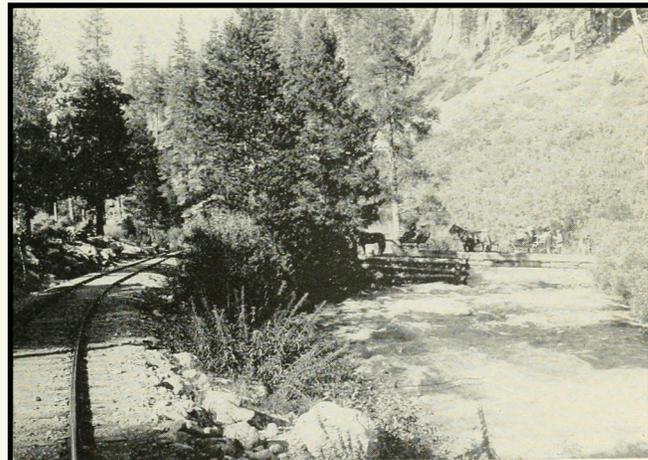
**Truckee Republican*, 8/17/1872, 11/10/1875, 9/14/1878, 12/5/1879, among other undated issues

**Sierra Sun*, My Place in the Sun, "German native ran early lumber," Doug Barrett, 2/16/1879, p. 3



WHERE'S THIS????

TDHS volunteers decided that we would showcase an image from the area and let you try to guess where this picture was taken - and the decade identified with it. Starting July 1st and running until August 31st, the first person to contact us with the correct answer will win a free book, *Fire & Ice*. You may submit your entry by email to history@truckeehistory.org or by snail mail, one entry only. Please no telephone calls. We hope to engage you history buffs out there!



To view a larger image of this photo, please visit our website at this link: <http://www.truckeehistory.org/Where-Is-This.html>

ASSUMPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY PARISH TRUCKEE'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

Part 1 of 2: A Church on the Move

Katie Holley

Catholics in Truckee in the 1860s were worshipping together even before a permanent church was constructed, then seemed to spend the next century chasing that “permanent church” down the block as fire and several moves forced change on the parish community.

In the Beginning. Truckee grew up with logging and the building of the Transcontinental Railroad. In the summer of 1869, just after the completion of the railroad, the Catholic citizens of Truckee built a church right next to the Central Pacific Railroad roundhouse, with the small rectangular building facing southwest. (Early Christian churches often were built oriented directly east-west so that the sanctuary – the portion of the church containing the altar where the sacrifice of the mass was offered – was at the eastern end of the building. This allowed the assembled people to face east while praying in public as was the custom for praying in private at that time.)

The first mass was offered in the new church on August 15, on the Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Assumption Church, as it was colloquially called, served the Catholic populations of the Italians, Portuguese, and Irish who settled here. It is estimated that almost 10,000 Irish Catholics were employed by the Central Pacific Railroad in construction of the Transcontinental Railroad, but not all of them were in Truckee!

In 1883, the parishioners put in a tower with a bell to call people to worship. Photographs in the TDHS collection show the progress being made on the tower’s construction. In 1890, the wooden church burned to the ground, but the bell was salvaged and re-installed when the church was rebuilt on the same site within the same calendar year.

The Church Moves to Church Street. In 1907, the entire church building was relocated to Church Street, just east of the rocks that lie east of the Methodist Church. Sanborn maps from 1907 confirm this location. The orientation of

the Catholic church was now facing northwest, and a brick rectory was constructed nearby. (Incidentally, Church Street was named in the 1800s after a highly skilled local freightwagon driver named Eli Church; it was not so named because of the houses of worship thereon.)

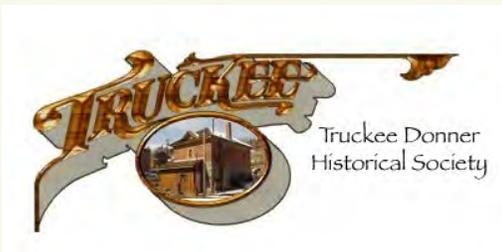
Just a Little More to the North. In 1949, the State of California wanted to route Highway 267 through Truckee, and required that the Assumption Church building be moved again. The church and rectory were moved to the portion of E Street that curves north and roughly parallels Donner Pass Road at the east end of downtown. The church doors now faced southeast.

A Little Mountain Church. The Assumption Church building was a simple rectangle, with an entry vestibule just large enough for 2-3 people to stand and stamp the snow off their boots. The building lacked a sacristy for vestments, sacred vessels, and other supplies; it did have a choir loft, and a belfry for the original bell from 1883. As Truckee continued to grow in population, the tiny church grew in 1954 with a single-wing addition extending south from the sanctuary. At an unknown date a small sacristy was added to the back of the church.



Truckee-Donner Historical Society collection;
1907 Catholic Church

In the next issue of ECHOES you will read about the stained glass windows of Assumption Parish and the final destination of the Church on the Move.



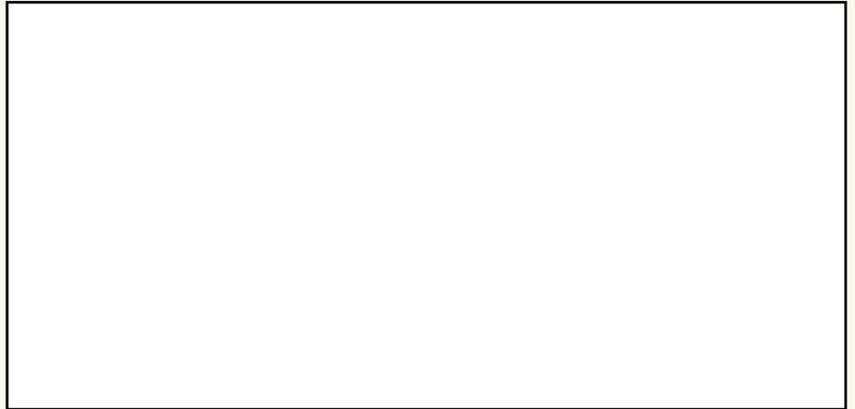
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SPECIAL DONATIONS: Gift Membership \$____ In the Name of _____

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

Areas of Special Interest and/or Comments/Suggestions: