

A Day Trip on Old Clear Creek Highway and the 1928 Realignment of the Lincoln Highway

Join LHA members Janette Bloom and Jan Marson on August 25 for a day trip exploring Clear Creek Canyon in Carson City. We will gather at 9:30 a.m. at the Stewart Indian School main entrance at 5500 Snyder Avenue. First we will travel the Stewart Indian School Trail (via car or on foot) while using cell phones to hear alumni and employees relate their personal experiences at the school. We then head up Clear Creek Canyon to explore the 1928 alignment of the Lincoln Highway. Suggested donation (includes lunch): \$15.00 payable to “Nevada Chapter LHA.” Please RSVP by August 20th to Cindy Ainsworth at cainsworth2271@att.net.



Snyder Avenue Entrance to the Stewart Indian School



Start the tour at the Map of the Stewart Indian School Trail

Historic sites along the original Clear Creek Canyon portion of the Lincoln Highway include a small cemetery at the former Ormsby County Poor Farm (now Fuji Park) where two civil war veterans are buried, Stewart Indian School ranch lands, a billboard painted on the canyon wall during the 1895 Presidential campaign, WPA-era culvert and bridge rock work, and a former Forest Service Job Corps Camp – all this in only 5 miles!



Following a break for a box lunch, there's an option to continue touring further on the abandoned roadway through Forest Service land. The stretch of the highway above the old Job Corps/Youth Camp is accessible only by foot (unless the Forest Service leaves the gate open) and winds its way up to Spooner Summit. For those adventurous enough to hike the 5 miles to the Summit, a return shuttle is recommended. Although nature has all but reclaimed this portion of the Clear Creek Highway, the spectacular views of Carson Valley remain. Of

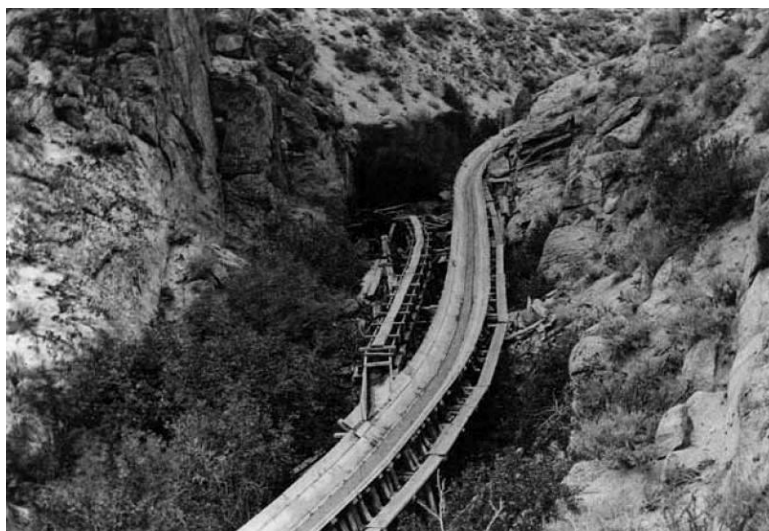
interest to motorists are the remnants of boxed-in springs that provided roadside water to travelers on the Lincoln Highway.

The short stretch of the former Clear Creek Highway that we will explore belies a long and interesting history. Originally a Washoe pathway to Lake Tahoe, the trail up Clear Creek Canyon grew into a wagon road known as Johnson's Cut-off, and developed into the Rufus Walton Toll Road with the growth of the lumber industry during the Comstock era. The Walton Toll Road extended to about one mile east of Spooner Summit, where it connected to the King's Canyon road. Later referred to as the Clear Creek Grade, the road was used as an alternate route to the King's Canyon road with daily stages running between Carson City and Glenbrook during the summer months.



Passed over in favor of King's Canyon Road for the original route of the Lincoln Highway in 1913, the Nevada Highway Department improved the road in 1928, designating the Clear Creek Highway as the realignment of the Lincoln Highway. Old Clear Creek Road then served as part of US 50 until the alignment was changed once again in 1957 to provide a better roadway to the 1960 Squaw Valley Olympics. Remarkably, the current roadbed is the original pavement that NDOT installed in the early 30's. The road has never been repaved and is apparently a construction marvel for this very fact.

What remains of the Clear Creek Highway is now known as Old Clear Creek Road or, in Douglas County, Old Highway 50. For a road that is less than 10 miles in length, a remarkable number of governmental entities claim (or disclaim) jurisdiction over the road – the Washoe Tribe, BIA, USFS, NDOT, USFS, Carson City, and Douglas County are all involved. A feat that undoubtedly no other road in this country can match!



C. & T. L. & F. Co. V-Flume from Spooner Summit to Carson City via Clear Creek Canyon

Millions of board feet of logs and lumber were transported down Clear Creek Canyon. As the site of one of the major flumes during the Comstock days, lumber was moved from Spooner Summit to the railroad yard in Carson City for transportation to the Virginia City mines. Initially developed by the Summit Fluming Company, the Carson and Tahoe Lumber and Fluming Company (C. & T. L. & F. Co.) lengthened the flume to 12 miles and located railroads at both ends of the flume. At this point in the Clear Creek Grade's history, there were 14 bridges spanning the flume making travel more

precarious than in earlier times. Although the flume is long gone, portions of the flume bed are still visible and easily accessible, as they form a flat, walkable area along Clear Creek.



Flume shacks housed Chinese flume tenders



Spooner Summit 1876



Lumber yard in Carson City at the terminus of the Clear Creek Flume

As the history of Clear Creek Canyon is inextricably intertwined with that of the Glenbrook area of Lake Tahoe, attempts were made to access the portions of the Lincoln Highway that pass through the gated community of Glenbrook. Unfortunately, the Forest Service is logging the area and has closed all access to the old highway so we are unable to explore the connections this summer. Nonetheless, the LHA was promised access at a future date!



Stewart Indian School, 5500 Snyder Avenue, Carson City, NV



Official Map of the Lincoln Highway: 1928 LH Clear Creek Canyon Route & old US 50
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