

Placer-Sierra Railroad Heritage Society



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August 2021 Newsletter

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The China Wall and Summit tunnels are a visual testament to Central Pacific's Chinese workers. Our August Zoom program explores the Chinese legacy at Donner Pass. See page 2.

Scheduled Events & Notices



Aug 26 PSRHS Zoom Meeting – 7PM – Program: Phil Sexton – Honoring The Work of Giants at Donner Pass

Sep 18-19 Colfax Railroad Days

**Sep 28 PSRHS LIVE Meeting, 7PM - Note New Date 4th Tuesday
Tentative Program – Jim Wood - Colfax Lime Kilns**

As we move on from the COVID trials of 2020-21, we encourage you to renew your membership in PSRHS for 2021 or join PSRHS as a paid member. As conditions permit, we will be hosting presentations on historic or contemporary operations along the Donner Route using Zoom or in-person meetings, offer field trips to regional sites, continue publishing our monthly newsletter articles and historic photos, and expand resources on our web site. More web cams are planned so viewers can track rail operations over the route. Thanks for your past and continued support of PSRHS and regional railroad history.



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AUGUST ZOOM PROGRAM

ZOOM Presentation August 26 at 7PM.

Phil Sexton will present **Honoring The Work of Giants at Donner Pass**. Phil is currently Executive Director of North Lake Tahoe Historical Society. He has a passion for protecting and preserving the history of Donner Pass, its artifacts and landmarks, and the major contribution of Chinese laborers in that history. He promises to show some stuff that you haven't seen before, but won't tell you precisely where the sites are. He hopes his presentation will generate support for the Donner Pass National Historic Landmark project.

To access the zoom presentation:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9324272808?pwd=L2ltVjdwYkg2ZjcwOE5qTTN6RUFWdz09>

Meeting ID: 932-427-2808

Passcode: 837480

July Program Recap: The History of Railroad Track 1500's to 1900's, was presented by PSRHS president **Chuck Spinks**. Chuck provided a very interesting look at rail development from wood to strap to plate to edge rail. He noted that England led early development but was surpassed by the US in the 1900's.

LIVE MEETINGS RETURN SEPT 28

Note New Day and Location

On **September 28** PSRHS plans to return to in-person meetings. The meeting date will shift to the **fourth Tuesday** to fit availability of our **new meeting location, Auburn Veteran's Memorial Hall at 100 East St.** More details will be provided in the September newsletter and our web site.

PETE DIURNI, PROGRAMS MANAGER

Good Day PSRHSociety Members and Board alike! My name is Peter Diurni (Dee-er-knee. Just easier for everybody, ok?.) I am a new member as of 2019, then was asked to join the board and after bombarding

Mr. Spinks with all manner of questions, I was elevated to the position of Programs Manager. My qualifications? Honestly, remains to be seen, but I love Western and California History, Trains, Railroading in general, love to learn new things, all the time, will never know everything. That's what I plan to bring to the programs.

I am surrounded with Historians, a Geologist, couple of Civil engineers and Members - please help me with your professions and interests, so we can better serve you in our continuing future. Depending on how long you, our members have been here, as a new member, I would love to go back in time to readdress some of the great past programs and field trips and we may do that, but we will cover as much Heritage as well as History in forth-coming programs. The subjects Placer, Sierra, and railroad cover a vast area for exploration! So, please, members, if you have anything that you would like to present or see presented, drop me an email at petediurni@hotmail.com Please address as, PSRHS Member Idea/Presentation.

The August 26 Zoom meeting features Historian Phil Sexton discussing The Work of Giants at Donner Pass. Hope to see everybody there!

COLFAX RAILROAD DAYS

Colfax Railroad Days will be held Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 18-19 in downtown Colfax. If you can help staff the PSRHS table for 2-3 hours on one of those days, email your editor at rsrr@exwire.com If you are willing to work a shift at the caboose, email Swend Miller at swendm@icloud.com

DONNER PASS TUNNELS

The SFGate web site recently featured an interesting article on the railroad tunnels at Donner Pass. Tracks were removed from the 1867-era series of tunnels in the 1990's. This is still railroad property, but many people have enjoyed walking through the historic sheds and tunnels. The SFGate article can be found at <https://www.sfgate.com/renotahoe/amp/donner-summit-lake-tahoe-railroad-tunnels-history>



Passing Scene – AMTRAK ALC-42 No. 301

On Saturday, July 17th, Amtrak No. 6 had the new Siemens ALC-42 No. 301 in its consist. ALC stands for Amtrak Long-distance Charger, 4200 horsepower. This is one of six 50th anniversary locomotives, but the only one manufactured by Siemens Mobility. Photographed just east of Alta, the 301 sports a unique paint scheme harking back to a former Penn Central E8A that was striped in similar livery. As the story goes, this one-time paint scheme was applied in 1971 as the fledgling Amtrak began to assume passenger train operation. Amtrak refers to this paint scheme as "Day One." *Photos and information provided by Paul Greenfield.*



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 paste the link below and include it in all your emails.

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

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From the Archives

July Mystery Photo (right): Prominent in the distance are the snowsheds east of Tunnel 8 near Donner Summit. These original CPRR tracks became Track 1 when the summit tunnel 41 was completed. The paved road in the foreground is the original Highway 40 over Donner Summit, now Donner Pass Road. Railroad tracks were removed from these sheds in the 1990's, and this section of Hwy 40 was bypassed by I-80 in the late 1950's. *Postcard image courtesy of Jim Wood*



August Mystery Photo (left): What is the significance of this locomotive to the Donner Route? When and where was the photo taken? *PSRHS Collection courtesy of Jim Wood*

Accidents/Other Incidents. *Placer Herald, 17 December 1904.* **Killed in Snow Sheds.** Daniel W. Hayes, a brakeman, was killed in the snow sheds this side of Blue Canyon Sunday night last. Hayes was acting as middle brakeman, and caught the caboose out of Blue Canyon, and it is supposed was walking on top of the cars to his station, and forgetting sheds, stood straight up, and was struck in the head by a beam, killing him instantly. Conductor John Lord and brakeman C. E. Fordemwalt were in the caboose and their attention was called to the accident by Hayes' lantern crashing through the caboose window. The inquest was held at Auburn the same night by Coroner Shepard, and the body taken to Sacramento. Deceased has a mother and sister living in Sacramento, and two brothers in the employ of the railroad company.

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 <https://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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