

Tex + dogs Old Man.

Feb, 22 '79

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May have to change 2 pip
Russ has
others now in Tex dot

What

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710 pictures?

Captions--Recollection of Dog Sled Days Feb., 1979

1. Tex Cushion and his lead dog, Dawson.

Adele Reed collection

2. What once was left of the dog sled service building.

Tom Johnston collection

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3. Mary Gish and Julia Rogers riding the dog sled to the Pine
Cliff Camp .

Collection of Olive Barker

4. This was when the dog pen was in use, named Mammoth Dog Teams
and freight and passenger service building.

Adele Reed collection

5. The film makers from the Republic Studios with their own dog
team in 1942.

Adele Reed collection

Caption Feb 22, 1949

1. Tex Cushman & his lead dog Dawson
A.R.
2. What ^{once} ~~was~~ left of the dog sled service
bldg.
Tom Johnston
3. Mary Gish & Julia Rogers riding
dog sled to the Pine Cliff Camp,
Coll Olive B.
4. The dog pen ^{in use} and the Mam. Dog
Teams, freight + passenger service
bldg.
A.R.
5. Film makers from Republic
Studios w. their dog team in 1942.
A.R.

Later in the 1920's another form of transportation came to Old Mammoth. Tex Couchane and wife brought their Malamut/^edog team and at that time the dog sleds meant a way in and out in winter for residents who wintered in. It did not take long for Tex to build up a colorful, dependable business that he named Mammoth Lakes Winter Patrol.

He and helpers hauled supplies, mail, whatever, and rescued visitors to the area, sometimes taking injured or ill victims to meet a doctor on Sherwin Hill. Shoveling of snow from summer cabins was important, Tex was always there when needed.

A new highway was built from #395 all the way to the Lakes in 1937, '38 and it by-passed Old Mammoth and the mining road. #203 meant the beginning of a new village. The business people of the meadow town were soon rebuilding in a location along the highway that was known as New Mammoth. As it grew the name was changed to MammothhVillage and through the years progress, growth and skiing has made the name Mammoth Lakes very prominent.

Reference, "Mammoth Lakes Memories" by author

Recollection of dog sled days in Old Mammoth

by Adele Reed

A hardy and rugged couple were Tex Couchane and wife Ruth who began their Mammoth Winter Patrol in 1927. They brought their team of Malamutes, sled dogs, at a time when snow shoes and skis were the only mode of travel in winter. They built up a business that became very important and it was located above the meadow in Old Mammoth.

Helpers were boarded who worked with Tex on shoveling of snow from cabins each winter. The route included Old Mammoth and all of the Lake area. Tex and his teams were on call for all kinds of work, such as freighting, passenger travel and more important, rescue trips. Extra dogs, about half grown, were shipped in for training as replacements on the teams. Ruth helped with this, using a small box sled with two dogs hitched, one in front of another while she walked ahead. They also raised their own pups; a section of the pens was reserved for them.

It was great fun to watch the fat, roly poly pups at feeding time. Raw meat and bones were thrown about the pen, then came a wild scuffle with much growling and fighting. As they grew they were allowed to follow the sled team across to Penny's Tavern for exercise. While the team curled up in the snow the pups scouted everywhere.

Yours truly had a surprise visit one day. As I worked at my desk I had a feeling I was being watched. Looking around at the front window there was a line-up of serious pups faces, ears up, wondering! Their heads filled what little space there was left above the snow line, then off they scampered.

Extra dogs were kept at the Summer's place below Laurel Creek in high wire pens. Food was something of a problem as the hardworking Malamutes required raw meat. In winter when Highway 395 and the road out of Mammoth were open, Tex would drive to Bishop for dog food every so often. Farmers would let him know of dead animals that he and a helper would butcher. During the

heavy snow of 1933 at Bishop there were quite a few dead animals that had been marooned in the snow far out in fields. At times like this Tex took along his dog team and sled in order to reach the needed dog food.

There was great excitement around Mammoth in February, 1942, when the movies were scheduled to visit our snow covered country. The Republic Studios sent a scout ahead to reserve rooms and lodging at Penny's and at Manahu Lodge and wherever possible.

They brought in two dog teams of their own and also used two of Tex's teams. A Russian snow scene was their goal down on the flats near the Standard Oil tanks in four to six feet of snow.

We remember so well the work of helping to start cars parked near our Mammoth Garage across from Penny's. The crew left each morning at precisely 4 a.m.! It meant four mornings of that before they were able to catch the sunrise they wanted.

There were other visits by the same studios, sometimes filming in Old Mammoth or other areas and Tex and his teams were always on call. They arrived with a large camera car one time that they used along the Owens River in order to keep up with galloping saddle horses used in a western.

The camera car had to be housed in our garage nightly. Again it meant a 4 a.m. starting time. Many people stopped by to see the car. It had two Lincoln 12-cylinder motors in it. Also two rear ends, each driven by a motor.

After the people of the town of Old Mammoth moved and set up their business in 1938-'39 on SR 203 the small village was called New Mammoth. It was isolated from the outside in winter for a week or so at a time or until the main highway was opened. Tex operated as usual from his headquarters above the meadow.

The era of Old Mammoth can now be titled historical. Many good memories remain, one of which will always belong in the history of Mammoth Lakes, namely, the man and his dog teams.



Photo by Tom Johnston



Adele Reed Collection



Olive Barker Collection



DOG DAYS IN MAMMOTH — Tex and Ruth Couchane's dog team operation in Old Mammoth during the 1920s, 30s and 40s attracted a great number of outdoor enthusiasts and film makers. At top





Adele Reed Collection



DOG DAYS IN MAMMOTH — Tex and Ruth Couchane's dog team operation in Old Mammoth during the 1920s, 30s and 40s attracted a great number of outdoor enthusiasts and film makers. At top right is what remains of the dog sled service building. Center right finds Julia Rogers and Mary Gish riding dog sled at entrance to Pine Cliff Camp. At bottom right is a summer view of the dog sled operation with Malamute dogs inside fence. At top left is Tex Couchane, owner of Mammoth freight and passenger service, in his winter garb with a proud lead dog. Bottom left is a group of film makers from Republic Studios with one of their own dog teams used during filming in 1942.



Photo by Tom Johnston



Olive Barker Collection



Adele Reed Collection