

Chaun Mortier's Notes on Winter Sports in Truckee

Slide No. presentation Sat., March 1, 2025

3. 1866 Dutch Flat Donner Lake Road opened Summit House, example of amount of snow, Pollard Station, Dry Ground
4. 1872 examples of Logging companies with ponds that would be used for skating parties when the froze over; flumes froze as well
5. **Heidi** Flumes froze as well; Donner Lake smooth as glass to skate the entire length
6. 1880 had largest snowpack, 900 cm = 29 1/5 feet, 1881 drought year (Water year is a 12-mo period from Oct 1-Sept 30)
 - A. 1882 Use of Ice pond for skaters
 - a. Thriving community, winter "play" was skating at Schaffer's Pond, Donner Lake, Iceland. Mill Companies ponds froze over and became a recreation site. Another popular "sport" was snow sledding
7. 1884 **BREAK SLIDE** – Donner Lake, Sleighing. Family trips to Donner Lake from Truckee
8. 1885 Heavy winters were a common occurrence and with work slowdowns playing in the snow was a mental health break for many of the residents, especially the younger ones. (Star Rink was between Mar 1885 and Dec 1891) Photo approx. 1887
9. **Heidi** 1886. Same info re: skating etc. now is being called a "Season". Note the name of the Saloon - Snowflake - on Main Street.
10. 1892 – Charles "Roddy" McClellan [McLellan] had developed the idea of an Ice Skating Rink for the downtown core. His creation was 450' x 50', enclosed with a fence (with open roof) and had a ticket booth and a warming hut. This was built in the Plaza and continued until at least January 1893. This location was also a production site for ice. Issue was it kept melting during the day and was not effective.
11. 1894-1 1894 started off in a good place *Good ice production, etc. but trouble was brewing. **Hard winters had taken their toll** on Truckee and we were going into a **recession**. In May the country was suffering Labor Strikes that began to cripple the economy, By summer 1894 the **Pullman Strike** was affecting Truckee. 340 troop members were sent to Truckee from Companies B and C of the National Guard. There was a Gatling Gun set up on a flat car in the middle of Town. This was out of fear of violence but there never was any in Truckee. McGlashan saw disaster in the future. He was already the representing attorney for the railroad and when a pending strike in Truckee was on the horizon, he was expected to avert that. He had already told the SPRR that his loyalties lay with the workers but either they didn't hear him or ignored it. So, to avert a strike in Truckee he invited everyone for an outing to Frog Lake. *McGlashan had developed an enterprise to raise frogs for the newest demand out of San Francisco; Frog Legs! He invited the town folks to spend the day relaxing and harvesting frogs. (GMAMM, pgs 163-164). A great day for the families, broke the momentum of a strike. The original concept of the Ice Cone started in January of 1894 as a prototype "building" to see if an Ice covered building could work.
12. 1894-2 See Data on 1894-1
13. 1895-1 January **BREAK** Slide to begin next section, Snow Levels in Truckee were immense. Photo is Truckee January 25 1895, showing snow levels.
14. 1895-2 Dec Mr. McGlashan had come up with the idea of a carnival/Ice Palace because of the continued issues of living off credit in the winter and working all summer to pay it off. Although popular with

people, getting off a train was a problem. So becomes the birth of an Idea to help Truckee. Knowing McGlashan could play off the “warm, fuzzy” feeling SPRR had because of the strike issues, he went to San Francisco and proposed the development of excursion trains for a Winter Carnival in Truckee. On Nov 15, 1895 Newspapers were reporting that SPRR will be running excursion trains to Truckee during winter Months. Rumor has it, as soon as the contract was signed, he sent a telegraph to Truckee to the Winter Carnival Committee and the building started. Ground was broken on the Ice Palace November 30^{ish}, 1895 and within 10 days was completed. The original carnival was to take place at the End of December. There was a great deal of snow, everything was moving smoothly and then, IT RAINED! Modeled after the Coliseum of Rome. 135 Fir Trees, Ice rink 800’ long, turrets and towers from 100-200’ in height, in the center a dance hall 160’ long. A stock company was created and incorporated with eleven directors as follows: C.F. McGlashan, John Sheritt, Joseph Marzen Jr., W.P. Calkins, W.R. Spalding, W.M. Burckhalter, T.B. Whitney, Stewart McKay, F.T. Meloche, Daniel McPhetres, and William McDougald.

15. 1896-1 – It Worked!
- B. 1896-2-So popular, fruit was being sent to be on display in the palace. Dec 1895, S. Mitchel, President of the Board of Trade, Visalia, CA reached out to CF regarding sending a citrus exhibit to be displayed inside the ice palace. There were additional 3 companies who also wanted to display their fruits inside the Ice Palace = instant refrigeration.
- C. 1896-3 What began as methods of survival for residents of Truckee were now items in a Playground of Tourism
18. 1896-4 Dry Ground. List dimensions (one acre, etc) The ice palace is elliptical in shape, its longest diameter measuring 250 feet and its shortest 150 feet. It was not constructed like the ice palaces of Eastern States. Instead of using huge blocks of ice as is done there, posts were erected on a firm foundation of ice and wire netting stretched from post to post. This was then sprayed with water and allowed to freeze, after which the process was repeated and so on until the walls are the desired thickness this gives the structure a much more dazzling appearance and causes icicles to hang like stalactites over the entire ceiling of the interior of the palace. These, when the building is illuminated by electric lights, sparkle like rare diamonds, and the reflection from the bright walls form a scene that is very brilliant and impressive. The floor, which is solid ice to a depth of sixteen inches, makes a skating rink that cannot be excelled anywhere.
19. 1897-1 More fruit being shipped for the Carnival Season. Notices of participants and excursion trains abound.
20. 1897-2, Photos of Ice Palace from 1895-97
21. Heidi 1897-3. Expansion of “snow” interest; demise of Ice Palace.
22. 1902 – Time Jump. Ice Carnival every year. People would rent out their houses for Winter Carnival/Sports Season and go live in Hotels.
23. 1903 – Because of the continued marketing of Truckee and the Carnival, different types of attention was being drawn to the area.
24. 1909 world record jump on original jump. Has gained notoriety, and the Carnival concept is moving into Sports.
25. 1910 – Rope tow, donkey engine *November 21 1910, Hilltop Area “South Hill” is now being used for snow festivities
26. 1911 – Large snows * Start of Tahoe Tavern Run. First automobile over Donner Summit to Tahoe Tavern would earn a Silver Trophy.
27. 1913 – New Ice Palace, Cost of \$10,000. At the base of south hill, hilltop area. Using old toboggan run with improvements. Carnival has now become **Fiesta of the Snow**. Individual companies, like the Lions Club, would sponsor Snow Fete.

28. 1913 - New Ice Palace, now using new term of **Snow Fiesta**
29. 1914 – Heavy Snow Year, Oakland Tribune Attempt at world record ski jump
30. 1915 – Snow Play, photos of various snow play events
31. 1915 tobogganing, Ice Palace
32. **Heidi** 1915 – Burnt Down. Building burnt down (initial cause listed as vagrants living in the building, 2nd cause stated was teenagers smoking!)
33. **Heidi** 1917 – Fun News, There was no longer a Pavilion but the fun continued! 1st mention of **skijoring** (TR 2/1/1917, p. 1)
34. 1919 – Small notes of continued Carnival effects with Truckee now being a movie Mecca.
35. 1920 Views of Important sites in Truckee.
36. 1921 – train prices and pics of Truckee Area
37. 1922 – Not only snow interests but other items - like prohibition
38. 1926. News articles regarding snow play - including Skijoring
39. 1929.1 - when did dog races start (1915). **Sierra Dog Derby Association created in 1928.**
Reinstated by Lions Club 1981
40. 1929.2 – More info on Sled Dogs and Winter sports preparation.
41. 1930 - Ski Jump built at Hilltop. Read GMAMM section on McGlashan trying to get town interests to buy up land
42. 1931.1. Maude Maynard towing skiers at Hilltop
43. 1931.2, McGlashan Passes away. Sports live on.
44. 1934- Various articles regarding Truckee and Winter Sports Travel
45. **Heidi** 1934.2 Summer view of ski jump
46. 1935.1 Views of Ski Jump
47. 1935.2 Big Snow Year, Sculptures in street
48. 1936 attempt at revival of Ice Palace, recession has hit.
49. 1937, groups still traveling to Truckee to play in the snow
50. **Heidi** **1938. End of an Era Carnival ends. Winter sports continue on.**
51. 1939. Things occurring around Truckee.
52. 1946 – War is over, Winter sports re-grow
53. 1959 – Truckee showing Old Highway 40 going through town. Freeway is being built on hill north of Town in time for the 1960 Olympics
54. 1960 – Olympics Arrive!
55. Listing of Active Ski Areas in Truckee

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