History: Museum reflects back on Tahoe's roots

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It is an unassuming building situated in the high visibility spot on Highway 50 in South Lake Tahoe that is shared by the Chamber of Commerce and the Senior Center. Inside there are many forms of art, information, artifacts and pictures that help to preserve and display the history of the Lake Tahoe Basin.

The museum's first location, in a small rustic cabin situated behind the Al Tahoe Fire Station, was not so visible but those who found their way to this first informal museum were fascinated by the artifacts, by the society members who were so enthusiastic about the history of the area and by the ambiance inside this tiny building. The Historical Society asked the residents of the area to help with the collection of artifacts and memorabilia for the museum and received more than the building could display. From this nucleus they created and operated this museum every summer from 1970 to 1983.

Six years ago the museum was moved to its current site, offered by the city when the library moved to new quarters. A much larger space for exhibits was available to a more chronological, story-oriented museum could be designed. There was also more room for collection and improved preservation activities. Since then displaces have been expanded and redesigned several times a conservation techniques have been improved. The number of yearly visitors has tripled in the past two years. The museum was open every day of the week in the summer of 1988 and two or three days a week that winter.

The museum received a new look in 1988 with new display cases, a video area, special changing exhibits, new books and sale items in the museum shop. There is an exciting new railroad exhibit set to be opening in the spring. The museum’s goal is to display items that cover the history of the entire basin at the Lake Tahoe Museum.