

# Placer-Sierra Railroad Heritage Society

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## March 2016 Newsletter

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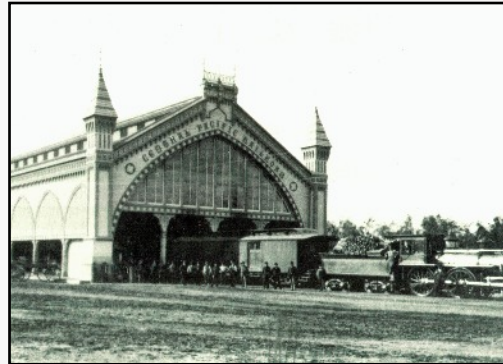
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*March Mystery Photo from the  
Ken Yeo Collection. See page 4.*

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## Scheduled Events & Notices



- Mar 24**    **PSRHS Meeting and Presentation – 7 pm**  
              – Auburn Airport Terminal Bldg  
              – Program - Willie Burroughs – Snow Removal over the Sierra
- Apr 2**     **Caboose work session – see page 2**
- Apr 28**    **PSRHS Meeting and Presentation – 7 pm**  
              – Auburn Airport Terminal Bldg  
              – Program – To Be Announced
- May 3**     **Big Day of Giving – see page 2**

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## March 2016 Newsletter

### Monthly meeting 7PM Thursday, Mar 24th Auburn Airport Terminal Bldg

**March Program:** Willie Burroughs, retired SP/UP conductor "The Snow Queen" will talk about his experiences working with snow removal crews over Donner.

**February Program Recap:** Dave McClain talked about his life-long interest in recording train sounds, his experiences with locomotive restoration at the Western Pacific Railroad Museum in Portola, and how he found himself pulled into the investigation of the bomb train explosions in Roseville.

### PSRHS Engineering Committee

The PSRHS Engineering Committee met on Feb. 18 with only three people in attendance. We discussed several potential research projects related to the design and construction of the CPRR over Donner. We will initially focus on changes in the Donner route as constructed compared to Judah's original surveyed route. Intent is to develop detailed maps that show both Judah's original route and the as-constructed variations. Judah's original maps have apparently been lost, so this effort could produce a product of significant interest to the history community. If more people get involved, this would be expanded to include mapping Judah's other surveyed routes over the Sierra.

We anticipate taking some field trips in the near future to begin comparing Judah's route descriptions with features and place names on old maps and topos.

A second project for near term is to research and document the story behind use of nitroglycerine for railroad construction over the Sierra.

Please let the editor know by reply email if you would like to participate in this group's activities.

### Colfax Caboose Committee

The Colfax caboose committee met on March 8 at Colfax City Hall and again on Saturday, March 12 at the caboose.

Work is continuing on developing a proposal to the City of Colfax for what is tentatively titled The Interactive Caboose project. There is general agreement that the caboose should be set up to "tell the story" of caboose life, what activities took place there, its importance to railroad operations, and why cabooses are no longer in use. This will provide a unique resource for attracting visitors to the area and educating local school children.

The group agreed to begin holding monthly meetings the first Saturday of each month, starting with a breakfast committee meeting at Dine and Dash at 8am, followed by a caboose work session from 9am-1pm. On Saturday March 12 several inside projects at the caboose were addressed, including touching up the cupola windows, measuring for trim boards and flashing, and making preparations to begin roof replacement at the **April 2 work session** if weather permits, or inside work if weather is bad.

**If you would like to be added to the mailing list of caboose volunteer workers**, please reply to the editor by email and I will see that your name gets added. To help with workload planning, we request a 4 hour commitment (9-1) for the work sessions on the first Saturday of each month, and a few days advance notice of who will be attending each work session.

### Big Day of Giving May 3

PSRHS will again participate in the Big Day of Giving on May 3. This is an opportunity to raise funds for club projects on a day devoted to seeking donations from the public for non-profits from throughout the region.

This year PSRHS will designate the caboose project as our area of fund-raising focus for that day. If you are considering donating to PSRHS and its activities, consider doing it that day, as money donated that day is augmented by the BigDOG program.

Watch for more details in the April newsletter.



### **Passing Scene**



**Friendly Enemies – Who Says these guys can’t get along?** BNSF gained trackage rights over the Donner route as part of the SP-UP merger, so it is not unusual to see occasional BNSF freight trains passing through Colfax. Not so common though is seeing UP and BNSF consists side by side. This 2005 photo caught two eastbound freights awaiting clearance to proceed from the Colfax yard area on their run over Donner summit. *Photo by Roger Staab*

**Please remember to renew your PSRHS membership  
if you have not already done so. Thanks**

### **Amazon Smile Fund Raising**

We are now part of the Amazon Smile fund raising campaign. We receive a donation to the society based on your purchases. Please feel free to copy and past the link below and include it in all your emails.

<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/68-0488569>

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## From the Archives

**February Mystery Photo:** The photo at right shows the snowbound City of San Francisco in January 1952. The location was by Tunnel 35 just east of where Hwy 20 today meets I-80. Passengers were trapped for three days before Hwy 40 could be opened from Nyack to a point below the stranded train and passengers rescued. The doorway to the baggage car next to the man at left was kept open at all times to allow access onto the train. *AP Wire Photo, PSRHS collection*



**March Mystery Photo:** What was this building, and where was it located? For extra credit, where was it located relative to features that can be seen today. *Ken Yeo collection*

**CPRR/SP Donner Route Timeline: 1923-25 Double Tracking.** The completion of the second track over Donner Summit saw several miles of snowsheds removed and not replaced, but the new line included 7 new tunnels. While the new track closely paralleled the original track for most of the route, the new track running to the west portal of Tunnel 41 diverged from the old track at what became Norden. Both this stretch of new track and the entire Norden complex were under new snowsheds. The Norden complex included passing sidings for both the old and new tracks and a covered 100 foot turntable capable of turning the large cab-forward helpers. In early 1926 Norden assumed the helper, maintenance and communications operations formerly carried out at Summit, which was soon abandoned.

### Membership Information

Individual Members = \$25.00/yr  
Each Additional Family Member = \$5.00/yr

- Monthly Meetings (4th Thursday) and Newsletter
- Member Activities, History Pubs and Field Trips
- Display and Restoration Projects

PSRHS, P.O. Box 1776, Colfax, CA 95713  
or join/renew online at [www.psrhs.org](http://www.psrhs.org)

Reader comments, additional details, etc., are invited on any newsletter items or photos. Please forward comments, suggestions or information for inclusion in future issues of the newsletter to:

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