NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name: TAHOE Shipwreck
other names/site number: Steamship TAHOE

2. Location

street & number N/A not for publication N/A
city or town Glenbrook vicinity X
state Nevada code NV county Douglas code 005 zip code 89413

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility, meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ___ nationally X statewide ___ locally. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Ronald M. James, SHPO 12-22-03
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

✓ entered in the National Register Edson R. Beall 2/11/04
___ See continuation sheet.
___ determined eligible for the National Register
___ See continuation sheet.
___ determined not eligible for the National Register
___ removed from the National Register
___ other (explain):

Signature of Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

___ private
___ public-local
_X_ public-State
___ public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

___ building(s)
___ district
___ site
_X_ structure
___ object

Number of Resources within Property (Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	0	buildings
1	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: TRANSPORTATION Sub: Water Related

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: NOT IN USE Sub:

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

N/A

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation N/A
roof N/A
walls N/A
other N/A
N/A

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.) See continuation sheets.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

__X__ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
____ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
____ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
____ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)
Property is:
____ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
____ B removed from its original location.
____ C a birthplace or a grave.
____ D a cemetery.
____ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
____ F a commemorative property.
____ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)
COMMERCE
TRANSPORTATION
ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

Period of Significance 1895-1940
Significant Dates 12/26/1895 (keel laid at San Francisco); 6/24/1896 (launched at Glenbrook); 8/30/1940 (scuttled at Glenbrook).
Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above) N/A
Cultural Affiliation N/A
Architect/Builder Union Iron Works, San Francisco, CA; Robert Forsythe, Chief Engineer; H.P. Freer, Designer

Narrative Statement of Significance See continuation sheets.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

Previous documentation on file (NPS):
___ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
___ previously listed in the National Register
___ previously determined eligible by the National Register
___ designated a National Historic Landmark
___ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
___ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data
_X_ State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State agency
___ Federal agency
___ Local government
_X_ University
_X_ Other
Name of repository: Nevada Historical Society; South Lake Tahoe Historical Society; North Lake Tahoe Historical Society

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	11	244660	4330880	3			
2				4			

__ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Martin McClellan and Michael A. "Bert" Bedeau
organization New Millenium Dive Expeditions, Inc. date October 30, 2003
street & number 12980 Welcome Way telephone 775-852-9327
city or town Reno state NV zip code 89511

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name State Lands Division, State of Nevada
street & number 33 West Nye Lane, Room 118 telephone 775-687-4363
city or town Carson City state NV zip code 89706

7. Description

The substantially intact remains of the twin-screw passenger steamer TAHOE lie in a sub-aquatic canyon on the eastern side of Lake Tahoe approximately one-half mile west of Glenbrook, Douglas County, Nevada. She rests with her keel on the canyon floor, which runs at a steep (approximately 30 degrees) angle from east to west. Her bow rests to the east at a depth of approximately 385 feet while her stern is to the west at a depth of approximately 460 feet below the surface of the lake.

Tahoe as Built and Modified 1895-1940

The TAHOE is a steel-hulled, twin-screw passenger steamer. She was built by the Union Iron Works of San Francisco, California as Hull # 42 between December 1895 and July 1896 specifically for service on Lake Tahoe. Fortunately, the original yard specifications for the TAHOE survive. Her overall dimensions are given as follows: length 169' 9", beam (extreme) 17 feet 10 inches, depth (molded at center) 9 feet 10 ½ inches and extreme draft 6 feet. She features a straight stem and an elliptical stern and has 16 inch close bulwarks topped by an iron pipe rail fitted with wire netting. Her total displacement is 154 tons.

TAHOE is a single-decked vessel with an awning deck extending from the stern to the after side of the main deck house. The main deck house is 102 feet long and 10 ½ feet wide, and is constructed in three parts: the central section, covering the engine and boiler space of iron with an iron roof and a single-raked elliptical funnel; and the forward and after sections of teak wood with a galvanized tin roof. The pilot house was originally located immediately forward of the main deck house (see below for a discussion of pilot house modification).

The TAHOE is provided with steel frames, beams and hull plating, and an iron keel, stem, stern post, and fittings. She is divided into six watertight compartments located aft of the collision bulkhead. The external portions of her main deck are finished in teak planking 2 inches thick and 3 inches wide while the lower (internal) deck is finished in tongue-and-groove pine planking. The principal rail was also of teak. The lower deck is ventilated by means of 34 (17 starboard and 17 port) 7 ½ inch diameter brass air ports or portholes.

TAHOE's lower deck contains several working spaces. Forward, located just behind the collision bulkhead, is the baggage and mail room fitted with storage shelving. Aft of the baggage room is the dining room, which is fitted with two long tables with storage lockers beneath, two sideboards with glass racks and decorative mirrors, and 50 swing-style seats with leather cushions. All of the furnishings are constructed of Primavera, also known as White Mahogany. The dining room walls are finished in tongue-and-groove cedar and it is partially illuminated and ventilated by an air well and skylight located aft of the

7. Description, continued

pilot house on the main deck house. A stairway connects the dining room to the main deck house above. Immediately aft of the dining room is the galley, which is fitted out with a large wood burning cooking range, wood box, sink with steam pipe, and various counters and cabinets. This space has a separate ventilating trunk and skylight.

Behind the galley was the boiler and engine room that contains one locomotive-type boiler 8 feet in diameter and 18 feet 2 ½ inches in length with a single furnace and a grate of 64 square feet. The boiler has a total heating surface of 2,566 square feet and is capable of producing 160 psi of steam pressure. This space also contains two engines consisting of three compound expansion high pressure 15-inch cylinders and two low pressure 18-inch cylinders, all having a common stroke of 12 inches. The engines generate a maximum of 1,200 horsepower and turn two three-bladed bronze screws 4 feet 10 inches in diameter with a 7-foot-8-inch pitch at a maximum of 383 revolutions per minute. This allows the TAHOE a maximum speed of 18 ½ knots per hour. This room also has space for storage of cord wood to be used as fuel for the boiler. In addition, the boiler provides steam for heating throughout the ship. The engines also operate an electrical engine and dynamo which provides direct current to 65 lighting fixtures of 16 candle power each.

Aft of the boiler and engine room the remainder of the lower deck was devoted to four single-berth state rooms finished in tongue-and-groove cedar and furnished with a bunk with built-in drawers, swing seat, wash stand, clothes locker, toilet rack, and mirror. These rooms are accessed by a separate stair from the main deck above. The space to the rear of these four state rooms was unfinished and used for miscellaneous stowage.

The main deck of the TAHOE features the aforementioned main deck house. At the forward end of this structure is the pilot house. The pilot house is constructed of teak wood inside and out and rests 48 inches above the roof level of the main deck house. The pilot house has large windows forward and to port and starboard and is topped by a swivel mounted 4000 candle power electric search light. Forward of the pilot house on the main deck is a cargo crane located next to the baggage hatch that communicates with the baggage room below. The crane is hand operated capable of lifting a maximum of 700 pounds.

The forward portion of the main deck house, just aft of the pilot house is constructed of teak wood with multiple windows, port and starboard doors, and a galvanized tin roof. It contains the smoking room, bar, and gents lavatory, as well as the stairway leading down to the dining room. The smoking room is furnished with banquette seating with leather cushions, mahogany paneling and bar, and oil-cloth floor covering. Aft of the smoking room is the center portion of the main deck house, which is framed, roofed, and finished in iron. This section covers the boiler and engine room below and supports the main funnel,

7. Description, continued

fidley, and two curved bell air intake funnels. Aft of this is the rear section of the main deck house, also constructed and finished in teak wood, which contains the main cabin, the purser's office, and the ladies' lavatory. The main cabin is fitted with swing-down banquette seating upholstered in red plush, Brussels carpet and Primavera paneling. The exterior of the main deck house features numerous swing down seats constructed of teak wood. Two life boats with moveable davits are fixed to the roof of the main deck house above the main cabin. To the rear of the main deck house is an open or awning deck covered by a continuation of the main deck house roof supported by a central stanchion and iron pipe supports at the rail.

Only one significant modification was made to the original structure of the TAHOE. In about 1910 the smoking room was expanded. This necessitated moving the pilot house from in front of the main deck cabin to on top of the extended smoking room. The new pilot house enjoyed 360 degree views and significantly raised the TAHOE's profile. The roof deck was extended around the front of the new pilot house and an additional rail was installed. In addition at some point in the early part of this century the boiler was converted from wood burning to oil fired.

Description of the Wrecksite

Location

The TAHOE rests off the shore of Glenbrook Bay at an average depth of 410 feet. Its location can be determined by the following set of triangulated distances in that it is 1.67 miles from Pomin Rock on a bearing of 244 degrees, 1.21 miles from Shakespeare Point on a bearing of 298 degrees and 1.07 miles from Deadman Point on a bearing of 145 degrees. Further, it is 2250 feet on a bearing of 229 degrees from the center of the old T-Pilings located just north of center on the Glenbrook Bay shoreline. Most specifically, the SS Tahoe is at the Lat/Lon coordinates of 39 05.496 North by 119 57.256 West.

Present Physical Condition and State of TAHOE Wreck Site

The SS Tahoe rests upon its keel with about a 5-degree list to its port side. An imaginary centerline drawn through the ship shows the bow to be pointing in a direction approximately 5 to 15 degrees east of true north and the stern orientation is in a direction approximately 5 to 15 degrees west of true south. The hull structure is intact with no ripped or torn steel openings of any kind. The portholes appear to have been removed prior to sinking. (Note: the ones we have viewed are not present however our study to date has not been able to examine all 34 individual portholes.). The rear from about a position approximately 20 to 25 feet aft of the stern crew berth areas is imbedded into the sand/silt bottom composition. At the rudder, which is bent 90

7. Description, continued

degrees to the port is only visible by about 4 feet. This puts the cut the TAHOE created during her slide to depth from the point at which she hit bottom at some 200 feet of depth (not yet verified) at approximately 8 feet into the physical bottom. It is important to know this because damage to the hull in this area is not determinable. Assuming the soft nature of the bottom composition that exists around the TAHOE, it would be safe to assume that no hull damage was caused during its slide and therefore if the TAHOE were at the surface with sea cocks closed she would probably float in her present condition.

There are two design levels to the TAHOE: the upper deck, and the lower cabin and hold. Because limitations to date have not afforded the opportunity to explore inside the ship, the condition of the Lower cabin and hold cannot be commented upon. The upper deck can be described in three sections. Aft of the engine compartment, amidships, which would include the engine compartment, boiler room and fuel storage space, and forward of the fuel storage space. These three designations are appropriate because the superstructure on the upper deck level in the amidships section is plated with a galvanized iron plating. Thus, it is the only section presently standing erect on this level; intact as it was the day she was scuttled. Inside these iron plated exterior walls is an open area above the engine room, boiler room, and fuel storage area. Thus there are no physical rooms in this area. The roof section above, also of galvanized iron, is solid and intact. It supports the galley chimney, the forward pointing air funnels, some mechanical equipment, and the smoke stack, which also stands erect, has been highly damaged due to the stresses during her sinking. The stack, however, is missing its four cable supports. The status of the support cables has yet to be determined, but it might be safe to assume based upon the damage to the smoke stack that these supports broke off during her sinking. All the glass windows in the entire ship adorning this upper deck level were removed prior to scuttling.

Moving forward at the upper deck is the area that once supported the bar, smoking room, and bridge (pilot house). This structure was made of wood and was completely destroyed during the scuttling. There is only about a 10 to 15 foot section of the portside wall to the smoking area, which contains a passenger door to the port deck and railing. A small section of the roof over the bar and smoking room, just behind the bridge, is present but collapsed downward and folded against the iron wall separating the bar area from the fuel storage area. There are many timbers, doors, conduit, etc., lying about in this section directly upon the teak decking that supported it in the first place. Just forward is more intact teak deck material leading up to the baggage hold, which is open. Positioned to the port and starboard sides of the crane and wench are the port and starboard bollards both still containing the 3-4 inch rope that towed the TAHOE behind the Quichakiddin. The rope exists in two sections that drape over their prospective sides of the ship as this line was cut when it became obvious that it may cause damage or even sink the Quichakiddin. The railing in this area for the most part is intact but there are areas that were damaged after she had been on the bottom for over 20 years as it was torn from the ship in the 1960s by persons trying to salvage parts of the ship using grappling hook

7. Description, continued

systems (one of which we recovered in 2002). The railing is now back lying on the bottom in two piles; one to the port side and one to the starboard.

The upper deck area aft of the amidships engine compartment is also damaged. The walls and roof structure, made of wood, are intact but have slid out of plumb to the port side and the roof has slid off these leaning walls and perilously rests with an abnormal overhang over the port-side railing. This area has not been as thoroughly examined as the amidships and bow section due to its depth. Knowledge of this area has come from Remote Operated Vehicle (ROV) operations. The lifeboat davits are broken and hanging upside down on the port side and the starboard side davits are unknown. The roof structure and metal posts of the rear deck area are listing to the port side and some are missing; this may also have been caused by unauthorized salvors trying to remove artifacts. The opening of the roof and or its missing parts have opened up the pursers office and the cabin and restroom areas for examination from above. The rear deck railing and decking are intact and as sound as the day she sunk. Again, it is hard to determine the interior space conditions of this section at this point in time.

8. Significance

The mostly intact remains of the steamer TAHOE are eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A at the statewide level for its association with the development of recreation and tourism at Lake Tahoe--the progenitor of the modern tourist industry in the State of Nevada. Specifically the TAHOE was the key element in the leisure infrastructure developed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries by the Lake Tahoe Railway and Transportation Company and the Bliss Family. The TAHOE served and a vital link carrying passengers and mail to the various resorts around Lake Tahoe from the railhead at Tahoe City. She and her sisters were the principal means of moving guests, their baggage, mail and supplies around the lake from her launch at Glenbrook in 1896 until her retirement in 1934 and eventual scuttling in 1940. The TAHOE was essential to the development of the leisure industry at the lake, which in turn was the prototype for later developments in tourism and entertainment in Nevada--an industry that has grown to become the largest single element in the Silver State's economy.

Some Early History of Lake Tahoe

For hundreds of years before its "discovery" by Euro-Americans, Lake Tahoe was the summer home of the Washoe people. Known as "Da Ow A Ga" in the Washoe language, the Lake was the geographical and spiritual heart of Washoe life and the site of their summer camp sites. The Lake provided a cool

8. Significance, continued

refuge from the heat of the Carson Valley in summer, plentiful fish and game, and afforded the Washoe opportunities to trade with tribes from further west in California (Anon. 1976:3).

The famous explorer John C. Frémont is credited with the "discovery" of Lake Tahoe by Euro-Americans. In February of 1844, during his second expedition into the western interior, Fremont and his companion Pruess sighted Tahoe from a vantage point atop Stevens Peak to the south. Fremont recorded this in his journals and named the lake after Amade Bonpland an associate of the noted botanist Alexander von Humboldt. Unlike other names given by Frémont "Lake Bonpland" never caught on (James 1915:22-23). Indeed, Tahoe was officially designated as Lake Bigler, after the third governor of California, in 1853. In 1862, William Henry Knight compiled a new map of the Pacific States and finding dissatisfaction with the name Bigler consulted with various members of the San Francisco newspaper fraternity as to possible alternatives. Dr. Henry DeGroot of the *San Francisco Evening Bulletin* and the *Sacramento Union* suggested that they use the Washoe name for the lake, which he gave as Tahoe--meaning big water or high water. This name was thought suitable and added to the new map. This name found favor with the general public and has been used ever since (James 1915:25).

In the immediate wake of the Comstock gold and silver rush in 1859/1860, the Tahoe basin became a primary transit link between the new diggings at Virginia City and California. The route between Carson City and Placerville via Kingsbury Grade and the south end of the Tahoe basin quickly became a primary stage and wagon road. This route was improved with the construction of a road along the east shore of the lake to Carson City via Glenbrook, Spooner Summit, and Kings Canyon. As a result of road development a few early hotels were established such as Yank's Station, Lapham's Hotel (later the Lakeside House), and the Glen Brook House (Wheeler 1992:16). These accommodations, modest though they were, quickly became not only overnight stops for stage passengers but also lodging for a trickle of leisure travelers attracted to the summer climate and picturesque scenery of the Tahoe basin. Indeed no less a figure than Mark Twain was one of these early visitors to Tahoe--electing to camp out on the eastern shore during the summer of 1863. Twain described his first view of the lake as follows: "...as it lay there with the shadows of the mountains brilliantly photographed upon its still surface I thought it must surely be the fairest picture the whole earth affords" (James 1915:360).

The Bliss Family and the Carson & Tahoe Lumber & Fluming Company

Despite the scenic wonders of Lake Tahoe, its isolation and the dominance of the timber industry in the Tahoe basin kept tourism at a minimal and rather primitive level for some time. Duane LeRoy Bliss and his four sons were the single most significant force in the development of the tourist industry at Lake

8. Significance, continued

Tahoe in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Indeed Duane Bliss was also a significant factor in its earlier development as a timbering center.

D.L. Bliss emigrated to California from his family home in Savoy, Massachusetts during the 1849 Gold Rush. Bliss tried his hand at mining but eventually ended up operating a hotel and store in Trinity County, California (Wheeler 1992:3-4). In his time in California he met and did business with many of the future industrial barons of the New West. One of these included Almarin Paul with whom he had additional business dealings when he joined the "Rush to Washoe," as the initial Comstock boom was known, in 1860. Bliss settled in Gold Hill, Nevada and worked operating various mills and mine properties (Wheeler 1992:7-9). He also joined with Paul and William Baker to open a bank in Gold Hill known as the Gold Hill Bank of Paul, Bliss & Baker. The bank flourished and was absorbed by the Bank of California in 1865--an institution which came to control all of the mills and most of the mines on the Comstock (Wheeler 1992:13-14).

Bliss quickly came to work with the principal backers of the Bank of California--known locally as "the Bank Crowd." These included such luminaries as William C. Ralston, William Sharon, Henry Yerington, and D.O. Mills. In the late 1860s, Bliss worked in a variety of capacities for the Bank interests on the Comstock--including acquisition of all rights-of-way for the bank-sponsored and -owned Virginia & Truckee Railroad (V&T), which was completed to Gold Hill in 1868 and to Virginia City in 1870 (Wheeler 1992:14).

One of the principal products that the V&T transported up the hill to the Comstock was a vast supply of timber used to shore up the ever deepening mines. In 1870, D.L. Bliss realized that the available timber supply on the eastern slope of the Sierras would soon run out and that another source of timber would be needed for the Comstock. He formed a partnership with D.O. Mills and Henry Yerington that proceeded to purchase large timber holdings on the east side of the Tahoe basin. In 1872, this group in turn formed the Carson & Tahoe Lumber & Fluming Company (C&T) to cut, mill and transport their timber from Tahoe to Carson City and thence via the V&T to the Comstock (Wheeler 1992:14).

Over the next several years a complex industrial infrastructure was created to achieve this goal. Timber was cut and logs hauled or flumed down to the lake shore. They were then transported by means of lake steamers using log booms to the C&T sawmills at Glenbrook on the east shore near the foot of Spooner Grade. Indeed the steamer, *Meteor*, which would later see service as a tourist boat was originally used in this capacity. The *Meteor,* built in 1876 was known as the "Greyhound of the West" as she was purported to be the fastest inland steamer of her day with a top speed of 20 knots per hour (McKeon 1946:5).

8. Significance, continued

A narrow gauge railway was constructed to transport sawn lumber from the mills at Glenbrook to the top of Spooner Summit where it was transferred to the Carson flume. The flume, utilizing water from the Marlette Lake water system, conveyed the timbers to a vast holding area at Carson City where it was loaded onto flat cars and shipped to the Comstock and other points in Nevada via the V&T. Other flumes and rail links were developed all around the basin as lumbering dominated the local economy through the 1880s (Wheeler 1992:28-34). It is estimated that between 1871 and 1898, when operations finally ceased, that the C&T had taken 750 million board feet of lumber and 500,000 cords of rough wood from the Tahoe basin (Scott 1957, vol.1:289).

The Lake Tahoe Railway & Transportation Company

D.L. Bliss was a man who was able to see well ahead of his present circumstances and to capitalized on opportunities that might present themselves. As the demand for lumber from the Tahoe basin declined, Bliss realized that his existing assets at Tahoe might be used to create a new tourist-based economy at the lake. The scenery was still spectacular and his lake steamers already supplemented their duties as log haulers by supplying the modest resorts and communities around the lake with passenger and freight service. His substantial land holdings also would lend themselves to development of new resorts and summer homes. Furthermore the profits realized in the lumber business would allow Bliss to create the first class infrastructure needed to transform the existing crude tourist experience at Tahoe into one that would appeal to the wealthy and growing leisure class.

In the early 1890s, D.L. Bliss and his sons set out to create a new and larger Tahoe tourism industry. They determined that the reliance on stage transportation to and around the lake over treacherous mountain trails had restricted Tahoe's appeal and thus kept the available accommodations modest. Three missing elements were needed to create a first class resort at the lake: direct rail connections between the lake and the Southern Pacific main line over the Sierras, expanded and more luxurious water transportation from the railhead to the various resorts around Tahoe, and the creation of a truly first class resort on a par with the finest hotels anywhere (Wheeler 1992:48). The first of these elements was to be a new steam ship to make the daily summer transit around the lake.

Union Iron Works and the construction of the TAHOE

TAHOE was constructed by the Union Iron Works (UIW) ship yard in San Francisco as Hull #42 between November of 1895 and June of 1896. She was designed specifically for service on Lake Tahoe and at the request of the Bliss family's newly incorporated Lake Tahoe Transportation Company (Wheeler 1992:48-

8. Significance, continued

49). TAHOE is described elsewhere in this document. Suffice to say here that she represented a significant increase in capacity and luxury over her predecessors and was truly a beautiful and elegant ship--thoroughly modern for her time.

UIW was a firm that D.L. Bliss and his associates in the lumber and mining business were intimately familiar, being one of the pioneer industrial concerns on the Pacific slope. Founded by Irish immigrants Peter and James Donahue in a San Francisco tent in 1849, the Union Iron Works quickly became a major regional industrial concern. They produced a significant amount of the heavy machinery used in both mining and lumbering in California and Nevada as well as railroad locomotives and other transportation equipment. UIW also had a subsidiary iron works in Virginia City in the 1860s & 1870s. Much of the equipment for the Comstock mines and mills was produced by UIW (Brechin 1999:125-127.).

In the early 1880s, however, *borassca* (or economic decline) had begun to take hold of the Comstock, radically reducing the demand for machinery related to both mining and lumbering. By this time Irving and Henry Scott had taken over UIW. The Scotts had become intimately connected into the capital establishment in San Francisco since first arriving in California in the 1860s. Irving Scott realized that UIW would have to diversify in order to remain lucrative and began to construct an enormous and up to date ship yard at the foot of Potrero Hill south of central San Francisco. This coincided with an expansion in American trade interests and imperialist ambition that in turn created a demand for a new modern two-ocean navy. By 1886, Scott had landed his first commission for the US Navy--the battleship *U.S.S. Charleston*. As a result of government patronage by the mid-1890s UIW had become the dominant industrial concern on the West Coast and one of the largest ship builders in the world (Brechin 1999:127-128).

TAHOE's launch, career and scuttling

Construction of the TAHOE was completed at the UIW yard at Potrero Hill, San Francisco in the spring of 1896. As requested by the owners, TAHOE was fitted together in San Francisco, then disassembled, loaded onto flat cars, transported by rail to Carson City and hauled over Spooner Summit by wagon. She was then reassembled by UIW in a cradle built by the owners. She was christened by William M. Bliss age 2, grandson of D.L. Bliss as TAHOE of GLENBROOK and launched amidst much celebration and ballyhoo on Sunday June 24th, 1896. After satisfactory trial by UIW she was turned over to the Lake Tahoe Transportation Company and put into service (Wheeler, 1992:49-52).

8. Significance, continued

TAHOE immediately began transporting passengers, mail, and freight around the lake. This allowed D.L. Bliss to put his next plan into operation: the construction of a rail link from the lake to the mainline. It was determined that the best grade and the shortest connection could be made from Tahoe City on the

lake's northwest corner to Truckee. In December of 1898, the Bliss family formed a new company, the Lake Tahoe Railway & Transportation Company, which purchased the assets of both the Lake Tahoe Transportation Company and the Carson & Tahoe Lumber & Fluming Company. This included all of the buildings, rail, engines, and rolling stock remaining from the various C&T narrow gauge lumber operations. A large site on the lake shore at Tahoe City was also purchased. William Bliss, trained as an engineer at M.I.T., supervised the surveying and construction of the 12-mile, narrow-gauge line to Truckee as well as the transport across the lake of much of the Glenbrook railroad infrastructure to be re-erected at Tahoe City. Berths and maintenance facilities for the ships and a long railroad pier were also constructed. Railway construction was initiated in the Spring of 1899 and by the beginning of the 1900 season the Southern Pacific was offering connecting service to Tahoe City from Truckee (Wheeler 1992:52-54).

With the needed transportation infrastructure in place, the Bliss family could now complete the last piece of the plan. D.L. Bliss' son Walter also attended M.I.T, but was trained as an architect. He was commissioned to design and build a 450-guest luxury hotel to be erected just south of Tahoe City. The Tahoe Tavern was thoroughly modern with all the most deluxe amenities. It was completed in 1901 and built in a rustic style reminiscent of the great Adirondack camps. The Tavern was an immediate success and in 1906 a large annex was built, followed by the "Casino" in 1907 (Wheeler 1992:55-58).

The general improvement in transportation represented by the TAHOE had repercussions for other resorts at the lake as well. Tallac Resort, owned by the flamboyant "Lucky" Baldwin, constructed a new and modern hotel in 1899 and its famous Casino in 1901. The Tallac Casino was one of the most famous and high-toned illegal gambling houses in the country and set the precedent for later casino development following legalization on the Nevada side of the lake in 1931 (Scott 1957, vol. 2:420-424). The venerable Brockway Springs Hotel was given a major upgrade and expansion at this time (Scott 1957, vol.2:133). The Bliss family also expanded its holdings at Glenbrook, opening the Glenbrook Inn in 1907 (Wheeler 1992:80-81). More modest accommodations can also trace their origin to this time period, such as the Al-Tahoe Inn (later Globin's Resort) built in 1908 (Scott 1957, vol.2:17). Substantial new summer homes such as the Tevis-Pope mansion of 1908 (Scott 1957, vol.2:326) and Hellman-Ehrman mansion of 1903 (Scott 1957, vol.2:349) were also built as a result of improved transportation.

8. Significance, continued

The TAHOE moved her base of operations to Tahoe City following the completion of the new pier and dock facilities in 1898 (Scott 1957, vol.2:178). She maintained a daily schedule through the summer season that left Tahoe City at 9am and proceeded around the lake in a counter-clockwise fashion returning to Tahoe City at 5pm (Scott 1957, vol.2:274). The *Nevada* or the *Meteor* generally operated in the opposite direction on the same schedule. All boats called at every major resort/pier on the lake during its day long circuit (Scott 1957, vol.2:265). As the resorts were closed in winter, steamer service was limited to twice weekly mail runs and were usually operated by *Nevada* or other smaller vessels (Wheeler 1992:106). TAHOE operated with an unblemished safety record for thirty-eight seasons. Indeed her only tragedy was the loss of her first master Captain E.J. Pomin in December, 1919. Pomin was killed after being struck in the head while boarding the *Nevada* at the Tahoe City pier.

The arrival of the TAHOE heralded the beginning of what some refer to as Lake Tahoe's golden age. It was a time when only the elite were able to travel for pleasure and only the wealthy managed to escape the unair-conditioned summer of lower elevations. Lake Tahoe was the reserve of the well-to-do and particularly for northern California's high society. For thirty-eight seasons TAHOE and her sisters presided over the summer experience at the lake. Nevertheless, just as improvements in transportation and infrastructure had rendered the nineteenth-century tourist institutions inadequate and obsolete, so to would the institutions catering to the elite find themselves outmoded.

Improvements to the roads over the Sierra had always been a priority in California. Indeed the road from Placerville to Tahoe was the first designated State Highway. In the very early years of this century intrepid auto enthusiasts began making the run up to the lake from lower elevations via the Placerville Road and the old Emigrant Gap Road over Donner Summit. By 1912, a crude road connecting Tahoe City with Tallac and the south end of the lake was opened. Promotional materials advocating the so-called "Wishbone Route" between Sacramento and the lake via both routes were circulated in order to increase the use of autos for mountain transport (James 1915: 121-142).

Early auto travel, however, was not always as simple as depicted in the literature of the time. This was demonstrated by the difficulties encountered by George Starr and Arthur Foote in their attempt to win the Tahoe Tavern Auto Derby Cup for being the first auto and driver of the 1911 season to make the trip over the Sierra to Tahoe City. They left Colfax, some 60 miles away, on June 2 in a new open-topped Model T Ford. After encountering washed out bridges, snow banks, broken wheels, damaged steering gear, and slow progress dictated by having to hand haul the car over snow and rock, Foote and Starr finally arrived at Tahoe Tavern and claimed the Cup...on June 10! Scott 1957, vol.2:484-491).

8. Significance, continued

As the new century progressed, however, significant road improvements were made around the lake and on both routes from Sacramento. By the late 1920s, it was possible to make the trip up from the valley in a matter of hours rather than days. The much-desired road circumnavigating the lake was completed in the early 1930s. This, combined with economic depression, brought significant changes to the tourist economy at the lake. The Bliss family sold the rail link and the Tahoe Tavern to the Southern Pacific Railroad in the mid-1920s and leased the TAHOE and her sisters to a Southern Pacific subsidiary for continued operation. The combination of easier auto access and the general economic decline of the early 1930s, however, resulted in a steep decline in both freight and passenger revenue. Moreover, following the 1934 season the TAHOE lost her lucrative US Mail contract to a lower bid gasoline motor launch operator. This was the final straw and TAHOE, along with *Nevada* and *Meteor* were pulled out of service and mothballed at Tahoe City (Wheeler 1992:98-100).

All three steamers remained out of service and moored at the Tahoe City pier for the next five years. In the late 1930s rumors circulated that offers had been made to sell the ships to Japanese scrap merchants--Japan then being engaged in a war in China and paying top dollar for scrap iron. William S. Bliss, however, determined to give the steamers the "dignified burial he thought they deserved" (Wheeler 1992:100). *Meteor* was the first to be scuttled--sent to the bottom of the lake on April 21, 1939 and *Nevada* followed in October of 1940. Despite proposals to make her a museum and pleas from school children to save her, TAHOE was towed to a spot approximately one-half mile from Glenbrook on the evening of August 29, 1940. A few minutes before midnight her sea cocks were opened and at 3:00 am on August 30 she slipped beneath the surface of the lake (Wheeler 1992:101)

While the other steamers were sunk in deep water, it was the intent of the Bliss family to sink the TAHOE in shallow water near her launching point at Glenbrook. The idea was to sink her in about 100 feet of water so that she might be visible from the surface. However, there was a miscalculation about the bottom of the lake in this area. Glenbrook canyon continues its steep decline below the surface of the lake. As such even though the depth of the lake was only about 100 feet where the TAHOE was scuttled, she settled on the bottom at approximately a 30-degree angle and slid down the slope to her final resting depth of 385 feet at the bow and 460 feet at the stern (McClellan 2001:33). Despite some damage done by a crew who had dragged an anchor across Lake Tahoe in an attempt to snag artifact, she remained essentially undisturbed until a group called New Millennium Dive Expeditions formed in the late 1990s to locate the TAHOE and to dive on the wreck if possible. The ship was found essentially intact in the summer of 1999 and recorded using a remote operating vehicle. While diving at the depth of the TAHOE at an altitude of over 6000 feet was deemed very hazardous it was possible given the use of cutting edge mixed-gas dive techniques. Even so, divers would be limited to a mere four and one-half minutes at the wreck site. Such dives were successfully undertaken in the summer of 2001 (McClellan 2001:40-41).

8. Significance, continued

Summary

Clearly, TAHOE was an integral element in the development of the leisure and tourism economy at Lake Tahoe during the period from the late 1890s through to the 1930s. Moreover the precedent of a tourism based economy, created by the Bliss family and others at the lake set an immediate precedent for the State of Nevada as a whole. Indeed, taking a cue from "Lucky" Baldwin's Tallac, Tahoe was the site of many early and important Nevada casinos including the famous Cal-Neva at Crystal Bay. Tahoe hostelries such as the Tahoe Tavern and the Glenbrook Inn set the precedent for world-class hotel-casinos such the Riverside and the Mapes in Reno and the development of the strip in Las Vegas. Tahoe was where Nevada learned the leisure trade--an economy that by 1960s had surpassed mining and agriculture to dominate the state's livelihood (Elliot 973:327). As such the remains of the TAHOE are highly significant to the history and development of Nevada in the twentieth century and are worthy of listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the statewide level under Criterion A.

9. Bibliography

Anonymous
1976 *WA-She-She: a Washo Tribal History*, Intertribal Council of Nevada, Carson City.

Bliss Family Papers
var. Bliss Family Papers, Special Collections, University of Nevada Library, Reno.

Brechin, Gray
1999 *Imperial San Francisco*, University of California Press, Berkeley.

Elliot, Russell R.
1973 *History of Nevada*, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 1973.

James, George Wharton
1915 *Lake Tahoe the Lake of the Sky*, Charles T. Powner Co., Chicago.

McClellan, Martin
2001 "Tahoe: A Mile High Challenge." *Immersed* (Fall, 2001).

McKeon, Owen F.
1946 "Railroads and Steamers of Lake Tahoe." *Western Railroader* (March 1946).

Scott, Edward B.
1957 *The Saga of Lake Tahoe.* 2 vols. Sierra Tahoe Publishing Company, Crystal Bay, Nevada

Strong, Douglas H.
1984 *Tahoe: an Environmental History.* University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln.

Wheeler, Sessions
1992 *Tahoe Heritage: The Bliss Family of Glenbrook, Nevada.* University of Nevada Press, Reno.

10. Geographic Data

Boundary Description

The TAHOE rests off the shore of Glenbrook Bay at an average depth of 410 feet. Its location can be determined by the following set of triangulated distances in that it is 1.67 miles from Pomin Rock on a bearing of 244 degrees, 1.21 miles from Shakespeare Point on a bearing of 298 degrees and 1.07 miles from Deadman Point on a bearing of 145 degrees. Further, it is 2250 feet on a bearing of 229 degrees from the center of the old T-Pilings located just north of center on the Glenbrook Bay shoreline. Most specifically, the TAHOE is at the Lat/Lon coordinates of 39 05.496 North by 119 57.256 West.

Boundary Justification

The National Register boundaries of the TAHOE Shipwreck is limited to the footprint of the ship plus a 150-foot radius to capture potential fallen artifacts.

TAHOE Shipwreck, Glenbrook vicinity, Douglas County, Nevada

Name of Property: The TAHOE Shipwreck

Location of Property: Glenbrook Vicinity
Douglas County, Nevada

Location of Negatives: Nevada Historical Society
1650 North Virginia Street
Reno, NV 89503

Photograph 1: Steamer Tahoe and Specifications
Photographer: Unknown
Date of Photograph: Unknown (post-1932)

Photograph 2: Steamer Tahoe
Photographer: Unknown
Date of Photograph: Unknown (post-1908)

Photograph 3: Steamer Tahoe
Photographer: Unknown
Date of Photograph: Unknown

Photograph 4: Steamer Tahoe
Photographer: Unknown
Date of Photograph: ca. 1900

Photograph 5: Steamer Tahoe
Photographer: Unknown
Date of Photograph: 1905

Photograph 6: Steamer Tahoe at Lake Tahoe Railway and Transportation Co. Dock
Photographer: ? Palmer
Date of Photograph: ca. 1908

1) USGS Topo Map

2) General Arrangement Plans (oversize)

3) Midship Section

4) SS Tahoe–As it Rests Today–July 2002