

History: Osgood's Toll House has a rich legacy

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The oldest building still standing in the Tahoe basin is now boarded up and waiting for disposition. It is a sturdy, hand-hewn blockhouse which served as a toll station and landmark on the road into Lake Valley. It was built in the summer of 1859 by Nehemiah Osgood and established at the foot of the Meyers Grade where Echo Lake Creek flows into the Upper Truckee River. Osgood's shortcut was one thousand feet long from the summit to the toll house and reduced the distance from the summit to the floor of Lake Valley. It stood on the left side of the road as one travelled toward the lake. Osgood established his family's home just across the road from the toll station.



Toll houses dotted the valley in the 1860 and 1870s, especially at the south end of the lake. The operators charged for passage and took the responsibility of keeping their section of the road in good condition as the state had failed to provide adequate funds for building or maintaining the roads. During the Comstock Lode's highest activity, traffic was heavy as these roads carried all of the supplies and material from California that were needed for mines and miners around Virginia City, Nevada.

Osgood expanded his holdings around the station in 1871 and employed at least three toll keepers to handle the traffic. The 1867 capture of outlaws by a posse from Placerville was only another part of the passing parade for Osgood's. No longer in use after the 1880s, it stood empty for three

decades. In 1911, the spring thaw broke the dam on Echo Lake Creek and sent tons of water down upon the station washing it from its foundation. It was rescued by the Celio family and placed on a foundation in Meyers near the old golf course.

Local citizens and the Historical Society helped to move the building in 1974 to the site of a proposed museum adjacent to the new county library. Funds for the new museums were never raised and Osgood's stands today at the corner of Highway 50 and Rufus Allen, a vision and a relic of the past. It is in good condition for its age and the Historical Society is investigating the feasibility of moving that venerable building closer to the museum. Discussions and investigations are under way on its ultimate fate.