

# DONNER CROSSINGS

A Publication of Placer-Sierra Railroad Heritage Society  
Issue No. 3, February 2008



SUMMIT SIERRA NEVADAS, DONNER LAKE, SNOW SHEDS AND TUNNELS. (See Annex No. 42.)

(14)

Croft's New Overland Tourist and Pacific Coast Guide was published in the late 1800's to provide information about the route for travelers on the new transcontinental railroad. This view of Donner Summit from the 1879 edition shows the east portal of Tunnel 6 in the right foreground, along with Tunnel 7, Tunnel 8 and the snowsheds connecting them. Donner Lake is in the distance. *See article on Croft's Guides in this issue*

Preserving Railroad History along the Donner Pass Route



## From the Editor:

After the Colfax depot renovation project wrapped up last summer, your editor took some time off to get caught up on other projects. However, information for future articles has been accumulating, and it is past time to generate another issue of Donner Crossings.

Let me start by offering special thanks to Colfax resident Vic Simpson for loaning me his original copy of Crofutt's 1879 New Overland Tourist and Pacific Coast Guide, and his collection of shipping orders from the Auburn Depot for February 1904. These documents opened my eyes to a whole world of information related to early-day railroading along the Donner Route.

Crofutt's guide is one of many such documents published for the newly opened transcontinental route of the Pacific Railroad. Several editions of the guide can be viewed on, or downloaded from various web sites. Each subsequent edition added more descriptions and photos of stations and points of interest along the route. I had been aware of some isolated descriptions from these guides, but only after reviewing the volume Vic

loaned me, did I really began to appreciate the wealth of information they contained.

We all know that railroads move large freight, including carload quantities of manufactured goods, lumber and other bulky items. With modern freeways, cars and truck traffic rolling through the region, it is easy to forget that in the early days of the newly opened railroad, the only alternative for moving goods of all sizes was via slow mule- or oxen-drawn wagons. Thus, once the railroad was open for business, it should be no surprise that the freight hauled from station to station included a myriad of small items as well as shipments of larger goods.

## In This Issue:

First -- let's take a brief look at Crofutt's guide and the type of information it provided to the early-day transcontinental traveler.

Second -- what was hauled on those early freight cars? We'll look at a sample of shipping orders from the Auburn depot in February 1904.

*-Roger Staab, editor*

*You are invited to submit feature articles and/or photos for future issues of Donner Crossings. Please contact Roger Staab, email [rsrr@exwire.com](mailto:rsrr@exwire.com), or by mail at PSRHS, P.O. Box 1776, Colfax, CA 95713. Assistance is available to format your information or photos into final form for publication.*

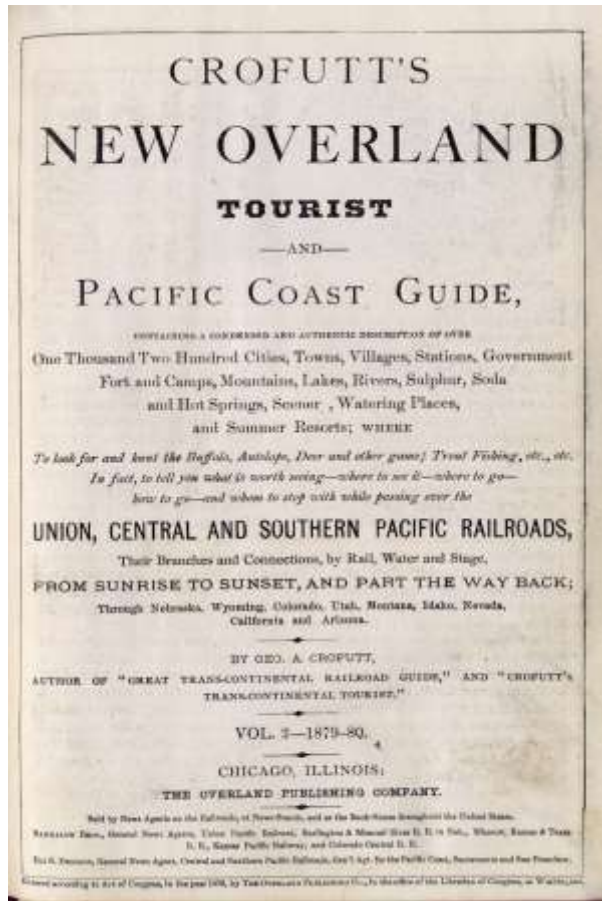
## Placer-Sierra Railroad Heritage Society

[www.psrhs.org](http://www.psrhs.org)

Individual Membership	\$20/yr
Family Membership	\$25/yr

Make Check Payable to:	PSRHS
	P.O. Box 1776
	Colfax, CA 95713

# Croftutt's New Overland Tourist & Pacific Coast Guide—1879 edition



Inside Title Page from Vic Simpson's 1879 edition of Croftutt's New Overland Tourist & Pacific Coast Guide

Upon completion of the Transcontinental Railroad in 1869, people immediately began using this much faster and easier way to cross the continent. However, most travelers knew little about the vast lands west of the Mississippi through which they would be passing.

George Croftutt had already started exploring the west in the 1860's. When the railroad was completed, Croftutt compiled his personal observations of the route in the first of his guide books, the **Great Transcontinental Railroad Guide**, in 1869. Soon after, he began publishing **Croftutt's Tourist Guides**, updating them yearly with more information about the route. Copies of the Guides could be purchased on the trains.



Ad from inside back cover of Croftutt's New Overland Tourist & Pacific Coast Guide, 1879 edition.

These guides became a treasure trove of information about what the traveler would see along the route. First, Croftutt provided a brief description of the several options available to travel by train from eastern cities to Council Bluffs, Iowa. Across the Missouri River from Council Bluffs stood Omaha, Nebraska, the legislated eastern terminus of Union Pacific Railroad, and the start of the new Trans-Continental route.

In those early days, travelers had to transfer from eastern railroads to Union Pacific trains that then crossed the river to Omaha for the trip further west. Croftutt describes the “transfer grounds” on the Iowa side of the river, designed to help



people make this switch to the UP trains. Four eastern railroads terminated on multiple tracks at the east end of a building constructed by Union Pacific. Passengers getting off the trains proceeded through the building, and boarded Union Pacific trains waiting west of the building.

Croftutt broke his description of the route west from Omaha to Sacramento into several segments, and each segment was preceded by a timetable for that portion of the route.

TIME TABLE.									
SACRAMENTO DIVISION.									
SACRAMENTO TO TRUCKEE.									
F. A. FILLMORE, Division Superintendent.									
WEST FROM OMAHA.			SACRAMENTO TIME.				EAST FROM SAN FRANCISCO.		
Daily Emigrant and freight.	Daily Express, 1st and 2d Cl's	Distance from Omaha.	STATIONS.		Elevation.	Daily Express, 1st and 2d Cl's	Daily Emigrant and freight.		
1:30 a m	3:15 a m	1000	Lv.	TRUCKEE	2645	12:00	m	11:00	p m
2:15	4:35	1044	.....	Sioux's Canyon	2790	11:35		10:00	
3:00	4:00	971	.....	Summit	2017	11:05		9:35	
3:40	4:30	973	.....	Cascade	2319	10:34		9:00	
4:10	4:54	979	.....	Truckee	2191	10:10		8:35	
4:50	4:45	2084	.....	Sioux	1831	9:55		8:10	
5:30	5:15	1691	.....	Emigrant Gap	1659	9:14		7:10	
6:25	5:50	1697	.....	Blue Canyon	1617	8:50		6:15	
7:10	6:55	1704	.....	Sandy Hill	1594	8:35		5:30	
7:40	6:19	1706	.....	Alta	1612	8:00		4:30	
7:55	6:17	1708	.....	Dutch Flat	1611	7:50		4:30	
8:10	6:25	1710	.....	Gold Run	1599	7:40		3:40	
8:50	6:54	1617	.....	H. Mill	1641	7:12		3:55	
9:25	7:00*	1721	.....	Cedar	1611	6:50*		3:10	
10:00	7:37	1725	.....	N. E. Mill	1580	6:37		1:49	
10:30	7:59	1729	.....	Applegate	1550	6:51		1:15	
10:45	8:01	1730	.....	Clipper Gap	1759	6:55		12:55	
12:10 p m	8:25	1734	.....	Adborn	1550	6:10		12:30	p m
12:30	8:42	1745	.....	New Castle	160	4:50		11:50	
1:10	9:04	1751	.....	Flint	405	4:32		11:25	
1:45	9:15	1754	.....	Blacklin	248	4:30		11:00	
2:30	9:32	1757	.....	Sanction	193	3:45		9:32	
2:40	9:42	1760	.....	Antelope	154	3:35		8:50	
3:30	10:00	1767	.....	Arcade	23	3:20		8:25	
3:50	10:10	1771	.....	A. M. Bridge	24	3:10		8:05	
4:35	10:25	1775	Ar.	SACRAMENTO	2	3:00		7:45	a m

+ Day Telegraph. † Day and Night Telegraph. \* Meals.  
 — The passenger's attention is directed to the elevation of each station.

These timetables provided information about the route including meal and other stops, mileage and estimated arrival times. In Croftutt's guides, the timetables also served as a chapter divider for that portion of his guide.

What followed each timetable were descriptions of the stops and other points of interest along the route, including historical information and changes that may have occurred since the railroad was completed. The text was written so that the traveler could follow along as the train progressed westward from Omaha to Sacramento.

Often, Croftutt included side discussions of points of interest off the mainline. In the sample page shown below, Dutch Flat was described as

a jumping off point for gold mining settlements reached by wagon. On the subsequent page, Croftutt provided a brief description of the mining communities of Little York, You Bet and Red Dog, along with discussions of hydraulic mining and origins of the region's gold deposits.





Pictorial fold-out map of San Francisco and the bay area from Crofutt's 1879 Guide.

accessible because of the railroad. These scenes include Yosemite and Yellowstone Parks, Pikes Peak and the Colorado Rockies, Mount Shasta and San Francisco.

Thanks to the loan of Vic's book, PSRHS now has scanned images of Crofutt's 1879 edition in our archives, which are available to members who wish to research these pages. The book was

scanned in high resolution, two pages to a scan. The files are saved in standard jpeg format. Our archives also contain a downloaded PDF version of Crofutt's 1878 edition, but the quality of the scans is not as good as the 1879 edition.

Please contact the editor by email for further information on Crofutt's guides, or to access the archived images.





# Local Freight Shipments from the Auburn Depot, February 1904

While a major source of revenue for the railroad was shipment of large items between eastern and west coast markets, in its early days the railroad provided the most practical means to ship many smaller items between local stations. While this should not come as a surprise, nonetheless it becomes much more real when one gets the opportunity to view shipping documents from that era. We need to remember that there were not good alternatives for moving goods from one place to another. Thus, even small items were shipped by rail when practical.

One of Vic Simpson's family members happened to have saved the shipping orders for goods leaving the Auburn Depot in February 1904. These were passed on to Vic, and he was kind enough to loan them to me for scanning. (I scanned over 70 shipping orders – Vic has more. This can serve as a reminder that many items of interest are tucked away in someone's attic, but you may need to ask to discover them.)

What follows are some selected shipping orders illustrating the variety of items being moved locally by railroad in 1904. Other items appearing on Auburn shipping orders from February 1904 include: a sewing machine, empty oil tanks, piano and piano stool, household furnishings (Bekins wasn't around yet), hay and feed, sides of beef, a crate of hogs, chicken coops, animal hides, a box of nails, Hercules powder & blasting supplies, groceries, boxes of fruit, drums of coffee, sacks of spuds --- you get the idea.

SHIPPING ORDER, No. 2-2-1904  
 SOUTHERN PACIFIC COMPANY.  
 Auburn Station, 2-2-1904  
 Delivered to the SOUTHERN PACIFIC COMPANY, by  
 Ford & Sons  
 Tamarack  
 SHIPPER: Ford & Sons  
 CONSIGNEE, MARKS AND DESTINATION:  
 C. W. Collins  
 Tamarack  
 No. Eggs: 1 case Eggs, Weight: 10  
 Recd  
 Paid 4/4

A case of eggs shipped by Ford & Sons to Tamarack (near Cisco)

FORM 1432 (Revised) No. 2-23-1904  
 SOUTHERN PACIFIC COMPANY.  
 Auburn Station, 2-23-1904  
 Delivered to the SOUTHERN PACIFIC COMPANY, by  
 Lowell & Co.  
 Colfax  
 SHIPPER: Lowell & Co.  
 CONSIGNEE, MARKS AND DESTINATION:  
 A. Wilson  
 Michigan Bluff  
 via Colfax  
 No. Eggs: 1 case Eggs, Weight: 55  
 Recd  
 1/83

This case of eggs from Lowell & Co. will need alternate transportation from Colfax to Michigan Bluff.

FORM 1428 (Formerly 1277389)  
 SHIPPING ORDER No. \_\_\_\_\_  
**SOUTHERN PACIFIC COMPANY.**  
 Auburn, Cal. Station, 2-13, 1904  
 Delivered on day to the SOUTHERN PACIFIC COMPANY, by  
**Placer Laundry**  
**Emigrant Gap**

SHIPPER: **P.C. & Randy**

CONSIGNEE, MARKS AND DESTINATION:  
**Mr. W. W. Emigrant Gap**

No. Pkg.	ARTICLE	WEIGHT
	1 Basket Laundry	110

SHIPPER'S SIGNING LOWER RATES, WHEN SUCH ARE CONDITIONAL UPON SHIPMENTS BEING RELEASED OR AT OWNER'S RISK, OR UPON VALUATION, MUST EXCISE RELEASE CLAUSE ON BACK HEREOF.

Placer County  
 Laundry –  
 We Deliver!  
 (to Emigrant Gap)

William Watts  
 shipped baled  
 trees and vines,  
 these to New  
 England Mills  
 near Colfax

Shipping Order by S. P. Co. (Formerly 1277389)  
 SHIPPING ORDER No. \_\_\_\_\_  
**SOUTHERN PACIFIC COMPANY.**  
 Auburn, Cal. Station, Feb 29-1904  
 Delivered on day to the SOUTHERN PACIFIC COMPANY, by  
**WILLIAM WATTS**

SHIPPER: **WILLIAM WATTS**

CONSIGNEE, MARKS AND DESTINATION:  
**Mr. Geo. J. New England Mills**

No. Pkg.	ARTICLE	WEIGHT
	1 Bales trees & vines	20
	Covered	420

SHIPPER'S SIGNING LOWER RATES, WHEN SUCH ARE CONDITIONAL UPON SHIPMENTS BEING RELEASED OR AT OWNER'S RISK, OR UPON VALUATION, MUST EXCISE RELEASE CLAUSE ON BACK HEREOF.

Shipping Order by S. P. Co. (Formerly 1277389)  
 SHIPPING ORDER No. \_\_\_\_\_  
**SOUTHERN PACIFIC COMPANY.**  
 Auburn, Cal. Station, Feb 10 1904  
 Delivered on day to the SOUTHERN PACIFIC COMPANY, by  
**AUBURN LUMBER CO.**

SHIPPER: **AUBURN LUMBER CO.**

CONSIGNEE, MARKS AND DESTINATION:  
**Auburn Lumber Co. New cases**

No. Pkg.	ARTICLE	WEIGHT
	30 Do Lumber	720
	1 Bin Lumber	30
	1 Moulding	5
	1 Doan	30
	1 Box Putty	20
	1 Box Glass	20
	304	840

SHIPPER'S SIGNING LOWER RATES, WHEN SUCH ARE CONDITIONAL UPON SHIPMENTS BEING RELEASED OR AT OWNER'S RISK, OR UPON VALUATION, MUST EXCISE RELEASE CLAUSE ON BACK HEREOF.

Some frequent  
 shippers like  
 Auburn Lumber  
 developed pre-  
 printed forms

A.W. Kenison Co.  
 was a frequent  
 shipper of liquid  
 refreshment. Their  
 pre-printed form  
 made it easy to list  
 items shipped.

Shipping Order by S. P. Co. (Formerly 1277389)  
 SHIPPING ORDER No. \_\_\_\_\_  
**SOUTHERN PACIFIC COMPANY.**  
 Auburn, Cal. Station, 2-18, 1904  
 Delivered on day to the SOUTHERN PACIFIC COMPANY, by  
**A. W. KENISON CO.**

SHIPPER: **A. W. KENISON CO.**

CONSIGNEE, MARKS AND DESTINATION:  
**Rocky Mountain**

No. Pkg.	ARTICLE	WEIGHT
1	CASES BOTTLED BEER	250
	CASES	
	CARBONIZED DRINKS	
1	HARTLEY WATER	180
1	CODE'S	120
5	SODA	400
	WHISKY	
	BARRELS	
	BAGS ICE	

SHIPPER'S SIGNING LOWER RATES, WHEN SUCH ARE CONDITIONAL UPON SHIPMENTS BEING RELEASED OR AT OWNER'S RISK, OR UPON VALUATION, MUST EXCISE RELEASE CLAUSE ON BACK HEREOF.

## PSRHS Mission Statement

- ◆ To research, document, and preserve the history of railroading and current operations in the Placer-Sierra area.
- ◆ To interpret the relationship and effect of railroad commerce and activities with the cultural and economic development of local communities and the region.
- ◆ To collect, curate, restore, and interpret – by way of display and operation for public view – memorabilia of local railroads.
- ◆ To work with other civic, historical, and public organizations to accomplish these goals.

### Area of Focus: The Transcontinental Route over Donner Pass from Roseville to Truckee

- ◆ Monthly Presentations, 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday, 7PM, DeWitt Senior Center, Corner of 1<sup>st</sup> & D Ave., off Bell Rd., N. Auburn
- ◆ Field Trips to nearby points of interest
- ◆ Restoration Projects
- ◆ Photo Displays

[www.psrhs.org](http://www.psrhs.org)



*Preserving Railroad History  
along the  
Donner Pass Route*



[www.psrhs.org](http://www.psrhs.org)

P.O. Box 1776, Colfax, CA 95713

**Placer-Sierra RR Heritage Society**