

Our Historic Character Reenactor

Steve Hale has been reenacting historical figures from the American West and Lake Tahoe region for almost two decades. In addition to George Whittell, Jr. they include John A. Snowshoe Thompson, John C. Fremont, Stephen T. Mather, Albert Johnson, and Bill Keys.

Mr. Hale has performed at dozens of venues up and down the West coast including National Parks & Monuments, State Parks, historical and Western festivals, dinner theaters, statue dedications, conferences, Chautauqua celebrations, fund raising events as well as in repertory with other Chautauqua performers. This year marks his fourth appearance as the feature historical reenactor for the 69th Annual Death Valley '49ers Western Heritage and Music Encampment.

His professional background includes awards nationally for Excellence in Interpretation & Conservation Education, as Nevada's Conservation Educator of the Year, and regionally for preserving historical legacies through performance.

Mr. Hale has written and published a book entitled, ***"The Passionate Creation of the National Park Service- Borax, Death Valley, and Stephen Mather"***. The book tells the incredible story of *unlikely* historical events that enabled millionaire businessman Mather to lead the creation of the National Park Service and become its 1st Director in 1917.

Most recently, Mr. Hale has just created Bill Keys, a new character reenactment who will appear in Death Valley National Park and Furnace Creek Ranch this Fall. Gold miner Bill Keys was well acquainted with "Death Valley Scotty" and orchestrated Walter Scott's infamous "Battle of Wingate Pass" fiasco. Keys' Desert Queen Ranch exemplifies the resourcefulness of early Western settlers.

Visit www.ComstockCharacters.weebly.com for additional information about character histories and upcoming appearances.

AN EVENING WITH GEORGE WHITTELL, JR.



**Millionaire Who Built
the Thunderbird Lodge
and inadvertently
preserved Lake
Tahoe's East Shore**



Whittell's 1931 Duesenberg Model J (originally \$20,000 delivered) sold for \$10,340,000 in 2011- most expensive car sale in American history

PART 1

Mid-1930's

(no intermission)

PART 2

Early 1960's on the screened-in porch at
Thunderbird Lodge, east shore of Lake Tahoe



Whittell's 1940 mahogany 55' Thunderbird Yacht built by Hacker-Craft in Bay City, MI; twin 550hp engines raced around Lake Tahoe at 70mph with the likes of Sammy Davis, Jr., Tony Bennett, and Frank Sinatra

George Whittell, Jr.

1881-1969

George Whittell, Jr. barreled through life with speed and recklessness fueled by wealth and a misguided youthful passion for non-conformity. He left a wake of mystique and larger than life tales, as well as his exploits at his Thunderbird Lodge on the east shore of Lake Tahoe.

Whittell grew up on San Francisco's Nob Hill in the late 19th Century. As the only biological child of wealthy parents, his escapades spanned the Great San Francisco Fire of 1906. His outlandish behavior repeatedly embarrassed his socially proper Victorian parents while establishing himself as one of America's most colorful millionaires of the 20th Century. Newspapers in the "City By The Bay" regularly chronicled his outlandish behavior enraging his father while his son built a colorful reputation and folklore gossip that would outlive him.

The circus, The Great War, Parisian Elia Pascal, discovering the tax haven in Nevada, Lake Tahoe, and the Great Stock Market Crash of 1929 all shaped his world in extraordinary directions. By the early 1930's George Whittell, Jr. was the wealthiest man in America. As 'Tahoe's richest resident, his social circles, indulgent spending, and growing irascible desire for privacy cultivated stories that continue to resonate today.

Whittell's summers living on the east shore of Lake Tahoe nurtured his protection of his massive estate on the east shore of Lake Tahoe. As the decades passed he maintained his fierce desire for privacy by stubbornly keeping the estate surrounding the Thunderbird Lodge intact right up until his death in 1969.