



Sierra Steamers

***Great Family Fun - -
Come blow the whistle!***

An operable Dolbeer steam donkey engine is on display at the museum and demonstrations are conducted on holiday weekends and for special events during the summer season. (For the uninitiated, a “steam donkey” is a steam engine that was used to drag chained logs through the forest to a point where they could be loaded for transportation to the lumber mill.)



Steamers Tom Heitzman, Bill Edlund, Patrick Emmert, Jeff Young, Norm Saude, and Dale Houdashelt (Ed Selleck photograph, August 2011)

Sierra Steamers are a volunteer group of men with diverse backgrounds, dedicated to the preservation of early industrial-age operations in the central Sierra. They are licensed to operate steam boilers, skilled in a variety of crafts, and passionate about what they do.

The Steamers’ efforts greatly benefit the Central Sierra Historical Society in meeting their mission of being an interpretive gateway, presenting the natural and cultural histories of the region. The enthusiastic support of CSHS and the community, as well as the Steamers’ excellent rapport with people of all ages, makes them effective public speakers as they educate the spectators at their frequent “*steam ups*”. Funding comes from visitor donations, CSHS sponsored fundraisers, a grant from the Forest Service and significant personal out-of-pocket contributions.

Steamers have justifiably earned the respect of the community, visitors to the museum, and history buffs in general. Management of the Sierra National Forest recognizes their importance and has cooperated by allowing the salvage, preservation and display of relics with historical value found abandoned in the forest. Most recently, a donkey engine was salvaged from Musick Mountain which had been left from Herman Peterson’s logging operation in the early 1900’s. That one is still waiting for restoration.

When a project is undertaken, it can be counted on as being done right, in accordance with museum standards of exactness and quality. Exhibits in the planning-development stage include a sawmill, mining operation and flume house.

Steamers can be seen in action at the Museum of the Central Sierra, Shaver Lake at the entrance to Camp Edison. Visit www.sierrahistorical.org, or watch the Mountain Press for a schedule of events.

REMAINING EVENTS IN 2011

DATE	EVENT	TIME, LOCATION
Nov 25 & 26, 2011	Children's Holiday Crafts – Sponsored by v.e.s.t	11:00 - 2:00 at the Museum

CALENDAR OF EVENTS FOR 2012

March 31	Annual Meeting	2:00 PM, Media Room at the Museum
May 12	Sierra Voices Presentation	1:00-3:00, Media Room at the Museum
May 27	Steam Donkey Engine Steam-Up	10:00-3:00, Museum Parking Lot
June 9	Sierra Voices Presentation	1:00-3:00, Media Room at the Museum
June 12	Photography Class – Instructor, David Hunter	9:30-11:00, Media Room at the Museum
June 19	Photography Class – Instructor, David Hunter	9:30-11:00, Media Room at the Museum
June 26	Photography Class – Instructor, David Hunter	9:30-11:00, Media Room at the Museum
July 1	Steam Donkey Engine Steam-Up	10:00-3:00, Museum Parking Lot
July 3	Photography Class – Instructor, David Hunter	9:30-11:00, Media Room at the Museum
July 7	Pancake Breakfast	7:00-11:00, Shaver Lake Community Cntr.
July 9	Watercolor Class w/ Mary Street & Deanna Bristow	10:30-12:30, Media Room at the Museum
July 10	Photography Class – Instructor, David Hunter	9:30-11:00, Media Room at the Museum
July 14	Sierra Voices Presentation	1:00-3:00, Media Room at the Museum
July 15	SJ&E Caboose 100 Year Celebration	10:00-3:00, Museum
July 15	Steam Donkey Engine Steam-Up	10:00-3:00, Museum Parking Lot
July 15	Ice Cream Social	2:00-4:00, Museum
July 16	Watercolor Class w/ Mary Street & Deanna Bristow	10:30-12:30, Media Room at the Museum
July 17	Photography Class – Instructor, David Hunter	9:30-11:00, Media Room at the Museum
July 21	Pine Logging Picnic	1:00 PM, Pine Logging Camp
July 23	Watercolor Class w/ Mary Street & Deanna Bristow	10:30-12:30, Media Room at the Museum
July 30	Watercolor Class w/ Mary Street & Deanna Bristow	10:30-12:30, Media Room at the Museum
August 4	Black Pot Cook-Off (Tickets in Advance)	TBA, Shaver Lake Fishing Club
August 6	Watercolor Class w/ Mary Street & Deanna Bristow	10:30-12:30, Media Room at the Museum
August 11	Sierra Voices Presentation	1:00-3:00, Media Room at the Museum
August 18	Steam Donkey Engine Steam-Up	10:00-3:00, Museum Parking Lot
August 18	Old Timer's Picnic	TBA, Edison Campground
August 18	Fundraiser Dinner (Tickets in Advance)	5:30 PM, Shaver Lake Community Cntr.
September 2	Steam Donkey Engine Steam-Up	10:00-3:00, Museum Parking Lot
September 2	Sierra Voices Native American Culture w/Davis Family	11:00-3:00 Museum
September 15	Sierra Voices Presentation	1:00-3:00, Media Room at the Museum
October 13	Sierra Voices Presentation	1:00-3:00, Media Room at the Museum
October 21	Steam Donkey Engine Steam-Up	10:00-3:00, Museum Parking Lot
Nov 23 & 24	Children's Holiday Crafts – Sponsored by v.e.s.t.	11:00 - 2:00, Museum

SIERRA VOICES 2011

The second season of Sierra Voices has been very successful. The word is out - - the place to be on the second Saturday of the month (May through October) is at the museum at Shaver Lake listening to presenters who have a deep connection to the history and preservation of the central Sierra.

The Central Sierra Historical Society hosts these presentations at our beautiful museum located adjacent to Camp Edison on the shores of Shaver Lake. The mission of the Society is to enrich the cultural and educational experiences of the visitors to the central Sierra Nevada by deepening their understanding of the human and natural history of the area.

In May, our second season began with Roger Coats. Using his beautiful book of photographs, he took us on a journey to the alpine "high country" as he and his companions skied, explored and daredeviled their way over mountain passes, through pristine meadows, and down long slopes of powder snow. Our June presenter was David Hunter a wildlife photo journalist. Using his photos as a backdrop, his account of how he was able to capture such beautiful images of wildlife in their natural habitat was inspiring. Local timberman and long-time resident of Shaver Lake, Jeff Young, was our July presenter. Jeff told us the story of "sinker lumber" which comes from old growth trees that he has located and pulled up from the depths of Shaver Lake. The next time you visit our museum notice the beautiful white pine paneling on the walls - the product of his efforts.

The topic for August was the history of the Fresno Flume which ran from the Shaver Lake millpond to Clovis. The presenter was Norman Saude assisted by Jeff Young and Bud Olson described how the flume was built, used and ultimately abandoned. In September, Sierra Voices had two presentations. On Labor Day the Davis family from Auberry demonstrated how the earliest residents of the Central Sierra used the natural resources to sustain their lifestyle for centuries. On the 10th of September, Coke Hallowell, one of the Founders of the River Parkway and Trust, spoke to us about the work that group has done to preserve the San Joaquin River as a beautiful and accessible resource in its journey through the central valley. Finishing the 2011 series was Morgan Blasingame, 3rd generation cattleman and rancher. His experiences gave us a unique look into the early history of the central valley foothills, high Sierra, and the people who helped create the rich legacy of our region.

Next spring will be our third year and we are looking forward to providing more presenters who will continue to highlight the unique qualities of the central Sierra.

GARABEDIAN FOUNDATION AWARDS GRANT FOR THE SJ&E CABOOSE #50 RESTORATION PROJECT

The Central Sierra Historical Society & Museum is very pleased to announce the award of a Year 2011 Grant from THE BERTHA AND JOHN GARABEDIAN CHARITABLE FOUNDATION.

The 2011 Grant of \$1,000.00 will fund Caboose Restoration Project expenses associated with hardware replacements, paint, air pressure instruments, and truck placement under the Caboose.

The Central Sierra Historical Society & Museum members, the Board of Directors, and the volunteers of the Caboose Restoration Committee are very grateful for the generosity of The Bertha and John Garabedian Charitable Foundation. The Foundation has been a long-time supporter of the Caboose Restoration Project, with several Grant Awards given over past years.

2011 RESTORATION PROJECT PLANS:

- Landscape preparation for the Caboose Display Site
- Placement of railroad ties and rail
- Truck placement of Caboose
- Completion of interior wood restoration
- Painting of interior walls, cabinets, and exterior
- Placement of air pressure instruments
- Construction of entry platform
- Construction of snow shed

DONATIONS TO CSHS HAVE BEEN MADE IN MEMORY OF:

Don Bickford Alan Epstein

MUSEUM GIFT MEMBERSHIP

To: Toby Wait & Family

From: Barbara Krueger

CENTRAL SIERRA HISTORICAL SOCIETY SEASONAL MUSEUM HOURS

Thursday–Sunday - 11:00-3:00 until December 18 (weather permitting)

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December 19 through April 13, 2012 – closed for the winter

April 14–May 20 – Thursday-Sunday 11:00-3:00 (weather permitting)

May 21-Fall – Seven days a week – 11:00-3:00

HOW YOUR DONATIONS BENEFIT THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Your membership renewal and donations have a lasting impact on the Central Sierra Historical Society & Museum.

Our current projects include the following:

- * Steam Donkey Engine #1 (in the parking lot)
- * Steam Donkey Engine #2 (currently under restoration)
- * Saw Mill
- * Topographic Map
- * Powerhouse Building
- * Trails
- * Museum
- * Resource Room
- * Foothill, Forest, Alpine Backdrop
- * Displays, Cabinets

DON'T FORGET THE MUSEUM FOR YOUR HOLIDAY SHOPPING

The museum gift shop offers a variety of books, oral histories, notecards and postcards, unique gifts, and clothing. We also sell items made by local artists. The museum will be open Thursday-Sunday from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm. Support the museum and while you're here make sure you check out all the new displays recently added to the museum.

ICE CREAM SOCIAL 2011

“THANK YOU “ to ...

300+ Visitors

Norm's Shaver Lake Deli

VEST Members

4H Members

... for making our Annual
Ice Cream Social
a GREAT Success!!

A Great Time At The Fundraiser Dinner

This year's successful fundraiser dinner was held Saturday, August 20. The fun event was organized and hosted by Patrick Emmert, the Sierra Steamers, and **v.e.s.t.** (Volunteer Education and Service Team). It benefited the Musick Mountain Steam Donkey, the SJ&E Caboose #50, and CSHS Operations.

The many exceptional raffle prizes and silent auction items were announced by the Master of Ceremonies, Norman Saude, and the lively auction was hosted by Jeff Young. The delicious dinner was prepared by Jim Markus, and his family and friends. Generous donors and faithful supporters contributed a total of \$8,733.78. A special thank you is owed to everyone who donated items, time, and effort to make the fundraiser such a huge success.

Thank You!

Black Pot Cookers Do it Again!

Once again, the High Sierra Black Pot event held at the Shaver Lake Fishing Club on August 7 was a huge success. A record number of guests, cookers, musicians, and helpers totaled 262 this year. The event Coordinator, Heather McDonald, thanks all who participated.

Proceeds from tickets, donations and raffle tickets brought in \$34,824, and the costs were low because of generous donations, leaving \$23,332 in net proceeds to benefit the CSHS Building and Exhibit Fund for this year.

Each era is intertwined with what has come before, and in turn leaves some legacy for the future.

C.B. SHAVER

An excerpt from

“CANNONBALL”: A BIOGRAPHY OF C.B. SHAVER” by Douglas Shaver McDonald II

Today the old Shaver mill site lies at the bottom of a much bigger Shaver Lake. The old saws and steam engines of my great, great grandfather's company have long since silenced, but the effects of his work during his fifteen short years in California can still be seen.

Throughout my childhood I had heard the legacy of my great great grandfather, C.B. Shaver, who moved here from Michigan in 1891. He is most fondly remembered in my family as the man whose work as president and manager of the Fresno Flume and Irrigation Company served him enduring fame as the namesake for the town and reservoir of Shaver Lake. To my pleasure, I have discovered that the initiative and dynamic personality of C.B. Shaver founded one of Central California's earliest successful lumber operations and was instrumental in the development of the early economy of Fresno County. In its day, the Shaver mill was the largest Fresno County had ever known, cutting a total of 450 million board feet of timber.

As a youth, Charles B. Shaver quickly worked his way up in the lumber industry. He was born in Steuben County, New York, in 1855, the third child of John and Mary Shaver who were millers until 1865 when the family moved to Michigan to pursue farming. He was educated in Michigan and at the age of eighteen entered the lumber trade in Detroit. He quickly rose to the position of foreman, and remained there as such until 1882 when he left to pursue his interest in building logging railways. He developed skills that would be invaluable to him in his future in California. In two years of work, he built 14 miles of logging railway and put in over one hundred million feet of logs and rail. In 1891 he traveled to Missouri and built a lumber mill there, then he ventured to California. By the age of 35, Shaver had mastered the intricacies of the lumber industry and established himself as a prominent figure in his trade, well skilled in both the know-how and the business sense necessary for the successful operation of a lumber company.

Like many other early timber operators, Shaver had run out of lumber in the East. On his visit to California, he and his brother-in-law, Lewis P Swift, toured the forest areas of the Sierra Nevada. Amazed at what they saw in the Sierra east of Fresno, they returned home to Michigan with a wild proposal and received backing from Grand Rapids financier, George Long. Shaver was interested in acquiring an interest in the Pine Ridge Flume & Lumber Company. This young company had vast holdings of timber and water rights in the relatively undeveloped Pine Ridge area of the Sierra above Fresno.

For a long time, logging in this area had been limited by the difficulty of moving timber by wagon down the precipitous journey to Fresno. Attempts to construct a railroad to the area had failed due to the tremendous cost of surmounting the Tollhouse Grade. In what proved to be an ingenious plan, the Michigan group bought a controlling interest in the company as well as several additional mills and surrounding timberlands including the Musick sawmill and 2,300 acres of the timberland of William Stephenson. The newly organized company became known as the Fresno Flume & Irrigation Company. Shaver and Swift proposed the survey and construction of a dam and forty-two mile flume from Stevenson Creek to Clovis. A previous attempt by the acquired flume company had failed when their faulty U-shaped flume was unable to hold enough water to float lumber for its own construction. However, the Michigan group believed that a better designed V-shaped flume that had fewer joints and a stronger frame would succeed. The completed flume made the most successful attempt at getting mass amounts of lumber from Pine Ridge down to the valley. The flume required about nine million board feet of lumber to construct, at a cost of \$200,000. (Perhaps one of the greatest feats of the company was not the actual construction, but the fact that they accomplished this \$200,000 project with only \$30,000 in available capitol).

The magnitude of the construction and development of the Shaver mill and flume is difficult to understand from a modern perspective, but this project was no small feat during the time it was built, 1892-93, a period of steam engines and tough manual labor. The U.S. was on the verge of an industrial revolution, just prior to this time, most logs were cut by hand and transported by huge teams of oxen. New lumbering techniques such as the steam donkey had only recently been introduced. The proposal of building a flume 41 miles over steep terrain and rugged wilderness presented a vast challenge.

(continued on reverse)

The men of my great, great grandfather's time had tackled a major feat with the simplest of tools, but great ingenuity and strength of will.

The labor intensive construction of the mill, dam, and flume was a major undertaking for the young company. Everything associated with the mill and construction project had to be hauled up the mountainside by freight wagons including huge boilers and saws necessary for the new mill. The rock fill dam, completed in 1893, was about 50 feet high and 300 feet long, with a capacity of 5000 acre feet. Rock was mined in a nearby quarry and carried to the site in horse drawn ore cars. At the base of the dam began the 41 miles of flume to the Clovis mill. Designing of the flume was the responsibility of a young John S. Eastwood, one of Fresno's first engineers. The new flume was built right on top of the old flume. Production was difficult, and portions of the flume were built over extremely rocky ground. In some sections, towering trestles had to be built from the bottom of 90 foot deep canyons. In other areas, such as the Tollhouse Grade, workers had to be lowered down sheer rock faces to install necessary footing. However, production was expedited by the fact that lumber and materials could be floated down completed upper sections of the flume to positions under construction.

Even though the company had quickly established itself, once in operation, it experienced only moderate success. A nationwide depression in 1894 nearly put the organization out of business. At one time the company was forced to pay workers with credit vouchers which were redeemable at the Fresno office and only if funds were available at the time. Many workers discounted their checks for 50 cents on the dollar. These circumstances put tension on already shaky labor relations. On more than one occasion, C.B. Shaver, plagued by writs and attachments, was forced to hide out from the sheriff and creditors. Working through these difficult adversities, the company held on, and by 1900 was experiencing sufficient returns to expand production with the installation of a railroad and a 42-ton Shay locomotive which was disassembled and hauled up the mountain in pieces to be reassembled at the mill.

By 1905, having survived labor struggles and the depression, the company was into full swing, operating two steam powered mills equipped with double-bands, dry kilns, railroad locomotives and cars, tugboats and booms, with the capacity of 35 million feet of lumber per year. A newspaper at the time quotes their supply of sugar and white pine as "practically inexhaustible, as there are twenty thousand acres of timber around the lake". Of course, today no one would ever consider a timber reserve inexhaustible, but for the rate at which logging was being conducted by the company, the 15,000 acres of virgin timberland was more than they could deplete. The company employed a force of 600 men and turned a lucrative profit. The same article quoted its productions as "an important factor in the industrial development of the country". The flume floated upwards of 20,000,000 board feet of lumber annually from Pine Ridge to the planning mill in Clovis. As the head of such a successful operation, C.B. Shaver was also an influential director of the California Sugar and White Pine Agency with powerful connections and markets for lumber throughout the state. Most of the lumber was used in Fresno by raisin shippers for the construction of shipping boxes.

Much of the company's success was due to the efforts and strict work ethic of the management and workers at the mill. Lewis Swift headed production and acted as foreman at the Shaver mill, he was very strict, but a good and ingenious man. He was nicknamed "Scrap Iron Swift" for his ability to improvise almost anything the mill needed. The mill workers lived in an area known as sulfur meadows – which consisted of the mill, blacksmith shop, dry kiln, general store, barn, stage stop, and a cluster of cabins. Later a one-room school house was installed. For the most, life was strictly business at the mill. In the interest of running efficiently, the company did not allow any unmarried women at the labor camp. Workers in search of night life were rumored to have ridden the flume down to "flesh pots" below Shaver, where they could catch the morning stage back to the mill for work.

On a few occasions mill workers were known to make these flume rides on small board rafts called flume boats. The full forty-one mile ride to Fresno took about six hours, but only the braver individuals would ride the most dangerous parts of the flume, which in some places reached speeds in excess of 35 miles per hour. The most thrilling part of the ride was the steep section between Pine Ridge and Tollhouse. A tale by Cliff Field of Pine Ridge recalls a time when Shaver missed the stagecoach to the valley and decided to ride the flume down through this section, figuring he could catch the stage before it reached Tollhouse. He made the

journey in 7 minutes, over a distance that normally takes nearly an hour by stagecoach.

In June of 1898, the box factory and planing mill in Clovis were totally destroyed by fire. He had the entire plant rebuilt on a larger scale than before and running, within 50 days from the date of the fire!

Shaver was married in Grand Rapids, Michigan to Lena A Roberts of Pennsylvania. They had three children, Grace, Ethel, and Doris. Doris McDonald was my great grandmother. Shaver was also an active member of the community, a Mason, and associated with the Benevolent Order of Elks. He also participated as a member of the Chamber of Commerce. Socially, he identified with the Sequoia Club, and politically as a Republican. A story about his old Stanley steamer best helps explain his character. He was one of the first in Fresno to acquire a horseless carriage and each morning, after he got it fired up, he would roar through the downtown area, for which he acquired the nickname of "Cannonball Shaver". A Fresno newspaper of his time described his appearance as "portly of figure, genial of countenance... passionately fond of a good cigar". He was a familiar figure in Fresno and at the lumber mills, easily recognized by his dark suit, stubby cigar and derby hat. Cannonball was known to walk around all day in the mill with the same cigar which he never lit.

Shaver was described as "a dynamic individual with a flair for getting things done." In the fledgling years of the company, after the expensive two year construction of the dam, flume and mill, his business sense and resourcefulness kept the company afloat long enough to await reaping the substantial rewards of the fully operational mill in the 1900's.

Despite his good humor and flamboyant attitude, he was unable to defend against the unexpected. C.B. Shaver died shortly after he turned fifty. Medical science of his day was unable to treat an infected goiter in the back of his neck. Compounded by diabetes, the infection took its toll and he gradually weakened until, on Christmas day, 1907, surrounded by four of Fresno's most prominent doctors, Shaver died at his Fresno mansion. Shaver's funeral at the Fresno Episcopal Church was one of the largest the community had ever seen. He was buried at the Mountain View Cemetery.

In 1912, a few years after Shaver's death, Harvey Swift, brother of Lewis Swift, and the succeeding President of the company, sold to the Hume Bennett Company, which had other logging interests in the San Joaquin Valley. Shaver's wife, Lena, who had maintained an interest in Shaver's holding, agreed with the sale of \$950,000. The move turned out to be a very prudent one, as just two years after the sale to Bennett, a huge snowstorm wiped out part of the aging flume, and the undercapitalized company was unable to recover.

Read McDonald's entire story of his great great grandfather at the Museum of the Central Sierra.

Suggested Opportunities for Sponsorship

*Have you wished you could
have a lasting impact on the
Museum of the Central Sierra?
Here's your chance . . .*

1. A three-dimensional topographic model (9.5' x 6.5') of the San Joaquin River and Kings River watersheds as an anchor exhibit to greet the museum visitor and introduce the three geographic themes of foothill, forest and alpine. The design will have interactive components that educate about geology, water flow, historic and current uses of water, exploration, Native American territories and the biology of the three life zones.
2. Funds to restore the Musick Mountain Steam Donkey. This donkey came from the Dawn Lumber Company owned by Herman Peterson and operated from 1919 to 1925. It was found on Musick Mountain by the Sierra Steamers.

*Contact the museum for estimated cost
of these gifts.*

Summer at the Museum:

Children's Crafts

This summer **v.e.s.t.** members, Shirley Kepler and Judy Statler began a very successful summer children's crafts program at the museum. Approximately 150 children (and some adults) made bird feeders and snakes. The bird feeders were made out of toilet paper rolls, honey and birdseed. We've been told there were many bird feeders hanging on trees at the Camp Edison Campground!

The snakes were made out of yarn, macaroni, and clay. Shirley and Judy wanted the children to become aware of the environment they were visiting by exposing them to birds and snakes.

Next summer the children will make pinecone owls and Indian necklaces. Take your children to the museum next summer and have fun making something!



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NEWSLETTER - FALL, 2011

We would like to keep you informed of Museum accomplishments and events in a timely manner. If you wish to receive an email notice of events and progress, please send an email to cshts@netptc.net

How to Reach Us

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