

Placer-Sierra Railroad Heritage Society



<https://www.psrhs.org>

July 2023 Newsletter

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*VIA Rail on the Donner Route?
See page 3 for photos and story.
Photo courtesy of James Schlinger*

Scheduled Events & Notices



Jul 25 PSRHS Monthly Meeting, 7PM – Program – Jim Wood
– Recap of Past Field Trip to Clipper Gap

Aug 22 PSRHS Monthly Meeting, 7PM – Program TBA

Sept 16-17 Colfax Railroad Days

Your annual PSRHS membership helps fund purchase of historic photos, publication of railroad history documents, field trips, and other historic preservation activities.

Preserving Railroad History on the Donner Pass Route



Placer-Sierra Railroad Heritage Society

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PSRHS MONTHLY MEETING

TUESDAY, JULY 25, 7PM

Auburn Veterans Memorial Hall

July Program: PSRHS member **Jim Wood** will present a photo review and discussion of a **previous club field trip to Clipper Gap**, including visits to abandoned Tunnel 0, the sites of two former Central Pacific trestles, and line changes due to double-tracking. Other previous field trips are being considered for either future meeting presentations or return field trips.

Our meetings are open to all who are interested. See our web site for directions to the meeting location.

June Program Recap: Marilyn Sommerdorf presented her program **Perishable – The Story of Placer County Fruit Growing and the Southern Pacific Company**. Marilyn combined photos of historic buildings that supported local fruit packing with information on early fruit growing in Placer County and the role the railroad played in the success of this business.

NEW DONNER CROSSINGS ISSUE

Donner Crossings Issue #17, Summer 2023 has been completed and is ready for printing. Hard copies will be mailed to currently paid PSRHS members. This issue's subject is **The Train Wreckers – Aug. 1881**. Paid Members - watch for your copy in the mail. At a future date a low resolution PDF version of this issue will be posted on our web site.

PSRHS JUNE BOARD MEETING

The PSRHS board of directors met prior to the June program. Topics discussed include:

- The Ballengers made a recent generous donation to PSRHS. Dave and Margie were long-time members of our organization. We thank them for supporting our railroad history activities.
- Our meeting room is now available on some additional days of the week. Board members discussed options and decided to stay with our current 4th Tuesday date for meetings.

- We have name tags for paid PSRHS members. If you have paid yearly dues you will receive a name tag either by mail or at a meeting.
- Discussed possible location for additional web cams to be linked to our web site. The current Applegate web cam shows only Track 2. Two locations at or near Colfax have been proposed in the past, but both have issues with wifi bandwidth compatible with camera uploads. One suggestion is to make a proposal to the City of Colfax to help provide enhanced wifi service at the Colfax Passenger Depot, allowing a web cam to be placed on the depot roof. A camera there would provide train views on both tracks while also showcasing the downtown area in the background, including live views of community events such as 3rd of July and Railroad Days.

PASSENGER TRAIN MFG BOOMING

For an excellent YouTube video on Why Passenger Train Manufacturing is Booming in the US, check out the link below provided by Paul Lanyi. It includes a profile of Siemens Manufacturing in South Sacramento..

[Passenger Train Manufacturing Booming](#)

FEATURED ARTICLE

I found the article featured on page 5 in the Colfax Historical Society Archives in a booklet titled Patchwork Memories – A Collection of Works by Writers from the Colfax Adult Activity Center, 1985. The booklet contains short articles and stories drawn from past experiences of the writers. The description of an on-board train experience from another era caught my attention.

The story was likely written “tongue-in-cheek” and should be taken as such. The use of SP in the title makes me think the time frame was pre-Amtrak, not post-Amtrak as the author’s wording implies. Still, the story does describe aspects of the train travel experience in an earlier era. rs

See Story on Page 5



Passing Scene - VIA Rail on the Donner Route

It's not every day you see a Canadian VIA Rail train traversing the Donner Route. James Schlinger captured these photos July 6 between Tunnels 35 & 36 at Yuba Gap, showing a new VIA Rail trainset built by Siemens South Sacramento on its way to the customer. We understand this was the sixth VIA trainset delivered by Siemens, with an ultimate destination of VIA's Montreal Maintenance Center. UP 6519 ran light from Roseville to South Sacramento, turning on the wye at Elvas before backing into the Siemens plant. The train was designated as a special, originating at Florin with UP destination the Proviso Yard in Chicago. At Chicago, UP transferred the trainset to the CN for the rest of the journey to Montreal. VIA ordered a total of 32 trainsets, so similar moves are likely to occur for some time.



*Photos Courtesy of
James Schlinger*



Membership Information

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

- Monthly Meetings (4th Tuesday) 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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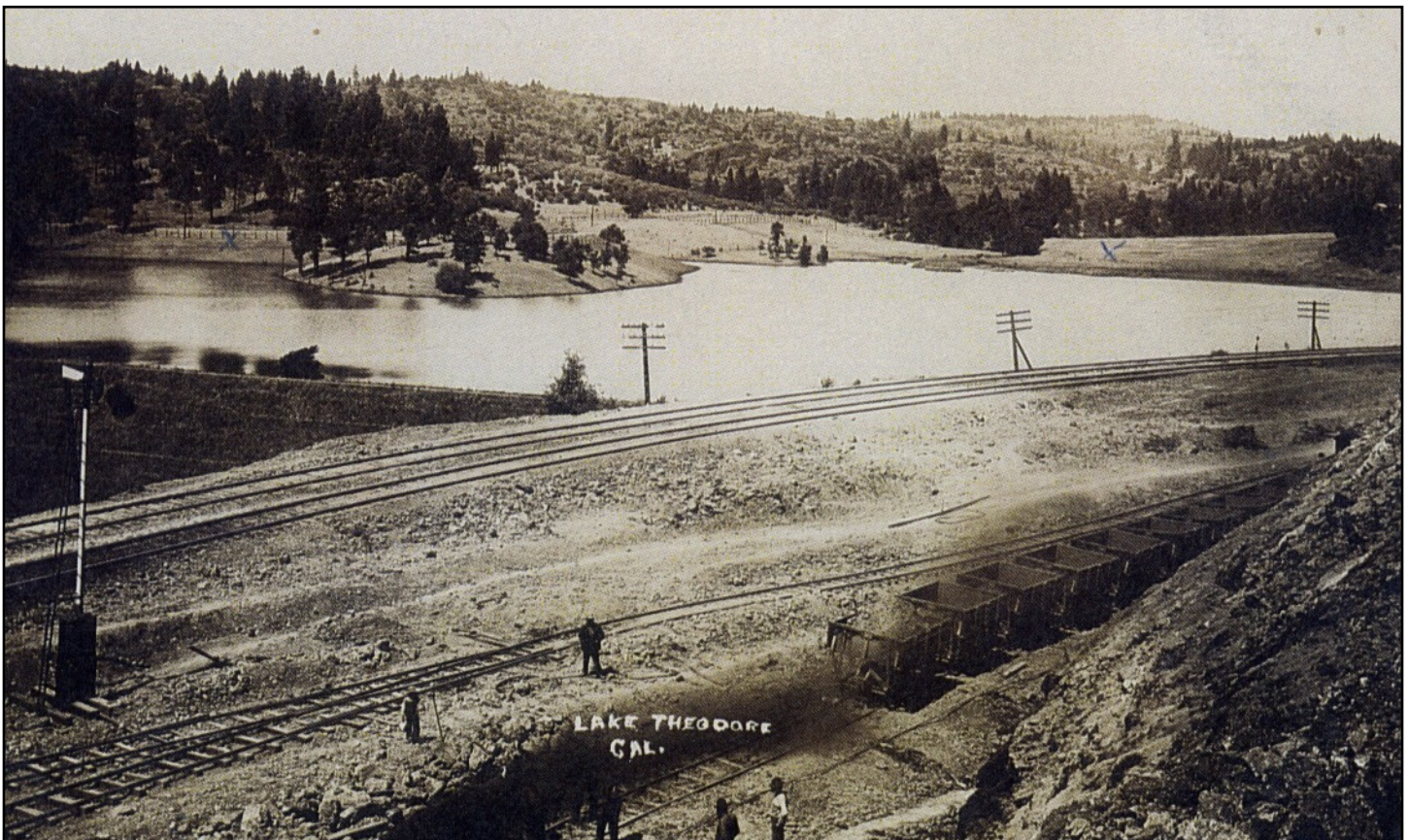




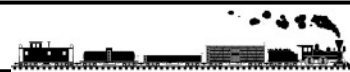
From the Archives - Clipper Gap Double-Tracking

This photo was taken near Clipper Gap with Lake Theodore in the background. It shows double-tracking underway circa 1911. The new eastbound track reached this area at a slightly different elevation than the older Track 1 and would have crossed Track 1 if changes weren't made. The hillside at lower right was cut back to allow Track 1 to be moved closer to the photographer. This change allowed the two tracks to share the space between the hillside and the lake, but at slightly different elevations.

At our July meeting, Jim Wood will show photos taken at a previous PSRHS field trip to Clipper Gap. His program will include features visited such as this location, sites for two early Central Pacific trestles that are no more, and abandoned Tunnel 0. *PSRHS collection.*



Accidents/Other Incidents. *Colfax Sentinel, Oct. 25, 1901.* "The Southern Pacific, Union Pacific and Chicago and Northwestern lines, which operate the overland limited between San Francisco and Chicago, have decided on important improvements in the appointments and running schedule of that train and to that end there have been ordered from the Pullman Company seven entirely new trains, which will cost in the neighborhood of \$1,000,000. Without waiting for the new equipment, however, the three lines will on November 3rd reduce the running time of the limited 3 hours and ten minutes between San Francisco and Chicago. Two new flyers will be placed in service and the time of another train will be reduced four hours. The new schedule will make the time between Chicago and San Francisco 65 hours and 15 minutes."



THE DISAPPEARING BEDROOM ON S.P.

By Jack Pitchford

I will tell you about my first ride on Amtrack (*sic*) about some years ago, and S.P.'s disappearing bedroom. It was quite an adventure.

The porter eventually showed me to my roomette. In Amtrack language the "ette" means tiny because it certainly was small and the porter put the suitcases down and disappeared. At the very end of the room there was a small bench and I thought, "Good Gosh! That sure is one small bed, but I guess that's what I paid for," and so I tried laying on the thing and although I am small it was too small and I thought, "Oh boy, for three nights of this, this is going to be something." Then I saw a crack in the wall above the bench. So I thought, "Well by golly, I bet its one of those old-fashioned wall beds." So I hugged and I tugged and I pulled and suddenly the bed came down. And I just about under it. I got out just in time, as the bed came down and the room disappeared. The bed occupied the whole room except for a six inch space and, what is more, the bed covered the wash basin and the toilet. And I thought, "Boy! The guy that planned this sure must have good kidneys." So, after all that exertion I decided I wished I had thought of that before, for I had to ppush up the bed. So, after this was accomplished, I pushed the bed down and jumped out of the way as the bed came down and made the room disappear again.

So, as I was going to sleep, I discovered the gobs of suitcases under the bed. So, up went the bed again and I pulled out the suitcases and down came the bed again. By that time, I thought I had enough exercise for a month, and I was tired. But, I couldn't figure out where to put my clothes, so, of course, my clothes ended up on the end of the bed, and I decided, I was not going to

put shoes on the end of the bed, and so I looked around the room and up in the far corner was a small cupboard. I thought, "Boy, they have a place to put shoes."

So I put my shoes up there and settled down for the night.

Sometime during the night there was a loud clang, clang, clang, clang, and I thought, "Oh Boy! It's time to get up." And I jumped up and there were huge lights shining right in on me, as the train had stopped at a crossing there was a car's lights shining smack into my room.

So I pulled the shade down and went back to sleep to the clickety click. As I heard the clickety click I eventually dropped off to sleep.

Well the next morning I started dressing, went up to my cupboard, one shoe only. I thought, "Oh Lord, I've lost a shoe," and I didn't think to bring another pair of shoes with me due to packing space. So, I thought, "Well, it's probably under the bed." So, up went the bed again. No shoes. So, down came the bed again, and I finished dressing.

While I was dressing I heard a strange noise above me, a sort of a click click like a door was closing, so I went up in the cupboard again and there was the other shoe. So, it dawned on me that I had both shoes shined during the night. It seems there was an outside door to the hallway and when you put your shoe up there why the porter would open the door in the hall and shine your shoe and put the shoe back. Well, I had chosen to take one shoe out before the other shoe had come back.

I thought, "Someone's looking after my sole alright."

From Patchwork Memories – A Collection of Works by Writers from the Colfax Adult Activity Center, 1985