STATES

THE PLACES WE RUN

Celebrating 50 Years of American Ultrarunning History



By Bob Crowley, Hal V. Hall and Tim Twietmeyer

STATES • THE PLACES WE RUN • 50 YEARS OF AMERICAN ULTRARUNNING HISTORY • BOB CROWLEY, HAL V. HALL AND TIM TWIETMEYER

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The Places We Run

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By Bob Crowley, Hal V. Hall and Tim Twietmeyer
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BY BOB CROWLEY, HAL V. HALL AND TIM TWIETMEYER

High up in the grand Sierra,
'Neath the fearless eagle's glance,
With the sunshine of God on its rugged face
Is the brave old camp Last Chance.

--H.H. Richmond

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*=*Aid Station*

Introduction

Life is a story, unique for every living thing. Most of the time, the best tales come from the most unlikely circumstances.

Watson opened the kitchen door, Robie set the table, Barner cooked the recipe, and Ainsleigh enjoyed the meal. Or as the proverb goes, *when one door closes, another opens...*

In 1974, Drucilla Barner, secretary to Wendell Robie, member of the Western States Trail Foundation, and first woman to win the Tevis Cup 100-Mile Endurance Ride, suggested to Gordy Ainsleigh he try completing the horse race on foot in less than 24 hours. And so, he did, and thus began the 50-year history of what would become the most famous and revered ultra-endurance trail run in the world: the Western States Endurance Run (WSER), or as it's known today, "States".

For thousands of years before Gordy set foot on the hallowed ground of the Western States Trail, it had been used as a seasonal migratory path by Native Americans, moving back and forth across the Sierra Nevada seeking shelter and nutrition, living one with the land. Later came settlers from Spain and Mexico, followed by American pioneers seeking fortune and a better life. Fertile soil, prosperous grazing and hunting grounds gave way to mining equipment and disruption of the landscape. What was left behind became protected land, forests, and parks.

States has had the privilege of annually honoring this important slice of earth, peaks formed by tectonic shifts and deep canyons carved by ancient rivers. Along the way, history has been laid upon the trail, enriching its meaning and creating stories which bind the years - and those who have gone before - together.

There are places we run along the course which have earned a name. 2023 marks the 50th States run. To celebrate the occasion, we thought it would be apropos and fun to answer the question, “Why is it called that name?” and share with you, what we discovered.

We hope you enjoy learning about the places we run as much as we delighted in researching over 75 distinct places. Maybe, as you move along the trail, you’ll feel more at one with the surroundings, gather strength from those who stepped before you and find serenity in knowing you are adding to the history of the trail. Just remember to look down now and again or those ancient rocks and roots will cause you to become one-with-the-trail by leaving behind your face imprint...

Although nature has shaped the trail and its surroundings due to fire and flooding, the Western States Trail remains vibrant and welcoming. Don’t mourn the change but instead embrace the transition. You will still be following in the footsteps of so many before you, a history rich with tales of happiness and tragedy, boldness and grit, beauty and tradition. Make your own imprint on the Western States Trail for others to follow in the future. Respect and revel in your privilege.

Oh, and Watson, the man who opened the kitchen door? Well, that’s Robert Montgomery Watson, conservationist, mountaineer, and America West historian, who dedicated his life to exploring, preserving, and sharing the Western States Trail with all. You will pass his stone monument atop your first ascent, the Escarpment, as you drop off into the backcountry. Be sure to tip your cap to him for good luck.

Bob, Hal and Tim

Acknowledgements

We are grateful for one of the few historic wilderness trails in America that remains undisturbed here in Northern California. Although the flora and some topography has evolved at the hands of Nature and humankind, the trail remains resilient, providing those who tread upon it an exhilarating experience. The soaring vistas and endless rows of canyons, diverse wildlife and geology, distinctive wildflowers and crisp Sierra air remain just as it has for tens of thousands of years.

We are privileged to recreate among this cathedral of life and honored to be part of a community that cares deeply about the Western States Trail's beauty, preservation and history.

Thank you to the following people and entities who assisted us with this book, have created memories across the years and help assure the Western States Trail will persevere for future generations:

April McDonald, Auburn State Area Recreation and Parks District (ARD), Auburn "Endurance Capital of the World", Bill Rose, Bureau of Land Management, CalFIRE, California Conservation Corps, Charles Savage, Charles V. Gabri, Chelsie Brokenshire, City of Auburn, Craig Thornley, E. Clampus Vitas Chief Truckee Chapter, Ed Moore, El Dorado County Historical Society, Eldorado National Forest, Frank Ives, Gene Markley, Kelsey Monahan, Kevin Sawchuk, Mark Falcone, Matt Brownlee, Mo Livermore, Mountain Maidu Tribes of California, Michael G. Lynch, Nisenan Tribe of California, Nolan Smith, Norm Klein, Placer County Archives and Research Center, Placer County Historical Society, Shannon Weil, Tahoe National Forest, The Native Sons of the Golden West - Parlor 59, US Department of the Interior, US Forest Service, Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California, Western States Trail Museum, Western States Endurance Run Foundation (WSERF), Western States Trail Foundation - Tevis Cup

Evolution of the Name "Western States Trail" (WST)



Early travelers knew the present-day Western States Trail as part of the Washoe Trail[1] that had been well established and used for thousands of years by Native American tribes from both sides of the Sierra Nevada. It was a seasonal route used for hunting, gathering, trading, and perhaps spiritual purposes. After James Marshall's discovery of gold in 1848 at Sutter's Mill in Coloma, CA, gold was also discovered north and south of Sutter's Mill in Coloma. This led to more trails being developed through the mountain passes of the Sierra Nevada.

Discovery of silver in Nevada in the late 1850's fueled a reverse migration from California's Mother Lode east to the Comstock Lode and Virginia City via a route known as the Placer County Emigrant Road. It linked Carson City, Nevada and Forks House near Foresthill, California.

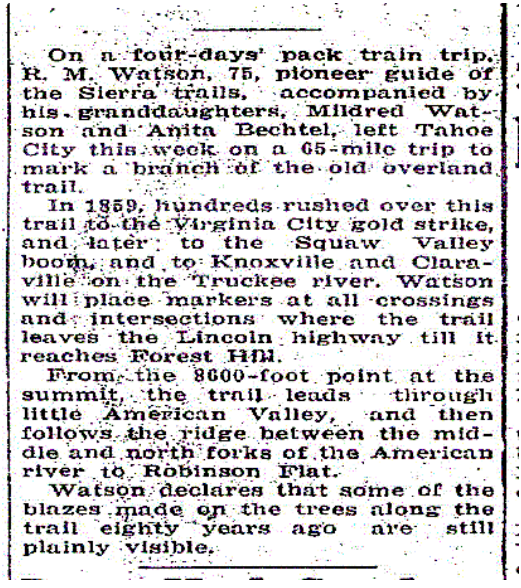
In 1852, there were efforts by the citizens of Placer County to establish a competing emigrant road. It was known as Scott's Route and the Old Ridge Route.[2]

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[1] R.M. Bucke, "Twenty-five Years Ago," The Overland Monthly, Vol. 1, June 1883, Page 555

[2] Edward B. Scott, Squaw Valley, Crystal Bay, Sierra-Tahoe Publishing Co., 1960, Pages 2 and 3.

After returning from the Yukon in 1900, Robert Montgomery Watson, a pioneer guide and trailblazer, explored the old trails in the area, including the Placer County Emigrant Road, a trail he traced and marked for others to follow.



On a four-days' pack train trip, R. M. Watson, 75, pioneer guide of the Sierra trails, accompanied by his granddaughters, Mildred Watson and Anita Bechtel, left Tahoe City this week on a 65-mile trip to mark a branch of the old overland trail.

In 1859, hundreds rushed over this trail to the Virginia City gold strike, and later to the Squaw Valley boom, and to Knoxville and Claraville on the Truckee river. Watson will place markers at all crossings and intersections where the trail leaves the Lincoln highway till it reaches Forest Hill.

From the 8600-foot point at the summit, the trail leads through little American Valley, and then follows the ridge between the middle and north forks of the American river to Robinson Flat.

Watson declares that some of the blazes made on the trees along the trail eighty years ago are still plainly visible.

In 1931, Watson, along with Scotty Allan, also of the Tahoe region, added signage to the former Placer County Emigrant Road. As a result, it was sometimes referred to as the Watson-Allan Holiday Trail. [3]

In 1955, Wendell T. Robie, an Auburn businessman of pioneer stock, a horseman and leader in many efforts to preserve Placer County history, conceived of the name "Western States Trail". That year Robie organized the world's first "100 Miles in One Day" equestrian endurance ride from Tahoe City to Auburn along what was then known as the Lake Tahoe-Auburn Riding Trail. By the second 100-mile riding event in 1956, the route

[3] Mark McLaughlin, "Tahoe City: Law and Order, Part 1," August 14, 2013.

was described as the Watson-Allan Holiday Trail. However, reference to the Western States Trail Ride also appears.[3]



Wendell Robie (Second from Left) with Governor Ronald Reagan and other members of California Recreational Trails Committee

In the early 1970's, Robie began a campaign to obtain government recognition of the naming the Western States Trail by linking Carson City, Nevada with Sacramento, California. The trail, in concept, followed the Tevis Cup 100-mile route that would also link up with the Jedediah Smith National Recreation Trail that extended from Folsom State Recreation Area to Discovery Park in Sacramento.[4] Robie also advocated adding the eastward route to Carson City and beyond through Nevada to the Utah capital of Salt Lake City. It was to be known as the Western States Trail.

The fifty-mile stretch from Beal's Point at Folsom Lake State Recreation Area to the Tahoe National Forest boundary at Foresthill, was designated the Western States Pioneer Express Trail National Recreation Trail.[5] On December 9, 1975, in cooperation with the California Department of Parks and

[3] The Pony Express, Volume XXIII, No. 2, Sonora, California, July 1956, Cover and Pages 1,2, 12.
[4] Jedediah Smith National Recreation Trail, designated by Secretary of the Interior, February 1974.
[5] Western States Pioneer Express Trail National Recreation Trail, designated by Acting Secretary of the Interior, October 8, 1975.

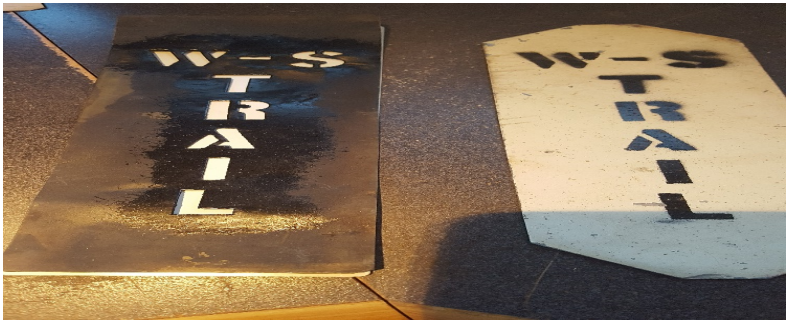
Recreation, the County of Placer and other agencies, it was reported that the U.S. Forest Service was expected to seek similar designation for the next major segment of the trail that extends to the California-Nevada border and beyond to Carson City. This action was supported by Governors Reagan of California[6] and Laxalt of Nevada.[7] The proposed designation was endorsed by the Nevada State Park Commission on March 8, 1971. On July 9, 1990, the Acting Forest Supervisor made public an Environmental Impact Statement and Resource Management Plan which included the National Trail Evaluation of the Western States and Tevis Cup Trails. The designation of the remaining route in the Tahoe National Forest as a National Recreation Trail remains pending until legal rights of way are secured.

Signage Along the Trail

Over the years, many forms of signage have been used to mark the trail. Besides the cut "small i" blazes in the trees that represent "candles lighting the way" and the cairns or ducks of piled rocks that once marked the route, metal trail signs were initially placed on trees by Robert Montgomery Watson in 1931.



[6] Letter to the Chairman of the California Riding and Hiking Trails Advisory Committee, February 13, 1967
[7] Letter to California Department of Parks and Recreation, January 16, 1967.



The Native Sons of the Golden West (NSGW) Auburn Parlor 59, with Watson's help, added signage along the route in September 1931.[8] The first signs were dog-eared, horizontal metal signs that indicate AUBURN-TAHOE NSGW. Later, horizontal metal signs were utilized which indicated TAHOE-FOREST HILL, EMIGRANT TRAIL, NSGW Auburn. One end of this sign was slightly dog-eared. In the years following the 1931 signage expedition, metal signs were placed along the trans-Sierra route that indicated AUBURN – LAKE TAHOE RIDING TRAIL. In the 1970s, white vertical signs indicated WS TRAIL.

Today, the route can be found much the same as it was originally used. While other historic trail routes have become paved roads over time, the Western States Trail has retained its historic character by following the original route and has, in part, not been affected by modern development.

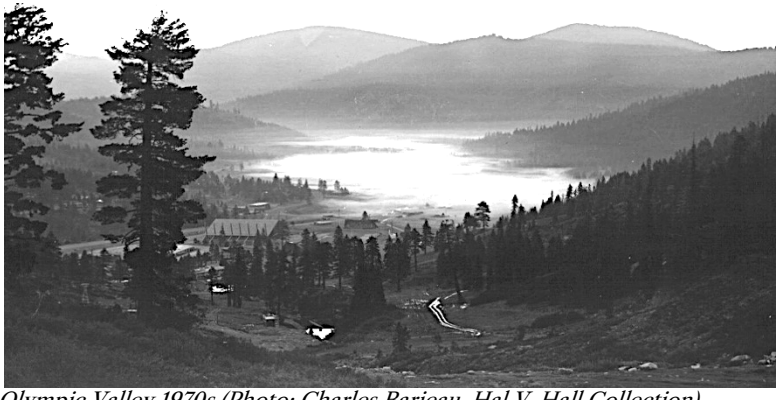
Fifty years ago, the Western States Endurance Run was founded and became the crown jewel of ultra-trail running. Runners from around the world have challenged this trail for the privilege of earning a finishing buckle award.

One Hundred Miles, One Day.

[8] "Emigrant Trail is Followed to Lake," Reno Evening Gazette, September 29, 1931, Page 7.

Olympic Valley 0

Next place Escarpment: 3.5
Miles to Auburn: 100.2



Olympic Valley 1970s (Photo: Charles Barieau, Hal V. Hall Collection)

The Washoe Tribe inhabited the land around Lake Tahoe for thousands of years and used Olympic Valley as a summer tribal ground. The first white settlers passed through the valley during the 1849 California Gold Rush.[9] In 1960, the present-day Palisades Tahoe Ski Resort was the site of the Winter Olympic Games; thus, the adopted name of Olympic Valley.

Two prospectors, Ethan Allen Grosh and Richard Maurice Bucke, became trapped here by an early winter snowstorm in November 1857. Eventually they crossed the Escarpment but became hopelessly lost, frost bitten, starved and hypothermic. Bucke survived but with both of his feet amputated, and E. Allen Grosh perished and is buried at Last Chance.[10]

In August of 1856, Placer County surveyor, Thomas A. Young, reported from the summit his enthusiasm over the sight spread out below, "This is the most beautiful valley the eye of man has ever beheld."[11]

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[9] Edward B. Scott, Squaw Valley, Crystal Bay, Sierra-Tahoe Publishing Co., 1960. Page 11.
[10] History Expeditions, https://historyexp.org/grosh-brothers-expedition-2023/.
[11] Edward B. Scott, Squaw Valley, 1960, Page 9.

Escarpment 3.5

Next place: Watson Monument 3.6
Miles to Auburn: 96.7



Runners greeted by supporters at the top of The Escarpment

The Escarpment hosted an aid station for States beginning in 1992. Shannon Weil and Mo Livermore needed a handle for the station, so Shan felt 'The Escarpment' was an apt name. The aid station was eliminated before the 2014 event.

"Escarpment", defined as a long, steep slope, especially one at the edge of a plateau or separating lands of different heights, is an apropos description for this place, separating the eastern slopes of Palisades Tahoe from the western slope of the Tahoe National Forest.

George Wharton James noted in 1913, "In the late summer tints, it is beautiful, but what must it be in the full flush of its summer glory and perfection? Then it must be a delight to the eye and a refreshment to the soul."[12] The arduous climb was first known as Scott's Route.[13] However, R. Maurice Bucke knew the route in 1857 as the Washoe Trail from Carson City, Nevada, to Robinsons Flat. [14]

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[12] George Wharton James, The Lake of the Sky, The Radiant Life Press, 1915. Page 171
[13] Jane Fiedler, A History of Squaw Valley, Self-published, 1977. Page 21
[14] History Expeditions, https://historyexp.org/grosh-brothers-expedition-2023/

Watson Monument/Emigrant Pass 3.6

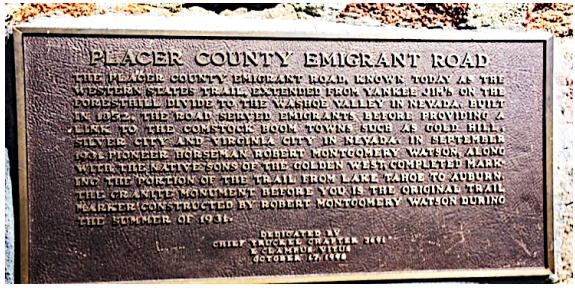
Next place: Fort Sumter 3.7
Miles to Auburn: 96.6



Native Sons of the Golden West with Robert Montgomery Watson at Emigrant Pass 1931 (Photo by Wendell Robie, Hal V. Hall Collection)

Atop the summit of Emigrant Pass, at an elevation of 8,774 feet, stands a rock monument built by Robert Montgomery Watson in 1931, and appropriately named Watson's Monument. Watson was responsible for locating and signing the Placer County Emigrant Road which later became known as the Western States Trail in 1956.[15]

A bronze plaque was added to the monument in 1998 by E. Clampus Vitas Chief Truckee Chapter, describing the Placer County Emigrant Road from Washoe Valley Nevada to Yankee Jim's.



[15] Western States Trail Guide, Fifth Edition, July 2016, Pages 1 and 5.

Fort Sumter 3.7

Next place: Greek Hotel 5
Miles to Auburn: 96.5



Fort Sumter looking southwest

The block-like volcanic outcropping between Squaw Peak and Granite Chief was named by a group of miners, known as "Stampeders", who came over the trail in the early days of the Civil War. They touched off a huge bonfire atop this peak on July 4, 1863, in celebration of Independence Day and commemorating the start of the Civil War at Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor, South Carolina, on April 12, 1861.[16]

In 1913, George Wharton James referred to this place as "peculiar battlemented rock."[17] He further added:

"As one crosses the sandy divide, expansive vistas loom, ahead and to the right, while Squaw Peak now presents the appearance of a vast sky-line crater. Across, the peak has a circular, palisade appearance, and the lower peaks to the right seem as if they were the continuation of the wall, making a vast crater several miles in diameter."

[16] Western States Trail Guide, Fifth Edition, July 2016, Pages IV and 5.
[17] George Wharton James, The Lake of the Sky, The Radiant Life Press, 1915. Page 172.

Greek Hotel (Little American Valley Cabin) 5

Next place: Granite Chief Wilderness 5.1
Miles to Auburn: 95.2



Native Sons of the Golden West with Robert Montgomery Watson at the ruins of the Greek Hotel 1931 (Photo by Wendell Robie, Hal V. Hall Collection)

The remnants of this place are below the States trail, off to the left, within the Little American Valley which lies at the headwater of the Middle Fork of the American River at an elevation of over 7,000 feet.[18]

During plans to establish the Placer County Emigrant Road and mining activity in the area, Jorge Ballen, commonly called, "Greek George", for which this place was named, built a cabin in Little American Valley and kept a public house for the accommodation of travelers. He and his wife decided to remain there all winter. The snow was twenty feet deep and Mrs. Ballen did not leave the house for five months. She then made her appearance on the roof in April where she basked in the sunlight from which she had been so long deprived.[19]

In 2022, during a preliminary site search, members of History Expeditions discovered artifacts believed to be from the Greek Hotel.

[18] Western States Trail Guide, Fifth Edition, July 2016, Page 6.
[19] Thompson & West, History of Placer County, Oakland, California, 1882, Page 406.

Granite Chief Wilderness 5.1

Next place: Hodgson's Cabin 9.5
Miles to Auburn: 95.1



Granite Chief is a 9,000-foot mountain on the northern shoulder of the wilderness area and was a landmark which pioneer travelers used to guide them along the trail.

The Granite Chief Wilderness Area (25,680 acres) that runners enter after the States trail intersection with the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail, was set aside by the United States Congress in 1984 as a part of the California Wilderness Act. This legislation threatened the Western States Endurance Run's continued use of the four miles of historic trail but was resolved after a four-year effort.

Author Gene Markley describes the thoughts of an elderly, dying Native American who made his way up toward Granite Chief from Olympic Valley for the last time: "From this boulder ridge top, the man's cloudy mind then felt comfortable that his contribution to the legend of the white man's destruction of the earth would be remembered by young Indian warriors from now on. His name would be honored forevermore. The will to die soon descended upon him and it is here where the wise warrior died with the blessing of the Great Spirit."[20]

[20] Gene L. Markley, Bogus Thunder Mountains, Self-published, 1976. Pages 14-17.

Hodgson's Cabin 9.5

Next place: Lyon Ridge 10.3
Miles to Auburn: 90.7



Although no longer part of the course, in the early days of States, the trail passed by the former privately owned logging campsite of Hodgson's Cabin. Built in 1946 by Bob Hodgson and at one time owned by Wendell Robie and Johnny Hodgson in partnership, the cabin was a single room with a wood stove for heat. In 2014, the American River Conservancy purchased the cabin and surrounding 10,115 acres, adding it to wilderness managed by the Tahoe National Forest and adjacent to the Granite Chief Wilderness. The 'footprint of man' was removed with the cabin being demolished and the road system decommissioned.[21]

In 1983, Jim King strategically hid a water bottle behind the cabin. Thirty runners followed his footprints in the snow when he took a wrong turn at the Red Star Ridge aid station. The film *Desperate Dreams — II* (produced by Centreburn Productions) documents the run's dramatic outcome.

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[21] Steven Agar, 3,347 Acre Donation to Tahoe National Forest Added to Granite Chief Wilderness, https://snowbrains.com/staging/donation-tahoe-granite-chief-wilderness/, September 6, 2017

Lyon Ridge/Foresthill Divide 10.3*

Next place: Cougar Rock 12
Miles to Auburn: 89.9



Wagon on –the Placer County Emigrant Road (Placer County Museum Collection)

Lyon Ridge is named after the first settler in the area, John Lyon, a miner who came to California during the Gold Rush of 1849. He settled in the Sierra Nevada and established a ranch in the area. Lyon's ranch was a popular stopping point for travelers and miners on the way to the Comstock Lode. In 1857, Lyon was killed in a mining accident. His ranch was abandoned and the area was eventually named after him.[22]

Lyon Ridge follows below the eastern facing ridge of Lyon Peak which has a naturally occurring slope made of a jumble of loose rocks that have fallen from the rocky face above the trail. Also referred as Wubena Pass, most know it today as where Lyon Ridge ends and the Foresthill Divide begins. Along this volcanic ridge the trail undulates through forest and rock.[23] In 1863, William Brewer, described his party's journey, "We followed a volcanic lava ridge – in places only a sharp ridge, with a canyon a thousand feet deep on each side.[24]

[22] Google Bard, April 2023
[23] Western States Trail Guide, Fifth Edition, July 2016, Pages 8 and 9.
[24] Francis P. Farquhar, Up and Down California 1860-1864-The Journal of William H. Brewer, Book 4, Chapter 5, 1863.

Cougar Rock 12

Next place: Elephant's Trunk 14
Miles to Auburn: 88.2



Gordy Ainsleigh, the first to finish under 24-hours during the Tevis Cup Ride, at Cougar Rock in 1974. (Photo by Charles Barieau, Hal V. Hall Collection)

This large upright monument has some resemblance to that of a cougar head, thus the name, Cougar Rock. A modern-day landmark, this outcropping has a steep and narrow passage with deep canyons on either side. Footing is poor for humans and horses alike. An alternate route which avoids the sharp climb was built around Cougar Rock in the 1990's. Runners have come to prize a photograph at this dramatic panoramic site.[25]

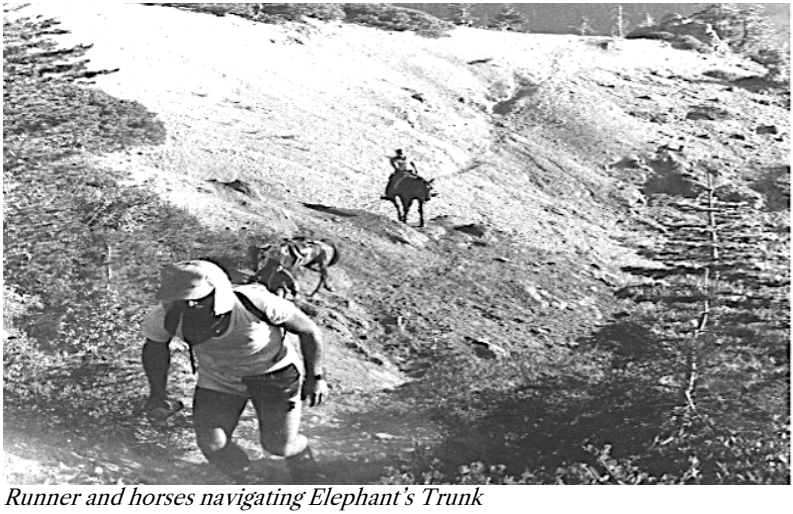
This rock outcropping was named in the 1960s by Drucilla Barner, the first woman to win the Tevis Cup (Western States 100 Mile Ride), and corporate secretary of the Western States Trail Foundation as well as Heart Federal Savings and Loan in Auburn.

In his report to the Surveyor-General in 1856, Thomas Young suggested a need to grade around portions of the ridge. He certainly must have meant Cougar Rock. Along the narrow volcanic ridge, the trail weaves through forest and rock. One might wonder how anyone ever wanted to pass this way.

[25] Western States Trail Guide, Fifth Edition, July 2016, Page 9.

Elephant's Trunk 14

Next place: Red Star Ridge 15.8
Miles to Auburn: 86.2



Runner and horses navigating Elephant's Trunk

Another difficult section of terrain along the ridge is a place that Drucilla Barner called "Elephant's Trunk". The name is a result of the trail's resemblance to an elephant's trunk, a slight dip, and a steep ascent on the lava base ridge.[26]

This section of the Western States Trail has undergone several redesigns over the years. The original trail is still visible and quite a bit steeper than the new design. In 1995, and again in 1998, Elephant's Trunk was covered in snow, so the trail was marked straight up the pitch, not on the trail that traverses that sidehill.

There is no mistaking Elephant's Trunk and upon reaching this unique place, runners are under two miles from the next aid station at Red Star Ridge.

[26] Western States Trail Guide, Fifth Edition, July 2016, Page 10.

Red Star Ridge 15.8*

Next place: Duncan Canyon 24.4
Miles to Auburn: 84.4



Red Star Ridge takes its name from nearby Red Star Mine and Red Star Point, which is near the place where Duncan Canyon empties into the Middle Fork of the American River. This ridge separates Duncan Canyon from the Middle Fork.[27] There is a spring which is located on its north side more than three-quarters of the way down the ridge before reaching the Duncan Canyon aid station.

According to Wendell Robie, the existing trail along Red Star Ridge followed an old brush covered sheep driveway showing two generations of use down to bare rock and with a big three-acre sheep bed ground near its center. The ridge shows very heavy use. If only five bands of sheep a year had pastured out that wide driveway over the top of the ridge during fifty years, it represented five hundred thousand sheep. Evidence seems to bear out more like ten bands, doubling it to one million sheep! They wore the soil right down to flinty hard rock, which has represented quite a challenge to all who travel over the route.[28]

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[27] Placer County Archives, Placer County Place Names, Page 144.
[28] Letter from Wendell Robie to Reid Jackson, Tahoe National Forest Acting Supervisor, dated May 3, 1972.

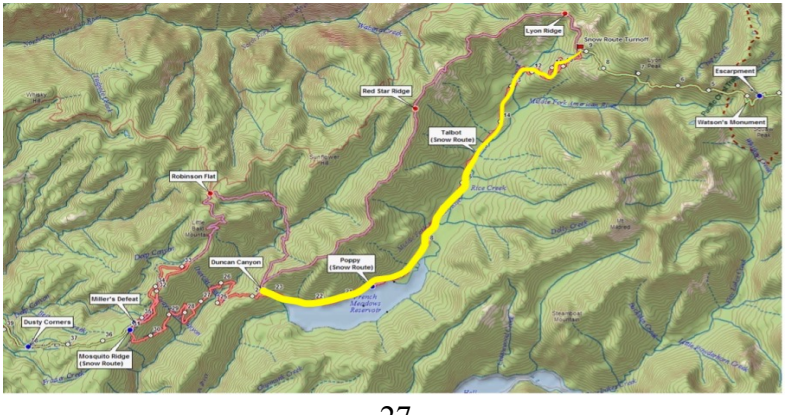
Poppy/McGuire Trail [Used in snow year]

Next place: n/a
Miles to Auburn: n/a



The Poppy Trail, also referred to as the McGuire Trail, is a gentle 4-mile-long trail at an elevation of 5,290 feet. The trail winds through timber and follows the north shore of French Meadows Reservoir, climbing moderately to the top of Red Star Ridge. The plethora of California poppies made the trail name obvious. The origin of the name, “McGuire”, is unknown.

This short trail, offering scenic views of the French Meadows area, is used during “snow years” of States when the snowpack is too deep to traverse across the higher Foresthill Divide. It is below Red Star Ridge to the east, along the west side of French Meadows reservoir.



French Meadows [Used in snow year]

Next place: n/a
Miles to Auburn: n/a



This portion of the trail is used during a snow year at States.

Between 1850 and 1856, a group of Frenchmen following the Middle Fork of the Middle Fork of the American River, came upon a narrow gorge where the stream tumbled through a rocky canyon with high velocity. They found the country above opened out into a fair valley, half a mile wide and several miles in length. They camped and commenced mining. The valley was subsequently called Frenchmen's Meadows, later modified to French Meadows. Considerable prospecting was done here with negligible results. The meadows were used for grazing sheep and cattle and is widely known for its trout fishing.

This was once the site of Native American trade events and today an annual congregation still occurs at this site. The dam and reservoir groundbreaking were in 1963. There was a cabin belonging to a resident who was not happy to be relocated. Upon completion, the French Meadows project was praised as the "strongest and boldest water development in the state." Its gross water storage is 134,993 acre-feet with a surface area of 1,253 acres.[29]

[29] Christina Richter, "A Glimpse into Placer County Water Reservoir History," The Placer, March-April 2023, Page 4.

Duncan Canyon 24.4*

Next place: Robinsons Flat 30.3
Miles to Auburn: 75.8



James Wilson Marshall, the first discoverer of gold in California, said this area derived its name from Thomas Duncan who came to the country overland in 1848 from Missouri in the wagon train of Captain Winter. They entered California via the Emigrant Trail from Little American Valley, following down Foresthill Divide south of the North Fork.[30]

Duncan subsequently was hired to lead a party to the site of "good diggings." He led them to the canyon that bears his name but was placed under arrest by the party when no gold was found. While under guard, some small quantities of gold were discovered, and he was released and "fled" from the area which never became noted for major gold production.[31]

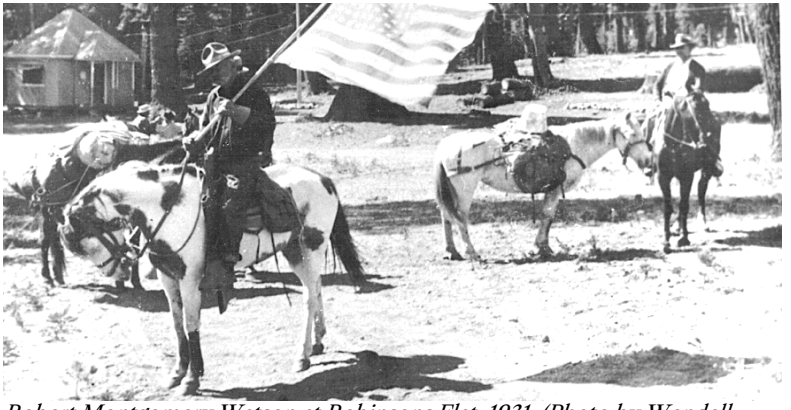
Today, it's clear water, tangled mat of undergrowth and noble forest trees would have reminded old-timers of the primitive days more than any other stream or creek of like magnitude in the mountains. In 2001, the Star Fire burned through much of Duncan Canyon. The recovery from the fire is still in process.

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[30] Placer County Archives, Placer County Place Names, Page 69; Erwin Gudde, California Place Names, Page 115; and, Thompson & West, History of Placer County, Oakland, California, 1882, Page 381
[31]Ibid.

Robinsons Flat 30.3*

Next place: Barney Cavanah Ridge 31
Miles to Auburn: 69.9



Robert Montgomery Watson at Robinsons Flat, 1931. (Photo by Wendell Robie, Hal V. Hall Collection)

Since 1852 this was the summer cow camp of Captain M.M. Robinson from the gold rush mining town of Wisconsin Hill.[32] The Robinsons played an important role in the development of the Foresthill Road, the ranch a popular stop for travelers.[33]

Originally named Robertson Flat (also Roberts Flat), the name was officially changed to Robinsons Flat on June 8, 1961, by the U.S. Geological Survey with credit to Wendell Robie. Robinsons Flat's grassy meadow has a pitcher pump near a large granite stone inscribed, "Crossroads of the Sierra."[34]

Robinsons Flat may have been first visited by emigrants in 1844 when six members left the Stephens-Townsend-Murphy Party to find an easier pass and quicker route while the others followed the directions of Chief Truckee over the Sierra crest.[35]

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[32] Domestic Names Committee Decision on Robinsons Flat (06027111), June 8, 1961
[33] Google Bard, April 2023
[34] Western States Trail Guide, Fifth Edition, July 2016, Page 10.
[35] Wendell Robie, "History Record Western States Trail Route Prior to the Gold Rush," unpublished and undated.

Duncan Peak [Pass by]

Next place: n/a
Miles to Auburn: n/a



Duncan Peak was named for Thomas Duncan, an early day miner. The region was first mined in the early 1850's.[36]

Runners pass by this place a mile to the west of Robinsons Flat. Atop a high cone-like mass of white granite is the Duncan Peak Lookout, which has vistas of California from the high crest of the Sierra in the east, to the Coast Range to the west, and from the far north of the Sacramento Valley to the San Joaquin Valley in the far south.[37] This is one of the last remaining lookouts in California. From this vantage point, one can look northeast and see Squaw Peak and southwest to see the Western States canyons. It's pretty darn awesome.

John Oliver stood as the lookout's sentinel for many years, living in the small quarters and monitoring the landscape for any signs of fire. John became a loyal and trusted friend of States. Raised in Placerville, John was a commercial pilot and later an air traffic controller.

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[36] Placer County Archives, Placer County Place Names, Page 69; Erwin Gudde, California Place Names, Page 115; and, Erwin Gudde, California Gold Camps, 1975, Page 103.
[37] Western States Trail Guide, Fifth Edition, July 2016, Page 11.

Little Bald Mountain [Pass by]

Next place: n/a
Miles to Auburn: n/a



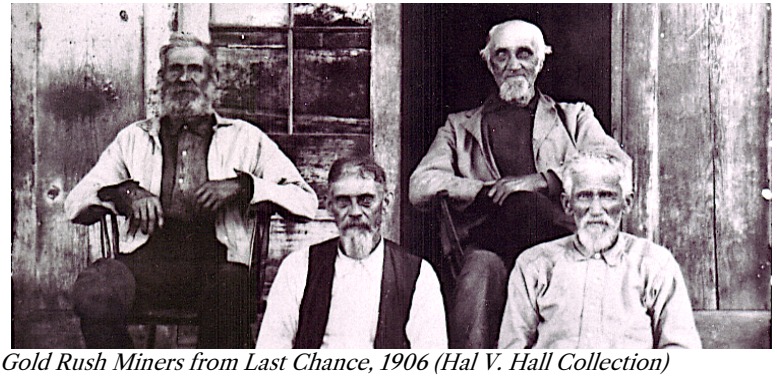
Although no longer in use by States, in the aftermath of the Star Fire in 2001, the Little Bald Mountain Trail was used to keep the race distance at 100.2 miles. The trail from Red Star Ridge through Duncan was closed for those years so the run travelled from the Red Star Ridge aid station to Robinsons Flat on the Soda Springs Road.

Exiting Robinsons Flat, runners headed down into Little Robinson Valley and then turned onto the Little Bald Mountain trail. Once back near the Duncan Peak Lookout, runners headed down the road from the Lookout and back to Forest Road 43 where they turned left and headed down trail on FR 43 to Cavanaugh Ridge.

In 2006, after the removal of the hazard trees, the trail from Red Star Ridge to Robinsons Flat was re-opened and States decided to eliminate the trail down Cavanaugh Ridge. Instead, the Little Bald Mountain trail down to Miller's Defeat and then down to Dusty Corners was used.

Barney Cavanah (Cavanaugh) Ridge 31 [Pass by]

Next place: Miller's Defeat 34.4
Miles to Auburn: 69.2



Gold Rush Miners from Last Chance, 1906 (Hal V. Hall Collection)

The gold miners pictured above, left to right: Barney Cavanah (or Cavanaugh) after whom Cavanaugh Ridge was named, William Anderson, John P. Ray, and Andy Hauk, who came to California soon after the discovery of gold and helped place the tombstone of Ethan Allen Grosh in the Last Chance Cemetery.[38] Besides being a miner at Last Chance, Barney Cavanah was one of the discoverers of the "Big Bonanza" in Alaska's Klondike.[39] Barney Cavanah impacted the historical development of the Foresthill Divide but moved on as the excitement of the Gold Rush faded during the closing years of the 1850's.[40]

No longer in use, a mile from Robinsons Flat the Western States Trail passes the former event route that went down Cavanaugh Ridge to the old Deep Canyon 1 and 2 aid stations. This route was once an old wagon road that led to a trail past Grizzly Mine at Little Grizzly Creek and up to Last Chance.

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[38] The American River – Insider's Guide to Recreation, Ecology and Cultural History of the North, Middle and South Forks, Updated Third Edition, Protect American River Canyons, 2016. Page 368.
[39] The Western States Trail – History and Description, Western States Trail Ride, Inc., undated and unpublished; and, Wendell Robie, The Lake Tahoe - - Auburn Trail Ride, Trail History and Description, Published by Tom Cromwell, 1955, Page 3.
[40] Ibid, Page 18.

Miller's Defeat 34.4*

Next place: Dusty Corners 38
Miles to Auburn: 65.8



Photo: Chad Bruce

According to local legend, two miners, Sperry and Brown, who averaged $6.00 to $8.00 a day in wages for a year, met a third miner named Miller, who tried to obtain a larger claim than entitled. Claims were limited to the length of a pickaxe handle (3 feet) held to each side of one's body which would be about 8 feet. When it came time for Miller to measure off his claim, he substituted a young pine sapling for his regular pickaxe handle. When the other miners refused to accept this substitution, Miller was *defeated*, hence the name.

This account was told by John Robinson, president of the Placer County Historical Society in 1961.[41] In another account, Gene Markley told the story that an Irish rich placer digging was taken over by a group of Italians in hand-to-hand fighting.[42]

In 1854, Miller's Defeat was a right-of-way claim for the construction of a ditch to the Cosmopolite mining district.[43]

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[41] R.J. Steele, James P. Bull, and F.I. Houston, Directory of the County of Placer for the Year 1861, The Publishers, Appendix, Page 200.
[42] Norm McLeod, Nuggets from the Past, Personal Notes from Gene Markley's Gold Camp Class, unpublished and undated.
[43] Erwin Gudde, California Gold Camps, 1975, Page 216.

Deep Canyon 2/Dusty Corners 38*

Next place: Pucker Point 40
Miles to Auburn: 62.2



The origin of the name "Dusty Corners" is a mix of myth and fact. Purportedly, the name came from the early days of logging where trucks would grind up the dirt into fine particles with their heavy loads at this key wilderness intersection of logging roads. Due to the conditions, clouds of dust were kicked up by any passerby on foot or horse. The location is also at the crossroads of original mining roads.

Deep Canyon was the location of several mines located on the upstream section of the channel worked in the Glenn Mine between Duncan Canyon and Deep Canyon. The ground produced coarse gold similar to Glenn Mine.[44] The old mining camp of Miller's Defeat was situated on or near Deep Canyon which was occasionally referred to as Miller's Defeat Canyon.[45]

The Dusty Corner Aid Station, led by the White family for decades, has provided runners a welcome but brief respite before they head off into the famous hot and rugged canyons of States.

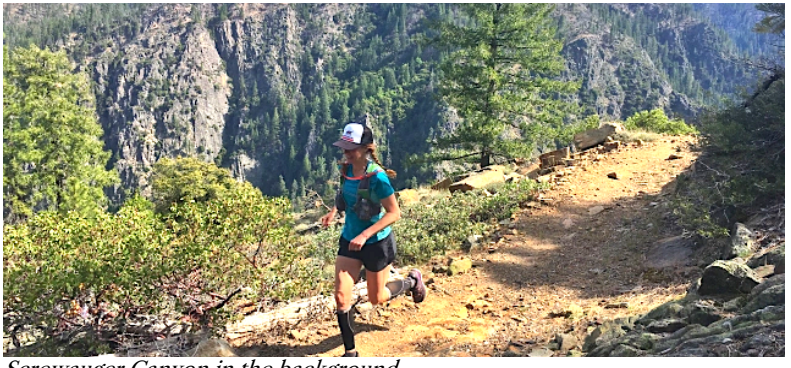
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[44] California Journal of Mines and Geology, Vol. 32, Jan. 1936

[45] Placer County Place Names, Page 64, Placer County Directory, 1861, Page 200

Pucker Point 40

Next place: Last Chance 43.3
Miles to Auburn: 60.2



Screwauger Canyon in the background

This trail had been created for the Tevis Cup 100 Mile One Day Ride. While reviewing the route, trail veteran Walt Tibbets, describing to Charles V. Gabri where the trail reaches the rim of the canyon and then turns west to travel along the rim, said, "This spot will make a rider pucker". Charles thought that Pucker Point was an apt name for that spot so from that day on it's been known as the Pucker Point Trail.

States began using this route when searching for more mileage because Duncan Canyon was not usable at the time. It replaced the 3+ mile downhill gravel road from Dusty Corners to Last Chance and created a much nicer trail. When Duncan Canyon was used again in 2006, the trail designers found other places to shorten the trail so Pucker Point could remain part of States.

Pucker Point Trail passes by the abandoned town of Star Town as well as several mines including Deep Canyon, Grizzly, Golden Riffle, Root Hog, Sharp Stick, Little Hope, and Eldorado. These all were established when Last Chance was a bustling location on the east end of the Michigan Bluff to Last Chance Trail. They were part of the Last Chance Mining District which was established in the early 1850's. Once the mines were established it was said, "the mines were perched on the rim of the canyon like sparrow nests".

Last Chance to Michigan Bluff

A brief interlude to convey the historical significance of this stretch of trail between Last Chance and Michigan Bluff



Last Chance circa 1906 (Hal V. Hall Collection)

Over the centuries, this segment of the forest has provided sustenance, spiritual renewal, wealth, happiness, and tragedy for mankind. For thousands of years, Native Americans utilized the trail which strafes two major canyons as a seasonal migratory and hunting route. Later, gold miners worked the land attempting to fulfill their dreams of prosperity. Today, the trail is used to commune with nature, lift spirits and remind us how fortunate we are to have such an abundance of riches open, free, and available to all.

In the National Recreation Trails application by the California Department of Parks and Recreation on March 28, 1975, for the designation of the Western States Pioneer Express Trail, the following was described:

"For the overriding theme of the Western States/Pioneer Express Trail (capital to capital) to become reality, a highly desirable link from Olympic Valley to Carson City, the capital of Nevada, will be sought in a future application. This section of the Western States Trail would link Sacramento and Carson City by the one remaining trail route east to west left largely unspoiled by modern pressures to demonstrate a pioneer experience for out-of-doors people today. With this link, the

trail would complete an important mission of tying together, dome-to-dome, the State Capitals of California and Nevada."



Michigan Bluff in the 1860s, Phoenix Hotel on the right (foresthillhistory.org)

The construction of the trail between the mining camps of Last Chance and Michigan Bluff presumably was built for the primary benefit of the miners searching for claims. This doesn't explain the difficulty, or the amount of labor needed for the construction of trails like the Last Chance and Michigan Bluff Trail. Most likely the trails were constructed after the mines were started and constructed by laborers paid for by the mine owners to get supplies in and the ore out. The fact that the trail was a toll trail indicates that it was paid for and a profit was expected back on the investment. The route was built in the early 1850's and later became a maintained toll-trail, which was one of the few toll-trails in the state. The toll price for walking the trail was 25 cents with the proceeds used to improve and maintain the trail through the canyons.[46]

Thanks to the cooperative efforts of the U.S. Forest Service, the Western States Trail and Run Foundations, and the U.S. Department of the Interior, the National Parks Service listed the Last Chance to Michigan Bluff section of the Western States Trail on the National Register of Historic Places on June 25, 1992.[47]

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[46] National Register of Historic Places, Michigan Bluff/Last Chance Trail, Section 8, Pages 1,5,10,12, and 15, June 29, 1992.
[47] Western States Trail Guide, Fifth Edition, July 2016, Page 14.

Last Chance 43.3*

Next place: Pacific Slab Mine 44.8
Miles to Auburn: 56.9



1860 Jensen Hotel - Mrs. Jensen far right (Hal V. Hall Collection)

The story goes of how Last Chance got its name is that once, when a prospectors' provisions were exhausted, he turned to one of his mining companions and said, "This is our last chance to make a grubstake." He then went into the forest, and returned with a large buck and a discovery, having stumbled upon gold as well.[48] The Placer County Directory attributes the shooting of a bird to the discovery of gold in that same area. Discovered in 1850, made a permanent settlement in 1852, Last Chance was later called Caroline Diggings.[49]

In 1863, William Brewer said from Last Chance through the next three canyons there was a toll trail; "very narrow ...was fearful, yet we had to pay $1.50 for the privilege of passing it".[50]

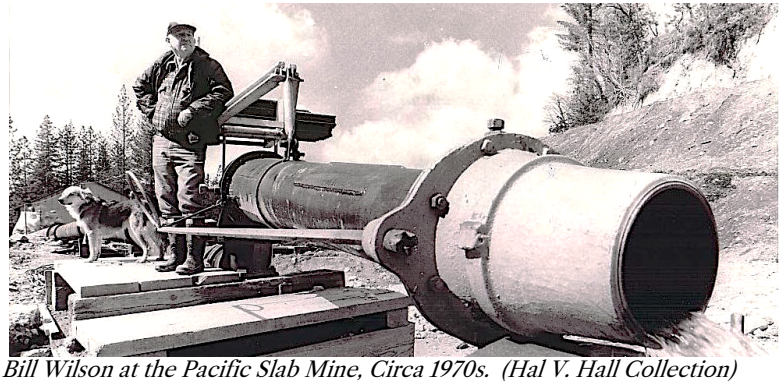
As previously stated, the National Park Service listed the Last Chance to Michigan Bluff section of the Western States Trail to the National Register of Historic Places on June 25, 1992. [51]

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[48] Erwin Gudde, California Gold Camps, 1975, Page 192.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Francis Farquhar, Up and Down California in 1860-1864-The Journal of William H. Brewer, Book 4, Chapter 5, 1863.
[51] Western States Trail Guide, Fifth Edition, July 2016, Page 14.

Pacific Slab Mine 44.8

Next place: Volunteer Bridge 45.5
Miles to Auburn: 55.4



Bill Wilson at the Pacific Slab Mine, Circa 1970s. (Hal V. Hall Collection)

One mile away from Last Chance, the trail leads in a southwest direction to the Pacific Slab Mine which remained active longer than any other hydraulic mining operation in California. The decline of mining in and around Last Chance was hastened by the Sawyer Decision of 1883 which severely curtailed hydraulic mining until 1951 when William "Bill" Wilson secured permission by the California Debris Commission to resume hydraulicking. Wilson began operations in 1955 and continued until his death in the 1970's.[52] The Pacific Slab Mine was the last operating hydraulic mine on the North American continent when halted in 1978.[53]

From here the trail drops down some 2,000 feet, on a very narrow, steep path that gold miners constructed with picks, shovels, and black powder. Some of the hard labor came from the Chinese laborers who also worked in dark mine shafts and tunnels when they weren't out in the hot sun on the trail.

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[52] Placer County Archives, Placer County Place Names, (Interview of Mr. Wilson on July 7, 1971), Page 108.
[53] National Register of Historic Places, Michigan Bluff/Last Chance Trail, Appendix 7, Page 10.

Volunteer Bridge 45.5

Next place: Swinging Bridge: 46.1
Miles to Auburn: 54.7



Volunteer Bridge during rebuilding, (Photo: Joe McCladdie)

Three quarters of the way down the canyon, runners cross a wooden bridge that was built over the drainage from the large sluice at the Pacific Slab Mine. After the 2013 American Fire, a collection of volunteers, coordinated by Western States Endurance Run Foundation trustee Mark Falcone and Tevis Cup leader Steve Hallmark, hauled all the bridge parts and materials which had been previously constructed and assembled at Bill Rose's homestead nearby. They then took it apart and carried it down the steep and narrow trail from Last Chance, installing the bridge in a day.

This herculean effort solidified the spirit of trail running and the local community: collaboration, respect, and tenacity.

The main outflow from the "placer bowl" of the mine is cut into solid bedrock and flows out through a tunnel to the sluices which are cut into the surrounding slopes. The sluices are at the very edge of the canyon and the outfall from the mine from the two-foot diameter supply pipe to the hydraulic monitor was discharged right over the edge of the cliff.[54]

[54] National Register of Historic Places, Michigan Bluff/Last Chance Trail, Appendix 7, Page 10.

Swinging Bridge 46.1

Next place: The Grotto 46.2
Miles to Auburn: 54.1



In December of 1861, the citizens of Last Chance built a new and permanent bridge across the river between this place and Deadwood, replacing the old bridge carried away by a flood.[55]

This bridge was named the "Swinging Bridge" by early Tevis Cup 100 Mile Ride competitors because the bridge sways when crossing with a horse.

This 110-foot suspension bridge spanning the river was first thought to date back as far as 1913. It was typical of the type of construction used by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) in the early days of managing public lands. While there have been improvements made to the bridge over the years, such actions did not change its overall appearance.[56]

The 2013 American Fire swept through Devil's Basin and severely damaged the bridge, causing its temporary closure. The iconic place was completely restored in a joint effort with USFS employees and States trail volunteers. Miraculously, the bridge was spared damage during the 2022 Mosquito Fire.

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[55] Placer Herald, December 21, 1861, Page 2.
[56] National Register of Historic Places, Michigan Bluff/Last Chance Trail, Appendix 7, Page 8.

The Grotto 46.2

Next place: Devil's Basin 47.4
Miles to Auburn: 54



Just after crossing Swinging Bridge there is a steady flow of cool water gushing over the rocks into a small pool which crosses the trail. This garden-cave setting conjures up a grotto, the name that Gordy Ainsleigh gave it in 1974 after he set his entire, over-heated body down into the cool pool of refreshing water.

Runners don't hesitate to do as Gordy did so many years ago and immerse themselves completely into this pool of nature's finest refreshment. There's no regret for the few minutes it takes since the rejuvenation will help power runners up the daunting climb ahead to Devil's Thumb.

In 2013, the American Fire created a major trail restoration issue at the Grotto with a land and mud slide washing away a huge chunk of the trail, leaving a 30-foot deep, 12-foot-wide gaping hole. Through a joint effort with USFS employees and States trail volunteers, the trail tread was completely rebuilt.

Devil's Basin 47.4

Next place: Devil's Thumb 47.8
Miles to Auburn: 52.8



Devil's Basin (ultrakrautrunning.com)

Devil's Basin is on one side of this steep canyon and the Last Chance Mining District on the other. Between them flows the North Fork of the Middle Fork of the American River which has cut its way down over 1,600 feet. The 1868 Doolittle map shows a 'Devil's Throne' and 'Hell's Delight' on the Middle Fork of the American River[57], accentuating the fact that the heat of this canyon has been omnipresent for centuries and is the bane of those who pass.

Mining got its start here in 1852 when gold was first found on the North Fork of the Middle Fork. In 1857, a steam-driven mill with two stamps and one arrastre was built.[58] The Devil's Basin Mine near Devil's Thumb at the top of Deadwood Ridge was a large hydraulic mining operation.[59]

This usually hot and strenuous climb out of the canyon has 37 graded switchbacks until the aid station situated at the top of the ridge is reached in just under two miles.[60]

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[57] Erwin Gudde, California Gold Camps, 1975, Page 95.
[58] Google Bard, April 2023
[59] National Register of Historic Places, Michigan Bluff/Last Chance Trail, Appendix 8, Page 5.
[60] Western States Trail Guide, Fifth Edition, July 2016, Page 14.

Devil's Thumb 47.8*

Next place: Deadwood Ridge 47.9
Miles to Auburn: 52.4



This rock outcropping, rising tall from the hillside, resembles a human thumb. Since it is in the vicinity of Devil's Basin and Hell's Delight, it is believed that Devil's Thumb got its name from Captain W.G. Adams who named the other sites. Devil's Throne, also named by Adams, may be the same granite column usually referred to as Devil's Thumb.[61] We think Adams got it right.

Located near the top of the canyon, this landmark is aptly named for the hellish conditions that once existed here. The 'thumb' is a large volcanic rock outcropping standing nearly 80 feet in height. Surrounding the Thumb is evidence of the Devil's Basin hydraulic Sourdough and Basin mining pits that eroded the canyon side in the seemingly never-ending search for gold. Once in view of Devil's Thumb, runners have nearly completed the long 2,000-foot ascent from the deep canyon below.[62]

When runners see the Thumb off to the left while ascending, they take solace in knowing their struggles are almost over as the famous Devil's Thumb Aid Station, with frozen popsicles, awaits atop the climb.

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[61] Placer County Archives, Placer County Place Names, Page 66.
[62] Western States Trail Guide, Fifth Edition, July 2016, Page 15.

Deadwood Ridge 47.9

Next place: The Pump 48
Miles to Auburn: 52.3



In the early 2000's, a stretch on Deadwood Ridge known for its lumber operation, was due to be worked by USFS contractors. Before it was going to be logged, the USFS allowed representatives of States to decide which trees stayed and which trees would be cut down to keep a forested esthetic in the stretch between Devil's Thumb to Deadwood.

The USFS allowed a 50-foot swath on both sides of the trail to remain forested. Rangers Richard Johnson, Nolan Smith and Ed Moore were present along with Tim Twietmeyer, his father and Shannon Weil representing States. Jointly, they made the decisions as to how this place would appear in the future.

The photo above was taken in 2023 after the devastating 2022 Mosquito Fire. Few trees remain in this beloved section of the course. But the memories persist as does the forest which will someday return to its magnificent status and beauty.

The Pump 48

Next place: Deadwood 48.2
Miles to Auburn: 52.2



The trail follows the divide southwest toward the former town of Deadwood. There is potable drinking water available from a hand-pump located at the junction of the Western States Trail and Deadwood Road, approximately midway between Devil's Thumb and the former town of Deadwood.[63]

The pump was installed by the Western States Trail Foundation in the 1990's and has become an iconic fixture for locals and visiting runners who train on the course in preparation for their States race. The Pump provides a reliable source of fresh water for runners training between Foresthill and Swinging Bridge as well as a place to immerse one's head and cap for a refreshing cooldown. The pump survived the 2022 Mosquito Fire despite being at the center of the most extreme heat.

As runners pass by the Pump on States race day, they don't hesitate to stop, pump and dunk. Not only a tradition, but runners appreciate the restorative cooling benefits before rolling down to El Dorado Creek.

[63] Western States Trail Guide, Fifth Edition, July 2016, Page 15.

Deadwood 48.2

Next place: Trail 6 48.3
Miles to Auburn: 52



Miners at the Deadwood Hotel, 1910. (Placer County Museum Collection)

"Deadwood" is a California provincialism signifying a sure thing.[64] In 1852, miners found riches here, exclaiming, "Though unsuccessful hitherto, we have now got the "Deadwood." In its heyday, Deadwood had 600 inhabitants but by 1855 the glory had passed.[65] Nothing remains except for overgrown mining tailings and shallow indentions where buildings once stood. The old cemetery area was used as a forestry service helicopter pad during the 1960 Volcano Fire.[66]

Deadwood could only be reached by foot along precipitous trails constructed in the early 1850's.[67] Last Chance to Michigan Bluff was once a toll trail, the toll collected by a Scotsman named Duncan Ferguson, owner of the hotel and bar at Deadwood called the Halfway House.[68] At one time Sam Colt, the inventor and gun manufacturer of the Colt Revolver, lived and prospected for gold here.[69] Alas, the last cemetery remains were burned by the 2022 Mosquito Fire.

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[64] Erwin Gudde, California Gold Camps, 1975, Page 92.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Placer County Archives, Placer County Place Names, Page 64.
[67] National Register of Historic Places, Michigan Bluff/Last Chance Trail, Appendix 8, Page 2.
[68] Western States Trail Guide, Fifth Edition, July 2016, Pages 13-14.
[69] Placer County Archives, Placer County Place Names, Page 64.

Trail 6 48.3

Next place: Kaput Springs 50
Miles to Auburn: 51.9



Just beyond the Deadwood Cemetery, the trail crosses a constructed motorcycle trail known as Trail 6 which cuts down into the canyon toward the north. To the south, the motorcycle trail follows a historic mining ditch that winds around the ridge toward the east below the townsite of Deadwood. The undisturbed mining ditch continues to the north side.[70]

Trail 6 is part of a "green sticker" network of trails utilized primarily by dirt bike/moto and Off-Highway Motor Vehicles (OHV). Vehicles having green or red stickers are OHVs. The trails have numerical names; this one is "6".

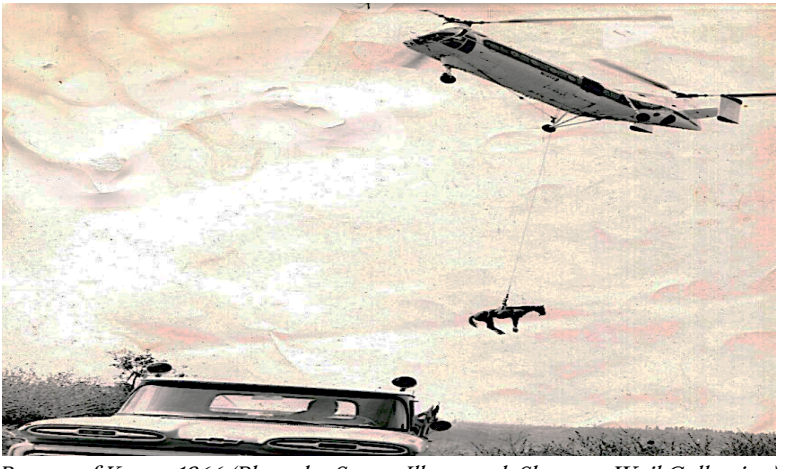
Further down the Western States Trail after a couple switchbacks is the intersection with a trail that leads into the deep rock gorge where the former Bogus Thunder mining camp lies. On this remote stretch of wild river, miners were forever mistaking the sound of the river vibrating along the canyon walls, for the thunder of an approaching Sierra storm.[71]

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[70] National Register of Historic Places, Michigan Bluff/Last Chance Trail, Appendix 7, Page 6.
[71] Gene L. Markley, Bogus Thunder Mountains, Self-published, 1976. Pages 37-38.

Kaput Springs (aka The Pipe or Holiday Springs) 50

Next place: Rainbow Land Mine 52.5
Miles to Auburn: 50.2



Rescue of Kaput, 1966 (Photo by Sports Illustrated, Shannon Weil Collection)

Named after a horse named "Kaput" that fell into the canyon on the 1966 Tevis Cup Ride, Kaput Springs is located mid-way down the descent to El Dorado Creek. The steed was drinking from the spring when he was stung by bees, flipped over and fell down some 700 feet. Marnye Langer's book, *The Tevis Cup*, enhances the story by describing how the drag riders (sweeps), including Jack Veal, found the rider in good shape but the horse was stuck near the bottom of El Dorado Canyon. Because *Sports Illustrated* was covering the race, the race organizer, Wendell Robie, called for a helicopter to rescue the horse. Kaput was rescued the next day.

This source of water was originally known as Holiday Springs. As you pass by this place where a pool of water surrounded by stones remains for the horses to refresh, runners know they are halfway home to the finish of States.

Rainbow Land Mine 52.5

Next place: Bake Oven Trail 52.8
Miles to Auburn: 47.7



The Rainbow Land Mine was a productive gold mine located near the bottom of El Dorado Canyon at an elevation of 1,919 feet. While the source of the name of the mine is unknown, it has been identified by the USFS as a historic site associated with mining.[72]

The only evidence of man's presence is the remains of the mining location: water ditches, collection ponds, remains of a cabin, and equipment.[73] The Rainbow Land Mine used hydraulic mining techniques that required water at pressure. There is evidence of this where the trail crosses a 6-inch steel water line that disappears into the hillside running north along the canyon wall.[74] On the northern most edge of the area is a dredger pond which is a depression along the edge of the river with rock piles all around.[75] Either an air shaft or collapsed tunnel has created a large depression next to the trail which connects with larger portions of the underground mining at the Rainbow Land Mine.[76]

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[72] National Register of Historic Places, Michigan Bluff/Last Chance Trail, Section 7, Page 9.
[73] Ibid, Page 6
[74] Ibid, Appendix 7, Page 3.
[75] Ibid, Appendix 7, Pages 3-4.
[76] Ibid, Appendix 7, Page 4

Bake Oven Trail 52.8

Next place: El Dorado Creek/Canyon 52.9
Miles to Auburn: 47.4



According to author and historian Gene Markley, the name given the mining site of 'Bake Oven' described the site well. With the heat of the August sun combined with being surrounded by the El Dorado Canyon walls spiraling 3,000 feet upward, it indeed is a bake oven.[77]

Upon visiting the site of Bake Oven, Markley discovered an ancient pair of wooden skis with leather bindings and thought of the man famous for his use of skis in the Mother Lode: John A. "Snowshoe" Thompson. Born in Norway in 1827, in 1856 Thompson began carrying the mail 90 miles between Placerville and Genoa, Nevada and continued for thirteen winters until 1869.[78]

Thompson carried what some believe was the first ore samples from the Comstock Lode in western Nevada to California to be assayed for value. His feats of skill and daring are legendary, so much so that a statue resides near the start of States that honors the memory and heroic efforts of this America West pioneer. Runners touch Thompson's foot for good luck before the start.

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[77] Gene L. Markley, Bogus Thunder Mountains, Self-published, 1976. Pages 4-5.
[78] Ibid. Pages 5-7.

El Dorado Creek/Canyon 52.9*

Next place: Poor Man's Creek 54.7
Miles to Auburn: 47.3



At the time of the exploration of South America, the Spanish term for 'gilded man', *el dorado*, was the designation given to a mythical Indian chief whose body was covered with gold dust. With the discovery of gold in California, it was simply used as a name for the gold region and it spread throughout the world.[79] As the name implies, it is a place of fabulous wealth or an opportunity to obtain it. During the Gold Rush, many adventurers believed that California would be their El Dorado.

Switchbacks line the trail as it climbs out to a summit at the famous old mining camp with Michigan Bluff 2,000 feet above the river. The trail is cut into the steep sides of the canyon and is narrow, bounded on one side by the steep ascent, like a wall, and on the other by the precipitous descent to the river below. On a hot summer's day, the heat generated from the bare rock facings coupled with the lack of shade trees can cause the temperature to rise an additional 10 to 20 degrees.[80] Runners are welcomed at canyon's bottom by the El Dorado Aid Station volunteers who douse them with cool ice, drinks, and courage to climb to Michigan Bluff.

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[79] Erwin Gudde, California Gold Camps, 1975, Page 107; and Erwin Gudde, California Place Names, 1947, Page 120.
[80] Western States Trail Guide, Fifth Edition, July 2016, Page 18.

Poor Man's Creek 54.7

Next place: Michigan Bluff 55.7
Miles to Auburn: 45.5



Located about 10-15 minutes before reaching Michigan Bluff, Poor Man's Creek was named because the diggings were poor and at times scared away new prospectors because of unprofitable results.[81]

One of the disillusioned prospectors was Leland Stanford. He came into town (Michigan City) in 1853 to mine in Poor Man's Canyon.[82] His efforts in Placer County's gold mining were not notable, but it was a start for one of California's "big money men".[83] He instead began his successful career by becoming a local merchant and later the President of the Central Pacific Railroad Company. He was later the Governor of the State of California, a United States Senator, and the founder of Stanford University.

Upon reaching Poor Man's Creek, you'll know the bountiful Michigan Bluff Aid Station awaits you just above.

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[81] Erwin Gudde, California Place Names, 1947, Page 298.
[82] Bill G. Wilson, Gold & Schemes... Unfulfilled Dreams – Stories of Guile, Greed & Great Promises, Self-published, Sponsored by the Placer County Historical Foundation, 2002, Page 50.
[83] Auburn Sentinel, "Noted Figures of Michigan Bluff," Bill Wilson, June 12, 1992, Page 8.

Michigan Bluff 55.7*

Next place: Bird's/Byrd's Valley 57
Miles to Auburn: 44.5



Main Street, Michigan Bluff circa 1925 (Placer County Museum)

Dr. William Wallace Wixom, a University of Michigan graduate, led a party of prospectors across the plains and mountains to California in the spring of 1850. They camped near the base of the Sugar Loaf, later called Michigan City.[84] It had six houses and thirty inhabitants, one of which was notable; Leland Stanford, who was a merchant there from 1853 to 1855.

Michigan City was precariously situated on a steep slope overlooking the Middle Fork of the American River. The hill was honeycombed with tunnels and hydraulic operations. Frequent cave-ins coupled with a devastating fire in July 1857 made the whole town unsafe and led the entire community to pack up and relocate in a hurry to the to the top of the hills in 1858. Once the town was declared safe, it was renamed Michigan Bluff in 1859.[85]

Michigan Bluff was the center of one of the state's richest hydraulic mining operations. By 1880, many of the individual claims had been bought up by the Big Gun Mining Company.[86]

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[84] The Pony Express, Sonora, California, date unknown.
[85] Western States Trail Guide, Fifth Edition, July 2016, Page 17.
[86] Placer County Archives, Placer County Place Names, Page 117.

Bird's/Byrd's Valley 57

Next place: Volcano Canyon Turn 57.8
Miles to Auburn: 43.2



Native American Grinding Stones at Birds Valley (Hal V. Hall Collection)

The trail from Michigan Bluff to Foresthill angles off through Byrd's Valley along the dirt-packed Gorman Ranch Road.

At a little valley about one mile southwest of Michigan Bluff, a packer named Bird or Byrd built a log cabin to store the supplies he brought weekly by pack mules from Foresthill. The place was soon known as "Bird's Store", a popular trading post for miners at Stony Bar and Rester's Bar on the Middle Fork of the American River.[87] The diggings were shallow with large stones that had to be removed by the miners to sink a hole to the bedrock.

Hydraulic mining began here in 1853 and the gold output averaged $100,000 per month ($7.5 million in today's dollars). The gravels mined were extremely rich, the gold yield having been $5 million ($375 million today).[88]

Scott Jurek, States record holder for the most male wins with six, buried his beloved dog, Tonto, here along the trail in 2003.

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[87] Placer County Archives, Placer County Place Names, Pages 42-43; and Directory of the County of Placer for the Year 1861.
[88] Google Bard, April 2023.

Volcano Canyon Turn 57.8

Next place: Paragon Mine 60
Miles to Auburn: 42.4



Volcano Canyon (Hal V. Hall Collection)

Much like the other canyons, Volcano Canyon, named after the nearby town, Volcano (later changed to "Bath"), is like a great furrow in a vast slope or plateau with the added beauty of tall green pines and firs. Today, the century and a half-old trail through the canyon is long, tedious, narrow and rocky. It descends into Volcano Canyon some eight-hundred-feet in two miles to the boulder-filled crossing of Volcano Creek. An ascent of about one-and-a-half miles leads to the west boundary of the Tahoe National Forest, the Paragon Mine, and the ghost location of the old mining camp of Bath.[89]

Except for the main street through Michigan Bluff, the paved road near the summit of Volcano Canyon is the first on non-trail surface of the run since Olympic Valley. It is at this point that the trail breaks at the junction of Bath Road and the Foresthill-Baker Ranch Road before heading to the wide main street of Foresthill.[90]

The 2022 Mosquito Fire turned this section of the trail into a moonscape, leaving only dirt and ashen tree relics behind.

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[89] Western States Trail Guide, Fifth Edition, July 2016, Page 19.
[90] Ibid.

Paragon Mine 60

Next place: Bath Road 60.6
Miles to Auburn: 40.2



Hydraulic mining at the Placer mine (Hal V. Hall Collection)

A Paragon in name, it is also a paragon of mines, admitting of no superior.[91] The big gold producers on the Foresthill Divide in 1895 included the Paragon Mine.

The Paragon claim had a frontage of 250 feet, extended a mile and a half through the hill with a width of 400 ft. It was first worked in 1852 and for ten years only by sluicing. Because of its cemented character, the gravel had to be washed seven times during which a total yield of $10 a ton was reported. Mining was done through an adit (from Latin *aditus*),[92]which is an entrance to an underground mine which is horizontal or nearly horizontal,[93] by which the mine can be entered, drained of water,[94] ventilated and minerals extracted. Finally, a 'frontage' of 1600 ft. (length along the channel) was worked in this way.

In 1864, a stamp mill was erected.

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[91] Thompson & West, History of Placer County, Oakland, California, 1882, Page 230.
[92] Ripley, George; Dana, Charles A., eds. (1879).
[93] Paul W. Thrush, 1968, *A Dictionary of Mining, Mineral, and Related Terms*, US Bureau of Mines, p.12.
[94] R. W. Raymond, 1881, *Glossary of Mining and Metallurgical Terms*, American Institute of Mining Engineers, p.3.

Bath Road 60.6

Next place: Foresthill 62
Miles to Auburn: 39.6



School at Bath in the early 1900s (Hal V. Hall Collection)

In 1850, the town site of Bath was originally named Volcano by the miners. Since another town of the same name was located on the opposite side of the Middle Fork of the American River, the name was changed to Sarahsville, in honor of the wife of a man called "Blaze." In January 1858, the citizens of Sarahsville wanted to build a post office. A town meeting was called, and the name of the place changed from Sarahsville to Bath.[95]

Bath was an important gold mining town with a 20-stamp mill built at the nearby Paragon Mine in 1864. By 1868, the total yield was estimated at $2.5 million dollars. By 1870 the town inhabitants had dwindled to 100 but the post office remained active until 1899.[96] With the rapid growth of nearby Foresthill, Bath's population dwindled and it returned to being a quiet mountain hamlet.

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[95] Thompson & West, History of Placer County, Oakland, California, 1882, Page 230.
[96] Erwin Gudde, California Gold Camps, 1975, Page 28.

Foresthill 62*

Next place: Cal Street 62.3
Miles to Auburn: 38.2



Main Street, Foresthill circa 1860s (foresthillhistory.org)

Foresthill, settled in the fall of 1850, was first known as "Under the Hill". It had saloons and a well-stocked store with mining supplies. R.S. Johnson and the Brannon Brothers built the first trading post, the Forest House, from which the town derived its name,[97] because of the surrounding dense pine forest.[98]

Early prospectors included two brothers from Ireland, William and Henry Ford, who worked the mines for six years. William left for Michigan and one of his sons, Henry, created one of the world's leading automobile manufacturers – the Ford Motor Company.[99]

The discoverers of the rich channel mines under Foresthill had visions of a large city for their mountain empire, as indicated by a Main Street designed with the same width as Market Street in San Francisco, California.[100]

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[97] Placer Nugget, "Yankee Jim's," May Perry, October 1963, Pages 3-4; and, Auburn Journal, "Pioneer Mining Towns of Placer," July 20, 1916.
[98] Erwin Gudde, California Place Names, 1947, Page 134.
[99] Henry L. Walsh, Hallowed Were The Gold Dust Trails, January 1947, Page 143.
[100] Western States Trail Guide, Fifth Edition, July 2016, Page 19.

Cal Street 62.3

Next place: Dardanelles Creek 65.2
Miles to Auburn: 37.9



Before 1986, the course went down the paved Foresthill Road, through the streets of the Todd Valley neighborhood, and onto White Oak Flat aid station. The route dropped down to the river through Fiddler's Green to Francisco's and the river crossing below Ruck-A-Chucky Rapids. The original route was much faster and shorter than today's Cal Street trail and is surprisingly remote and not all downhill to the river.

1986 was the inaugural year for States using Cal Street, the year Chuck Jones won Western States. A quarter mile west of the hotel in Foresthill, runners take a left turn near an informational trail kiosk onto California Street and go one block south to a right turn on Lowe Street. Where the street ends, the trail begins a long descent in a southerly direction after crossing Mosquito Ridge Road along Baltimore Mine Ridge into Dardanelles Creek.[101]

On October 8, 1975, the portion of the Western State Trail from Foresthill to Auburn was designated by the Secretary of U.S. Department of the Interior as a National Recreational Trail.

[101] Western States Trail Guide, Fifth Edition, July 2016, Page 19.

Todd's Valley/White Oak Flat [Old course]

Next place: n/a
Miles to Auburn: n/a



Todd's Valley, Dr. Todd's Farm, 1861 (foresthillhistory.org)

Todd's Valley was initially used as part of the old States course before the introduction of the "Cal Loop" in 1986.

Named after Dr. F. Walton Todd who built a log structure to be used as a store and hotel at his ranch in June 1849, Todd was a cousin of Mary Todd Lincoln. Todd's Valley became a general stopping place for travelers going to the mines. By 1852, rich diggings were discovered near the doctor's house and the population of the valley grew rapidly. The name Todd's Valley was first used in 1856 when the Todd Valley Post Office was established and operated until 1901.

Due to the development of the area, the Tevis ride trail was re-routed in 1982 into the Middle Fork of the American River Canyon along a network of known historic trails, wagon roads, and water ditches. When leaving the former White Oak Flat aid station there was a sign as runners headed down McKeon-Ponderosa that said, "Only a marathon to go".

Drucilla Barner told a story of an old white haired blind man that lived in a tiny shack near White Oak Flat along the course. He used to play the fiddle all the time. The foundation of his shack was still present in the late 1970's.

Dardanelles Creek 65.2

Next place: Eagle Creek Hydro-electric Site (Cal-1) 65.7
Miles to Auburn: 35



The Baltimore, Oro (Flat), and Dardanelles mines are located after crossing Mosquito Ridge Road and heading down into the canyon. Mining commenced in 1853, during the Crimean War.[102] The name of the straits in Turkey was Dardanelles and the name was repeatedly used for mines and mining companies, as the Crimean War made the name Dardanelles well known.[103]

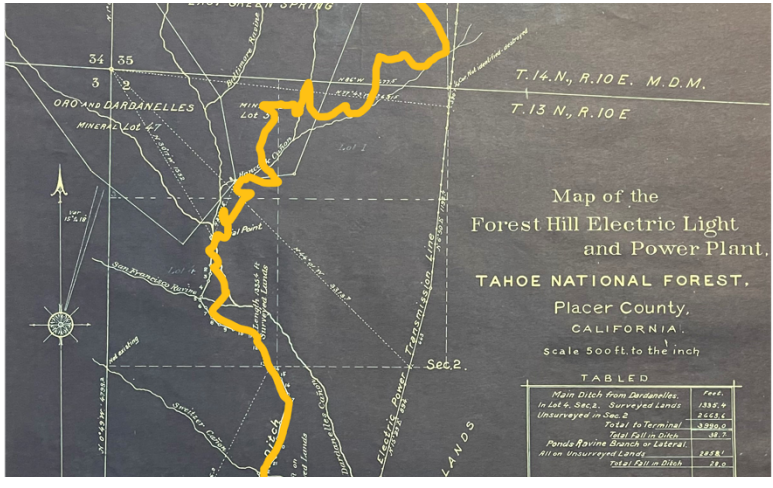
The trail follows chalky bleached terrain through a corridor of baking manzanita. Directly west, runners will see the orange and white cliffs near Todd Valley made bare by hydraulic mining. In approximately three miles, after a switchback trail down the steep canyon wall, the trail comes to Dardanelles Creek and the dam and ditch of the 1901 hydro-electric site of the Forest Hill Electric Light and Power Plant. The trail from Foresthill served as a supply route leading to a power plant site that was abandoned in 1932. The trail was rediscovered in 1980 by the Wendell & Inez Robie Foundation who linked the route to the Ruck-A-Chucky crossing.

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[102] Placer County Archives, Placer County Place Names, Pages 62 and 79.
[103] Erwin Gudde, California Place Names, 1949, Page 102.

Eagle Creek Hydro-electric/Dardanelles (Cal-1) 65.7*

Next place: Burl Tree 68
Miles to Auburn: 34.5



In the early 1900's, ditches were built between Dardanelles and Pond Creek with a constructed forebay and holding tank at the point of the ridge to capture water above the river before its 1,000-foot fall to a Pelton wheel and generator on the bank of the river.[104] The Forest Hill Electric Light and Power Plant was a hydroelectric plant generating power for local distribution.[105] Known as the Eagle Creek Hydroelectric Project, the remains of this plant were discovered and restored in 1981.[106] Today, modern-day hydroelectric power generation has replaced the technology of the 1910's. Near the forebay, is the location of the Dardanelles Aid Station. This site is listed as a cultural feature.[107]

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[104] Matt Langstaff oral history by Norman McLeod on November 7, 1986; transcribed by Patsy Wortell Larney on October 29, 1987..
[105] Frederick Hall Fowler, Hydroelectric Power Systems of California, Department of the Interior/U.S. Geological Survey, Page 73.
[106] Bob Suter, "A Small Company's Power Project", Sierra Heritage Magazine, undated.
[107] U.S. Department of the Interior, American River-National Recreation Area Feasibility Study, September 1990, Page 32.

Burl Tree 68

Next place: Elevator Shaft 69.9
Miles to Auburn: 32.2



Kevin Sawchuk had a tradition on race day which clearly worked for him as he was a rare 1000-mile silver buckle finisher of States (ten finishes under 24-hours). As Kevin ascended out of Devil's Basin he'd give the finger to Devil's Thumb, and then later, along the Cal Loop, he'd drop his drawers and moon a tree with a large burl in its trunk; thus, the story of the Burl Tree was born. Why this ritual? Kevin reports, "It just was something to make me smile and relieve the tension of the run. Besides, I always thought the Burl Tree looked like a big ol' bottom so I was paying homage."

Today the Burl Tree remains but, unfortunately, as seen in the photo above, was severely burned during the 2022 Mosquito Fire.

When runners pass by this distinct and proud oak, tip a cap, sprinkle a few drops of water at its roots and if there under a moonlit evening, give a shoutout to Sawchuk.

Just keep your shorts on - we don't want runners to trip and fall as it's a long way down the steep embankment to the river.

Elevator Shaft 69.9

Next place: Peachstone (Cal-2) 70.7
Miles to Auburn: 30.3



The Elevator Shaft was named by Mark "Marko" Falcone, a States and Tevis finisher, previous board member and extraordinary maintainer of the Western States Trail. Marko was an avid skier and often travelled from the Bay Area to ski at the Kirkwood resort. One of the steeper runs at Kirkwood was and still is named Elevator Shaft. Marko started to refer to this section of the trail as Elevator Shaft and the name stuck.

This section of the trail is approximately one mile east of the Peachstone (Cal-2) Aid Station. The trail turns south and descends a very steep incline before turning back northwest to continue the descent. This trail has very little soil and can be extremely slippery in wet conditions.

When the Robie Foundation constructed this portion of the trail, it was supposed to be a smooth connector of the upper and lower portion. Instead, the heavy equipment operator decided to plow down the hill at the top of the Elevator Shaft, thus creating the .3-mile steep descent on rugged trail that is a surprising quad "tenderizer" for all runners. Once at the bottom of the Shaft, there is less than five minutes of nice runnable terrain to the Cal-2 Aid Station.

Peachstone Gulch (Cal-2) 70.7*

Next place: Grotto #2 71.5
Miles to Auburn: 29.5



After the "Cal 2 – Dardanelles" sign the trail descends on a well-graded switchback trail to Peachstone Gulch (pictured Ann Trason with runners)

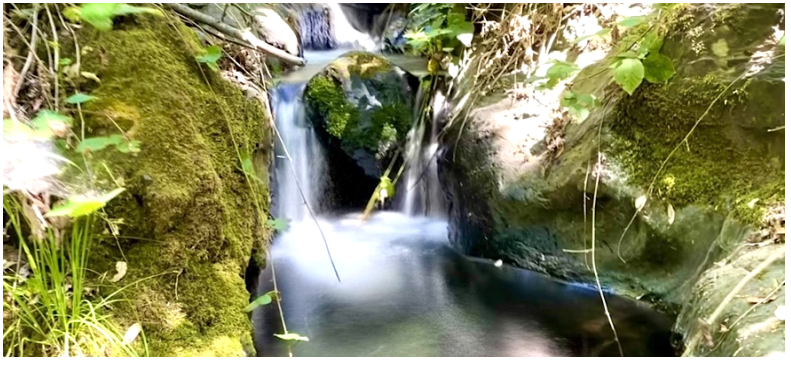
Peachstone Gulch is named after the peach-colored granite, a popular material for landscaping and building, that is found in the area. The existing trail from Peachstone Gulch to Ford's Bar was discovered by the Robie Foundation in the early 1980's as part of an effort to relocate the Western States Trail that had previously gone through Todd Valley from Foresthill on the way to Auburn.

Peachstone Gulch when it was a small community located about 30 miles northeast of Auburn and was home to several businesses including a grocery store, a gas station, and a restaurant. Today, Peachstone Gulch is a popular destination for hiking and fishing along the river. A dirt covered mine shaft is near the creek crossing.

The Cal-2 Aid Station is located before a switch-backed descent to Peachstone Gulch where an old miner's trail from the gold rush era takes runners to Ford's Bar. Cal-2 is a good place during States to re-fuel and get situated before the descent on nice, smooth singletrack trail.

Grotto #2 71.5

Next place: Six Minute Hill 72
Miles to Auburn: 28.7



This small drainage is affectionately known in the local greater-Auburn trail running community as 'The Grotto'. The Peachstone Gulch drainage flows down from Todd Valley to the Middle Fork of the American River and marks the end of the twisting downhill from the Peachstone (Cal-2) Aid Station to the river. Once here, the trail meanders along the river contour to Ruck-A-Chucky.

The Grotto is important to runners during the long 50-mile training run, Robinson-to-the-River. With little water available on the sixteen miles of Cal Loop, locals hid a water filter several yards above the trail in this drainage where runners would pause in the shade, pump water to their bottles to stay hydrated for the ten-plus hot miles to the end of the run. This spot alerts runners it's less than a mile before turning right onto the start of the steep climb up to the Ford's Bar Aid Station. Turning left at the intersection of the trail and the road will lead to the American River and a welcoming opportunity to cool off and rest before continuing along the trail.

A fire in 2016 known as the Trailhead Fire, damaged the trail from Ford's Bar toward Todd Valley and remnants of that burn continue to impact the trail between the Grotto and Ford's Bar.

Six-Minute Hill 72

Next place: Ford's Bar (Cal-3) 73
Miles to Auburn: 28.2



Less than a mile after passing the pleasant shade and cool temperatures at the Grotto, the single-track trail empties onto a dirt road. This is Ford's Bar Road and the beginning of what is known by the runners as Six-Minute Hill, taking six minutes to conquer for some, a bit more time for others. It's a grinding climb on a fire road that can be tough if runners are not ready for it.

The sixteen-mile California Street or "Cal Street" section of the trail was introduced in 1986 and the run was lengthened to a measured 100.2 miles. Compared to the previous route through Todd Valley and White Oak Flat, the Cal Street section was more exposed, more single-track, and longer than the previous route from Foresthill to the river crossing. That first year turned out to be a tough one as there was no aid station at Peachstone. Runners had a difficult segment of more than seven miles, primarily single-track, many in the heat of the day, and few runners had the chance to run that section before the race. This created a logjam of wrecked runners at Ford's Bar. It was said that they had runners laying in the back of pickup trucks like 'cord wood' as they evacuated the drops from the aid station. In 1987, the Peachstone aid station was added to the segment between Dardanelles and Ford's Bar to make that part of the trail more race and runner friendly.

Ford's Bar (Cal-3) 73*

Next place: Slug Gulch 75
Miles to Auburn: 27.2



Ford's Bar was named after a crossing on the Middle Fork of the American River that was originally used by Native Americans and later by miners. The crossing was named for John Ford, one of the first settlers to use the crossing, located where the river was narrow and shallow.[108]

In 1849 Ford had gathered "immense quantities" of gold here but became ill and had to be transported to Coloma where he was restored to health. A trading tent was located here but it, and the bar, were inaccessible during the rainy season. A sawmill was also in operation at Ford's Bar at that time. There were two stores at Ford's Bar, one on each side of the river.

Later, a bridge was built across the river at Ford's Bar to Otter Creek and the Roanoak Trail to Georgetown on the El Dorado County side. Try to imagine the town here with its own post office beside the river. A stagecoach used to make a run here using the Nugget Road (Ford's Bar Road). If you crossed the river, you could take the Roanoak Trail up to Georgetown from Ford's Bar.[109]

[108] Google Bard, April 2023
[109] Placer County Archives, Placer County Place Names, Page 78.

Slug Gulch 75

Next place: Sandy Bottom (Cal-4) 76
Miles to Auburn: 25.2



There are several possible origins to the name "Slug Gulch". The word slug was a favorite miners' term for coarse gold nuggets and was also used to name the large gold coins of the 1850's.[110] The name Slug Gulch is also a reference to slow-moving gold that was found in the area where the gold was difficult to extract and took a long time to find a profitable amount.

The name Slug Gulch may also have been derived from the slow-moving slugs that were found in the area. The slugs were a nuisance to the early settlers who would often have to clear them away from their homes and gardens.

From this site is the beginning of an abandoned wagon road built in the mid-1800's that stays close to the river, passing through moist streambeds lined with horsetails, giant ferns, and rock walls dotted with succulents.[111]

[110] Erwin Gudde, California Place Names, Page 366.
[111] Western States Trail Guide, Fifth Edition, July 2016, Page 24.

Sandy Bottom 76
Next place: Francisco's 77.5
Miles to Auburn: 24.2



This is a narrow trail along water ditches and miner paths built during the Gold Rush. It used to be a wagon road. The location had been the Cal-4 aid station for States but was abandoned several years ago.

The sandy river bottom and lack of rapids here are caused by sediment trapped by the damming effect of Ruck-A-Chucky rapid. A slide of some 225,000 cubic yards of rock dammed the Middle Fork of the American River at the site of the proposed Ruck-A-Chucky dam in 1940. The slide formed a natural dam 50 feet high that backed up the water for 2 ½ miles.[112]

Philip Deidesheimer, an emigrant mining engineer from Heidelberg, Germany, discovered the Fair View Gardens Deposit near Sandy Bottom. Here, he invented the "square sets" system of holding loose gravel in place in underground mines.[113] This system became the literal building block of the Comstock Lode silver mine in Nevada which yielded over a half-a-billion dollars in today's value.

[112] Placer Herald, "The Ruck-A-Chucky Slide," March 9, 1940.
[113] Placer County Archives, Placer County Place Names, Pages 64-65, 148.

Francisco's 77.5

Next place: Rucky (Ruck-A) Chucky 78
Miles to Auburn: 22.7



Greenwood Bridge 1938, Francisco's is up on the hillside on the left above the bridge (Hal V. Hall Collection)

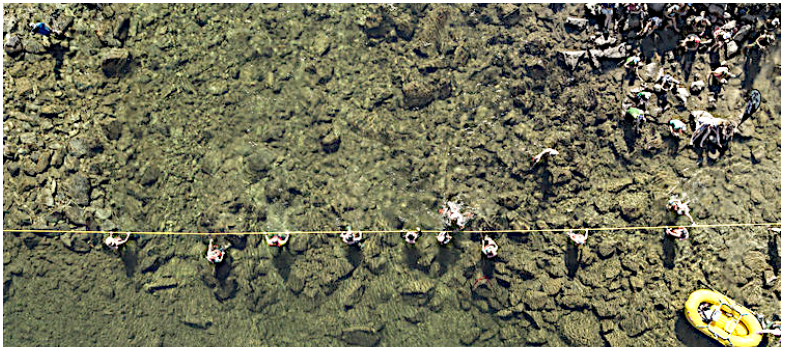
A short distance above Oregon Bar is Francisco's, a small mountain meadow above the river. It was named for a resident that lived there during the late 1960's and early 1970's. This site was named by early Tevis Cup Ride participants when the former resident was forced to abandon his home when the Army Corp of Engineers was going to build a bridge across the river.[114]

Between 1939 and 1940, the Auburn Journal & Placer County Republican newspaper reported progress of a proposed Ruck-A-Chucky concrete arch dam on the Middle Fork of the American River. There were six cabins built for workers with families, a mess hall, and an office building. However, in March 1940, access roads were buried under a huge rockslide that dammed the river to a depth of fifty feet. The workers discovered a pocket of gold yielding rich returns of upward to $10,000 in four days. Fifty-two workers were engaged in mining and earning more than what the dam operations was paying. On June 6, 1940, the idea of building a dam was abandoned but the 60-foot tunnel into the hillside earned the workers $40 to $90 a day each, a king's ransom.

[114] Western States Trail Guide, Fifth Edition, July 2016, Page 24.

Rucky (Ruck-A) Chucky 78*

Next place: Sliger Mine Road 78.2
Miles to Auburn: 22.2



Legend has it that the name Ruck-A-Chucky originated from several Chinese mining near the river. Late one afternoon, one of them asked how the chuck was, referring to that evening's dinner. The answer was a corruption of "rotten chunk" or "rusty chunk".

The abandoned wagon road on the north side of the river from Slug Gulch was known as Driver's Flat Road. It was named for teamsters who traveled its length loaded with supplies for the many mining camps along the Middle Fork of the American River during the flush years of the Gold Rush era. Today, this historic miners' road is used to reach a popular rocky area for "take out" and "put in" by Middle Fork rafters.

It is near this location in the summer of 1848 that a party of Oregonians first found a tremendous treasure of gold. There was enough of an influx of prospectors in the area that a ferry crossing was once operational and was later named Oregon Bar. The site is mentioned as being one of many mining bars on the Middle Fork of the American served by Charley Greene's People's Opposition Line of stages. The Greenwood-Ponderosa Bridge later spanned the river at this site but was carried away by a flood in December 1964.[115]

[115] Western States Trail Guide, Fifth Edition, July 2016, Page 26.

Sliger Mine Road 78.2

Next place: McCrary's Bend/Green Gate 79.8
Miles to Auburn: 22



View on Main Street, Greenwood, CA (Crawford's Photographic Gallery, Georgetown, California)

Discovered in 1864, the Sliger Mine was operated during the 1870's and again between 1922 and 1942 before being idled at a depth of two-thousand-feet. It had produced about $2.6 million in gold. The Sliger Mine was known for specimen gold which was desired by collectors and jewelry makers.

Extensive quartz veins and free gold was found throughout the district. Hard rock and seam mining were the only methods during the early period of the Gold Rush. As time passed and mining became more industrialized, the district saw much hydraulic mining. Around $5 million in gold was mined from the Greenwood District of which half is said to have come from the Sliger Mine.

A Wisconsin hotel was disassembled for shipping and in 1850 the hotel was transported across Panama, up the west coast of California, loaded on a riverboat, and carried up the river to Sacramento. Once in Sacramento, the riverboat was traded for wagons and teams that were used to transport the hotel materials to Greenwood. The hotel was rebuilt and, in the fall of 1850, opened as the Hoboken House at what is now Sliger Mine Road. Later, the hotel became a school and, around the turn of the century, burned to the ground.

McCrary's Bend/Green Gate 79.8*

Next place: Dead Truck Trail 82
Miles to Auburn: 20.4



After crewing for a family member during States, Lud and Barbara McCrary volunteered for many of the early years at what was called the "Green Gate" Aid Station. The gate is no longer painted green but retains the famous name.

This place ends the climb up from the river and Ruck-a-Chucky and begins a route that hugs the canyon wall on a narrow, winding trail about six-hundred-feet above the river along the take-line of the proposed Auburn Dam reservoir. It eventually passes through the Auburn Lakes Trail (ALT) Aid Station and rejoins the Quarry Road along the Western States Trail at Brown's Bar where the Quarry Road Aid Station awaits runners.

This is also the spot where many runners, hoping for a silver buckle, awarded for finishing States in under 24-hours, have a gut check. With 20-miles of runnable terrain ahead, the dream of "buckling" remains alive if runners can muster the courage and legs to move efficiently through the canyon. For others, it ends one goal and begins another: to finish, no matter what, in under 30-hours, where a bronze buckle is awarded.

Dead Truck Trail 82

Next place: Barbara's Bench 84.5
Miles to Auburn: 18.2



Runners will pass by the Dead Truck Trail sign on the right and likely wonder, "What the heck is a truck doing out here and why is it dead?"

There is indeed a truck, flipped over on its roof, at the bottom of this path toward the river. The path becomes extremely steep, dropping six-hundred-feet in less than 1.4-miles, passing a mining era homestead and vineyard that supplied wine to miners. This trail crosses American Canyon Creek and reaches the Middle Fork at Poverty Bar.[116] It is possible this truck was part of the homestead used for delivering wine.



[116] The American River – Insider's Guide to Recreation, Ecology and Cultural History of the North, Middle and South Forks, Updated Third Edition, Protect American River Canyons, 2016, Page 122.

Barb's Bench 84.5

Next place: Auburn Lake Trails 85.2
Miles to Auburn: 15.7



Barb's Bench, located between Dead Truck turnoff and Auburn Lake Trails (ALT), is dedicated to Barbara Barsalou Schoener, a member of the greater Auburn trail running community who was taken from us by a mountain lion, also known as a cougar, near this site on April 23, 1994. Barbara was ultimately discovered by a few local trail runners during the search. The female cougar that attacked her was euthanized and her cub, named Willow, has been a resident of the Folsom Zoo.

Cougars occasionally attack humans by accident but usually run off when they realize their prey is not a deer or other wild animal. In Mrs. Schoener's case, the autopsy showed she was attacked, then apparently escaped only to be run down by the mountain lion again. Barbara was the first person in California in the 20th century to be killed directly by a mountain lion. In 1909, a mother and child survived a mauling by a cougar but later died of rabies.

The memorial plaque on the bench states, "She will be greatly missed by her family, friends and fellow runners." This place provides a great view of the river and the native wildflowers are abundant. It's a very serene and peaceful place to sit and reflect.

Auburn Lake Trails 85.2*

Next place: Ball Bearing 85.3
Miles to Auburn: 15



Photo: Chad Bruce

With the promise of becoming a lakeside community after the proposed building of the Auburn Dam in the 1970's, developers created the Auburn Lake Trails (ALT) residential subdivision. ALT was named by the primary developer, Transamerica Development Company.

This place would have been at water's edge if the dam had been created. The development included a network of trails that connected to the Bureau of Reclamation constructed high water mark trail and would have followed the lakeshore.

The trail route used today by States begins after Green Gate aid station and ends at Brown's Bar Canyon. Along its northern boundary near Maine Bar Canyon, is the ALT aid station for States. While the Auburn Dam did not materialize and probably never will, ALT still became an active rural community.

The ALT Aid Station provides runners with a chance to refuel before heading into Maine Bar Canyon and a series of slot canyons which eventually end at the Brown's Bar footbridge. At night, runners can see headlamps of other runners and their pacers across the canyons, elusively close.

Ball Bearing 85.3
Next place: Brown's Bar 89.2
Miles to Auburn: 14.9



The trail is named after the ball bearings that were used to build the old mining ditch that the trail follows. The ball bearings were used to reduce friction and make it easier for the water to flow through the ditch. In the 1850's, there were 10,000 miners working in and living near this hill, all seeking their fortune in gold.

This portion of the Western States Trail was in use for States during the early years but was abandoned in 1985 because other portions of the trail were utilized to lengthen the course to reach the 100.2 mileage. Rather than running down to Maine Bar and then along the quarry road to the foot of Brown's Bar, the run stayed high above the quarry road yet below the homes to traverse what is known as the horizontal canyons. Today, due to erosion and neglect, the trail is in severe disrepair with gullies that are hip deep. Some locals still utilize this place as a training hill, affording steep climbs and descents over technical and rugged terrain.

Ball Bearing remains a standard for testing one's metal, physically and mentally.

Brown's Bar 89.2

Next place: Quarry Road 90.7
Miles to Auburn: 11



Once teeming with thousands of gold prospectors, this area of the river canyon included Browns Cut which was ancient river deposits that were worked by a complicated system of dredging.[117]

According to a San Francisco Bulletin newspaper article, dated September 10, 1857, Brown's Bar (along the river) was the terminal of a 4-mile flume from Poverty Bar.[118] The Mining Bureau said a dragline dredge was operated in 1946.[119]

From Sliger Mine through Auburn Lakes Trail (Maine Bar Canyon) to the upper portion of Brown's Bar Canyon, the trail was built by the Bureau of Reclamation. It was built along a level contour of the canyon wall above what was going to be the high-water mark of the reservoir that would have been created from the construction of the multi-purpose Auburn Dam.

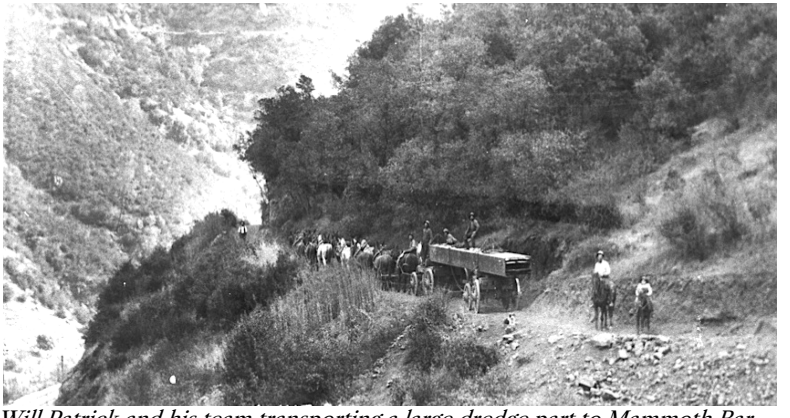
Years ago, States moved the aid station from this location down the trail to the flats on Quarry Road.

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[117] Thompson & West, History of Placer County, 1882, Pages 229-230.
[118] Erwin Gudde, California Gold Camps, 1975, Page 47.
[119] Ibid.

Quarry Rd 90.7*

Next place: Murderer's Bar 92.4
Miles to Auburn: 9.5



Will Patrick and his team transporting a large dredge part to Mammoth Bar (Placer County Historical Society Collection)

This wide, well-graded road that parallels the Middle Fork of the American River, was named for its purpose: moving limestone from the nearby quarry to the Sacramento Valley.

This portion of the trail goes through some of the best scenery available along the American River. For the most part, it follows the route of the Gold Rush era Grand Flume, a 13-mile long wood and canvas flume that was built by mining companies in an effort to extract gold from the river during the 1850's.

Much of the existing route along the Middle Fork became the artery of travel and commerce for its pack trains, mounted messengers and travelers, and boot-shod miners, who made famous their rich mining camps at every bar along the river.[120]

At the bottom of the steep drop from Brown's Bar, runners are dumped out at the Quarry Road Aid Station along a flat area of the Quarry Road.

[120] Western States Trail Guide, Fifth Edition, July 2016, Page 27.

Murderer's Bar 92.4

Next place: Walmsley's Turn 92.5
Miles to Auburn: 7.8



Murderer's Bar in 1850 (North Wind Pictures | Bridgeman Images)

Along the Quarry Road, just before Walmsley's Turn, one can peer down towards the river and view the area of Murderer's Bar which supported a population of hundreds of miners in the early 1850's and produced $2.5 million of placer gold by 1875. This portion of the river included what local miners called The Big Crevice which was first worked in 1850 by J.D. Galbraith. He discovered gold on the El Dorado County hillside above the river.[121]

There are numerous accounts of the origin of the name Murderer's Bar. The most plausible idea is this wild section of the American River took its name from a spate of killings spawned by lust and vengeance during the Gold Rush. In the autumn of 1848, a party of Native Americans tried to rescue some native women that five miners were assaulting. The miners opened fire and killed three of the Native American men. Later, a war party returned to the site and killed the five miners.[122]

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[121] Wendell Robie, "The Big Crevice", unpublished and undated.
[122] Erwin Gudde, California Gold Camps, 1975, Pages 231-232; Erwin Gudde, California Place Names, 1947, Page 252; and, Western States Trail Guide, Fifth Edition, July 2016, Page 28.

Walmsley's Turn 92.5

Next place: Highway 49 Crossing (aka Cave Valley) 93.8
Miles to Auburn: 7.7



Yeah, we couldn't get thru this book without using one AI-generated photo!

Shortly after Murderer's Bar, the States route forks to the left on a single-track trail that climbs to Cave Valley over a former wagon road that once continued to Cool and beyond to California's gold discovery site of Coloma.[123] The trail leads to the upper rock quarry ascending approximately 900 feet to the limestone quarry crossing at Highway 49.

In 2016, Jim Walmsley was leading the race, ahead of the course record by five minutes. At about mile 93, he missed the slight left to begin ascending the hill, remained on the Quarry Road, and his chance to win or shatter the record was gone. Although disappointing, he mustered the strength to turn around, rejoin the course and finish. That decision not only laid the foundation for his ensuing illustrious career, including two States course records and three wins, but inspired a nation of ultrarunners to never quit.

What lesson did Jim teach the rest of the runners? *Never* give up. Instead, follow Jim's lead that despite obstacles and plans gone awry, finish what you started.

[123] Western States Trail Guide, Fifth Edition, July 2016, Page 28.

Highway 49 Crossing (aka Cave Valley) 93.8

Next place: Pointed Rocks 94.3
Miles to Auburn: 6.4



By the summer of 1849, there were companies of miners working on Murderer's Bar and nearby river bars. By 1850, wagon road systems were developed to Cave Valley, Pilot Hill and in the other direction toward Foresthill and Yankee Jim's. The roads became well-traveled by individuals coming from Sacramento to the nearby mining camps.

Caves were first discovered by miners in the 1850's. The caves were full of giant bones and gold that had been washed into the lower caverns by the river. The glory-hole method of mining the limestone at Mountain Quarries started in 1910.

Local Auburn dentist, Dr. J.C. Hawver, explored a limestone cave near Cool in 1906 and found fossils of prehistoric animals, including birds and saber-toothed tigers. Four human skeletons determined 10,000 years old have been taken from the caves. After mining ceased in 1942, the main entrance was blocked with fallen rock and for the past fifty years the cave, tunnels, and waterfalls have been closed from public view.

Pointed Rocks 94.3*

Next place: No Hands Bridge/Mtn. Quarries RR Bridge 96.8
Miles to Auburn: 5.9



Pointed Rocks is a descriptive name for the rock formations in the area. The rocks are pointed and jut up from the ground, giving the area a unique look. The name was first used by the Miwok people who lived in the area before European settlement.

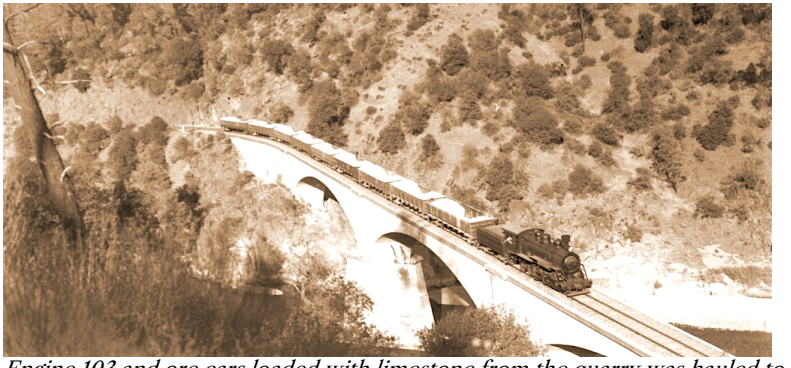
In October 2007, the run and ride in collaboration with the Trust for Public Land (TPL), succeeded in negotiating the sale of Pointed Rocks Ranch, a 370-acre property in western El Dorado County, from the Cowell Foundation to California State Parks. On June 7, 2008, these groups celebrated the dedication of Pointed Rocks as the first State Parks ownership in the Auburn Recreation Area.

Pointed Rocks Trail includes a portion of the Western States Trail that passes through magnificent oaks and grass meadows once owned by Wendell Robie. It is located between the Highway 49 Crossing and the Cool Staging Area. It continues down Warner Ravine on an old wagon road to No Hands Bridge.

In the waning hours of States, runners can hear the stadium announcer welcoming finishers as they enter the Placer High School track, prompting them to get on down the trail.

No Hands Bridge/Mountain Quarries RR Bridge 96.8

Next place: Black Hole of Calcutta 98.5
Miles to Auburn: 3.4



Engine 103 and ore cars loaded with limestone from the quarry was hauled to Auburn from 1912 to 1940 (Photo by A.C. Phelps, Michael G. Lynch Coll.)

The Mountain Quarries Bridge, aka No Hands Bridge, was completed on March 23, 1912, and was constructed to move quarried limestone along seven miles of railroad from the Mountain Quarries to the westbound Southern Pacific rail line at Auburn. Prior to 1984, Tevis Cup participants were known to comment that it must be dangerous to ride across the bridge without any guardrails. In jest of these fears, veteran rider Ina Robinson was known to drop the reins on the neck of her horse, hold out her arms, and say "Look, no hands!"[124]

At the time of its construction, the bridge was the longest concrete arch railroad bridge in the world. The bridge was built to determine if concrete was practical in building long bridges and was considered a great piece of railroad bridge engineering.[125] The Mountain Quarries Bridge was listed to the National Register of Historic Places on February 11, 2004.

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[124] Jim Ferris, Michael Lynch, Sheila Toner, American River Canyon Hikes, Auburn State Recreation Area Canyon Keepers, 2006, Pages 52-53.

[125] National Register of Historic Places, Section 8, Page 1, February 11, 2004.

Black Hole of Calcutta 98.5

Next place: Robie Point 98.9
Miles to Auburn: 1.7



Less than two miles from No Hands Bridge, the trail turns away from the former Mountain Quarries railroad grade and climbs on a single-track trail to Robie Point. Below Robie Point it passes over a small, rocky-strewn seasonal stream known as the Black Hole of Calcutta.

When Drucilla Barner first crossed the creek on the night of the full moon during the 1960 Tevis Cup Ride, it was so dark that she could not see her hand in front of her face. Her first thought was that of the astrological site of the Black Hole of Calcutta.

The Black Hole of Calcutta may have served as the inspiration for the name of the same astrological regions of space, at least according to NASA astrophysicist Hong-Yee Chiu.

Robie Point 98.9 (Wendell T. Robie)*

Next place: White Bridge 99.5
Miles to Auburn: 1.3



The welcome sign signifying runners have one mile to go to fulfill their dream of finishing the WSER

Next, the trail climbs to Robie Point, passing the Black Hole of Calcutta. Enmeshed in the 35,000-acre Auburn State Recreation Area, Robie Point is near the end of the trail at the top of a steep climb from the combined North and Middle forks of the American River.

Wendell T. Robie, a local businessman and activist born in Auburn in 1895, was a descendant of a wealthy pioneer family that had made their fortune in logging, milling, and operating lumber yards before founding the First National Bank of Auburn in 1912, Auburn Savings Bank, and the Central California Savings and Loan Association.[126] Groomed for the family business, Robie attended the School of Forestry at the University of California, Berkeley, and School of Business at University of Arizona, Tucson, before returning to Auburn to manage his father's business, the Auburn Lumber Company.[127] Ultimately, Robie became the President of the Heart Federal Savings & Loan, a financial institution that started out in his mother's desk drawer when the family

[126] Bill G. Wilson, Challenging the Mountains – The Life and Times of Wendell T. Robie, Robie Historical Foundation, 1998, Pages 21-28, 48.
[127] Ibid, Pages 37-40.

owned the Auburn Lumber Company. Robie was also a civic leader and was instrumental in the development of several local and state-wide recreation trail projects.

While debating with members of the Sacramento County Horseman Association about the ability of modern horses to maneuver the craggy Sierra landscape, Robie placed a wager that he and his Arabian stallion could complete the trans-Sierra route from Lake Tahoe to Auburn in one day. In August 1955, he and four others followed a well-known 100-mile pioneer path through the forest. Robie won the bet that was to become an annual event known as the Western States Trail Ride, informally known as the Tevis Cup. Decades later, when local rider, Gordy Ainsleigh, left his mount behind and attempted the course on foot, the Western States Endurance Run (States) was born.

Robie died in 1984 at the age of 89. There is no historical marker, no commemorative plaque or bronze statue here.

Robie Drive *is*, however, the road up which runners ascend, as the final climb in the race. At the crest of the hill runners are greeted by the "Mile 99" sign and a cacophony of cheers from Robie Point neighbors who turn out, day or night, to cheer each runner onto their final mile to home, the finish line.

The places, Robie Point and Robie Drive, honor a man who had a tremendous impact on the city, the state, and the world of sports, keeping his legacy alive. Wendell Robie left his mark on the history of the Western States Trail.

White Bridge 99.5

Next place: Placer High School 100.2
Miles to Auburn: 0.7



This is the final bridge runners cross before reaching the finish line. For most, it is a relief knowing the Placer High School track is only a left turn and short downhill run away.

The white bridge is where Borland, Cherry and Finley Streets come together to cross over the transcontinental railroad track. After crossing the bridge, runners turn left onto Finley Avenue and make the quarter mile downhill to the Placer High School track and the finish of the 100-mile run in front of the home grandstands.

The bridge became famous in 1983 when Jim Howard and Jim King battled to the closest finish in the history of the run. That year was the first time the run course was changed due to snow levels in the high country. Jim Howard had tied with Doug Latimer for the win in 1981 and Jim King won the race in 1982 so the two champions were looking for their second win. King started fast and built a 15-minute lead by the 15-mile checkpoint but got lost soon thereafter. When he arrived at the Duncan Canyon checkpoint at mile 24, King was more than thirty minutes behind yet took the lead again by Devil's Thumb. King built a 20-minute lead by Auburn Lake Trails but then started to slow. Our own co-author, Hal Hall, had been pacing Howard since Green Gate. At the bottom of the climb

to Highway 49, Hall told Howard he was 10-minutes behind King. Howard took off.

When Jim Howard arrived at the Highway 49 crossing, he found himself seven minutes behind. Howard continued to press, thinking there was still a chance for the win. Howard caught King as they approached the bridge with one-half mile to go. Howard went on to win the race by less than one minute. Howard's 56-minute split from the highway crossing to the finish remains legendary. King would go on to win the race the next two years and become the first three-time winner of the run.

And our intrepid author Hal? Howard dropped him twice from Highway 49 to the finish, Hall was unable to keep up with Howard's torrid pace.

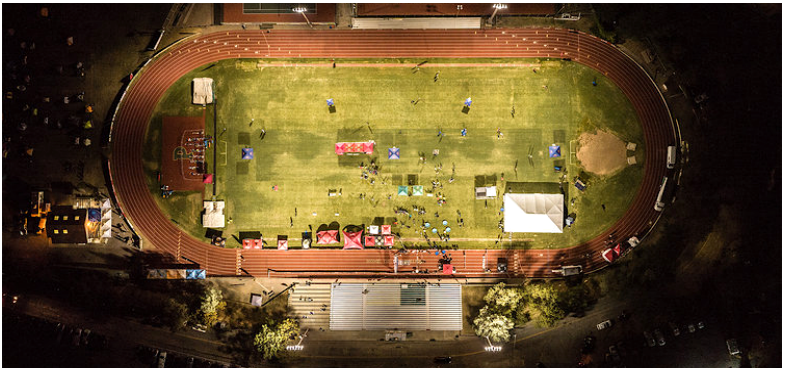
Ann Trason, 14-time States winner and past women's record holder, said the White Bridge was her favorite. Auburn's Endurance Capital of the World Committee began a campaign in May 2021, to rename what locals call the White Bridge, after Ann. No formal action has been taken by the City of Auburn.[128]

Another States' tradition is the blue "WS100" footprints painted on the road from the bottom of Robie Point, across the White Bridge, guiding runners to the finish line at Placer high School track.



[128] Endurance Capital of the World Committee meeting agendas and minutes, dated September 15, 2021; January 19, 2022; March 16, 2022; and, May 18, 2022.

Placer High School 100.2
Finish line



The school's origins can be traced back to 1882 when three young men from the East Coast arrived in Auburn with a dream of creating a college for Northern California. The trio met with influential members of the community in the Placer County Courthouse and began a campaign to solicit donations to build the Sierra Normal College and Business Institute. When the contributions reached $6,000, the three young teachers, M.L. Fries, A.W. Sutphen, and M.W. Ward contributed $1,500 each and built the school.

In 1897, the City of Auburn leased the Sierra Normal School as a high school known as Auburn High. During the first four years, student population grew with more pupils coming from outside of Auburn. In 1901, the electors of Placer County voted for a high school and the name was changed to Placer County High School. In 1903, the county purchased the building and grounds from Dr. Ward, the president and sole owner of the former Sierra Normal College.

When a States' runner sets foot on the track after their arduous race, they are transported, seemingly floating, around the ¾-mile oval in a counter-clockwise direction to the finish line in front of the bleachers. It's an other-worldly experience and the pinnacle of many an ultrarunner's career; a dream come true.

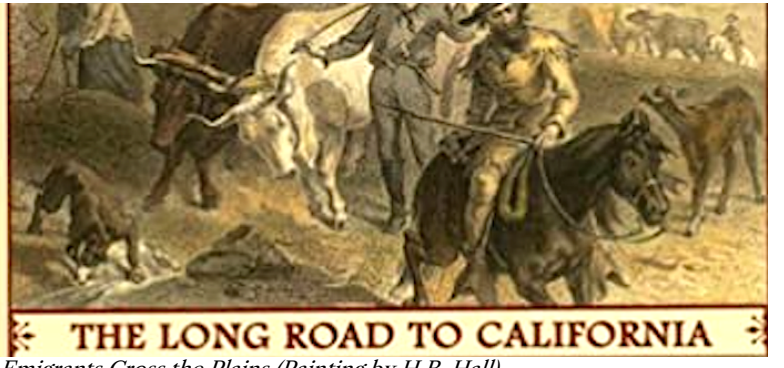


Placer Garage, Auburn (Placer County Museums)

On May 16, 1848, gold was discovered in the Auburn Ravine by Claude Chana (Charnay). This was the first gold discovery in Placer County. Chana cut a tree on Bear Creek and made bateas to wash gold. The place was successively known as North Fork Dry Diggings and Woods Dry Diggings. It was given the more "euphonious" name of Auburn in August, 1849. The name was suggested by Samuel W. Holladay after hearing a reading of the first lines of Oliver Goldsmith's "Deserted Village" which began with, "Sweet Auburn, loveliest village of the plain...".[129] The "town" consisted of three to four tents. By 1851, Auburn became the seat of Placer County and the city was first incorporated in 1860. The Central Pacific Railroad came to Auburn in 1865.

Today, Auburn is one of the oldest and best-preserved historic towns in California. Auburn is also known as the "Endurance Capital of the World", representing all sports found in the area including endurance riding, ultrarunning, mountain biking, kayaking, rafting, cycling, hiking, swimming, Ride & Tie, Pack Burro Racing and History Expeditions.

[129] The True Origin and history Behind the Naming of Auburn, Leonard M. Davis, Roseville Historical Society, 1999, page 11.



Emigrants Cross the Plains (Painting by H.B. Hall)

Westward from Auburn, the Western States Pioneer Express National Recreation Trail continues past former rich mining camps along the American River, through Folsom Lake State Park and along the American River Parkway. The western terminus of the trail is at the confluence of the American and Sacramento Rivers at Discovery Park, near the California State Capitol, more than fifty miles beyond Auburn.

In the National Recreation Trails application by the California Department of Parks and Recreation on March 28, 1975, the following was described:

"For the overriding theme of the Western States/Pioneer Express Trail (capital to capital) to become reality, a highly desirable link from Olympic Valley to Carson City, the capital of Nevada, will be sought in a future application. This section of the Western States Trail would link Sacramento and Carson City by the one remaining trail route east to west left largely unspoiled by modern pressures to demonstrate a pioneer experience for out-of-doors people today. With this link, the trail would complete an important mission of tying together, dome-to-dome, the State Capitals of California and Nevada. The administrator of the Nevada State Park System has notified us that they are presently at work tying down the routing of the Western States/Pioneer Express Trail as it passes through Nevada."

About the Authors



Bob Crowley, co-founder of History Expeditions, is an entrepreneur, having co-led media, technology, and software companies and then founding a Boston-based investment firm, The Mustang Group. Bob mentors sports, technology and non-profit entrepreneurs. He's completed more than 100 endurance events, including States and the famed *Tor des Geants* in the Italian Alps. Bob and his wife, Marcy, have two sons and four grandchildren and live along the American River in Fair Oaks, California.



Hal V. Hall is past president of the Western States Trail Foundation and the Placer County Historical Society, currently president of the Placer County Historical Foundation and Western States Trail Museum. Hal is a three-time winner, 31-time finisher of the Western States 100-Mile Tevis Ride and a three-time recipient of the Haggin Cup for most superior-conditioned horse. He was an Executive Producer of the film documentary, *They Crossed the Mountains: The History of the Western States Trail.* Hal and his wife, Ann, reside in Auburn, California.



Tim Twietmeyer, co-founder of History Expeditions, is an engineering manager at Hewlett Packard, and known for his five victories and unprecedented twenty-five sub-24-hour finishes at the States. He has been a 20-year board member of the Western States Endurance Run Foundation. In 2004 Tim led the first 100-mile "winter crossing" of the Western States Trail, in 2006, set the Fastest Known Time for the 168-mile Tahoe Rim Trail and in 2008, ran from Carson City, Nevada to Sacramento, California. Tim and his wife, Kathy, have three sons and reside in Auburn, California.

About History Expeditions

History Expeditions is a non-profit combining sport with history. Its mission is to discover American West tales and trails which have been lost to time and to honor inspiring heroes of history. In 2020, ultra-distance trail runners and friends, Bob Crowley and Tim Twietmeyer, conceived the idea of bringing two passions together, trail running and history, into an activity they called History Expeditions.

Since then, they have organized several Expeditions designed to research and reveal historically significant discoveries (trails, places, artifacts, new facts, etc...). The goal for each Expedition is to discover new findings and honor the historical protagonist's survivalism and heroism. The stories that emerge from the research serve to inspire Tim and Bob, their Expedition teammates, Elke Reimer, Jennifer Hemmen and recent addition, Hal Hall, and hopefully you.

In 2022 the Discovery Channel produced an episode following the Forlorn Hope and Donner Relief Party Expeditions entitled, *Donner Party Horror and Heroes*.

We invite you to learn more about History Expeditions at our website: https://historyexp.org, which has more details about past and future projects including the Forlorn Hope, Donner Relief Party, Grosh Brothers and Discovery Channel broadcast.

Download a free digital copy of this book and digital GPX file for the States trail and all these places we run waypoints here: **https://historyexp.org/states/** or scan below:

About Western States 100-Mile Endurance Run



In 1972, twenty U.S. Army infantrymen hiked the trail nonstop, starting one day ahead of the Tevis Cup ride. The members of the 6th Battalion of the 67th Air Defense Artillery Regiment at Ft. Riley, Kansas were: Larry Hall, Michael Paduano, Gregory Belgarde, Kenneth Kruzel, David Lenau, Jon Johanson and Mike Savage. Seven of the soldiers completed the distance on foot in under 48 hours.[130]

In 1974, Drucilla Barner, the first woman to win the Tevis Cup, inspired Gordy Ainsleigh to enter the race on foot, joining the horses of the Western States Trail Ride, to see if he could complete the Tevis Cup course in under 24-hours. At 20h42m, Gordy arrived in Auburn.[131]

In 1978, the "Gang of Four" (Phil Gardner, Mo Livermore, Shannon Weil, and Curt Sproul) created an independent annual running event for the last weekend in June.[132]

States continues to grow with international interest far exceeding the 369 annual entrants allowed for the once-in-a-lifetime experience of running States.[133]

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[130] Auburn Journal, Aug. 3, 1972
[131] https://www.wser.org/how-it-all-began/
[132] Ibid
[133] Ibid

Western States Trail Museum –Coming to Fruition



The history of the Western States Trail began in the pre-historical era with Native Americans traveling back and forth over the Sierra Nevada gathering, hunting and bartering. By the mid-1800's American explorers, settlers, and gold seekers arrived. Express Riders traveled by horseback in 1860-61, providing much needed communication and supplies to the mining camps and towns during the Gold Rush.

The history of the trail between Carson City, Nevada, and Sacramento, California, along with relevant artifacts and memorabilia stands ready for display and interpretation in the proposed Western States Trail Museum, a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization.

The museum's vision is to educate the public about the trail's heritage through exhibitions, in-person educators, speaker series, hands-on experiential displays, field trips, and artifacts.

If you are interested in knowing more about the museum and how you might help, please contact them by email at info@wstrailmuseum.org.

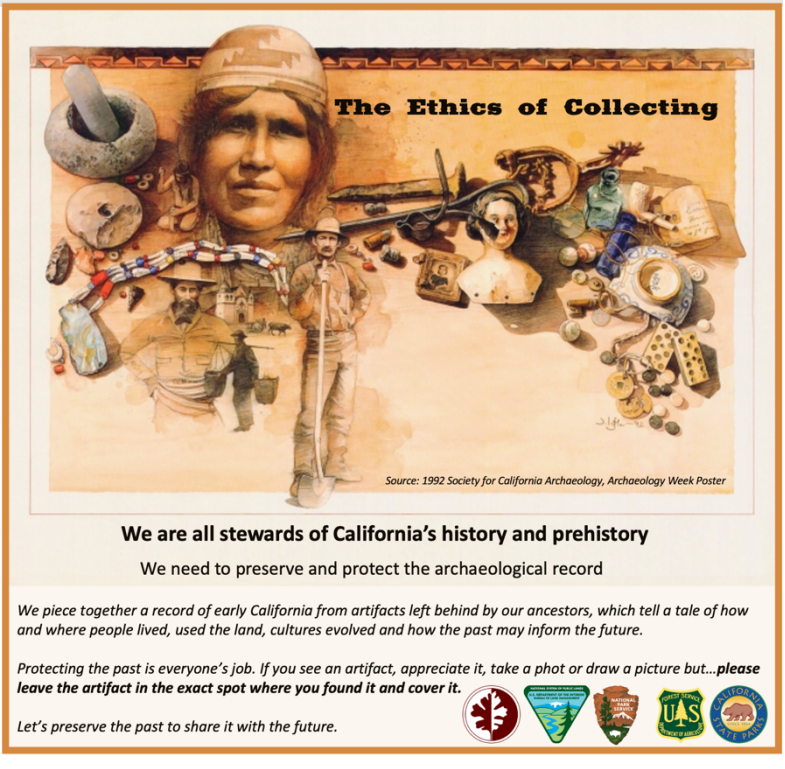
The Ethics of Collecting

It's common knowledge, right? We all say it, "If you find an artifact on the ground, it's okay to pick it up. Just don't dig!"

True or not true? **NOT TRUE**.

Artifact collection on public lands, including City Parks, is a misdemeanor punishable under California State law. California's Public Resource Codes recognize that the state's archaeological resources are endangered by urban development, population growth and by natural forces (e.g. fire, coastal and riverbank erosion). and need to be preserved.

For the sake of and respect for the land and our ancestors, please leave a found artifact where you found it and cover it.



In the century-old sport of ultrarunning, States was the first 100 mile ultra-trail run: a race filled with beauty and toughness, surrounded by stories, some historical and some fanciful, born in Auburn, California, the endurance capital of the world. Celebrate the 50th running of States by discovering the origins of the names of the places through which we run on the Western States Trail from Olympic Valley to Auburn. The trail, the history, the people; all part of the fiber that binds States together to be the mother lode of trail running.

