

LINCOLN HIGHWAY ASSOCIATION  
CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

NEWSLETTER

THE  
TRAVELER

EDITOR  
Gary Kinst

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Department of Public Works Division of Highways California State Archives

## COVER

This issues cover photo shows the Division of Highways crew pouring and leveling a new section of concrete roadway in 1915. Although this photo was taken in the Los Angeles /San Diego area, it is typical of the process performed throughout the State at that time. The roadway appears to be the standard 18 foot width and 4-5 inches thick. There doesn't appear to be any reinforcing rods being used in this section. These and other early photos can be accessed at [learncalifornia.org](http://learncalifornia.org) a research link of the California State Archives.



## JANUARY 9th CHAPTER MEETING



Auburn Blvd. on left and Greenback Lane on right



The intersection in 1927

The California Chapter held its January meeting at Rosie's Country Kitchen in Citrus Heights on January 9th. 11 members were present and new member Ken Masterman was welcomed into the Chapter. Following the traditional Chapter reports the discussion turned to our annual tours which have been affected by the poor economy. V.P. Paul Gilger submitted a proposal for a single two day "LH Cruise Tour" starting in San Francisco, stopping in Sacramento and continuing the second day to Verdi, NV and ending at Lake Tahoe. These "Cruise Tours" would allow individuals and groups to participate while driving their own vehicles.

Further discussion led to the decision to continue to offer 4 separate 1 day tours, but making them "LH Cruise Tours" allowing participants to drive their own vehicles.

Norm Root proposed to establish a new "Chapter Historian" position . His proposal was accepted and he was immediately nominated to fill the new position.

Your editor proposed sending the Traveler electronically due to the rising cost of printing and mailing. The majority of our members have an e-mail address and by sending the newsletter electronically, more news and stories can be included and all copies would be in color. Those members without e-mail access would still be mailed a B/W hard copy.

Bob Dieterich submitted a report on the up-coming convention in Dixon, IL on June 20-24, 2010.

Paul Gilger brought us up to speed on the California/Nevada convention scheduled for June 20-24, 2011.

Mike Kaelin reported on the progress of installing signage in the Altamont Pass corridor. Approval for installation has been granted, but the details for the provision of posts and their installation is still being hammered out.

Upon adjournment, approximately 7 members made their way several blocks down the street to the intersection of Greenback Lane and Auburn Blvd. This intersection was the point at which the two northern routes of the Lincoln Highway merged before entering Sacramento.

## HAPPENINGS

As reported in the January Traveler, I was invited to speak on the history of the Lincoln Highway and present a power-point program on the 1913 Pioneer Route from Sacramento to San Francisco via Stockton and the Altamont Pass as part of the Livermore Library's "Livermore Reads Together" program. It is difficult, to say the least, to present a history of the Lincoln Highway in 30 minutes. If the audience is unaware of the Highways origins and it's reason for being, 30 minutes doesn't seem to give it justice. All in All the presentation lasted 65 minutes with the power-point photos being the focal point of the evening. Myself and the folks at the Livermore Library were overwhelmed by the turnout. 88 folks braved the rainy weather to learn about the Lincoln Highway through Livermore and Alameda County.

My presentation was followed several days later by Mr. Doug McConnell the host of the PBS series *Open Road* and *Bay Area Back Roads*. Unfortunately I was unable to attend his presentation so I'm unable to report on its success.

I was able to attend the February 23rd presentation given by author Bill Roe. Bill, as you may recall ,was the gentleman who bicycled across the U.S. following, when possible, the original Lincoln Highway. Bill was accompanied by his wife who followed in an RV to lend support and shelter . The presentation was exceptionally well done and captivated the audience for 65 minutes. I didn't realize that the trip had taken place in 1999, prior to 9-11, therefore when he arrived in New York City the Twin Towers were part of the NY skyline. Bill has authored a book "All the Way to Lincoln Way" which contains all the photos as seen in his presentation. A Great read, especially if you are a bicyclist.

## INTERESTING FIND

I came across a 1936 John Wayne movie entitled " California Straight Ahead". Wayne is entrusted to lead a fleet of trucks hauling aviation parts from Chicago to Los Angeles while at the same time racing a steam train carrying a similar cargo. The first to arrive in L.A. gets the contract. Why they chose the Lincoln Highway and not Route 66 is a mystery, but thanks goodness for Lincoln fans they made the right choice. Vintage scenes crossing the country and especially in the Sierras where both the train and truck convoy become snow bound. Great vintage footage of snow removal engines and the convoy crossing the Rainbow Bridge. I don't need to tell you who wins the contract.

# SLIPPERY FORD GRADE

## Introduction

The region along Highway 50 from Strawberry to Sayles Flat in El Dorado County is historically significant because the evolution of this mountain road system is clearly evident. There are segments of the Johnson Cut Off Emigrant Road, Swan Henry Toll Road, Lincoln Highway and the original Highway 50. Interesting sites may be visited, such as, Slippery Ford, Slippery Ford Grade and Slippery Ford House. There are also the original Twin Bridges, Monk's Rock, Register Rocks and ghost signs, along with superb scenery along the South Fork of the American River. The Slippery Ford Grade has been determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. A segment of the grade has been 'rediscovered' by the next generation of historians. Several photographs of these sites are shown below.

## Overview

For orientation, refer to Fig. 1, a topographic map of the region. Important locations are as follows:

Point A is the site of a Slippery Ford crossing of Pyramid Creek on the Johnson Cut Off Emigrant Road. Date: 1853. Between 1854-1858 the road was further improved becoming the main county wagon road.

Point B is the site of a later Slippery Ford crossing of the South Fork of the American River.

Point C is the original site of Twin Bridges

Point D The area is accessible from the intersection of Highway 50 and Twin Bridges Road FS 11N15, about half way up the current Highway 50 grade. GPS coordinates are Lat 38 deg 48.323 min, Long 120 deg 07.368 min. The road is rutted. High vertical clearance vehicles only are advised down to the river. Beyond the river, access is by walking. Vehicles are prohibited

Point E is the site of the Horseshoe Curve on the Slippery Ford Grade. The GPS coordinates are Lat 38 deg 48.267 min, Long 120 deg 07.329 min. This location was recently 'rediscovered'. The grade was built by George Swan in 1861.

Point F is the end of the remaining segment of Slippery Ford Grade. The road is covered by the embankment for Highway 50 above.

Point G is the access to the Swan Henry Toll Road at the East end of the Lover's Leap Campground. Points G, H, C, E, and F are on the alignment of the Swan Henry Toll Road. The Slippery Ford crossing at Point B was used until the Twin Bridges structures were built at Point C. This section of road from Point G to Point F and on to Sayles Flat is known as Slippery Ford Grade. It was heavily used in the 1860's to haul material and supplies to the silver mines at Virginia City, Nevada. The Grade is mentioned in diaries and literature of the era.

The road was later used by El Dorado County, the Lincoln Highway, and old State Highway 50 until Highway 50 was realigned to its current location in the early 1930's. Thus the road was in continuous use for about 60 years.

Fig. 2 is an interpretive detailed map alongside the road.

## Photographs

Photo 1 Slippery Ford looking West across the South Fork of the American River. See Point B

Photo 2 Looking Down Slippery Ford Grade, date 1866.

Photo 3 Teaming Up for Slippery Ford Grade

Photo 4 Horseshoe Curve on Slippery Ford Grade, date 1920 See Point E

Photo 5 Same location. Brush obscures the uphill road on the left.

Photo 6 to 10 Slippery Ford Grade walking from Point E to F

Photo 7 The same location as Photo 2, Looking down the grade

Photo 11 Looking down at the American River

Photo 12 End of historic segment at embankment for Highway 50 above.

Photo 13 Slippery Ford House, date 1866

Photo 14 Slippery Ford House, same location

Photo 15 Interpretive sign at that the site of Slippery Ford House

Photo 16 Site of Slippery Ford House

The volume of traffic was high. Historians have listed 55 road houses along this route from Placerville to Meyers. These provided food and lodging of a sort for the teamsters and feed for the horses and mules.

Photo 17 Snow Slide Mountain, Headwaters of the American River. Date 1866. Probably an early bridge on the Swan Henry road across the American River at or near Twin Bridges.

Photo 18 Twin Bridges at Point C. One bridge went from the East bank to an island. The second bridge went from the island to the West bank of the river.

More interesting sites may be found walking East from the Lover's Leap campground. Monk's Rock is a short distance away. It is named for Hank Monk, a famous stage coach driver, who once gave Horace Greely a hair raising ride.

Photo 19 Further East is the remains of a metal culvert. The road surface has been eroded, and the area appears more like a stream bed.

Photo 20 There are occasional boulders that have a star burst pattern of fractures. This occurs when the top of a boulder, that would stick above the road surface, is drilled and blasted.

Occasional small areas of asphalt pavement remain. This was made by spraying a top course of aggregate and decomposed granite with asphalt. The asphalt penetrates and bonds the material together.

Photo 21 Near Slippery Ford there is an incomplete ski lodge built by the Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) in the 1930's. The cut granite blocks provide a durable structure.

Photo 22 Along the way there are names and signs painted on the rocks.

Photo 23 This is a section of the road just west of Slippery Ford. Register Rocks are a short distance to the right, where people wrote their names.

Lloyd Johnson Jan. 2010

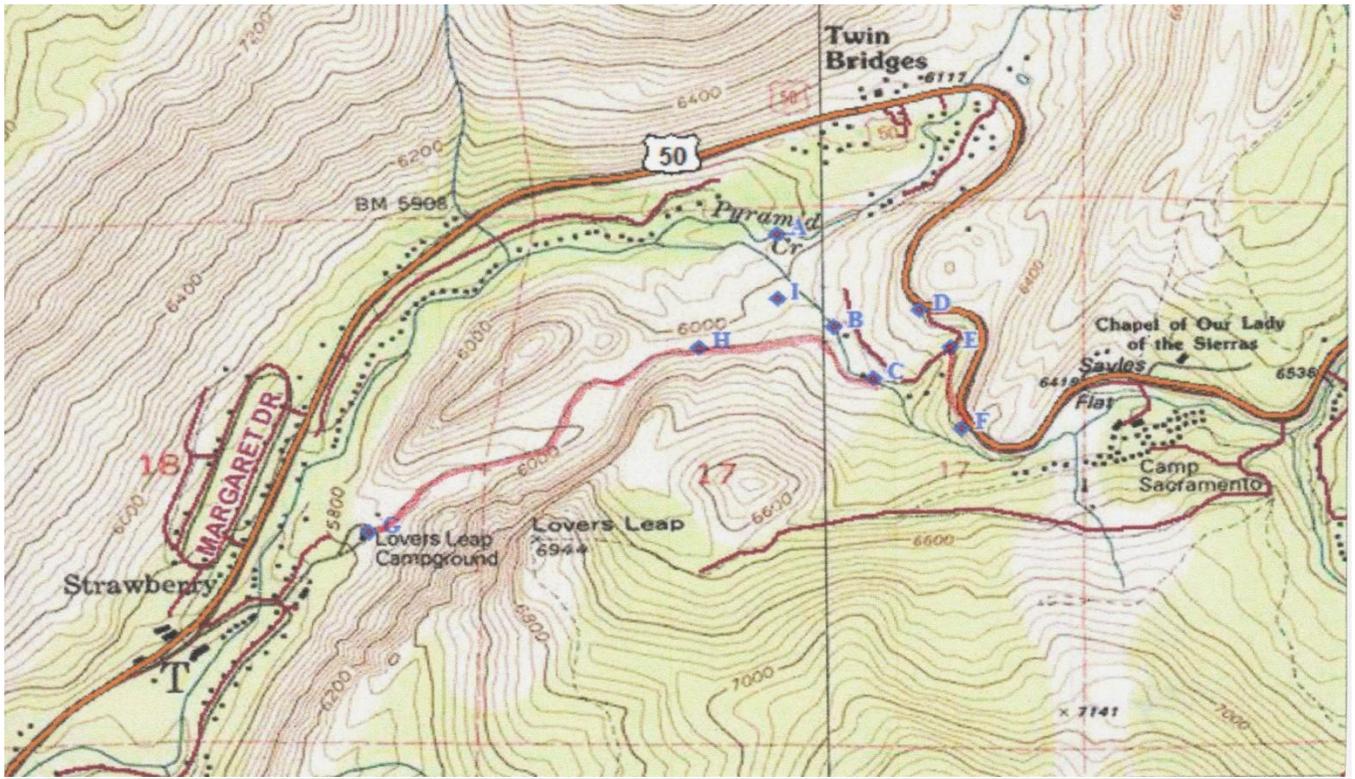


Figure 1

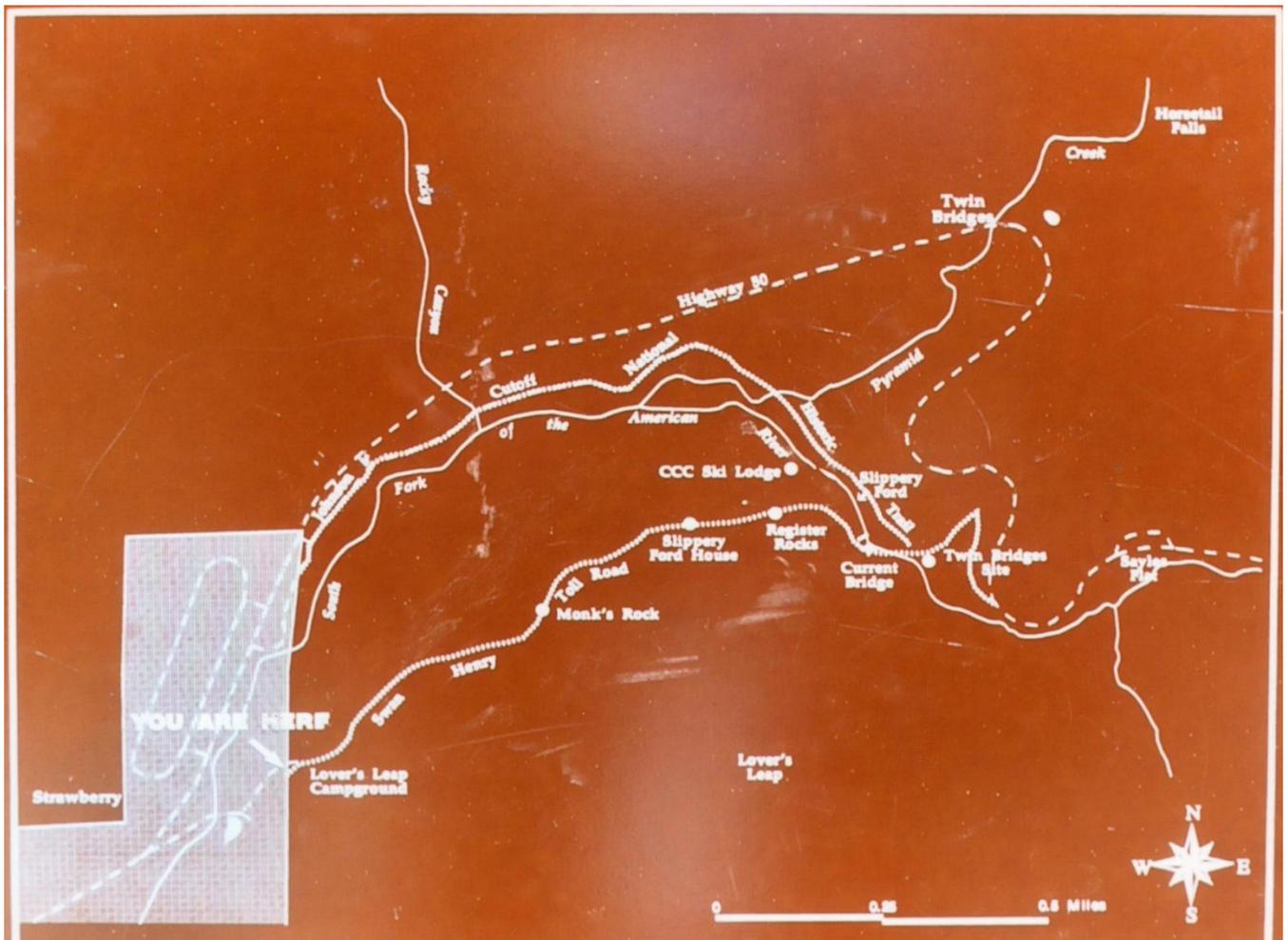


Figure 2



Photo 1

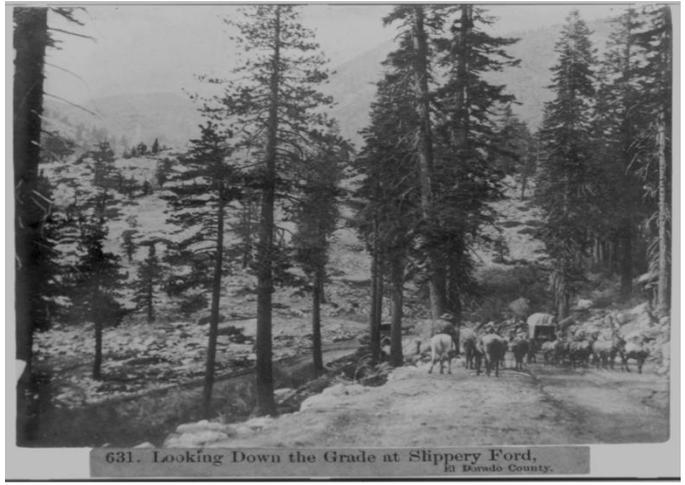


Photo 2

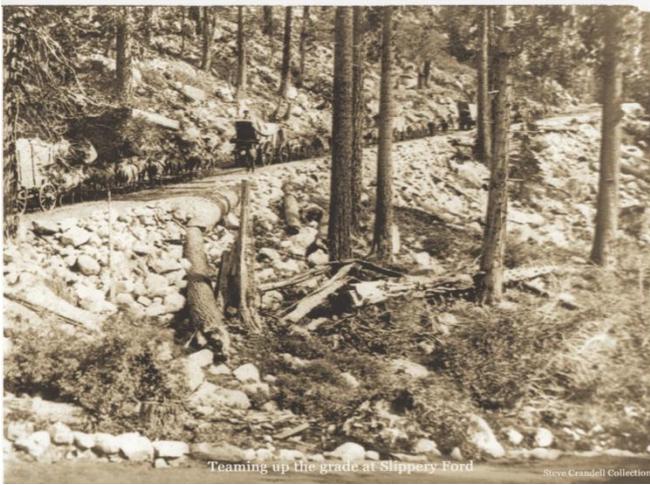


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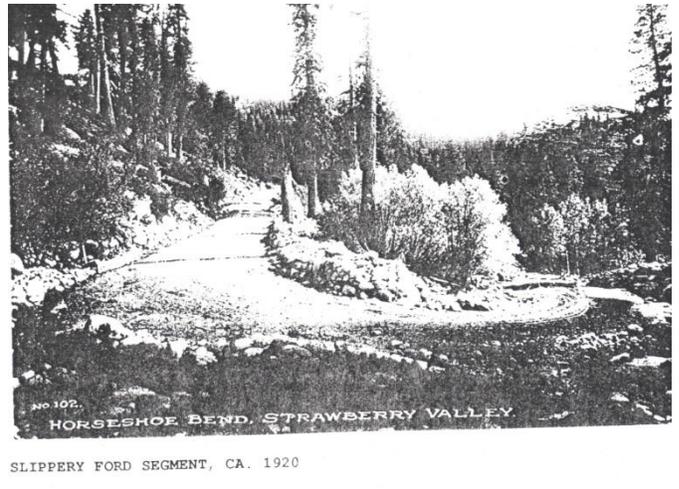


Photo 4



Photo 5



Photo 6



Photo 7



Photo 8



Photo 9



Photo 10



Photo 11



Photo 12

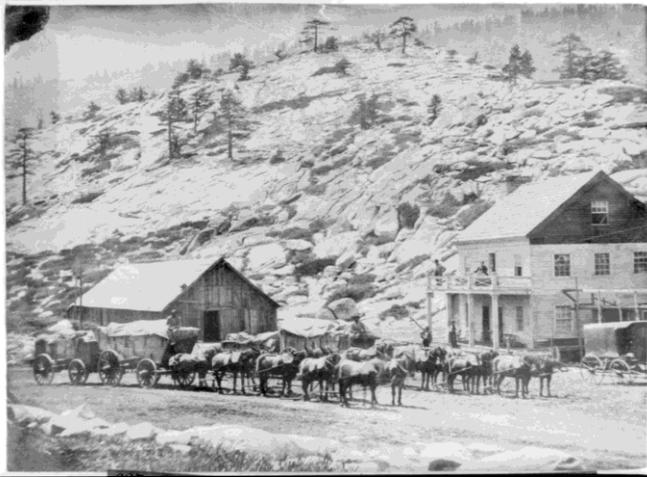


Photo 13

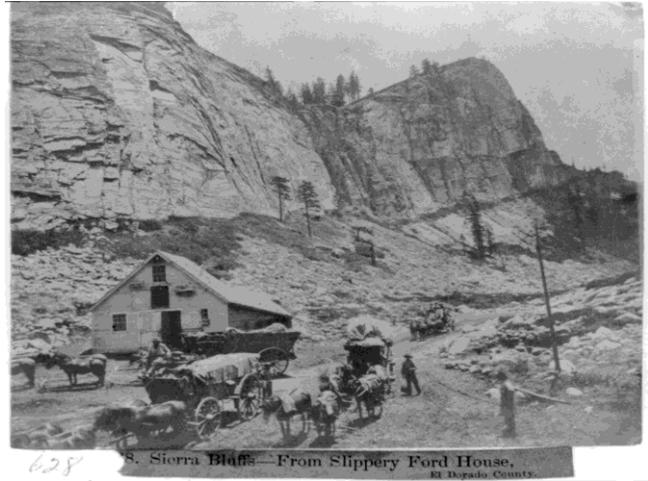


Photo 14



Photo 15



Photo 16

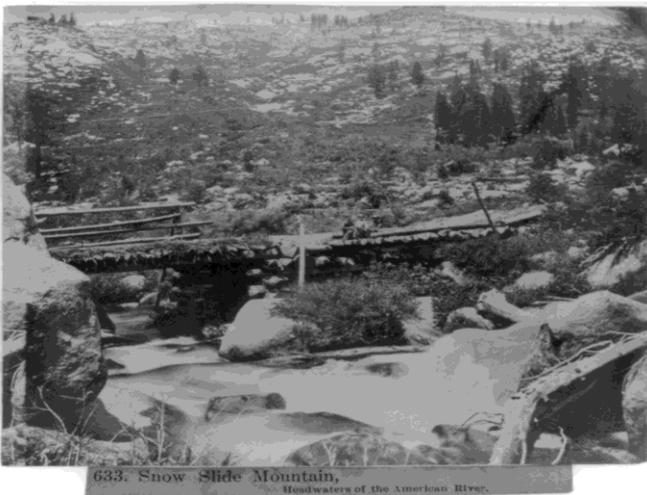


Photo 17

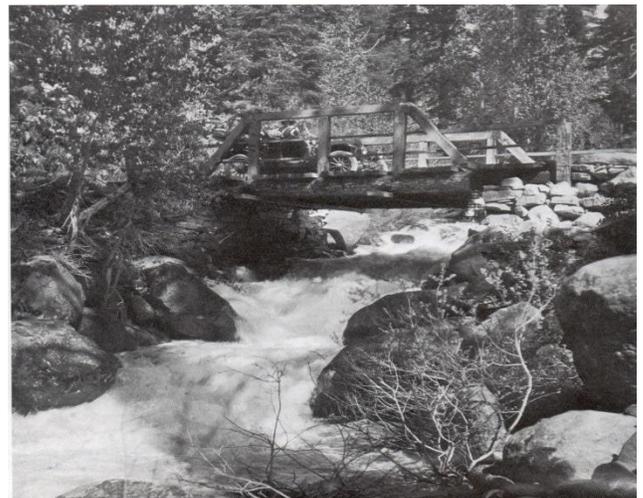


Photo 18



Photo 19



Photo 20



Photo 21



Photo 22



Photo 23

## SPECIAL NOTE

Due to the rising cost associated with publishing and mailing the Traveler, future issues will be offered electronically. IE; E-MAIL. We realize that some members do not have computer access or e-mail addresses, therefore those members will continue to receive the Traveler in hardcopy. For those of you with e-mail addresses, would you please e-mail me so I can confirm that I have your correct address. ALSO; please note that the California web site has been updated and all past issues of the Traveler are available in PDF format for reading or duplicating. Due to the fact that I have recently retired, I can no longer print color copies inexpensively which makes receiving the Traveler by e-mail that much better. Everyone can now enjoy the Traveler in color.

Thanks for your support and understanding;

Gary Kinst: Editor

## CLARKSVILLE DAY

The Clarksville Region Historical Society will hold its annual Clarksville Day this May 8. Last year the event was held for the first time in the town of Clarksville itself. The same is true this year. Clarksville is a ghost town on the Lincoln Highway on the south side of US 50 in Eldorado Hills just east of Folsom. The stretch of Lincoln Highway which makes a loop on the north side of US 50 will be open and provide a chance to drive or walk the entire length.

Antique cars will be present and offer rides over this stretch of the Lincoln. In addition there will be pony express riders, the Mormon Battalion, antique car clubs, wagon rides, and more. We will have a Lincoln Highway Association table and invite anyone who would like to help to show up. 3000 people attended the event last year and they expect more this year. For more information visit the Clarksville web site at <http://www.edhhistory.org/index.htm>.

## NEXT CHAPTER MEETING

### **Have you ever heard of the Chinese Diggings ? by Norm Root**

These are a historical destination right beside the Lincoln Highway, located in the northwest corner of Folsom Blvd. and U.S. Highway 50, in south western Folsom. The diggings are a group of narrow ditches about 18 inches wide and up to 30' deep. They are laid out in a herring bone format that form a unique sluice box system for washing gold. The system was owned by the Natomas Gold Mining Company and worked by Chinese laborers. The California Chapter of the Lincoln Highway Association was notified recently by the City of Folsom, that the owners of the property have applied to build a four story hotel on the property.

Lloyd Johnson will lead us on a tour of the diggings following the Chapter meeting. This part of the Lincoln Highway, Folsom Blvd., is not on any of our normal tours, so we seldom get to see it. During the meeting, Kell Brigan will tell about her ongoing research study of Routier Station which is in this same area. Anyone who has photographs of Folsom Blvd. is encouraged to bring them to the meeting to share.

We will meet for lunch at Ciro's Pizza Cafe, at 241 Blue Bird Ravine in Folsom, Saturday April 10th at noon. From Folsom Blvd. off ramp on U.S. 50 head north on Folsom Blvd. Turn right (east) on Blue Ravine Road. Ciro's is on the southwest corner of Blue Ravine and Prairie City Rd. Turn to the right into the driveway off of Blue Ravine at the beginning of the right turn lane onto Prairie City Rd. You can eat for \$7.37 and up to more than \$20. Unfortunately, the advertized \$6.99 buffet lunch is not available on Saturdays.

# MARK YOUR 2010 CALENDAR

Saturday **APRIL 10**  
12:00 noon

State Chapter Meeting  
Ciro's Pizza Cafe  
241 Blue Ravine Rd.  
Folsom, CA.

Saturday **APRIL 24**

Tour # 1 Central Valley 1913-1927 Route  
Sacramento to San Francisco  
Via Altamont Pass

Saturday **MAY 8**

2nd Annual Clarksville Day  
Clarksville, El Dorado County, CA

**JUNE 22 - 26**

2010 LHA National Conference Dixon, IL.

Saturday **JUNE 26**

Tour # 2 Sierra Nevada Southern Route  
Sacramento to Lake Tahoe  
Via Echo Summit

Saturday **JULY 10**  
12:00 noon

State Chapter Meeting  
Location to be announced

Saturday **AUGUST 28**

Tour # 3 Sierra Nevada Northern Route  
Sacramento to Verdi, NV  
Via Donner Pass and Dog Valley

Saturday **OCTOBER 2**  
12:00 noon

State Chapter Meeting  
Location to be announced

Saturday **OCTOBER 30**

Tour # 4 Central Valley Route  
Sacramento to San Francisco  
Via Carquinez Strait



Lincoln Highway undercrossing at Donner Pass

We are now taking reservations for the 2010 Lincoln Highway **California Cruise and Tours** !  
This is a new approach for 2010 which allows you to participate using your own vehicle  
For more information please contact Paul Gilger

- Tour #1 Sat. April 24: 1913-1927 Central Valley Route: *Sacramento to San Francisco via Altamont Pass*  
Tour #2 Sat. June 26: Sierra Nevada Southern Route: *Sacramento to Lake Tahoe via Echo Summit*  
Tour #3 Sat. Aug 28: Sierra Nevada Northern Route: *Sacramento to Nevada via Donner Pass & Dog Valley*  
Tour #4 Sat. Oct 30: 1928 Central Valley Route: *Sacramento to San Francisco via Carquinez Strait*

Each tour - \$45 per person.

All tours are one-day trips beginning and ending at the Holiday Inn "Sacramento I-80 N.E."  
5321 Date Ave. in Sacramento, at the Madison Ave. exit off I-80  
Boarding at 8:45 am. Departure at 9:00 am sharp!

You may select a single tour or any combination of tours.

Please fill out order form below and mail with check or money order in the amount of \$45 per person per tour

Make payable to "*Lincoln Highway California Chapter*", mail to:

Lincoln Highway Association California Chapter, PO Box 2554, Fair Oaks, Ca 95628-2554

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Indicate the number of people in your party for each tour: Tour #1 \_\_\_ Tour #2 \_\_\_ Tour #3 \_\_\_ Tour #4 \_\_\_

All tour participants agree that the Lincoln Highway Association, the California Chapter of the Lincoln Highway Association, its officers, directors and agents, shall have no responsibility or liability, in whole or in part, for any loss, damage, or injury to person or property, or any act of omission resulting from, arising out of, or occurring during any activity, program, tour, meeting, meal, or other service or facility furnished or supplied in conjunction with the tours. All participants must sign and date below:

Signature #1: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature #2: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature #3: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature #4: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please include other dated signatures, if applicable.

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### *Order Lincoln Highway Driving Maps for California now!*

We have received hundreds of orders from all over the United States for our very popular Lincoln Highway Driving Maps for California. They are essential for exploring the Lincoln in California.

Please fill out order form below and mail with check or money order made out to  
"*Lincoln Highway California Chapter*", to:

Lincoln Highway Association California Chapter, PO Box 2554, Fair Oaks, Ca 95628-2554

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Number of map sets: \_\_\_\_\_ x \$10.00 each = \_\_\_\_\_  
Packaging and postage + \$6.00 = \_\_\_\_\_  
TOTAL: = \$ \_\_\_\_\_