

180 Years Later, the Donner Party Speaks for Themselves

Capital Books Press publishes two landmark survivor accounts for the 180th anniversary of America's most haunting pioneer disaster

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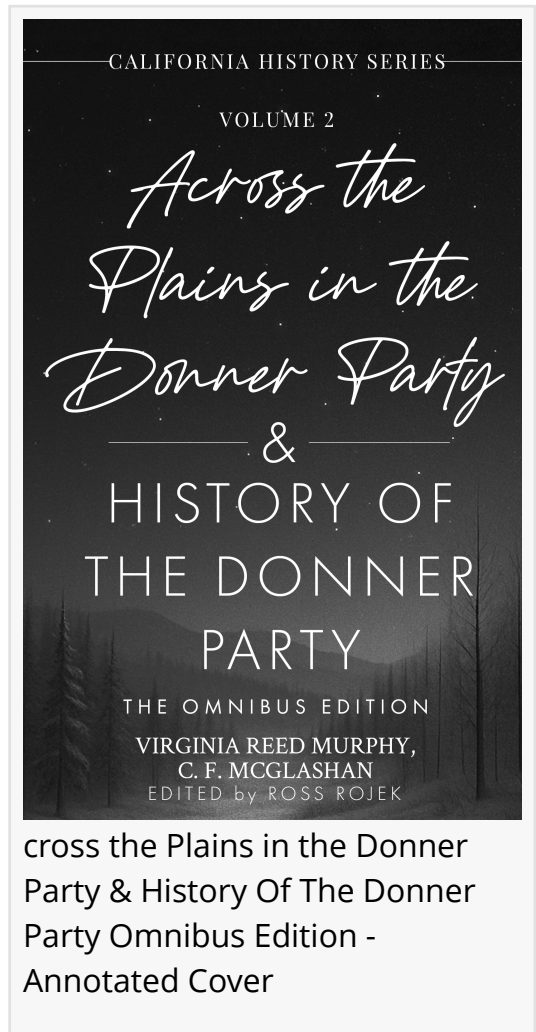
/EINPresswire.com/ -- On October 28, 1846, 87 California-bound pioneers became trapped in the Sierra Nevada snowpack near what is now Donner Lake. Half of them wouldn't make it out alive. The story has been retold, sensationalized, and mythologized ever since. But the survivors' own words have rarely been this accessible.

[Capital Books Press](#) has published two landmark annotated editions for the 180th anniversary of the Donner Party disaster: [The Expedition of the Donner Party and Its Tragic Fate](#) by Eliza P. Donner Houghton (ISBN 9781967659005), and [Across the Plains in the Donner Party & History of the Donner Party Omnibus](#) by Virginia Reed Murphy and C.F. McGlashan (ISBN 9781967659036). Both are available now on Amazon in print and ebook and through Ingram for bookstores and other retailers.

The Primary Sources Historians Have Relied On for 150 Years

These aren't secondhand retellings. Eliza P. Donner Houghton was 3 years old when her family became stranded in the Sierra Nevada in the winter of 1846–47. Her father, George Donner, died in the snow. She survived. Decades later, she wrote it all down. Her memoir, *The Expedition of the Donner Party and Its Tragic Fate* (originally published 1911), is a meticulous first-person reconstruction of one of the worst disasters in American pioneer history. Capital Books Press has issued a new annotated edition with modern typography and editorial apparatus, making it readable for a new generation without stripping its documentary power.

The Omnibus edition pairs two more essential primary sources: Virginia Reed Murphy's account,



written by one of the youngest survivors of the expedition, and C.F. McGlashan's comprehensive 1879 historical investigation, which drew on interviews with dozens of survivors and their families while memories were still fresh. Together, the three accounts form the closest thing to a complete firsthand record of the Donner Party disaster.

Why 2026 Is the Moment for Donner Party Coverage

The 180th anniversary spans a 12-month window from April 2026 through April 2027, tracking the original journey from departure in Independence, Missouri to the final rescue in the Sierra Nevada.

October 28, 2026 marks the exact anniversary of the moment the party became trapped. That date drives renewed national interest, curriculum planning, documentary production, and historical tourism to Donner Memorial State Park in Truckee, California.

The Donner Party remains one of the most searched, most taught, and most debated survival stories in American history. These editions give journalists, educators, documentary producers, and general readers the primary-source foundation the story deserves.

Interview and Review Copy Availability

A spokesperson is available for interviews on the Donner Party story, the significance of publishing annotated survivor accounts, and the historical importance of the 180th anniversary.

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80 years after one of America's most devastating pioneer tragedies, Capital Books Press brings the survivors' voices into sharp focus”

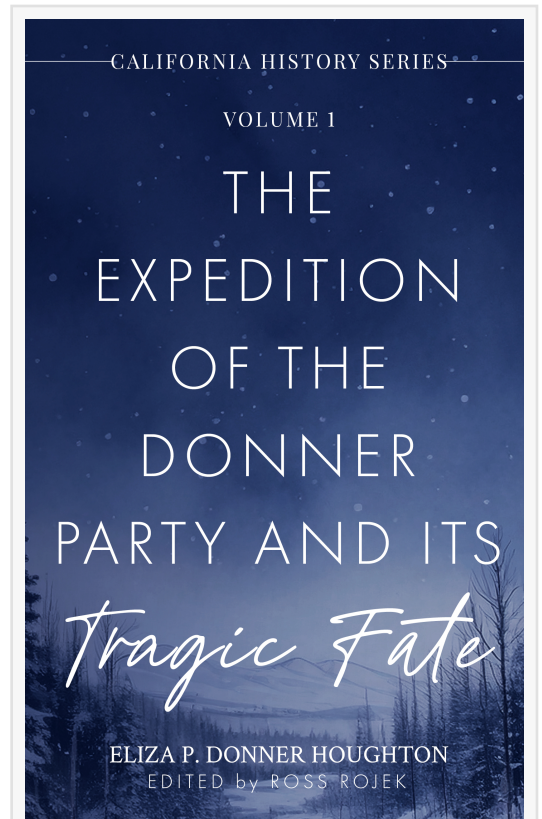
Ross Rojek

Topics include: the real history behind the Donner Party myth, what the survivors' own accounts reveal that popular retellings miss, how these annotated editions serve California's K-12 curriculum requirements, and the enduring cultural fascination with the 1846 disaster.

Review copies are available for journalists, podcasters, educators, and book reviewers. Press kit materials include

historical photographs, maps of the Hastings Cutoff, and full author/title information.

Ross Rojek



The Expedition of the Donner Party and Its Tragic Fate, Annotated: A Survivor's True Account of America's Most Harrowing Pioneer Journey Cover

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