



Tahoe Heritage: The Bliss Family of Glenbrook, Nevada

Sessions S. Wheeler, William W. Bliss

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In 1872, Gold Hill businessman Duane L. Bliss moved his family to Carson City and built a summer home at the small village of Glenbrook. The little valley with its mountain meadow and stream, framed by virgin forest and the blue water of its bay, had a beauty unmatched by any other vale in the Lake Tahoe Basin. This was where Duane Bliss built his Carson and Tahoe Lumber and Fluming Company, engineered the Lake Tahoe Railway and Transportation Company, and developed a quaint hostelry into the renowned Glenbrook Inn. Innkeeping at Glenbrook has a long and distinguished history beginning in the 1860s when its doors were first opened to travelers and tourists. An early brochure of the period described the features and attractions of the inn as "one of the pleasantest of the unconventional resorts on the lake; every inducement is here offered for those desiring rest and recreation." The hotel register, preserved by the Bliss family, contains the names of the principals who were responsible for Lake Tahoe's importance as a player in the lumber, mining, and tourism businesses. The long succession of national figures who loved and frequented Glenbrook would be hard to match: Nevada's first two U. S. senators (William M. Stewart and James W. Nye), Nevada's first governor (Henry G. Blasdel), Ulysses S. Grant, Civil War generals Phillip H. Sheridan and Irvin McDowell, authors Bret Harte and Joaquin Miller, Thomas Edison, Henry Ford, Clark Gable, and Rita Hayworth, to name only a few. Hostelrys have long been a valid subject for historical research and writing, but Tahoe Heritage is an account not only of Glenbrook and the Bliss family, but of Lake Tahoe from its earliest days. In their collaboration, Sessions Wheeler tells his tale with sympathy and sensitivity, and William Bliss provides the private Bliss family journals, letters, photographs, and personal recollections of unrecorded facts that are at the heart of this book.

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