

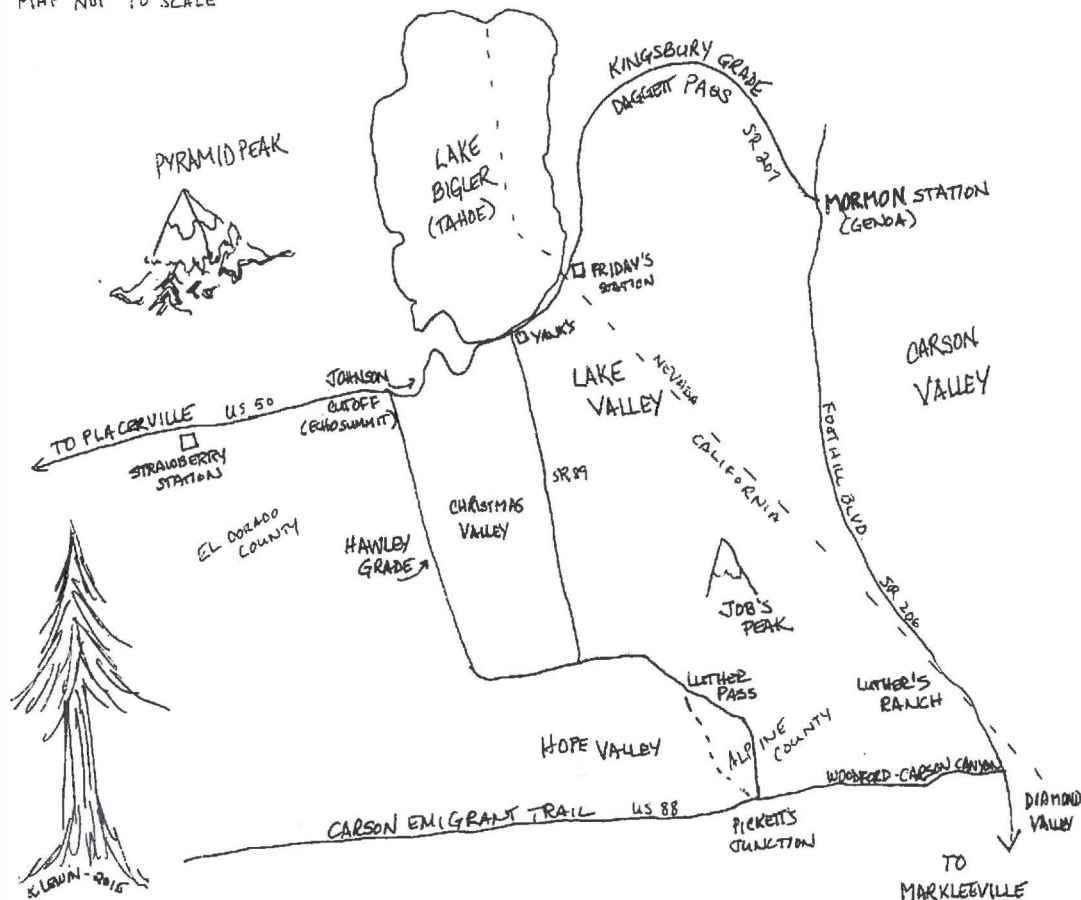


OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION



Hawley Grade and Luther Pass Hike Convention Tour D

MAP NOT TO SCALE

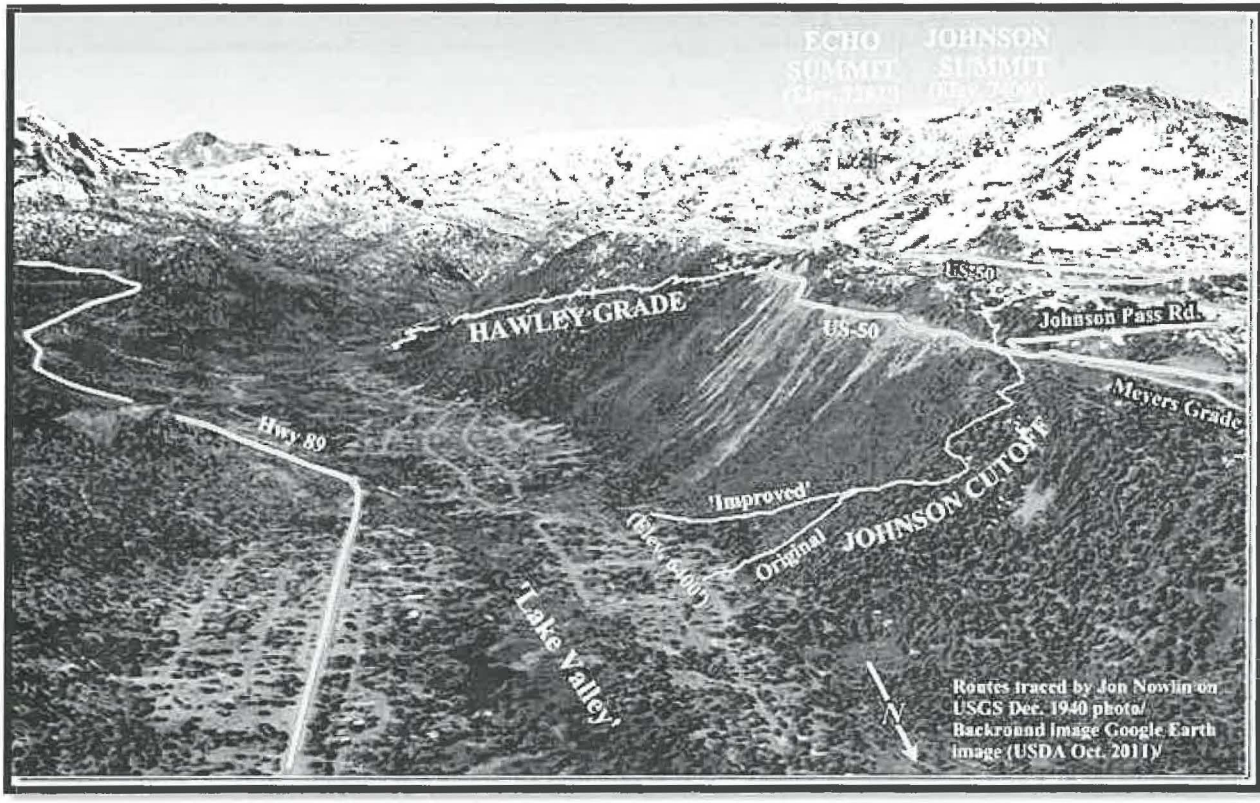


THIRTY-THIRD ANNUAL CONVENTION
September 21 - 25, 2015

HARVEYS
LAKE TAHOE



HAWLEY GRADE



Wagon Roads

This early wagon road is located between today's Echo Summit (US 50) and Christmas Valley (CA SR 89). It was named for Asa Hershel Hawley, born in Windsor County, Vermont, in 1813, who traveled the Overland Trail to California in 1852.

In 1854 he operated a public house - "Hawley's Elkhorn House" - outside Placerville at Six Mile House along with his business partner, James Sisson. After the State of California appropriated funds to build a road from Sacramento to Carson City, Hawley opened a cutoff road that angled south from "Johnson Hill" (today's Echo Summit, elevation 7,394') down to "Lake Valley" (today's Christmas Valley, elevation 6,521').

In 1855, he opened a toll house and trading post at the base of the trail - "Hawley's Second Elkhorn House" - where it crossed the Upper Truckee River intercepting Luther Pass Road. According to Sherman Day, "the route lies along a very steep, natural slope, through a thicket of manzanita chaparral of only three-fourths of a mile (3, 960'), which gives a grade of over 14 ½ degrees (actually, it was more than 25°)." Day continued, "it was considered the only reasonable grade into Lake Valley before a more direct route, 'Johnson Hill', replaced it in 1861" (although other sources indicate the opening of Johnson Cutoff in the 1850s).

Sherman Day was a civil and mining engineer from the east coast who came to California in 1849. He worked in several places including: San Jose, New Almaden, Folsom and Oakland.

In 1855, he made a survey of wagon roads across the Sierra. He also became a member of the California State Senate (1856) and later U. S. Surveyor General of California (1868-71). His expertise carried an influence establishing routes over the mountain passes. It was Day's route over today's Echo Summit that had its early beginnings as Hawley's Grade. According to George Goddard (another civil engineer, surveyor and map maker), "it (Hawley Grade) was recommended as the shortest, lowest and least snowbound route over that portion of the Sierra

With the passing of the federal Wagon Road Act of 1857, Congress opened the doors for all agencies and individuals to explore the best trans-Sierra routes for the benefit of better travel over the previously rocky – and often dangerously narrow – paths. Early explorations thought the Big Tree Road (beginning out of Hope Valley to Calaveras County) to be the best route; later the Ebbetts Pass (today's SR 4) was considered. Other routes being considered were trails into Mokelumne Hill in Calaveras County, as well as Butte, Sierra, Yuba, Colusa and Sutter Counties. There were many ways into California across the Sierra range.

One group that formed was the El Dorado Wagon Road Convention, which met in Placerville on May 6, 1857. Five days later, county representatives from El Dorado, Sacramento and Yolo met to elect 125 delegates to the Wagon Road Convention (as these groups were known) to insure the completion of the wagon road from Sacramento to Carson Valley. Asa Hawley was appointed vice president of that committee.

Another agency that endorsed this route was the Pioneer Stage Company, who generously offered "a coach and four" to carry the directors of the El Dorado Wagon Road Convention Committee over the summit and down Hawley Grade to test its utility as a main route. The company was not just being gratuitous. The owner, Jarad Crandall, saw this as an opportunity to improve his business. With better roads, more stage coaches could travel in both directions in greater comfort, carrying more goods to the mines and communities on both sides of the pass.

Lake Valley House/Elkhorn House/Hawley's Toll Station

At the Lake House (Hawley's 2nd Elkhorn House) – a tolerable good-sized shanty at the foot of the grade – we found a large party assembled, taking their ease as best in such a place, without much to eat and but little to drink, except old fashioned tarantula-juice, 'warranted to kill at forty paces'. The host of the Lake House was in a constant state of nervous excitement, and did the scolding, swearing, gouging, and general hard work in the brief space of half an hour than any man I ever saw. He seemed to be quite worn out with his run of customers – from a hundred to three hundred of a night, and nowhere to stow – 'em – all cussing at him for not keeping provisions; and how could he, when they ate him clean out every day and some of 'em never paid him and never will? I was not sorry to get clear of the Lake House, its filth, and its troubles.

J. Ross Browne, April, 1863

Below is another story of Lake House as told to Dan De Quille by Snowshoe Thompson, a few months before Thompson died. The entire story was published in *Overland Monthly*, October 1886. Here is an abbreviation of that story.

Jon Torsteinson (Torsteinsson) Rue was born in Telemark, Norway, in 1827. He came to America in 1837, where he changed his name to John A. Thompson, then to California in 1851.

After traveling around the state, he moved to Diamond Valley near Woodfords (Alpine County). John read an ad put out by the U.S. government asking for individuals to carry the mail across the Sierra in the winter months when other modes of travel were unavailable due to high snow depths. People from his homeland region got around during the winter on "snowshoes" - what today we would call skis. Remembering his "snowshoes" from home, John fashioned skis out of hard oak 10 feet long (weighing about 10 lbs. each), then tried them out on the upper slopes of the Sierra east of Placerville. From that time on, he became known as Snowshoe Thompson. From his home, he would travel over Luther Pass up Hawley Grade to Placerville then return through Lake Valley over Kingsbury Grade to Genoa and return to his farm.

On December 29, 1856, Snowshoe Thompson came upon a man at Hawley's cabin quite by accident. Thompson was crossing the Sierra westbound by way of Hawley Grade when he heard a man cry out inside. Upon entering, he found James Sisson - Hawley's business partner from Placerville - face down and disoriented. Sisson had been traveling east over the Sierra on a business trip to Carson when he got caught in a blizzard, got turned around and wound up at the cabin for 12 days. There was nothing to eat but raw flour. His matches had gotten wet and there had been no fire for four days. His legs were purple to the knees and he knew they must be amputated in order for him to live. When Thompson found him, Sisson had an ax in his hands, ready to do the job himself. Thompson built him a fire, made him as comfortable as possible, and told him not to do anything until he returned.

Thompson went back eastward to Woodford's, rounded up a rescue party and returned to carry Sisson out on a make shift hand sled. They carried him to Genoa only to learn that the doctor needed chloroform to perform the necessary surgery to save Sisson. Thompson proceeded to Sacramento for the needed chloroform and returned in time for the doctor to save Sisson's life. Sisson lived out the rest of his days somewhere in the Atlantic states.

Encounters around Lake Tahoe

There were still many Native Americans living around Lake Tahoe in the 1850s and encounters with white settlers were mixed. Some got along better than others. Asa Hawley had a deep distrust of them and his attitude caused him no end of aggravation. They wouldn't let him fish in the lake and tried to drive him away as a result.

In 1857, it was not certain that there was an outlet flowing from the lake. Hawley decided to find out. Friends James Green and John A. "Snowshoe" Thompson boarded a small boat and rowed along shore while Hawley walked along beside them. Hawley measured his paces for half a mile in order to determine how long it would take to row all the way around the lake.

Presumably someone had a time piece but Hawley didn't make a note of it. They probably started somewhere around Emerald Bay, as he noted (in his memoirs years later) that the water at Rubicon Point was two feet higher than it had been the previous summer. They found a river that flowed out of the lake (Truckee River). Hawley was sure he was the first to discover it. When they returned to their point of origin, Hawley declared that the lake was 150 miles around (almost twice its real circumference).

Politics

In 1855, Asa Hawley was elected supervisor to the second district (out of Diamond Springs, Mud Springs, Dry Creek, and Cosumnes Townships) in the first general election of the State of California. He also ran for State Assembly but lost. He ran again in 1859, however, and won. He was a man of prominence in his region and time. He was also among the first group of officers nominated to the **E. Clampus Vitus**, of the Coloma region in 1856.

Hawley's Family Life

According to the 1870 California Census, Asa married a woman named Sally while they still lived back east. They had a daughter, Emma, born in 1839 in Michigan. They had a second daughter named Susan, who was born in California in 1856. She later married Robert Ames.

There is evidence that Robert had a partner whose last name was Curtis and they owned a saw mill near the Emigrant Road. From other El Dorado County records, Asa and Sally adopted twin girls from Henry Robinson when his wife, Medora, died giving birth to them in 1856. Henry gave up all rights to guardianship of his daughters when the Hawley's adopted them.

In 1855 Asa Hawley homesteaded 160 acres in Upper Lake Valley at the base of Hawley Grade and by 1870 was operating a way station called "Hawley & Co." on 3,000 acres with dairy 75 cows, 12 horses, and 125 beef cattle. As was the custom of the time, most ranchers drove their livestock up into the high country to pasture during the hot summer months, driving them back into the valleys for the winter.

In 1870, Hawley moved his operation to King's Canyon then to Latrobe. By 1880, the family had moved to Smith's Valley, Esmeralda County, Nevada.

Asa Hawley died in Yerington, Lyon County, Nevada in 1899 at the age of 86.

TED ELLSWORTH REMEMBERS HWY 50 WAGON TRAIN AS FIRST PRESIDENT

By Ted Ellsworth

According to the records and minutes of the Highway 50 Association, the Wagon Train was first discussed at a meeting early in the winter of 1949.

While various means of promoting Highway 50 were being suggested, Rowland Morris, then El Dorado County Sheriff, came up with the idea of a Wagon Train, saying, since this highway was known as the Roaring Road during the 1860's and '70s with its many wagons, stagecoaches and riders, why not re-enact those days with a Wagon Train from Nevada to Placerville?

That was the idea that got things rolling. The members in attendance enthusiastically agreed with this.

They included, in addition to Rowland Morris: Haverly Gross, Wagon Wheel; Clyde Beecher, Nevada Club; Frank Globin; Charlie Fisher, Bond owner; Jorgie Jorgensen, Echo Lake; Alice Lyons, Phillips Resort; Dewey King, Twin Bridges; Herb Poole, Strawberry; Pop Oamer, Fied's Place; Ed Norton, Kyburz; John Hastie, Silver Fork; Ted Ellsworth, Whitehall; Oscar Schneider, Sportsman's Lodge; Floyd Poole, Pacific House; Detmer Kussell, Pacific House; Ernie Endicott, 50 Grand; and Myrtle Rice, Camino Food Center, among others.

Lloyd Raffetto, A.H. "Sandy" Murray, Sybil Berry, Jim and Florence



Berry and C.S. Collins were contacted in Placerville and they, like all the others, thought that this was an excellent idea.

A committee was formed and it was determined that the first thing that was needed was a Wagon Boss to put the Wagon Train together: wagons, horses, trailers, hay, teamsters, etc. Bode Martin and Ralph Plimpton were engaged as the first Co-Wagon bosses. They did their job well, though in all truthfulness, the wagons were not as authentic, nor the attire of the teamsters and the outsiders, as is today's Wagon Train.

Nevertheless, it was a lot of fun, very well supported and gave the highway a tremendous amount of publicity.

After the celebration in Placerville, the Wagon Train was dismantled and everyone sort of forgot about it.

No Wagon Train was planned or run during 1950, but by midsummer 1950, so many people from every sector began asking for a return that early in 1951 the Highway 50 Association decided to sponsor another Wagon Train.

Again, the first order of business was to find a competent Wagon Master. George Walker, a very well liked man with lengthy livestock experience and an intimate knowledge of Highway 50, because he held the contract to carry U.S. mail from Placerville to Echo Summit, agreed to take the job for the then handsome sum of \$300.00 per month, plus meals and mileage expenses. I think a great part of George Walker's reason for taking on the 3 or 4 month

task was that he loved the idea and greatly enjoyed the livestock, teamsters and the Wagon Train atmosphere. He did a wonderful job and continued to do so for several years. Later, Rocky Mountain took over as Wagon Master, to be followed by Harold Cummins. Each contributed his own unique flavor and style to the event in the most outstanding and favorable manner. Subsequent Wagon Bosses right down to the present have given their best and are a credit and a tribute to the success the Highway 50 Wagon Train has enjoyed.

(1949-1989) 40TH ANNIVERSARY WAGON TRAIN

Letter From The President

On Wagon Train's 40th anniversary, (26 years ago), then President Davey (Doc) Wiser wrote the following President's message. It contains some important information that should not be lost, so we are taking the liberty of re-printing his message to ensure that an accurate history of this time honored Bi-State Historic Event is remembered.

There are many people to thank for keeping the Hwy 50 Wagon Train alive for the past 40 years so that we may still enjoy it today.

Let's start with the Celio family for donating the lead double hitch wagons to Hwy 50 in the early 50's. Florence, Jim, Jack and Toni Sweeney for their contribution through the years, and for the old pictures we used in this year's program. Thank you to George and Ruth Walker for their enthusiastic endeavor. A special thank you to the Cass Amacker family. Also, thanks to Red and Lillian Dixon and family, Rocky and Willie Mountain, and Florence and Swift Berry. The list of people is endless. And to everyone else that contributed to Hwy 50 Wagon Train, we thank you.

The Hwy 50 Wagon Train was originated for several reasons. One was as a contribution to the Centennial Year Celebration of the Overland Rush of the 49ers to the gold fields of the Motherlode, and to generate business on the Hwy 50 corridor.

Herb Poole was the President of Hwy 50 when it was the first discussed at the Raffles Hotel (Old Carey House). Those present were Lloyd Raffeto, Swift Berry, Ted Ellsworth, Ed Norton, Harvey Gross and Dee Kuesseff of Pacific House. Others who were involved were Norm and Sarah Celio, Al Kyburz, Fyld Poole and Mrs. James Blair.

The Hwy 50 Wagon Train is the only moving State Historic Event in California and Nevada. It is unique within itself. We have had to fight for survival against progress. Thanks to Norm Waters and staff, we have prevailed in this matter.



Now it is all of our responsibility to keep it going for another forty years. The Pioneer spirit lives on in all of us. Just like in Lonesome Dove, it takes a lot of hard work and dedication to make something of this magnitude survive the up's and down's on life's trail.

I extend an open invitation to one and all to join the Hwy 50 Association Wagon Train and let your Pioneer spirit come alive with excitement and enthusiasm. Remember, you have a choice and you really can live your dreams on the Hwy 50 Wagon Train.

Respectfully, Your President
Davey "Doc" Wiser

Periodically the California and Nevada State Legislatures have reaffirmed our designation as a Bi-State designated historic event. Senator Tim Leslie sponsored a resolution to perpetuate this status and encouraged all State agencies to support this significant event in all ways possible. That wonderful support and cooperation of the California Highway Patrol, Nevada Highway Patrol, El Dorado County Sheriff's Department, South Lake Tahoe Police Department, Placerville Police Department, El Dorado County Department of Transportation and Cal Trans have made it possible for the continuation of the Highway 50 Wagon Train. More recently, Highway 50 Association has enjoyed the support of Senator Ted Gaines and his staff who recognize the value of the unique pioneering heritage portrayed here.



Did one of the most famous rides in American history cost a presidential candidate the race for the nation's highest office? As the story goes, *New York Tribune* editor Horace Greeley's stagecoach ride with the colorful Hank Monk at the reins later played a major role in Greeley's loss to incumbent Ulysses S. Grant in the 1872 presidential election.

More people today recognize the famous phrase, "Go West, young man, Go West," credited to Greeley, than know of the much-maligned social reformer of the mid-19th century. In 1859, the forty-eight-year-old former New York congressman, outspoken abolitionist, and women's rights advocate, was touring the West he had been touting to the nation. On July 30, he found himself at an inn south of Genoa running late for a lecture on the western slope of the Sierra Nevada. Turning to the stagecoach driver, Greeley asked the thirty-three-year-old Monk if it was possible to cross the massive mountain range in time to make his presentation in Placerville, California that evening. Monk assured the worried Greeley that he would get him there on time.

Leaving around dawn, the stagecoach followed the Carson River to Hope Valley, then turned north over Luther Pass to Lake Valley. From there, the stage climbed Meyers Grade to the top of Johnson Pass and shortly after noon pulled into Strawberry to change horses. According to Monk's version of the story, Greeley, in some distress, asked the driver if he was certain that he could get him to Placerville by 5PM. Knowing Strawberry was the last telegraph station before his final destination, Greeley wanted to send a telegram notifying the reception committee if he was going to be late. Monk emphatically responded, "I'll get you there."

The New York City editor experienced the ride of his life. He later wrote, "Yet at this brookneck rate we were driven for not less than four hours or forty miles changing horses every ten or fifteen, and raising a cloud of dust through which it was difficult at times to see anything."



"Just before I got to Dick's [Station] I looked into the coach and there was Greeley," Monk told a writer for San Francisco's *Golden Era* the following year, "his bare head bobbing, sometimes on the back and then on the front of the seat, sometimes in the coach and then out, and then on the top and then on the bottom, holding on to whatever he could grab."

At one point, according to Monk, Greeley cried out, "Driver, I'm not particular for an hour or two!" Monk responded, "Horace keep your seat! I told you I would get there by five o'clock, and by God I'll do it, if the axles hold!"

The shaken and disheveled Greeley arrived in time to meet the reception committee some twelve miles east of Placerville. Monk traveled on to the town, arriving there before Greeley. When the two men met up again upon Greeley's arrival, the Eastern greenhorn bought the daredevil stagecoach driver the finest suit of clothes available in Placerville as a token of his appreciation.

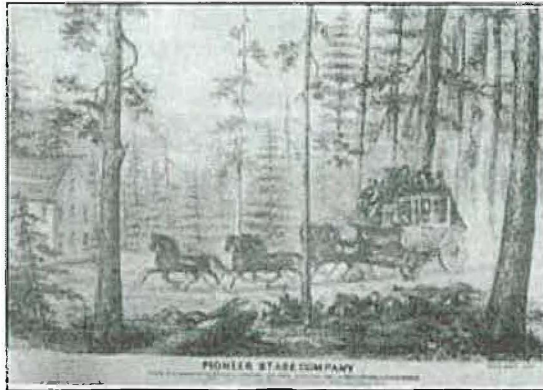
Greeley wrote his version of the harrowing ride on August 1. It was published in the *New York Tribune* after his account reached New York City by mail. Hank Monk, with the *Tribune* story and other

Myth #111: Riding High: Hank Monk and Horace Greeley by Guy Rocha, Former Nevada State Archivist

accounts making him a national figure, regaled all who would listen to his role in the now famous ride. Mark Twain heard the story from Monk while he was living in Nevada Territory in the early 1860s, comically recounted it in his 1866 western lecture tour, and embellished the tale in *Roughing It* (1872).

Humorist Artemus Ward, after hearing the story during his visit to Nevada in December 1863, wrote an anecdotal account of Greeley's stagecoach ride from hell in his work *Artemus Ward: His Travel and Complete Works* (1865). On March 29, 1866, Ward's comical version was read in the House of Representatives by New York Congressman Calvin Hulburt as a jab at his nemesis Horace Greeley and entered into the *Congressional Record*.

While Greeley tried to disassociate himself from Monk and the unflattering story, it continued to dog him right up to the 1872 presidential election. Some writers have suggested that the story may have actually cost him the election. In truth, historians have noted that Greeley was a long-standing controversial figure and savagely satirized by cartoonist Thomas Nast, independent of the exaggerated stories surrounding his stagecoach ride in 1859. Essentially, his stand on the major issues of the day led to his resounding defeat in the presidential election.



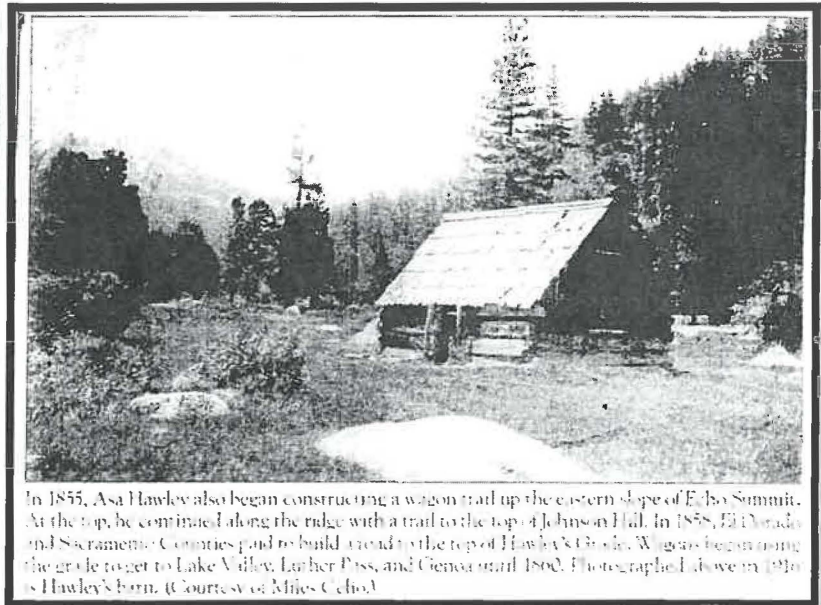
Shortly before the election, Greeley suffered a major financial loss in a famous diamond mine swindle, and then his sickly wife died. Overwhelmed by the devastating turn of events, America's premier social gadfly sank into a severe depression, dying before the electoral votes were cast.

Hank Monk, on the other hand, died in Carson City in 1883, eulogized as one of the greatest stagecoach drivers in American history and remains a folk hero.

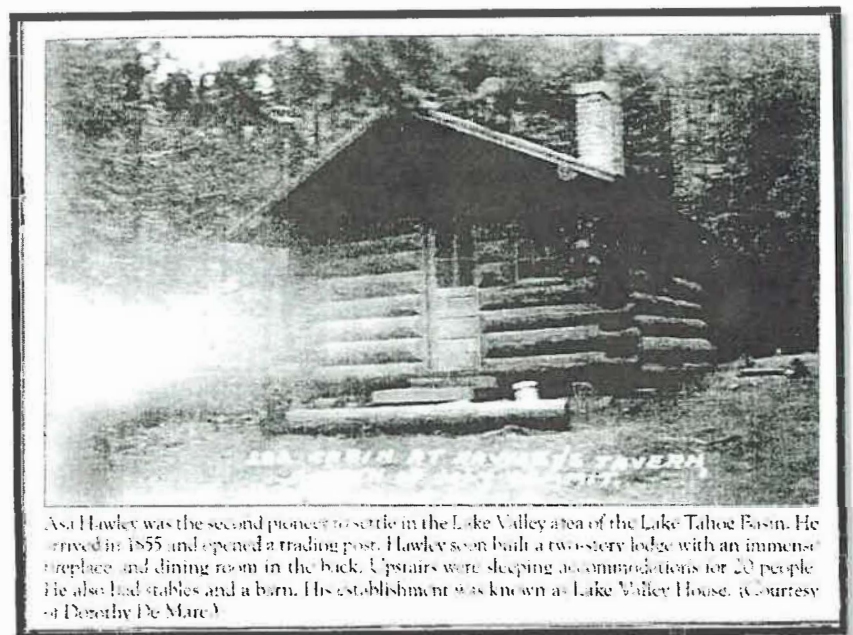
For further information, see *Hank and Horace: An Enduring Episode In Western History* (1973) by Richard G. Lillard and Mary V. Hood; *Hank Monk: He'll Get You There On Time* (1995) by Rich Pitter.

Photos: Nevada Historical Society, Reno, Nevada.

Original version in *Sierra Sage*, Carson City/Carson Valley, Nevada, July 2007 edition.



In 1855, Asa Hawley also began constructing a wagon trail up the eastern slope of Echo Summit. At the top, he continued along the ridge with a trail to the top of Johnson Hill. In 1858, El Dorado and Sacramento Counties paid to build a road to the top of Hawley's Gravel. Wagons began using the grade to get to Lake Valley, Luther Pass, and Genoa until 1860. Photographed above in 1910 is Hawley's barn. (Courtesy of Miles Celio)



Asa Hawley was the second pioneer to settle in the Lake Valley area of the Lake Tahoe Basin. He arrived in 1855 and opened a trading post. Hawley soon built a two-story lodge with an immense fireplace and dining room in the back. Upstairs were sleeping accommodations for 20 people. He also had stables and a barn. His establishment was known as Lake Valley House. (courtesy of Dorothy De Mare)

21 February 2009

El Dorado County Historical Museum
104 Placerville Drive
Placerville CA 95667

Dear Madam/Sir,

I am seeking information re the California pioneer
"Hawley" who was situated in the south Tahoe valley
area in the latter half of the 19th century.

Enclosed is a copy of my 12 Nov 08 letter to Ms. Peggy
Zeigler of the California Historical Society and a copy
of her 11 Dec 08 response. I believe that you will find
these missives to be self-explanatory.

I will be most appreciative for any information that
you can provide.

Cordially,
George S. Gillette

G.S. Gillette

12 November 2008

California Historical Society
attn: Mrs. Peggy Zeigler, Library Volunteer
678 Mission Street
San Francisco CA 94105-4014

Dear Mrs. Zeigler:

On behalf of Mr. Jessie R. Hawley, and myself, we thank you for your informative letter of 25 September 2008. As Jessie indicated, his interest is family history. My interest is of an historical nature, having spent some of my early years in "Hawley Country" (Hawley House, Hawley Grade, Hawley Falls, etc.).

I will list the information that I have, in the hope that it will bestir your interest to do further research, and advise us of your findings.

From the summit of U.S. Highway 50 (Echo Summit, not Echo Lake) the highway descends to the floor of Lake (Tahoe) Valley, down the Meyers Grade, to a point about one mile from the small town of Meyers (historically developed and

wholly owned by the pioneer Celio family). Meyers was once known as "Yanks Station", a way point on the Pony Express route. California State Highway 89 (the old, or original route from Meyers to the Luther Pass) tees into 50 at the base of Meyers Grade. From that point old 89 (now renamed "Upper Truckee Road" meanders south, on the west side of the Upper Truckee River (the main tributary to Lake Tahoe) to the end of the valley, where it turns east and becomes the old Luther Pass road. At the summit of Luther Pass there is a valley at the north side of Buck Ridge that includes some solid ground, some marshy area, and Grass Lake. The Luther Pass road then drops into Hope Valley and ends by teeing into Highway 83, the Carson Pass road.

Back to the junction of old 89 and 50: A mile south on old 89 is the (former) Celio Ranch House, including a slaughter house, a smoke house, a barn, other out-buildings, several corrals, etc. Another mile south was the site of a major operation, the former Celio Lumber Yard and Saw Mill,* discontinued in the 1920's and relocated north to a site near Ingora Ridge.

Hawley's
House →

About one and three-quarters ($1\frac{3}{4}$) mile further south, where between the road and the river, is the former site of a dairy operation, now long obliterated. It is at

* (Between the road and the river, now a residential development)

the place where an intermittent waterway, locally known as "Hawley Sticks" (but not necessarily its official name) crosses old 89 and flows into the Upper Truckee River. This is a roaring torrent of snow melt rushing down a steep mountain gorge in spring, then diminishing to bone-dry in mid-summer. The road makes a wide, semi-circular partial loop around a meadow of a half-dozen acres that once provided grazing for the dairy cows, but for most of the last century has been providing grazing for a herd (3 or 4, to more than a dozen) of Sierra Mule Deer on moonlit nights. At the easterly part of this meadow, about 8 or 10 yards west of the road, is the site of the Hawley House. It was about fifteen feet (15') square, made of rough-hewn pine logs, flattened on the top and bottom sides. Its precise location is identified by a pine tree, now about seventy (70) years old, growing at a point about three feet (3') inside of the west wall and three feet (3') inside the north wall of the cabin. When I first saw (1931) the Hawley House the roof and upper walls were already gone and the four sides were only four or five feet (4' or 5') high. Now they are entirely gone.

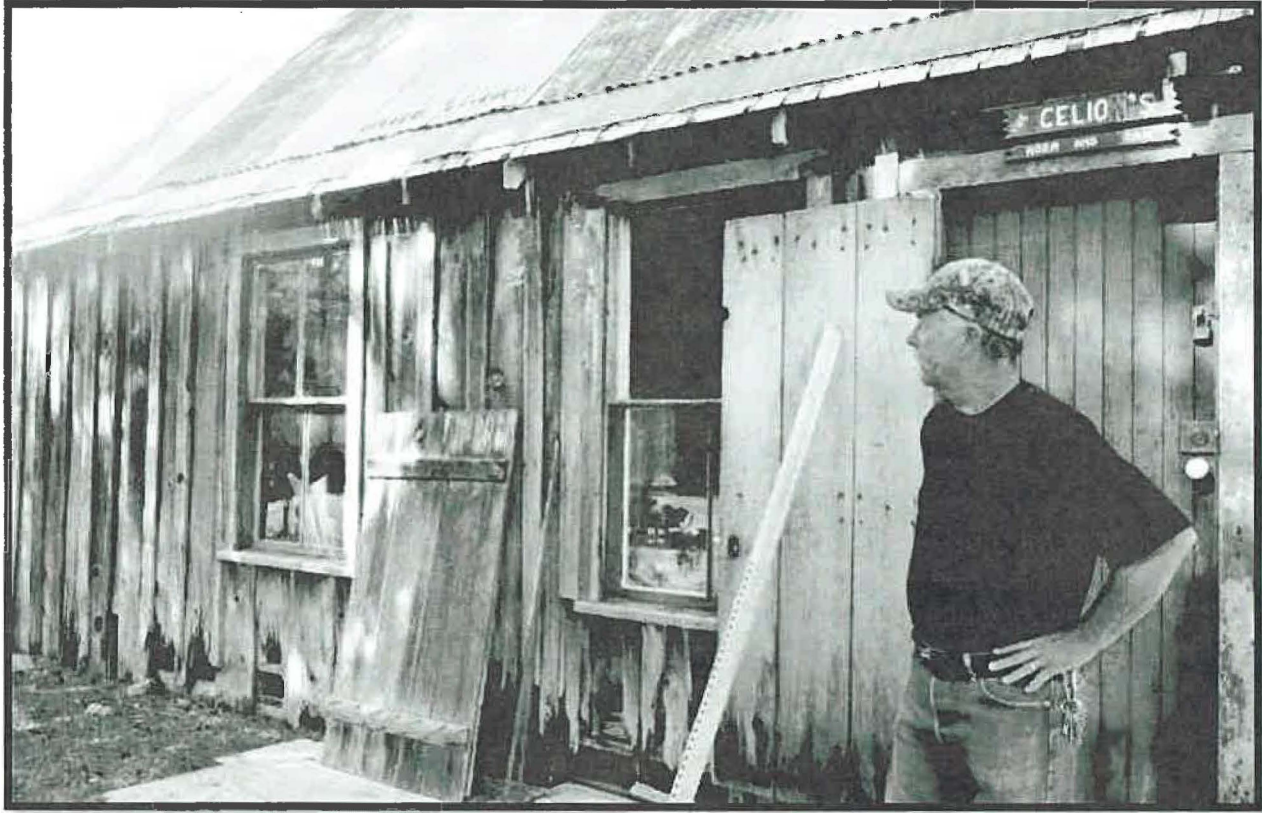
Hawley
House
location

At one time, when the California Historical Society was located in San Francisco on the north side of McAllister Street (mid-block, about #450) directly

A black and white photograph of a wooden marker, likely a survey point, standing in a sandy or dirt-covered area. The marker is a vertical wooden post with a rounded top and a small circular hole near the base. The number '34123E' is carved vertically into the post. The background shows a wooded area with trees and some fallen branches on the ground.



CELIO HOMESTEAD



Tom Celio

By Kathryn Reed

MEYERS – Not everyone struck it rich during the Gold Rush. Many of the men who came to California in search of gold ended up returning to work they knew.

Carlo Guiseppi Celio was one of those men.

He came to the United States from Switzerland. When he didn't strike gold, he began a dairy farm in Placerville.

In 1863 he homesteaded on property in what was known as the Upper Lake Valley area of the South Shore. The valley with its towering granite walls reminded him of his home in the Old World. Celio's first 160 acres on the South Shore were bought for \$300, which he paid for in gold.

At one point the Celio stake in Lake Tahoe was about 4,000 acres, making them one of the largest landowners. They ran 500 head of beef cattle from Meyers into Meiss, Big and Freel meadows. During the fall cowboys drove the cattle on horseback to the West Slope of El Dorado County. It was a five-day journey.

Today, the Celios own 103 acres on both sides of South Upper Truckee Road, to the center of the Upper Truckee River, and crossing the Old Meyers Grade twice.

On Aug. 24-25 the property is going to be the site of a 150-year celebration of the ranch. This is one of the largest private property holdings in the Lake Tahoe Basin. Tours of some of

the outbuildings will be available, stories of what life was like years ago will be told, and an old-fashioned cowboy barbecue will take place.

Recent History

Cattle no longer roam the property, but a handful of horses do.

Tom and Chris Celio in 2011 were deeded the property from Shirley Taylor. Taylor and Tom Celio are second cousins.

Taylor inherited the property from her mother, Hazel Taylor, who was a Celio. This was in 1985. Taylor spent years refurbishing much of what had gone into disrepair. She inherited what she calls "13 old buildings and three outhouses." The house had always been a summer home. Taylor winterized it so starting in 1988 she could live there year-round.

Since Tom and Chris Celio moved in full time they have put in a picture window above the sink that looks up to Echo Summit. Sitting at the kitchen table it's hard to have eye contact with the people on the other side of the table with that view just above their heads. They have also taken out a wall that divided the kitchen and living room to open up the area more. In 1986, Taylor was granted Timberland Preservation Zoning from the state Department of Forestry. This zoning restricts development and preserves the timberland. Selling wood was one way she could pay to bring the ranch back to life in at least a habitable manner.

In 1991, Taylor received the Forestland Stewardship Sward. Five years later she was honored with the California Tree Farmer of the Year award.

Through the 1990s many of the old buildings were reroofed, resided, and two foundations were reinforced. But it was never going to be what it was based on the number of acres and environmental regulations that bind private property owners.

My goal was to preserve the Celio ranch property as a tribute to the pioneering Celio family and hope that is continued in the future," Taylor told *Lake Tahoe News*. "The Celio mural on the Meeks building (in Meyers) scheduled for a September completion is my last effort to recognize the family.

Various members of the nine generations of Celios who are in the United States have spent time at the ranch. Tom and Chris Celio are continuing that tradition with their children, grandchildren, and great-grandchild.

There will even be Celios at the celebration next weekend who haven't met each other.

What it used to be like

In 1903, the Celios bought the town of Meyers, which consisted of a variety of businesses occupying 22 buildings. They were the largest employer at the time in this area.

The 125-head of dairy cattle required five people to milk them twice a day. Butter was made on site, which was then sold to locations as far away as San Francisco.

The family incorporated in 1905 and established a lumber company. Lumber from the first mill built in 1910 provided the lumber for the house where Tom and Chris Celio live today. It was built in 1914.

But Carlo Guiseppi Celio knew better than to clear-cut the forest area, even though others were doing so.

The slaughterhouse was built in 1912. Beef was sold to the various resorts around the lake and at stores in Meyers.

Tom Celio points to how the circular metal contraption in the ceiling would hold the cattle upside down after they were shot and killed. The blood drained into a catch area that flowed into a bathtub on wheels that was under the building. The carcasses stayed there chilled for a couple weeks before being sold for eating.

The room was chilled from ice blocks that had been cut the previous winter from area creeks and lakes, and even from a pond at Tahoe Paradise Golf Course.

A stone's throw from the main house is the house Norm and Ann Celio lived in when they were first married. They are Tom Celio's grandparents and Taylor's uncle and aunt. Celio recalls the story of when his grandmother found out there was no indoor toilet. She nearly lost it and was ready to leave. Norm Celio had been a bachelor at the lake and he was fine without that modern convenience. Still, he quickly added a bathroom to accommodate his new bride.

Today the house needs some work. Remnants from the past remain – old appliances, dishes, and handmade furniture.

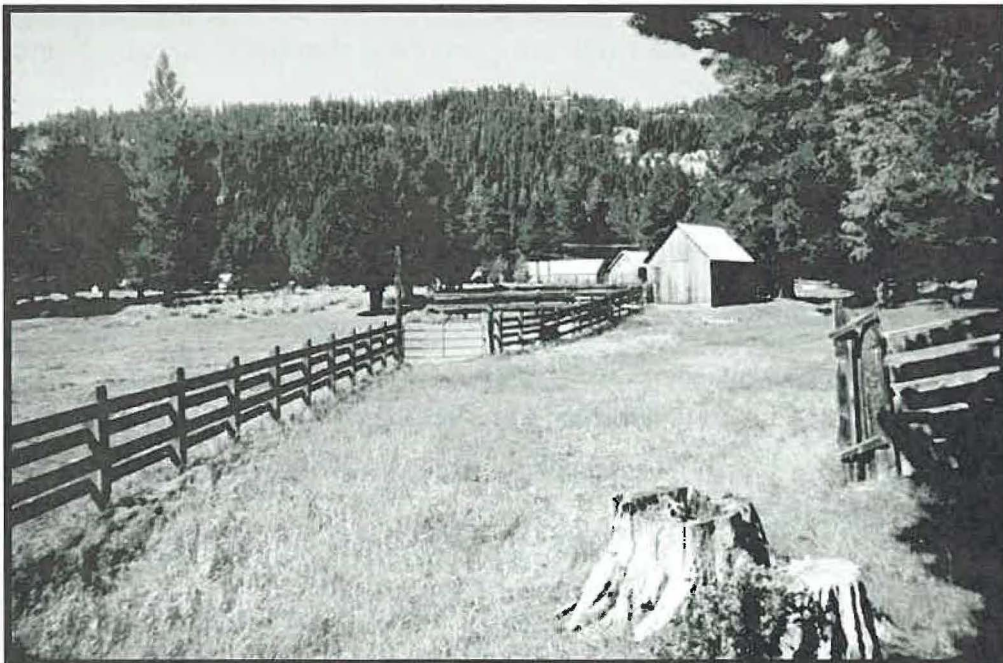
But the Celios were a clan of practical workers. Fancy antiques are not to be found here. The Depression took its toll on the Celio operations. There wasn't as much family to keep things going, so some of the businesses were leased out.

By the 1950s developers were taking an interest in Lake Tahoe. That is when much of the property that became Tahoe Paradise and Christmas Valley was sold off. They were given those names by developers to entice people to buy houses in the area.

A series of gifting-inheritance-gifting transactions have kept the current 103 acres in the Celio family.

"This is one of the last pieces of old Tahoe," Tom Celio said with pride looking at the ranch.

Information provided by The Tahoe Weekly magazine, [TheTahoeWeekly.com](http://www.laketahoenews.net/2013/08/celios-keep-tahoe-heritage-alive-on-private-ranch)
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Handout Compiled by Kathy Lewin

EXPLANATION OF HANDOUT FOR LUTHER PASS

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<p>This topographical map shows the original route of the Luther Pass Trail out of Hope Valley going towards Lake Tahoe.</p>	
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<p>This is a page out of a survey book done in 1861 that shows where Ira Luther's ranch was located.</p> <p>NOTE: "rough mountains" are the Sierra Nevada.</p>	
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<p>This map was done in 1981 showing the exact division of boundaries.</p>	
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<p>This letter was written in 1930 from Homer Luther to his half-brother Mark. After Ira and his family returned to New York in 1858, his first wife died. He married a couple of years later and Mark was born by Ira's second wife.</p>	
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<p>This article was written by Robert Stewart - an avid Nevada historian – who researched the background around "The Irish Brigade" mentioned in Mark Twain's book, <i>Roughing It</i>.</p>	
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LUTHER PASS

This pass sits on the Alpine/El Dorado County borders at 7,740 feet. It was named for Ira Manley Luther, who was born in Sweden, Monroe County, New York State on February 15, 1821. He came to California in 1850 seeking gold, as many did in those days. He first ventured up to the Ophir City Mine, outside Auburn, California. In 1851, he journeyed into Oregon just for speculation and in a short amount of time, made \$8,000 selling supplies back to the California miners.

Ira was not one to sit still for long. In 1852, he returned to New York, intending to buy out his sister's portion of the family homestead but met and married Lucy Crippen instead. They gathered provisions for their trip to California – a first for Lucy and a second one for Ira. In 1854, they arrived in Placerville, California. Ira purchased the “Cedar Ravine House” (an inn or tavern) for \$500 from J. B. Barr, located on Main Street. The building is now gone but there is a granite pillar marking the spot where it once stood.

They would later travel to Sacramento, California where Ira purchased 300 acres along the Sacramento River. Ira sojourned back and forth between San Francisco (where he had many various business dealings) and Sacramento, but mainly stayed in the Sacramento area. With Moses Conklin as his business partner, Ira purchased the City Hotel on J Street between 6th and 7th at a rate of \$300 a month (paid for in one year).

While still living in Sacramento, Ira and Lucy's first son, Homer, was born on September 20, 1856. Due to some financial business reversals, Ira decided to set out for the other side of the Sierra and try his hand at ranching in the Carson Valley of Nevada. While on their way to the Nevada Territory, his wife gave birth to their second son, Frank, in Placerville on September 27, 1858. A daughter, Nellie (named for a favorite Aunt Cornelia) was later born in Carson Valley in August, 1860.

Luther operated a water-powered saw mill from 1858 – 1865 on extensive acreage he purchased that straddles the California-Nevada state line. There is a story that he once cut off one of his toes while operating one of his saws and had to finish removing the toe himself. His home still stands today across the road from a historical marker designating his significance to the area. Descendants still live in and around Carson Valley. Luther was also a Major and Chief Engineer in the US Army under General Albert Sidney Johnston (later a Confederate Officer) who was commanding general of the district and territory of Utah at the time.

According to Sherman Day, surveyor of the 1855 State Emigrant Wagon Road, “Mr. Luther traveled through the Pass over the eastern summit with a wagon and painted his name upon a rock; hence the name.”

When it first opened, the pass was called “Johnston Pass” (after General Johnston) but was soon re-named “Luther's Pass” - to avoid any confusion with another nearby pass called “Johnson Cutoff.” Luther Pass was being considered as a possible route for the Central Pacific Railroad.

In 1857, after the California legislature failed to pass the Wagon Road Appropriation, citizens of Placerville raised \$5,500 toward the construction of a major road crossing the Sierra.

This was followed by Sacramento, El Dorado, and Yolo Counties belatedly restoring appropriation funds for its construction. Upon completion, the Board of Wagon Road Directors "in a coach and four" decided to "test" the newly completed line starting from Placerville, traveling over "Johnson Hill Summit" (Johnson Cutoff), then across Luther Pass down into Hope Valley. After several celebratory glasses of wine, Mrs. Woodford (of Cary's Mill along Carson River/Woodford's Canyon) "...provided every one with a fine meal. All slept in Woodford's haymow that night."

This segment of road was highly traveled by miners going after the Comstock Lode of 1859 from the Sacramento Valley over the Sierra into Carson Valley. Although some miners later found Daggett Pass/Kingsbury Grade to be shorter and more direct, there were many that continued to use Luther's Pass as a safe passage for moving goods and supplies as well as a dependable route for driving cattle to range land.

On April 3, 1860, the first Pony Express rider left San Francisco by boat before starting his journey taking the road through Sacramento, Placerville, over Johnson Cutoff, down to Lake Valley, over Luther Pass, down West Carson Canyon, past Woodford's, along the base of the Carson Range to Mormon Station (Genoa), then to Carson City and further east towards his final destination of St. Joseph, Missouri. Luther Pass was used by the Pony Express only a short while. It was soon re-routed over Johnson Cutoff to Lake Valley, then over Kingsbury's Grade (Daggett Pass) as this route was deemed more direct. And since one of the main features of the Pony Express was speed in delivery, saving precious time was a valuable component.

With the increasing presence of settlers into the territory, skirmishes with Native Americans were inevitable. One night while Ira was sitting in his home reading, an Indian burst in. Grabbing his fire arm, Ira shot the Indian. Such were the daily experiences of living on the Western frontier.

Ira Luther became a member of the Nevada Territorial Legislature 1861-1862. He was one of the 14 members of the "Irish Brigade" mentioned in Mark Twain's book, *Roughing It*. This was a group of voluntary camp followers of then Governor Nye who had joined his retinue of their own choice. They came from regions between New York and San Francisco, feeling that in the scuffle for little territorial crumbs and offices, they could not make their condition more precarious than it was, and might reasonably expect to make it better (there were only 5 of Irish decent).

Luther Pass was one of the three main wagon roads used in the 1860s - the others being Daggett's Ravine/Pass (Kingsbury Grade) out of Mormon Station and Johnson Cutoff to Lake Valley. While Johnson Cutoff may have been shorter, it was also narrower and animals more likely to slip and fall down to the valley below (a frequent occurrence among wagon trains along all the major mountain passes before they were graded and widened to allow safer passage in both directions). Luther Pass grade has a wide, gradual incline/descent from Lake Valley to Hope Valley.

In those days, travelers often needed to impose on the good nature of the permanent residents, if no inn or stage stop were available. One such incident occurred when the Eastern Boundary Survey Commission laid over at Luther's Ranch, having traveled over "so exceedingly rough mountain trails that it was impossible for a mule to get over..." They carried with them only the bare necessities to survive like blankets and basic equipment.

The bill of fare was simple: each man gets a stick about two feet long, sharpened at both ends – with one end he impales a slice of bacon and the other end he sticks in the ground the proper distance from the fire; cut a cold biscuit in half, remove a little piece from the center and place it under the bacon to catch the drippings. Bacon, biscuits, cold water drunk from a common pale and a few wild onions found along side of the trail, was enjoyed as much as was ever a kingly feast.

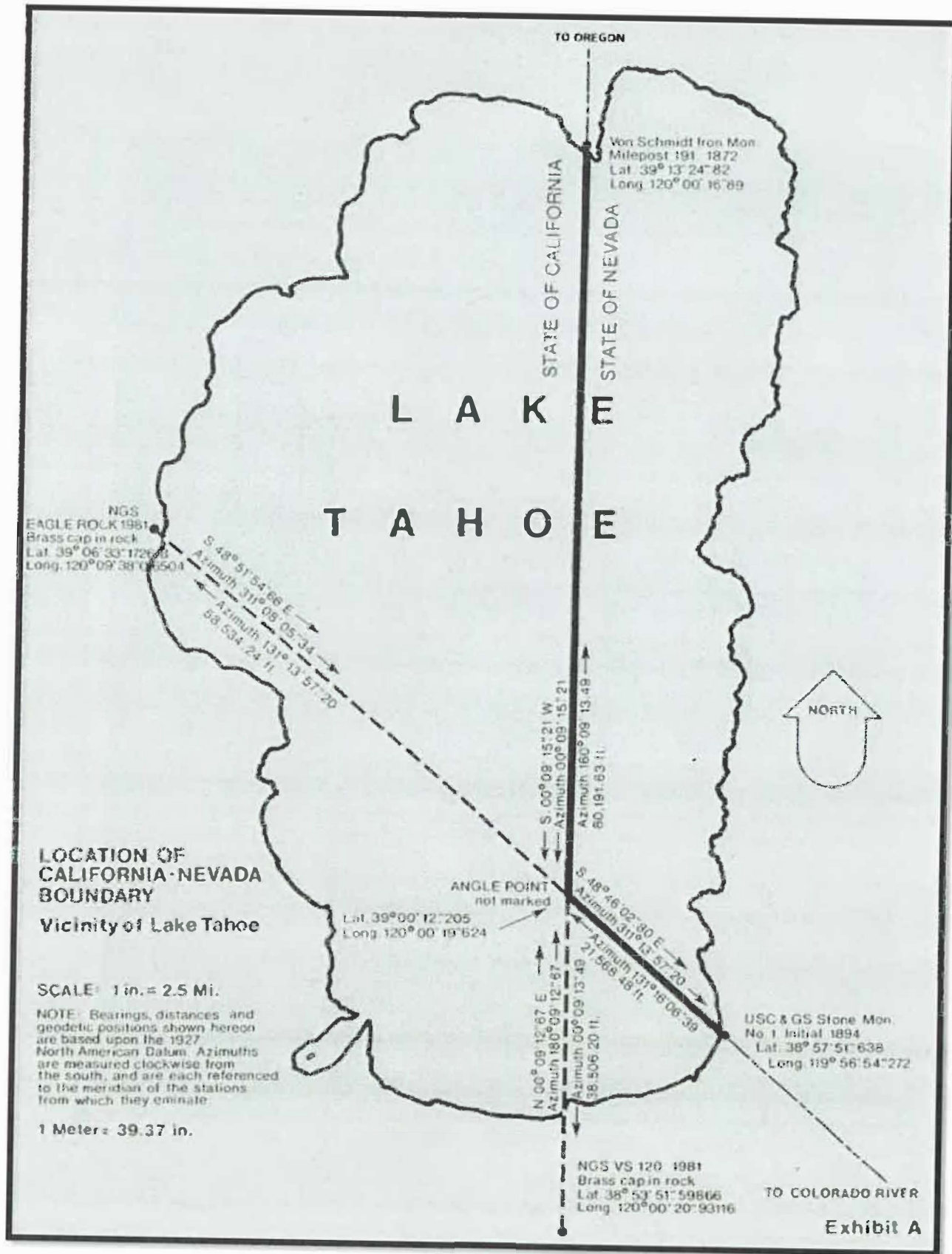
Many residences found themselves to be “taverns” as well. With great distances between civilization, when a weary traveler encountered a dwelling, he and his companions and animals were nearly worn out. What a welcome relief to enter someone’s home and be greeted by a full bar in the front living room.

From 1856 to 1876 Luther Pass was the main route used by Snowshoe Thompson who carried mail and other items (his pack sometimes weighed 100 lbs.) to Placerville by way of Johnson Cutoff. He returned by going down through Lake Valley to Mormon Station then back to his home in Diamond Valley near Markleeville.

The ranch land and saw mill Luther purchased was later bought by the Fay(e) Family, which is now on Bureau of Land Management land that bears the title “Faye-Luther Canyon Trail Head”. This is located on today’s Highway 206/Foothill Blvd. In 1864, the state lines were different than they are today. Half of Luther’s property was in Nevada (then Utah Territory before Nevada became a state); the other half was in Alpine County, CA. Other families that purchased some of the original Luther property such were: Dresslers, Farwells, Palmers, and Crippins (a relative of Luther’s wife who later became the first sheriff of Douglas County).

Luther and his family returned to New York in 1865. His wife, Lucy, died later that year. He married for a second time to Jane Eliza Cole in 1867 and they had a son, Mark Lee in 1872. Ira returned to California briefly to do some mining the town of Masonic, California but went back to New York for the rest of his life. He died in Ridgeway, Orleans County, New York, May 29, 1890.





THIS LETTER IS BY HOMER J ROME LUTHER TO HIS HALF BROTHER
MARK LEE LUTHER

April 26th, 1930

Dear Mark,

I am returning to you under separate cover the notes on Father's life. I was very much interested in reading them.

There are many things incident to that migration from Nevada to San Francisco over the mountains by stage coach that I can recollect; also our life at the ranch near Genoa. The house I can see still and the milk cellar with its running water through it, which was part of the house. The mill with its great overshot water-wheel in which father had the misfortune of losing his toes. The little school house I remember in which I toed a crack and learned to recite "Breathed there a man with soul so dead who never to himself hath said this is my own, my native land?" etc. Also recall the Indians about the house....the troop of soldiers camped at one time near us.....going berrying for Buffalo berries (as they were called) which grew along the streams....going to Genoa to attend a tent show or circus. I can remember the family of Cotton children who used to tell us of the snow and ice back in Wisconsin and their sleds. We children used for a sled the jaw bones of a dead ox or cow with a string attached with which to draw it and many other things.

I don't see how Nellie could have remembered much about staging over the mountains as she was so very young. In that staging party was a family by the name of Van Sickle. They had one coach and our family another and then there was a general baggage wagon, which, as I recall it, Uncle Henry Grippen drove. The trip took about a week and we stopped each day for a picnic lunch. I don't remember anything about the turkey sandwich, but I do remember the canned sardines.

On page 20 of your notes you refer to the placerville-Carson stage line. Look over the figures given for carrying 120 tons of freight at six to eight cents a pound and see if the total received for carrying freight won't stand a very liberal discount. \$5,250,000 is some freight charge for 120 tons of merchandise.

I hope you will have a pleasant trip East.

Sincerely yours,

Homer Luther



THE IRISH BRIGADE
Illustrated by True Williams
From first edition of *ROUGHING IT*

It was a jolly company, the fourteen. They were principally voluntary camp-followers of the Governor, who had joined his retinue by their own election at New York and San Francisco and came along, feeling that in the scuffle for little territorial crumbs and offices they could not make their condition more precarious than it was, and might reasonably expect to make it better. They were popularly known as the "Irish Brigade," though there were only four or five Irishmen among all the Governor's retainers.

His good-natured Excellency was much annoyed at the gossip his henchmen created—especially when there arose a rumor that they were paid assassins of his, brought along to quietly reduce the democratic vote when desirable!

- *Roughing It*, Chapter 21

In Chapter 22 of *Roughing It*, Twain writes of his first trip to visit Lake Tahoe, also known as Lake Bigler. "Three or four members of the Brigade had been there and located some timber lands on its shores and stored up a quantity of provisions in their camp." Traveling with a companion, Twain intended to find the old camp of the Irish Brigade members. "We found the small skiff belonging to the Brigade boys, and without loss of time set out across a deep bend of the lake toward the landmarks that signified the locality of the camp. (*Roughing It*, Chapter 22).

Ira M. Luther - Luther, 41 in 1861, was left on his own at an early age. He arrived in California in 1850, and profited from a trip to Oregon to purchase goods to sell in the goldfields of California. In 1858 he settled in Carson Valley. A man with many interests, he was active numerous aspects of the early years of settlement in western Nevada. Luther Pass between Woodfords and Lake Tahoe is named for him.

Researching the old mining claims and records books in the archives of the state of Nevada, researcher Robert Stewart has been able to identify some members of Twain's "Irish Brigade." formal land survey of the Brigade's timber claim had to wait until completion of a federal survey of the township in which it was located. That occurred the following year in 1862. In the 1860s, claims--like mining claims--were made by marking off land with piles of rock, tree trunks laid as corners, or other markings. In January 1862, county officers were elected in the new Territory of Nevada. In due course, later that same year, Ormsby County Surveyor James S. Lawson provided the Brigade with a survey of the claim. Only then could it be formally recorded with County Recorder S.D. King.

The following names in boldface have been identified as members of Twain's "Irish Brigade." are listed in the survey of the timber claim from the Ormsby County Surveyor's Survey #40 "claim of Nye and others situated in the East shore of Lake Bigler in the County of Ormsby and Territory of Nevada, the boundaries whereof are described as follows...." James S. Lawson, County Surveyor, 19 September 1862.

The claim is filed in *Volume 3, County Records*, pp. 197-200, Carson City Clerk's Office, Carson City, Nevada. (County Surveyor James S. Lawson was thirty-one years old in the 1862 Nevada census. In September 1861, he surveyed the East & South Township lines of Township 15 North, 10 East, mdm, under a contract issued September 14, 1861. This Township was not subdivided until 1865, when it was surveyed in detail by Butler Ives.

Robert Stewart is author of *Aurora, Nevada's Ghost City of the Dawn*, and conducts continuing research into the people of Nevada's territorial years.

Beginning of the Trail at Luther Pass



Base of the Trail in Hope Valley



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1863 Survey Map courtesy of the Special Collections Library at the University of Nevada at Reno and the Nevada Division of State Lands.

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From <http://www.twainquotes.com/IrishBrigade.html>:

Handout Compiled by Kathy Lewin