TEVIS: The Places We Ride

Celebrating Seven Decades of American Endurance Riding History

By Bob Crowley, Hal V. Hall, and Tim Twietmeyer
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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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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 since thousands have enjoyed the meal. Or as the proverb goes, *when one door closes, another opens...*

The annual Western States Trail 100-mile One Day Ride, or as it's known today, "Tevis," has become the most famous and revered long distance equestrian endurance contest in the world.

For thousands of years before Robie 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.

Tevis 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 ride along the course which have earned a name. To celebrate the annual 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 ride as much as we delighted in researching over 60 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.

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.

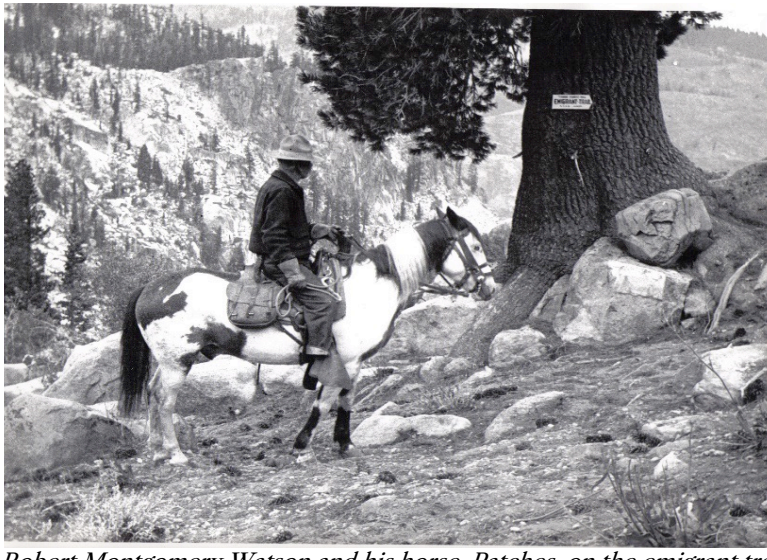
Bob, Hal, and Tim

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 (ASR), 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, Lucy Trumbull, 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, U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Forest Service – Tahoe National Forest, Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California, Western States Trail Museum, Western States Endurance Run Foundation, and the Western States Trail Foundation – Tevis Cup.

Evolution of the Name "Western States Trail"



Robert Montgomery Watson and his horse, Patches, on the emigrant trail above Little American Valley

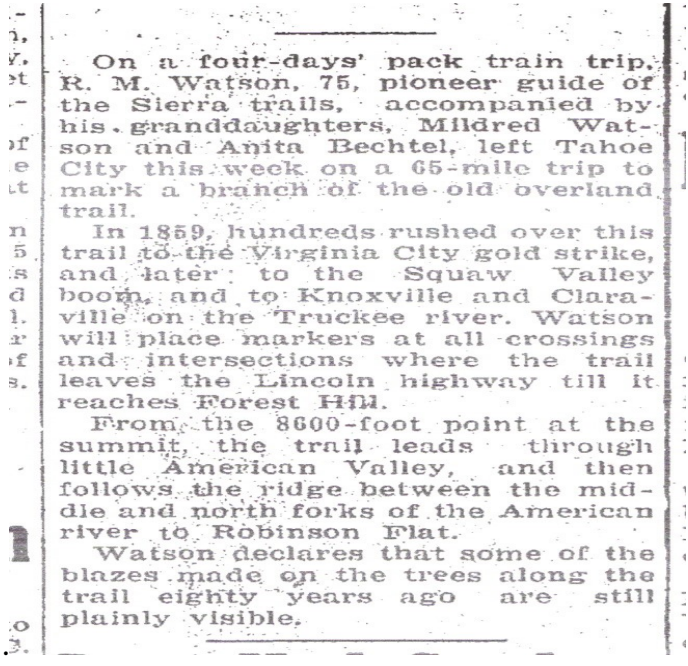
Early travelers knew the present-day Western States Trail (WST) as part of the Washoe Trail[1] that had been well established and used for thousands of years by Native American tribes from both sides of the Sierra Nevada. It was a seasonal route used for hunting, gathering, trading, and perhaps spiritual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

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

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]

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



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.

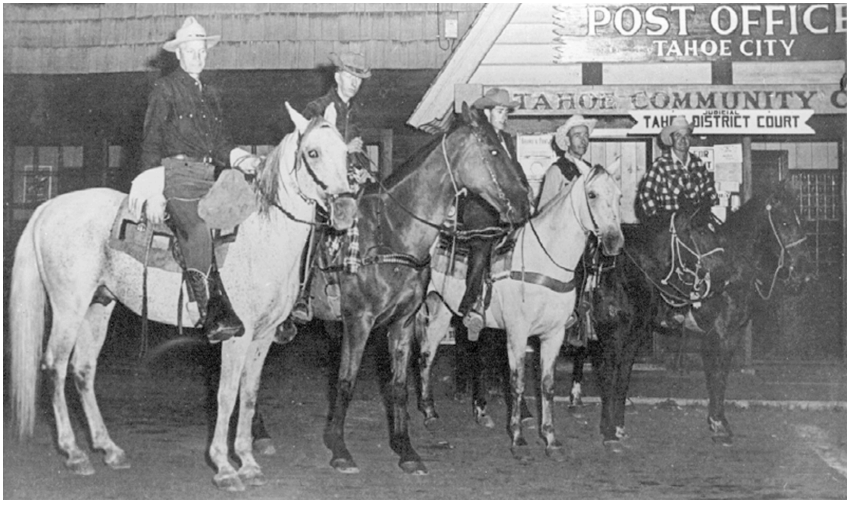
Reno Gazette, September 11, 1930

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."

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[2] Edward B. Scott, Squaw Valley, Crystal Bay, Sierra-Tahoe Publishing Co., 1960, Pages 2 and 3.
[3] Mark McLaughlin, "Tahoe City: Law and Order, Part 1," August 14, 2013.

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 was described as the Watson-Allan Holiday Trail. However, the first reference to the Western States Trail Ride appears.[4]



The horsemen who took turns carrying a mail bag with commemorative covers on Wendell Robie's saddle to Auburn at the Tahoe City Post Office are shown before starting of the first 100-mile one-day ride on August 7, 1955 (left to right, Wendell Robie, Pat Sewell, Bill Patrick, Dick Highfill, and Nick Mansfield)

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.[5] Robie also advocated adding the historic 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.

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[4] The Pony Express, Volume XXIII, No. 2, Sonora, California, July 1956, Cover and Pages 1,2, 12.

[5] Jedediah Smith National Recreation Trail, designated by Secretary of the Interior, February 1974.

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.[6] On December 9, 1975, in cooperation with the California Department of Parks and Recreation, the County of Placer, and other agencies, it was reported that the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) 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[7] and Laxalt of Nevada.[8] 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.



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

[6] Western States Pioneer Express Trail National Recreation Trail, designated by Acting Secretary of the Interior, October 8, 1975.
[7] Letter to the Chairman of the California Riding and Hiking Trails Advisory Committee, February 13, 1967
[8] Letter to California Department of Parks and Recreation, January 16, 1967.

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.



The Native Sons of the Golden West (NSGW) Auburn Parlor 59, with Watson's help, added signage along the route in September 1931.[9] The first signs were dog-eared, horizontal metal signs that indicate AUBURN-TAHOE NSGW. Later,

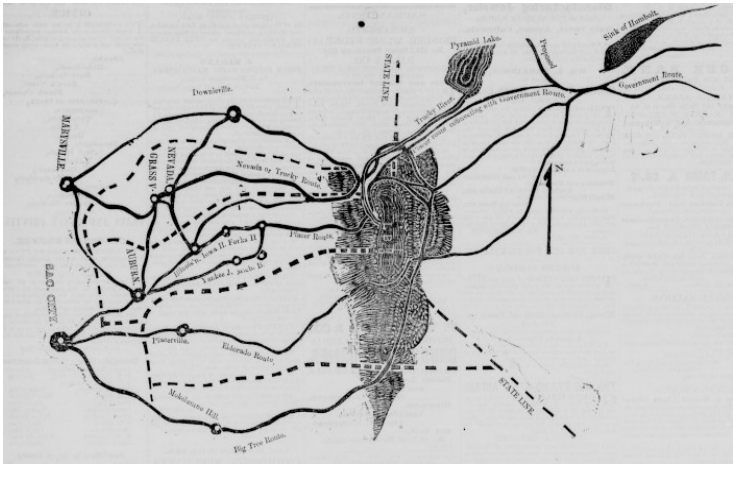
[9] "Emigrant Trail is Followed to Lake," Reno Evening Gazette, September 29, 1931, Page 7.

horizontal metal signs were utilized which indicated TAHOE FORESTHILL, EMIGRANT TRAIL, NSGW Auburn. In the years following, horizontal 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 not been affected by modern development.

In August 1955, the Western States 100 Mile One Day Ride was founded and became the crown jewel of long-distance endurance riding. Equestrians from around the world have challenged this trail for the privilege of earning a finishing buckle award that indicates, One Hundred Miles, One Day.

Placer County Emigrant Road



Map of Emigrant Roads, Placer Herald, Volume 5, Number 35, May 9, 1857

The Sierra Nevada stands like a mighty dorsal column, with summit passes and peaks from 8,000 to 10,000 feet above sea level, and throw out to the west its ridges, like ribs to a body, that extend, when unbroken by rivers, with evenness to the Sacramento Valley. By these lateral ridges first known travelers of the 1844 Stephens-Murphy-Townsend Party and

later gold and silver-fevered seekers made their way back and forth on Native American trails over the Sierra. One of these routes follows the direction of the Middle Fork of the American River through the mountains between the Sacramento Valley and the Utah Territory, later western Nevada.

The onslaught of westward travelers attracted by the California Gold Rush became the driving force to develop a faster, more direct route to the goldfields that would also accommodate wheeled vehicles. Business interests in the gold rush town of Auburn advocated a competing route across north shore of Lake Tahoe. As it was known, the Placer County Emigrant Road sought to divert travelers from the California Trail near Carson City through the Washoe Valley and over the Carson Range to North Lake Tahoe, and over the Sierra crest to Auburn.

The main route of the California Trail branched from the Oregon Trail west of Fort Hall, Idaho, and headed southwest toward present-day Nevada and thence along the Humboldt River and over the Sierra Nevada. By the mid-1850s, emigrants that had arrived at the eastern side of the Sierra Nevada had a choice of routes and alternate routes including the Placer Emigrant Route.[10]

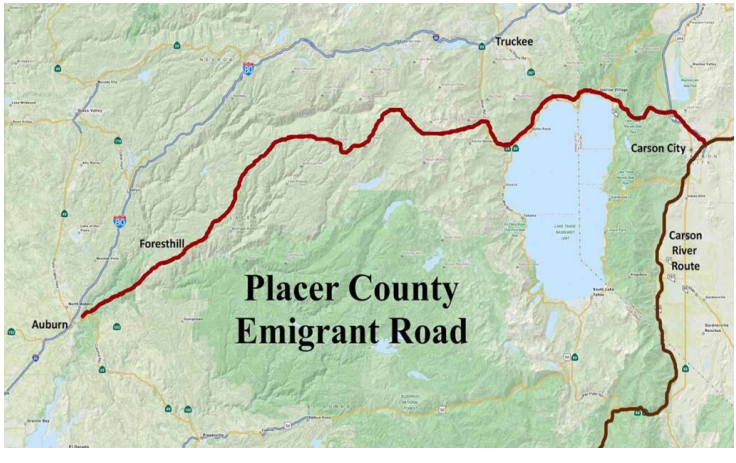
Emigrant diaries, circa 1852, shows that the Placer County Emigrant Road departed from the Carson Route on the Carson River. Some emigrants went directly, while others passed by way of Eagle Station (Carson City), to the Ophir Creek vicinity in Washoe Valley. The route climbed the Ophir drainage to first crossing of the Sierra Nevada at Tahoe Meadows then down to Lake Tahoe through the vicinity of today's Incline Village, due west over Stateline Point, and along the west side of Lake Tahoe to the Truckee River outlet. From that point the route followed downstream to a crossing opposite Squaw Valley. It then climbed out of the valley on the west side to the Sierra summit. The route then basically followed the ridgeline down the Foresthill Divide to Forks House, which is above

[10] Caltrans, "A Historical Context and Methodology for Evaluating Trails, Roads, and Highways in California," 2016, Page 39.

present-day Foresthill.[11] Forks House is where other existing wagon roads branched off to various mining camps.[12]

In November 1856, Placer County Surveyor, Thomas Young reported in his August 1851 examination and survey of the Placer County Emigrant Road that it was his impression that the road can be improved and made a good road with less expense than any other route - - will be shorter, and is the most central road extending from Carson Valley into the State.[13] All the while, other Sierra foothill counties, where emigrant travel was far more popular, were taking up the idea of improving exist trail routes and building wagons road to accommodate travelers.

On July 23, 1860, M. S. Stangroom of Michigan Bluff, reported that he had made a survey of a (proposed) wagon road to connect Sacramento via Auburn and Foresthill with the new mining district of Western Utah (Territory), which also included estimated construction costs.[14]



[11] California-Nevada Chapter of the Oregon California Trails Association, https://canvocta.org/?page_id=1209.
[12] National Park Service, Revised Feasibility & Suitability Study for Additional Routes of ... National Historic Trails, Appendix A.
[13] Placer Herald, "Placer County Emigrant Road," Volume 5, November 8, 1856.
[14] Sacramento Daily Union, "Placer County and Washoe Wagon Road," Volume 19, August 8, 1860, Page 5.

Some emigrant accounts suggest the Placer County route was difficult and unfinished. There were discussions in 1857 of maybe tying the route to the new National Road at Honey Lake. However, it never achieved the success of the competing Johnson Cutoff or the Henness Pass routes. Despite spending $13,000 in road improvements, the route's circuitous nature, rough terrain, lack of roadside services, and poor road condition prevented it from attaining popularity. As a trans-Sierra route, it drifted into temporary obscurity. However, in 1859, it received renewed interest as a more direct route to and from the Western Nevada mines, where it was also known as the Washoe Trail. Thus, the Placer County Emigrant Road was used during the rush to Washoe and through the 1860s.

Samuel Clemens, also known as Mark Twain, first visited Lake Tahoe in 1861 and historians believe he traveled from Carson City by following an old Indian route which was also known as the Washoe Trail.[15]

The Placer County Emigrant Road was most recently addressed in a study by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, which was submitted to Congress on January 17, 2020, as part of their Revised Feasibility and Suitability Study for Additional Routes of the Oregon, Mormon Pioneer, California, and Pony Express National Historic Trails, Appendix A: Study Routes and Historical Summaries, September 2017. The study evaluated the significance, feasibility, suitability, and desirability (eligibility) of adding certain additional routes to the historic trails.

[15] Nevada Division of State Parks, "Before it Was a Park – Lake Tahoe Nevada State Park and its Foundations in Comstock History," Jay Howard, 2014 (Revised 2017), Page 8; and, Larry J. Schmidt, "Locating Mark Twain's 1861 Timber Camp at Lake Tahoe," Nevada Historical Society Quarterly, Fall 2009, Page 214.

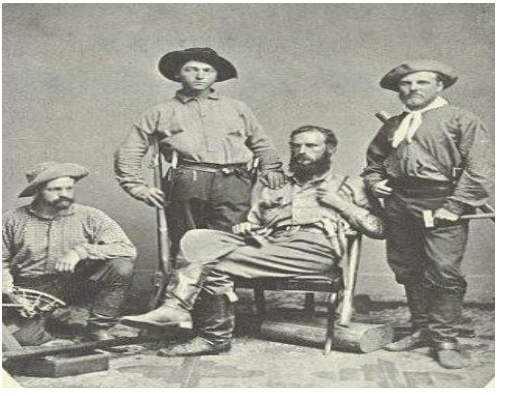
Robie Equestrian Park – 0 Miles
Next place Truckee River: 6.5 Miles
Miles to Auburn: 100



Robie Equestrian Park is in eastern Placer County, California, six miles south of Truckee, California. It is a private 160-acre parcel within Tahoe National Forest that was purchased by the Wendell & Inez Robie Foundation in 1990. The Park is located southeast of Truckee, northeast of Olympic Valley, and north of Lake Tahoe. Robie Equestrian Park serves as the staging area and start for the annual Tevis Cup Ride. Besides the Western States Trail there are other trails like the Watson Loop some which leads to the Sawtooth Trail and the summit of Mount Pluto and Mount Watson.

Starting from the Robie Equestrian Park, at an elevation of 7,000 feet, riders follow in a southerly direction following a graded dirt road for a short distance to connect to the Western States Trail. Heading west, there is a gradual descent of 6.5 miles to the Truckee River at the Midway Crossing on Highway 89.

Truckee River – 6.5 Miles
Next place Olympic Valley: 7.5
Miles to Auburn: 93.5



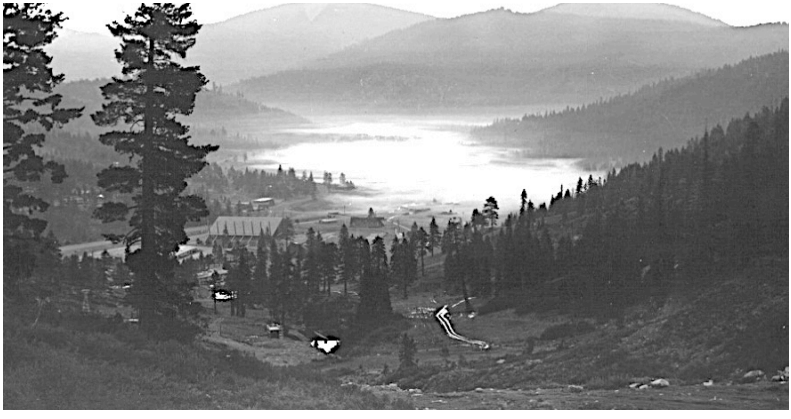
Explorer and surveyor, William H. Brewer, kept a journal about his expedition through California between 1860-1864. Brewer was chosen by Professor Josiah Dwight Whitney, to head a field party to map geological, botanical, and zoological resources. Brewer's account of his journey over the Sierra along the Placer County Emigrant Road to a point where the road divided at Robinsons Flat with one branch that continued along the Foresthill Divide to Secret House and down to Foresthill, and the other along existing wagon roads to Last Chance. On August 28, 1863, while at his camp on the Truckee River, Brewer wrote, "We were up and off early. It rained a little the evening before, but not much. We struck up Squaw Valley, a pretty, little grassy valley, then rose the steep ridge to the pass, which is between eight and nine thousand feet." The day before while in Tahoe City, Brewer had asked locals what was the shortest route to Sacramento.[16]

From the bridge crossing of the Truckee River, Tevis riders follow the south slope of Olympic Valley that was constructed in 2002 to avoid developed portions of the historic route through the valley floor. The trail ascends from the Truckee River (elevation 6,200 feet) past Olympic Valley to High Camp and Watson's Monument at Emigrant Pass (elevation 8,774 feet), a climb of 2,550 feet.

---

[16] Francis P. Farquhar, Up and Down California 1860-1864-The Journal of William H. Brewer, Book 4, Chapter 5, 1863.

Olympic Valley – 7.5 Miles
Next place Escarpment: 14.4
Miles to Auburn: 92.5



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.[17] In 1960, the present-day Palisades Tahoe Ski Resort and surrounding area 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 Grosh perished and is buried at Last Chance.[18]

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."[19]

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

Escarpment – 14.4 Miles
Next place: Watson Monument 14.5
Miles to Auburn: 85.6



Western States Endurance Run participates greeted by supporters at the top of The Escarpment

The Escarpment hosted an aid station for the Western States Endurance Run 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" is 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 the Palisades Tahoe ski resort 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."[20] The arduous climb was first known as Scott's Route.[21] However, R. Maurice Bucke knew the route in 1857 as the Washoe Trail from Carson City, Nevada, to Robinsons Flat.[22]

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

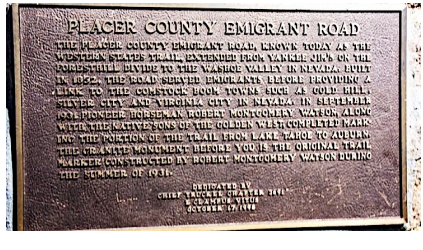
Watson Monument/Emigrant Pass – 14.5 Miles
Next place: Fort Sumter 14.6
Miles to Auburn: 85.5



Native Sons of the Golden West with Robert Montgomery Watson 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.[23]

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.



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

Fort Sumter – 14.6 Miles
Next place: Granite Chief Wilderness 16.0
Miles to Auburn: 85.4



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.[24]

In 1913, George Wharton James referred to this place as "peculiar battlemented rock."[25] 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."

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

Granite Chief Wilderness – 16.0 Miles
Next place: Hodgson's Cabin 20.4
Miles to Auburn: 84.0



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 riders enter after the 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 Tevis and Western States 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."[26]

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

Little American Valley Cabin/Greek Hotel (Pass by)
Next place: n/a
Miles to Auburn: n/a



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

Within the wilderness boundary, Little American Valley lies at the headwater of the Middle Fork of the American River at an elevation of over 7,000 feet.[27] George Wharton James in 1913, writes, "At our feet is the Little American Valley... With a little pointing out it is possible to follow the route it followed on the balance of its steep and perilous way. ...It did not take us long to reach the old stage-station in Little American Valley, which had been run by Greek George, charred logs remaining...the pile of rocks remaining denote the presence of the chimney."[28]

During the plans to establish the Placer County Emigrant Road, Jorge Ballen, "Greek George", built a cabin in Little American Valley, a public house for the accommodation of travelers. He and his wife decided to remain there all winter and brave the rigors of the climate.[29] In 2022, History Expeditions members discovered artifacts believed to be from the Greek Hotel, during a preliminary archeological search.

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[27] Western States Trail Guide, Fifth Edition, July 2016, Page 6.
[28] George Wharton James, The Lake of the Sky, The Radiant Life Press, 1915. Page 175.
[29] Thompson & West, History of Placer County, Oakland, California, 1882, Page 406.

Hodgson's Cabin (former site) – 20.4
Next place: Lyon Ridge 21.2
Miles to Auburn: 79.6



Hodgson's Cabin 1931 (Photo by Hal V. Hall)

Although no longer part of the course, in the early days of Tevis, 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 the Granite Chief Wilderness Area managed by the Tahoe National Forest. The 'footprint of man' was removed with the cabin being demolished and the road system decommissioned.[30]

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

Lyon Ridge/Foresthill Divide - 21.2 Miles
Next place: Cougar Rock 22.9
Miles to Auburn: 78.8



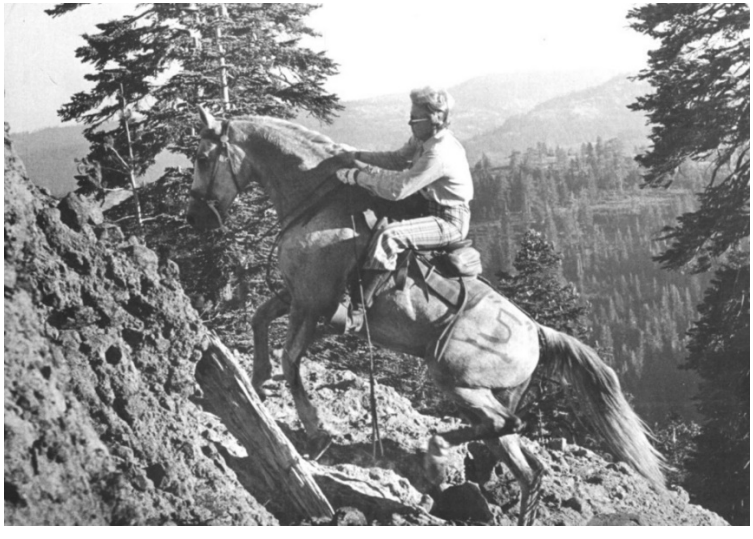
Wagon on the Placer Co Emigrant Road (Placer Co Museum Collection)

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.[31]

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.[32] 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.[33]

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

Cougar Rock – 22.9 Miles
Next place: Elephant's Trunk 24.9
Miles to Auburn: 77.1



Drucilla Barner, the Tevis Cup Ride at Cougar Rock in 1970 (Photo by Charles Barieau, Hal V. Hall Collection)

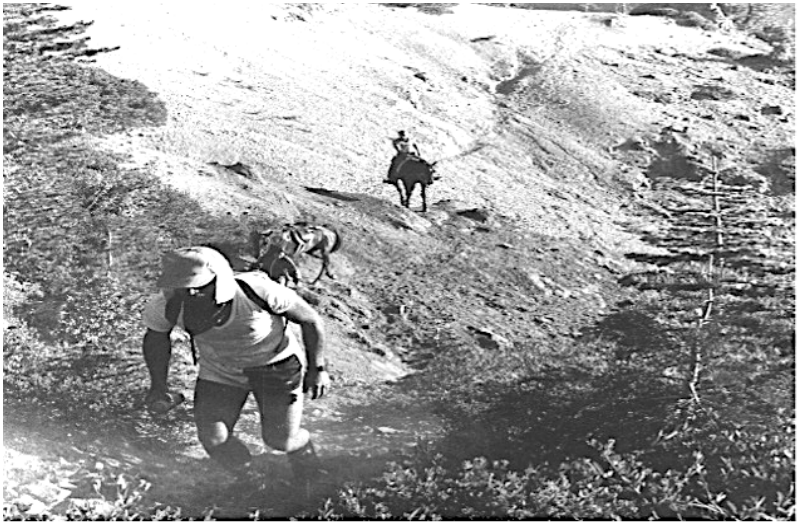
This large upright monument has some resemblance to that of a cougar head, thus the name, Cougar Rock. A modern-day landmark, this outcropping has a steep and narrow passage with deep canyons on either side. Footing is poor for humans and horses alike. An alternate route which avoids the sharp climb was built around Cougar Rock in the 1990's. Riders have come to prize a photograph at this dramatic panoramic site.[34]

This rock outcropping was named in the 1960s by Drucilla Barner, the first woman to win the Tevis Cup and 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.

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

Elephant's Trunk – 24.9 Miles
Next place: Red Star Ridge 26.7
Miles to Auburn: 75.1



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.[35]

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.

There is no mistaking Elephant's Trunk and upon reaching this unique place, riders are under two miles from the veterinarian examination and check point at the Red Star Ridge crossing.

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

Red Star Ridge - 26.7 Miles
Next place: Robinsons Flat 36
Miles to Auburn: 73.3



Photo by Lucy Trumbull, 2014

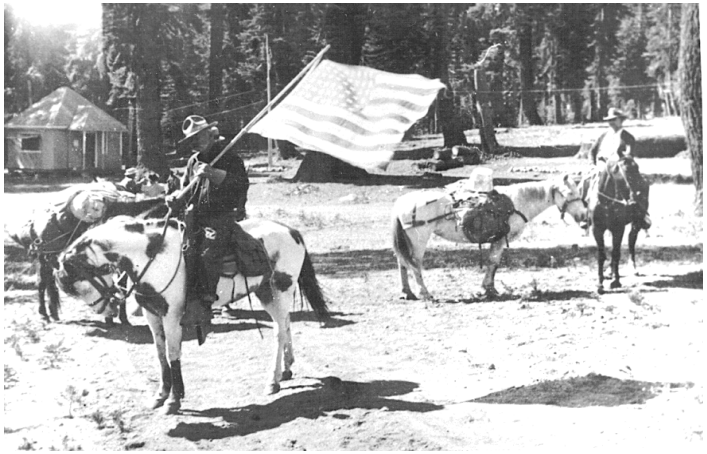
Red Star Ridge takes its name from nearby Red Star Mine and Red Star Point, which is near the place where Duncan Canyon empties into the Middle Fork of the American River. This ridge separates Duncan Canyon from the Middle Fork.[36]

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.[37] This route was used by Tevis Riders from 1971 through 1989.

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

Robinsons Flat - 36 Miles
Next place: Miller's Defeat 40.1
Miles to Auburn: 64



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 who was from the gold rush mining town of Wisconsin Hill.[38] The Robinsons played an important role in the development of the Foresthill (Placer County Emigrant) Road, as the ranch was a popular stop for travelers.[39]

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."[40]

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.[41]

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

Duncan Peak/Little Bald Mountain (Pass by)
Next place: n/a
Miles to Auburn: n/a



Duncan Peak was named for Thomas Duncan, an 1848 gold miner from Missouri who entered this area via the Emigrant Trail from Little American Valley. The region was first mined in the early 1850's.[42] Whether on USFS Road 43 or the trail to Bald Mountain, riders pass by Duncan Peak, which is less than a mile to the west of Robinsons Flat. Within a mile, atop a high cone-like mass of white granite of Bald Mountain is the Duncan Peak Lookout Tower, 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.[43] This is one of the last remaining lookouts in California. From this vantage point, one can look northeast and see Emigrant Pass near Squaw Peak and southwest to see the canyons of the Western States Trail.

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 the Western States Run and Ride. Raised in Placerville, John was a commercial pilot and later an air traffic controller.

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[42] 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.
[43] Western States Trail Guide, Fifth Edition, July 2016, Page 11.

Miller's Defeat/USFS Rd43 Intersection -40.1 Miles
Next place: Dusty Corners 44.5
Miles to Auburn: 59.9



Local legend says, 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.[44] In another account, Gene Markley says that an Irish rich placer digging was taken over by a group of Italians in hand-to-hand fighting.[45]

Near here, E. Allen Grosh and R.M. Bucke struggling on their hands and knees, were found by miners in early December 1857 having crossed the Sierra Nevada during a battering of winter storms and had become lost, frost bitten, starved, and hypothermic. Bucke survived the ordeal but had both of his feet amputated. Grosh perished and is buried at Last Chance.[46]

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[44] 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.

[45] Norm McLeod, Nuggets from the Past, Personal Notes from Gene Markley's Gold Camp Class, unpublished and undated.

[46] History Expeditions, https://historyexp.org/grosh-brothersexpedition-2023/

Dusty Corners/Deep Canyon - 44.5 Miles
Next place: Pucker Point 46.5
Miles to Auburn: 55.5



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 like what was found at the Glenn Mine.[47] 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.[48]

The Dusty Corner check point has provided riders and their horses with a welcome but brief respite before they head off into the famous hot and rugged canyons of the Western States Trail.

[47] California Journal of Mines and Geology, Vol. 32, Jan. 1936
[48] Placer County Archives, Placer County Place Names, Page 64; and, Placer County Directory, 1861, Page 200.

Pucker Point – 46.5 Miles
Next place: Last Chance 49.8
Miles to Auburn: 53.5



This trail was established 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.

Tevis began using this route in 1998 when searching for a better route to Last Chance. It replaced the 3+ mile hard-packed gravel road from Dusty Corners to Last Chance and created a much nicer trail.

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)

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 trail was a toll trail, indicating it was paid for and a profit on the investment was expected. The route was built in the early 1850's and later became a maintained toll-trail, one of the few 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.[49]

Thanks to the cooperative efforts of the USFS, 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.[50]

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

Last Chance - 49.8 Miles
Next place: Pacific Slab Mine 51.3
Miles to Auburn: 50.2



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.[51] 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.[52]

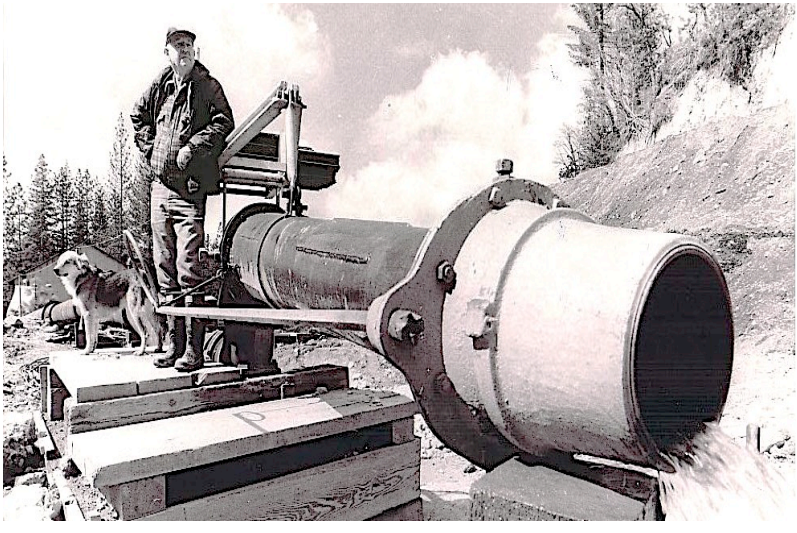
In 1863, William Brewer said from Last Chance through the next three canyons there was a toll trail; "very narrow ...was fearful, yet we had to pay $1.50 for the privilege of passing it."[53]

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.[54]

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

Pacific Slab Mine – 51.3 Miles
Next place: Volunteer Bridge 52
Miles to Auburn: 48.7



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

One mile 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.[55] The Pacific Slab Mine was the last operating hydraulic mine on the North American continent when halted in 1978.[56]

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

Volunteer Bridge – 52.0 Miles
Next place: Swinging Bridge: 52.6
Miles to Auburn: 48



Volunteer Bridge during rebuilding, (Photo: Joe McCladdie

Three quarters of the way down the canyon, riders 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 the trail 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.[57]

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

Swinging Bridge – 52.6 Miles
Next place: The Grotto 52.7
Miles to Auburn: 47.4



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.[58]

This bridge was named the "Swinging Bridge" by early Tevis 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 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.[59]

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 trail volunteers. Miraculously, the bridge was spared damage during the 2022 Mosquito Fire.

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

The Grotto - 52.7 Miles
Next place: Devil's Basin 53.9
Miles to Auburn: 47.3



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 when he ran with Tevis riders after he set his entire, over-heated body down into the cool pool of refreshing water.

If not in the river, riders don't hesitate to do as Gordy did so many years ago and immerse themselves completely into this pool of nature's finest refreshment. Horses too. There's no regret for the few minutes it takes since the rejuvenation will help power riders and their horses 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 the U.S. Forest Service and trail volunteers, the trail tread was completely rebuilt.

Devil's Basin – 53.9 Miles
Next place: Devil's Thumb 54.3
Miles to Auburn: 46.1



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[60], 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.[61] The Devil's Basin Mine near Devil's Thumb at the top of Deadwood Ridge was a large hydraulic mining operation.[62]

This usually hot and strenuous climb out of the canyon has 37 graded switchbacks until the aid at the top of the ridge is reached in just under two miles.[63]

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

Devil's Thumb - 54.3 Miles
Next place: Deadwood Ridge 54.4
Miles to Auburn: 45.7



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.[64] 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, riders have nearly completed the long 2,000-foot ascent from the deep canyon below.[65]

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

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

Deadwood Ridge – 54.4 Miles
Next place: The Pump 55.0
Miles to Auburn: 45.6



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 Western States Run and Tevis Ride representatives 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 and his father, and Shannon Weil. 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 – 55.0 Miles
Next place: Deadwood 56.3
Miles to Auburn: 45.0



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.[66]

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

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

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

Deadwood – 56.3 Miles
Next place: Trail 6 56.4
Miles to Auburn: 43.7



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

"Deadwood" is a California provincialism signifying a sure thing.[67] 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.[68][5] 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.[69]

Deadwood could only be reached by foot along precipitous trails constructed in the early 1850's.[70] 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.[71] At one time Sam Colt, the inventor and gun manufacturer of the Colt Revolver, lived and prospected for gold here.[72] Alas, the last cemetery remains were burned by the 2022 Mosquito Fire.

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

Trail 6 – 56.4 Miles
Next place: Kaput Springs 56.1
Miles to Auburn: 43.6



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.[73]

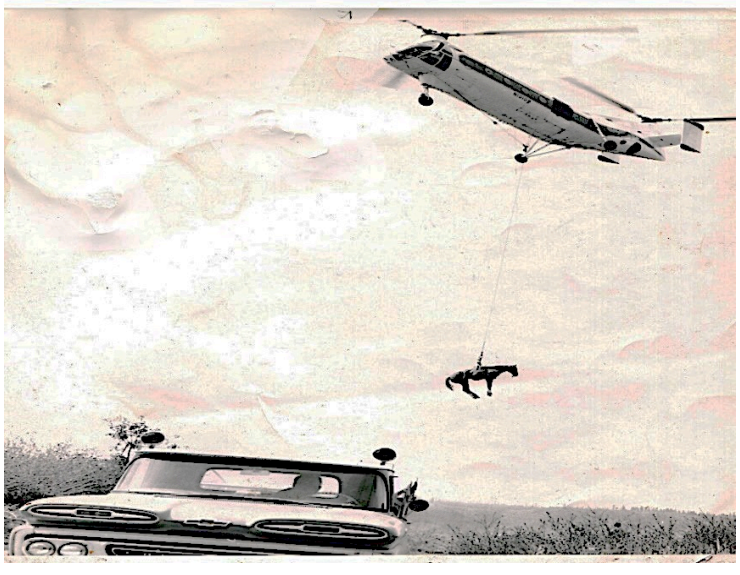
Trail 6 is part of a "green sticker" network of trails utilized primarily by dirt bike/moto and Off-Highway Motor Vehicles (OHV). Vehicles having green or red stickers are OHVs. The trails have numerical names; this one is "6".

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.[74]

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

Kaput Springs (The Pipe or Holiday Springs)–56.1 Miles
Next place: Rainbow Land Mine 58.6
Miles to Auburn: 43.9



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 Tevis 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, riders know they are about halfway to the canyon bottom.

Rainbow Land Mine – 58.6 Miles
Next place: Bake Oven Trail 58.9
Miles to Auburn: 41.4



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.[75]

The only evidence of man's presence is the remains of the mining location: water ditches, collection ponds, remains of a cabin, and equipment.[76] 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.[77] 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.[78] 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.[79]

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

Bake Oven Trail – 58.9 Miles
Next place: El Dorado Creek/Canyon 60.0
Miles to Auburn: 41.1



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 nearly 3,000 feet upward, it indeed is a bake oven.[80]

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 January 1856 Thompson began carrying the mail 90 miles between Placerville and Genoa, Nevada and continued for thirteen winters until 1869.[81]

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 in Olympic Valley that honors the memory and heroic efforts of this America West pioneer. Western States runners are known to touch Thompson's foot for good luck before the start of the race.

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

El Dorado Creek/Canyon - 60.0 Miles
Next place: Poor Man's Creek 61.8
Miles to Auburn: 40.0

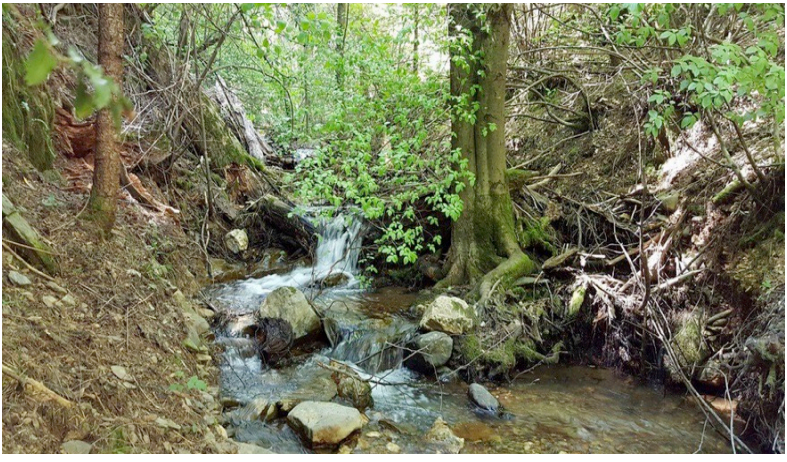


At the time of the exploration of South America, the Spanish term for 'gilded man,' *el dorado*, was the designation given to a mythical Indian chief whose body was covered with gold dust. With the discovery of gold in California, it was simply used as a name for the gold region, and it spread throughout the world.[82] 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 over 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.[83] Tevis riders are often welcomed at canyon's bottom by the volunteers who douse their horses and offer cool drinks, and courage for the climb to Michigan Bluff.

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

Poor Man's Creek – 61.8 Miles
Next place: Michigan Bluff 62.8
Miles to Auburn: 38.2



Located about 10-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.[84]

One of the disillusioned prospectors was Leland Stanford. He came to Michigan City in 1853 and mined in Poor Man's Canyon.[85] His efforts in Placer County's gold mining were not notable, but it was a start for one of California's "big money men."[86] 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 Leland Stanford Jr. University.

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

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[84] Erwin Gudde, California Place Names, 1947, Page 298.
[85] 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.
[86] Auburn Sentinel, "Noted Figures of Michigan Bluff," Bill Wilson, June 12, 1992, Page 8.

Michigan Bluff - 62.8 Miles
Next place: Bird's/Byrd's Valley 64.1
Miles to Auburn: 37.2



Leland Stanford's Store, Michigan Bluff (foresthillhistory.org)

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.[87] 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.[88]

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.[89]

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[87] *The Pony Express*, Sonora, California, date unknown.
[88] Western States Trail Guide, Fifth Edition, July 2016, Page 17.
[89] Placer County Archives, Placer County Place Names, Page 117.

Bird's/Byrd's Valley – 64.1 Miles
Next place: Chicken Hawk Staging Area/Volcano Canyon
64.9
Miles to Auburn: 35.9



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.[90] 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).[91]

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

Chicken Hawk Staging/Volcano Canyon–64.9 Miles
Next place: Paragon Mine 67.1
Miles to Auburn: 35.1



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 less than 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.[92]

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.[93]

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

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[92] Western States Trail Guide, Fifth Edition, July 2016, Page 19.
[93] Ibid.

Paragon Mine – 67.1 Miles
Next place: Bath 67.7
Miles to Auburn: 32.9



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.[94] 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*),[95] which is an entrance to an underground mine which is horizontal or nearly horizontal,[96] and by which the mine can be entered, drained of water,[97] 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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[94] Thompson & West, History of Placer County, Oakland, California, 1882, Page 230.
[95] Ripley, George; Dana, Charles A., eds. (1879).
[96] Paul W. Thrush, 1968, *A Dictionary of Mining, Mineral, and Related Terms*, US Bureau of Mines, Page 12.
[97] R. W. Raymond, 1881, *Glossary of Mining and Metallurgical Terms*, American Institute of Mining Engineers, Page 3.

Bath – 67.7 Miles
Next place: Foresthill 68.6
Miles to Auburn: 32.3



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.[98]

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.[99] With the rapid growth of nearby Foresthill, Bath's population dwindled, and it returned to being a quiet mountain hamlet.

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

Foresthill - 68.6 Miles
Next place: Cal Street 69.4
Miles to Auburn: 31.4



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,[100] because of the surrounding dense pine forest.[101]

Early prospectors included members of the William and Henry Ford family, who worked the mines for six years. Henry, one of William Ford's sons, created one of the world's leading automobile manufacturers – the Ford Motor Company.[102]

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.[103]

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

Cal Street – 69.4 Miles
Next place: Dardanelles Creek 72.3
Miles to Auburn: 30.6



Before 1981, the Tevis course went down the Foresthill Road, through the streets of the Todd Valley neighborhood, and onto White Oak Flat. The route then dropped down into 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.

1982 was the inaugural year for Tevis using Cal Street. A quarter mile west of the hotel in Foresthill, riders 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.[104]

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.

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

Dardanelles Creek – 72.3 Miles
Next place: Eagle Creek Hydro-electric Site (Cal-1) 73.3
Miles to Auburn: 27.7



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.[105] 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.[106]

The trail follows chalky bleached terrain through a corridor of baking manzanita. Directly west, riders will see the orange and white cliffs near Todd Valley made bare by hydraulic mining. In approximately two 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 Francisco's and the Ruck-A-Chucky river crossing.

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

Eagle Creek Hydro-electric/Dardanelles (Cal-1)-73.3 Miles
Next place: Burl Tree 77.6
Miles to Auburn: 26.7



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.[107] The Forest Hill Electric Light and Power Plant was a hydroelectric plant generating power for local distribution.[108] Known as the Eagle Creek Hydroelectric Project, the remains of this plant were discovered and restored in 1981.[109] Today, modern-day hydroelectric power generation has replaced the technology of the 1910's. This site is listed as a cultural feature.[110]

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

Burl Tree – 77.6 Miles
Next place: Elevator Shaft 79.5
Miles to Auburn: 22.4



Kevin Sawchuk had a tradition on Western States Endurance Run race day which clearly worked for him as he was a rare 1,000-mile silver buckle finisher (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 Western States runners and Tevis riders pass by this distinct and proud oak, they tip their cap, sprinkle a few drops of water at its roots, and if they are under a moonlit evening, give a shoutout to Sawchuk.

Just stay in your saddle - we don't want riders to trip and fall as it's a long way down the steep embankment to the river.

Elevator Shaft – 79.5 Miles
Next place: Cal-2 (Peachstone) 80.3
Miles to Auburn: 20.5



The Elevator Shaft was named by Mark "Marko" Falcone, a Western 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 Cal-2 (Peachstone) checkpoint. 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 canyon wall at the top of the Elevator Shaft; thus, creating the .3-mile steep descent on what has become a rugged trail. Once at the bottom of the Shaft, there is less than five minutes of nice terrain to the Cal-2 checkpoint.

Cal-2 (Peachstone) - 80.3 Miles
Next place: Grotto #2 (Peachstone Creek) 81.1
Miles to Auburn: 19.7



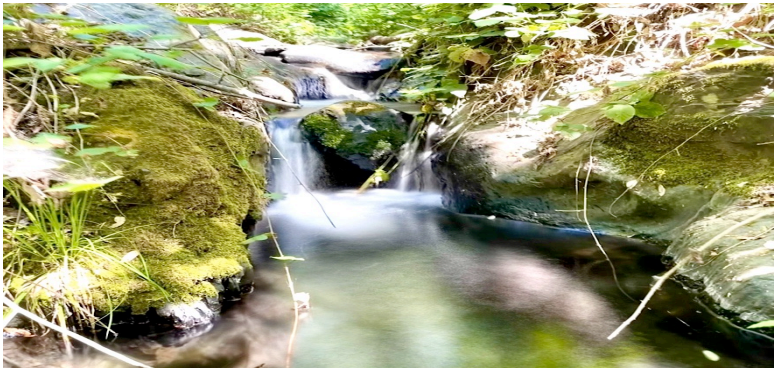
After the "Cal 2 – Dardanelles" sign the trail descends on a well-graded switchback trail to Peachstone Gulch (pictured Ann Trason with runners)

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

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 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.

Grotto #2 (Peachstone Creek) – 81.1 Miles
Next place: Six Minute Hill 81.6
Miles to Auburn: 18.9



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 Cal-2 checkpoint to the river. Once here, the trail meanders along the river contour to Ruck-A-Chucky rapids and beyond.

The Grotto is important to riders and runners given there is little water available on the sixteen miles of Cal Loop. This spot alerts riders and runners it's less than a mile before turning right onto the start of the steep climb up to the former Cal-3 checkpoint near Ford's Bar. Turning left at the intersection of the trail the road will lead to Ford's Bar along the American River and a welcoming opportunity to cool off and rest before continuing.

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

Six-Minute Hill/Nugget Road – 81.6 Miles
Next place: Ford's Bar (Cal-3) 82.0
Miles to Auburn: 18.4



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 (Nugget) Road and the beginning of what is known by 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 riders are not ready for it.

The sixteen-mile California Street or "Cal Street" section of the trail was introduced in 1981. 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. Riders had a difficult segment, which is primarily single-track, much of it in the heat of the day, and few riders had the chance to see that section before race day. Later, the checkpoints were added to the segment between Dardanelles and Ford's Bar to make that part of the trail more rider and horse friendly.

The trail from here to Auburn goes past various river bars, once so full of life, thronged with speculative humanity, so productive of gold mining, and the scene for so many strange incidents. There were mines all along the river, at the bars and up the hillsides, consequently each having an interesting history. The names of the river bars told of hardships, nationalities of those filing claims to mines, and others had no significant ties at all.

Ford's Bar Road (Cal-3) - 82.0 Miles
Next place: Slug Gulch 83.6
Miles to Auburn: 18.0



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.[111]

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 Ford's Bar Road. If you crossed the river, you could take the Roanoak Trail up to Georgetown from Ford's Bar.[112]

[111] Google Bard, April 2023
[112] Placer County Archives, Placer County Place Names, Page 78.

Slug Gulch – 83.6 Miles
Next place: Sandy Bottom (Cal-4) 84.1
Miles to Auburn: 16.4



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.[113] The name Slug Gulch is also a reference to gold that was found in the area where it 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-1850's that stays close to the river, passing through moist streambeds lined with horsetails, giant ferns, and rock walls dotted with succulents.[114] 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.

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

Sandy Bottom – 84.1 Miles
Next place: Ruck-A-Chucky Rapids 84.5
Miles to Auburn: 15.4



This is a narrow trail along what use to be a wagon road built during the Gold Rush. The location had been the Cal-4 aid station for Western States Run but was abandoned several years ago.

The sandy river bottom and lack of rapids here were caused by sediment trapped by the damming effect of Ruck-A-Chucky rapids. 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 2½ miles.[115]

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.[116] This system became the literal building block of the Comstock Lode silver mines in Nevada, which yielded over a half-a-billion dollars in today's value. Later, Deidesheimer's engineering design was used in the building of skyscrapers in east coast cities.

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

Rucky (Ruck-A) Chucky Rapids - 84.5 Miles
Next place: Francisco's 85.6
Miles to Auburn: 15.5



Ruck-A-Chucky Falls (Class VI – Portage)

Legend has it that the name Ruck-A-Chucky originated from several Chinese miners 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 and campers.

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.[117]

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

Francisco's – 85.6 Miles
Next place: Poverty Bar 88.5
Miles to Auburn: 14.4



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 early 1970's. This site was named by early Tevis participants when the former resident, known only as Francisco, was forced to abandon his home at the time the Army Corp of Engineers was going to build a bridge across the river.[118][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 were 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.

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

Poverty Bar – 88.5 Miles

Next place: Maine Bar 89.7
Miles to Auburn: 11.5



Poverty Bar 1857 (Wet-plate stereograph by Charles Weed, Placer County Museums Collection)

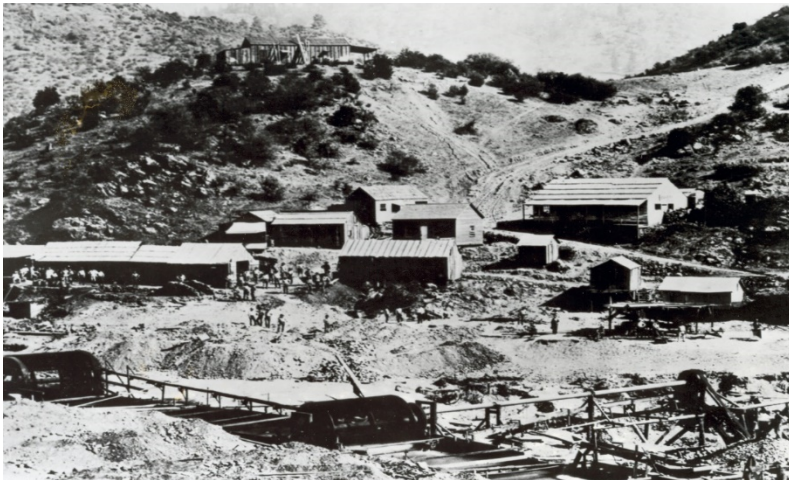
From Francisco's, the Tevis route heads west into Gas Canyon connecting with Driver's Flat Road, following the north side of the river past Oregon Bar. The trail winds in and out of tributary stream ravines, past the ruins of gold camps near Cherokee Bar, and through shady forests of oak and pine. The trail dips close to the river along a primitive Gold Rush era wagon road. After three miles, Poverty Bar, a sandy beach, is reached and the river is forded to the south side near the mouth of American Canyon at Philadelphia Bar. Here, water levels fluctuate during the summer.[119] Former mining settlements include: Oregon, Cherokee, Poverty, and Maine Bars, and American Canyon.[120]

In 1853, about 1,000 hands built a flume here, and some 4,000 miners made use of it when completed.[121] The trail follows the route of the Grand Flume, a 13-mile long wood and canvas flume that was built in an effort to extract gold from the river during the 1850's.

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[119] Western States Trail Guide, Fifth Edition, July 2016, Page 23.
[120] U.S. Department of the Interior/Bureau of Land Management, American River National Recreation Area Feasibility Study, May 1990. Pages 16-17.
[121] Placer County Archives, Placer County Place Names, Pages 64-65, 148.

Maine Bar – 89.7 Miles
Next place: Brown's Bar 91.6
Miles to Auburn: 10.3



Maine Bar 1857 (Wet-plate stereograph by Charles Weed)

This picture of Maine Bar is labeled, "Noon Time at Cromwell's Boarding House." The men in the picture undoubtedly came from Cromwell's Boarding House. At the top of the hill is the Fandango House. It was estimated that the 13-mile flume, as pictured, was 12 feet wide and 4 feet deep, and the amount of timber necessary to build the flume was more than five and a quarter million board feet of lumber.[122]

In 1857, the two largest mining camps on the Middle Fork were Maine Bar and Kennebec Bar, near Brown's Bar.[123]

[122] "The Gold Rush Period on the Middle Fork of the American River," tape recording of Wendell Robie's presentation to the Placer County Historical Society on October 5, 1972, Oral History Committee.
[123] Ibid.

Brown's Bar – 91.6 Miles
Next place: Murderer's Bar 93.3
Miles to Auburn: 8.4



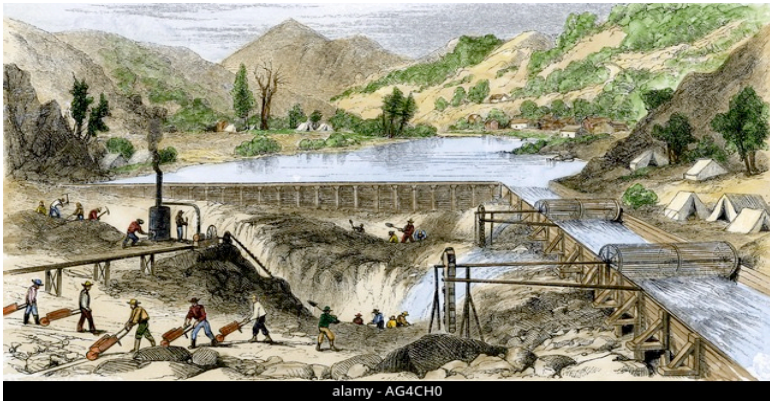
Once teeming with thousands of gold prospectors, this area of the river canyon included Browns Cut which was ancient river deposits that were worked by a complicated system of dredging.[124]

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.[125] The Mining Bureau said a dragline dredge was operated in 1946.[126]

Along the Quarry Road, just before Walmsley's Turn, one can peer down towards the river and view Murderer's Bar which supported a population of hundreds of miners in the early 1850's and produced $2.5 millions of placer gold by 1875.

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

Murderer's Bar – 93.3 Miles
Next place: Walmsley's Turn 93.4
Miles to Auburn: 6.7



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

There are numerous accounts of the origin of the name Murderer's Bar, the most plausible being it took it's 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 Americans. Later, a war party returned to the site and killed the five miners.[127] 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.[128]

Sacajawea's, son, Jean Baptiste Charbonneau, sometimes known as "Pompey" or "Little Pomp" accompanied his father Toussaint Charbonneau, a French-Canadian trader, and his mother as they led Lewis and Clark expedition on their 5,000 mile 20-month trip of discovery from North Dakota to the Pacific Ocean and back. Charbonneau came to Murderer's Bar the winter of 1848-49 and stayed there or in Auburn as a desk clerk at the Orleans Hotel until 1866.[129]

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[127] 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.
[128] Wendell Robie, "The Big Crevice", unpublished and undated.
[129] Karri Samson, "Charbonneau," unpublished and undated.

Walmsley's Turn – 93.4 Miles
Next place: **Mountain Quarries/Hawver** Cave 94.0
Miles to Auburn: 6.6



We couldn't get thru this book without using one AI-generated photo!

Shortly after Murderer's Bar, the Western States Run 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.[130] 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 Western States race, ahead of the course record by five minutes. At about mile 93, he missed the slight left to begin ascending the hill, passed Mountain Quarries, remained on the Quarry Road all the way to Highway 49, 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 Western States Run course records and four wins, but inspired a nation of ultrarunners to never quit.

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

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

Hawver Cave/Mountain Quarries – 94.0 Miles
Next place: No Hands Bridge/Mtn Quarries RR Bridge 96.0
Miles to Auburn: 6.0



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

By the summer of 1849, there were companies of miners working on Murderer's Bar and nearby river bars. By 1850, wagon roads were developed to Cave Valley, Pilot Hill and in the other direction, by crossing the river on a wire suspension bridge, toward Foresthill and Yankee Jim's. These 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. Local Auburn dentist, Dr. J.C. Hawver, explored a limestone cave 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. The glory-hole method of mining the limestone at Mountain Quarries started in 1910. 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.

The Quarry Road to the Highway 49 crossing is a wide, well-graded road that parallels the Middle Fork of the American River, that was named for its purpose: moving limestone from the Mountain Quarries to Auburn and beyond.

No Hands Bridge/Mtn Quarries RR Bridge-96.0 Miles
Next place: Black Hole of Calcutta 97.7
Miles to Auburn: 4.0



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

The Mountain Quarries Bridge, aka No Hands Bridge, was completed on March 23, 1912, designed 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!"[131]

At construction, the bridge was the longest concrete arch railroad bridge in the world, built to determine the practicality of concrete for long bridges and considered a great piece of railroad bridge engineering.[132]

The bridge is considered nationally significant by the U.S. Department of the Interior/Bureau of Land Management. The Mountain Quarries Bridge was listed to the National Register of Historic Places on February 11, 2004.

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[131] Jim Ferris, Michael Lynch, Sheila Toner, American River Canyon Hikes, Auburn State Recreation Area Canyon Keepers, 2006, Pages 52-53.
[132] National Register of Historic Places, Section 8, Page 1, February 11, 2004.

Black Hole of Calcutta – 97.7 Miles
Next place: Robie Point 98.1
Miles to Auburn: 2.3



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.

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

Robie Point - 98.1 Miles
Next place: Western States Trail Staging Area 99.9
Miles to Auburn: 1.9



Wendell Robie and Nugget at Robie Point (Photo: Charles Barieau)

Wendell T. Robie 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.[133] Robie attended the School of Forestry at the University of California Berkeley, and School of Business at the University of Arizona, before returning to Auburn to manage his father's business, the Auburn Lumber Company.[134] Robie became the President of the Savings and Loan, which started out in his mother's desk drawer when the family owned the Lumber Company.

While riding with the Sacramento County Horseman Association, Robie placed a wager that he and his Arabian stallion could complete the route from Lake Tahoe to Auburn in one day. On August 7, 1955, he and four other horsemen followed the well-known 100-mile pioneer path. Robie won the bet. Robie Point honors a man who had a tremendous impact on the city, the state, and the world of sports. Wendell Robie left his mark on the history of the Western States Trail.

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

Western States Trail Staging Area - 99.9 Miles
Next place: McCann Stadium, Gold Co. Fairgrounds 100.0
Miles to Auburn: 0.1



Western States Trail Foundation board member Frank Herald, who worked for the Auburn State Recreation Area, re-routed the trail from Robie Point to the Gold Country Fairgrounds in late 1980s, onto canyon roads and a newly constructed trail to the Western States Trail Staging Area.

This location was once home to Camp Flint that was originally built as a State Relief Agency "unemployed camp" in 1932, which was eventually used as a prisoner-of-war (POW) camp for German and Italian prisoners captured during World War II.[135] From here and the neighboring Auburn Dam Overlook parking lot to the Gold Country Fairgrounds, Camp Flint played host to a Works Progress Administration (WPA) relief camp during the Great Depression, World War II-era railroad security, physical therapy center to prepare soldiers for return to the front lines, and a POW camp, used as a headquarters for the Military Police Battalion to construct and maintain a railroad crossing. The former DoD radio communications building to the south on the hill is all that's left of the former camp. The adjacent Southern Pacific Railroad Companstation was known as Flint Station.[136] Camp Flint is considered a historic site significant at the state level.[137]

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[135] American River National Rec Area Feasibility Study May 1990. Pages 16-17.
[136] Dan Sebby, "Historic California Posts, Camps, Stations and Airfields," California Military Department.
[137] U.S. Department of the Interior/Bureau of Land Management, American River National Recreation Area Feasibility Study, May 1990



Four horsemen took turns carrying a mail bag with commemorative covers being handed to Auburn's U.S. Postmaster at the finish of the first 100-mile one-day ride

Since 1955, McCann Stadium has served as the official finish of Tevis. By the time everyone reaches the finish, Tevis riders will have found, both physically and mentally, as many valleys and peaks as mark this trail. The riders who press through the wary and lonely hours on the trail will get through only because they are both tough and at peace with themselves and their horses.

What they had done, what they had seen, heard, felt, feared--
the places, the sounds, the colors, the cold, the darkness,
the emptiness, the bleakness, the beauty. 'Til they died,
this stream of memory would set them apart, if
imperceptibly to anyone but themselves, from
everyone else. For they had crossed...
the mountains...

Bernard DeVoto, The Course of Empire, 1952.

In 1936, Vernon McCann led a grass roots movement charged with the formation of the 20th District Agricultural Association. Because of his tireless efforts, Mr. McCann has been called the "Father of the Auburn District Fair." An Auburn Journal story in 2002 described McCann as a "delightful gentleman who spent his lifetime in passionate dedication to Auburn, fighting constantly to make life better for all its residents." He was also known as "Mr. Auburn."



Placer Garage, in Auburn's Historic Central Square (Placer Co. 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..."[138] The "town" consisted of three to four tents. By 1851, Auburn became the seat of Placer County and 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.

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

The Places We Rode

In the years following the inaugural 100 Mile One Day ride in August of 1955 there have been six different starting locations and numerous route changes due to hazardous snow depths over the passes, rising river flows, natural disasters, weather, trail conditions, development, etc. It should be noted that besides the one-day ride there were two other trail rides that left from Squaw Valley on the same weekend including a two- and three-day rides to Auburn.

From 1955 to 1969 the route from Tahoe City was along the Truckee River to Bear Creek (Alpine Meadows). At Deer Park Ski Hill, the trail headed west to Five Lakes Crossing trail to the upper west rim of Squaw Valley, now known as Olympic Valley, crossed Squaw Creek at Tower 20 and rejoined the Placer County Emigrant Road over Emigrant Pass and Watson's Monument, Little American Valley (site of the Greek Hotel), Hodgson's Cabin, Red Star Ridge to Robinson Flat. However, in 1961 the route was altered from Five Lakes by going further west to Whiskey Creek and along the Pacific Crest Trail to Little American Valley, thereby avoiding the historic route through Olympic Valley to a little past Watson's Monument at Emigrant Pass. In 1969 it became necessary to move the start from Tahoe City to Olympic Valley due to increasing development of the north Lake Tahoe area.

Olympic Valley served as the starting point from 1970 to 1989 except for 1983 when Tevis commenced from Serene Lakes south of Soda Springs on the western side of the Sierras due to hazardous snow depths from well before the Escarpment near Emigrant Pass all the way to Robinsons Flat. The Tevis route started from Serene Lake through the Cedars in the Royal Gorge, over the snow-covered pass at Lyon Ridge, down to French Meadows along the Poppy Trail to Duncan Canyon, and reconnected to the traditional route at Robinsons Flat.

When the start of Tevis was moved from Tahoe City to Olympic Valley in 1970 the mileage was added to make up the difference by extending the route from the Foresthill Divide down Red Star Ridge to Duncan Canyon and to Robinsons Flat where Tevis reconnected to the traditional route. This route was used until 1990, when the start was once again moved due to the development of Olympic Valley to Robie Equestrian Park east of the Truckee River.

Robie Equestrian Park has been the start of Tevis since 1990 except for 2011 and 2023. In 2011, the snow depth over Emigrant Pass from the previous winter left organizers with the decision to postpone Tevis to October 2011 with the intention of starting and riding the route from Robie Equestrian Park to Auburn. As luck would have it, an early winter weather storm on the Wednesday before Tevis prompted a last-minute change to start from and finished in Auburn. The out-and-back route lead eastward from Auburn on the traditional trail through Foresthill and past Volcano Canyon and the Chicken Hawk Staging Area. Instead of continuing past Michigan Bluff, the route headed south on Gorman Ranch Road to Mosquito Ridge Road. In a planned move, the 2017 and 2023 Tevis started from Soda Springs instead of nearby Serene Lakes due to lingering deep snow at Emigrant Pass. Unlike the 2016 route that went from the start to French Meadows and into Duncan Canyon to reach Robinsons Flat, the 2023 route after reaching Lyon Ridge from Soda Springs turned onto the traditional route past Cougar Rock to Robinsons Flat, but was diverted at Francisco's by heading up Driver's Flat to the south side of the Foresthill Divide Loop Trail to reach the confluence of the North and Middle Fork of the American River where Tevis riders joined the traditional route to Auburn.

There are other former routes have also been travelled over the years. For example, during the August 1955 inaugural ride and afterward, when riders reached the top of Bath Road near Foresthill, they crossed the Auburn-Foresthill Road to the Air Strip, took a left on the Owl Creek Trail along the wagon road to another crossing of the Auburn-Foresthill Road at Spring Garden Road, then along McKeon Ponderosa Road to White Oak Flat, Horsemen's Park at beautiful Fiddler's Green, and down the canyon to Francisco's. The riders crossed the river below Ruck-A-Chucky rapids on the Ponderosa Bridge and travelled up the grade on the south side of the river along a narrow road to Spanish Bar and west to American Canyon, then passed the river bars to the lower portion of the rock quarry, No-hands bridge, to Robie Point (city limits), and along city streets to the Fairgrounds. This route was repeated with some modifications several time after 1955.

For several of the early years in the 1950s and 1960s, the route from Robinsons Flat to Last Chance took the current route past the Barney Cavanah (Cavanaugh) Ridge route on USFS Road 43 and the Last Chance Wagon Road to Dusty Corners.

However, for many years from the mid-1960s through the 1990s riders turned down Cavanah Ridge through Deep Canyon to reach Dusty Corners. Since 2003, the current route from Robinsons Flat is the historically accurate wagon road route to Last Chance.

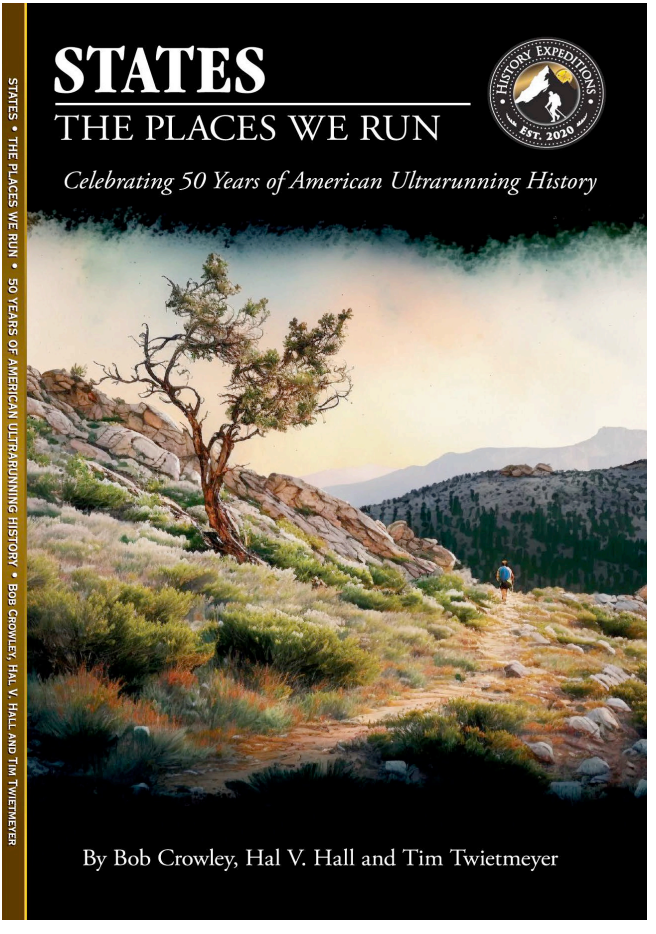
Another example of a route modification was the route from Foresthill to Todd's Valley through White Oak Flat to Francisco's, which was abandoned in 1982 due to the development of paved roads and the hinderance of private property. Thus, the use of the so-called California Street Loop began into the American River canyon to Francisco's. This popular route also began to be used in 1986 by the annual Western States Endurance Run.

After the flood of the Middle Fork of the American River in December 1964, which demolished the Ponderosa Bridge at the Ruck-A-Chucky crossing, and depending upon on the river flows, the fording of the American River would either be located here or further down river at Poverty Bar. After the California Division of Forestry created a boulder filled crossing of the Ruck-A-Chucky crossing in the late-1970s, the fording of the river became too hazardous for horses to cross. As a result, the Poverty Bar to Philadelphia Bar crossing was deemed to be the best location to ford the river. However, Tevis organizers found the route from Francisco's up the unimproved wagon road to Driver's Flat and Echo Hills Ranch (aka Butcher Ranch) and back down to Poverty Bar was making Tevis to difficult. The current route from Francisco's to Poverty Bar was discovered by the Robie Foundation in the early 1980's as part of the effort to relocate the Western States Trail in this area. By doing so, the former route after the crossing at Ruck-A-Chucky, up Sliger Mine Road past McCrary's Bend/Green Gate, Dead Truck Trail, and American Canyon to Maine Bar was abandoned by Tevis riders. However, this way remains the route of the annual Western States Endurance Run.

Due to what route changes would occur upriver and, in the mountains, the Cave Valley, upper Highway 49 crossing, and Pointed Rocks trail has been used periodically during Tevis. This route starts at Walmsley's Turn on the Quarry Road, which has consistently been used during the annual Western States Endurance Run.

Tevis began using the Pucker Point route in the mid-1990s after searching for a better route to Last Chance from Dusty Corners. However, the hard-packed gravel road from Dusty Corners to Last Chance is periodically used by Tevis.

Many of these other routes are described in our sister book, STATES: The Places We Run, published in 2023. There may have been other Tevis trails used that we have forgotten but, when identified, we will include in future editions of TEVIS: The Places We Ride.



Cover Design by Charles T. Wegman



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

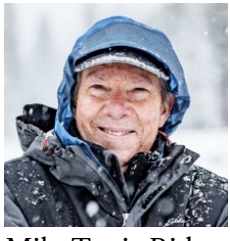
Westward from Auburn, the Western States Pioneer Express National Recreation Trail continues past former rich mining camps along the American River, through Folsom Lake State Park and along the American River Parkway. The western terminus of the trail is at the confluence of the American and Sacramento 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 Western States Run 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, 32-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 Western States 100-mile Run. 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.

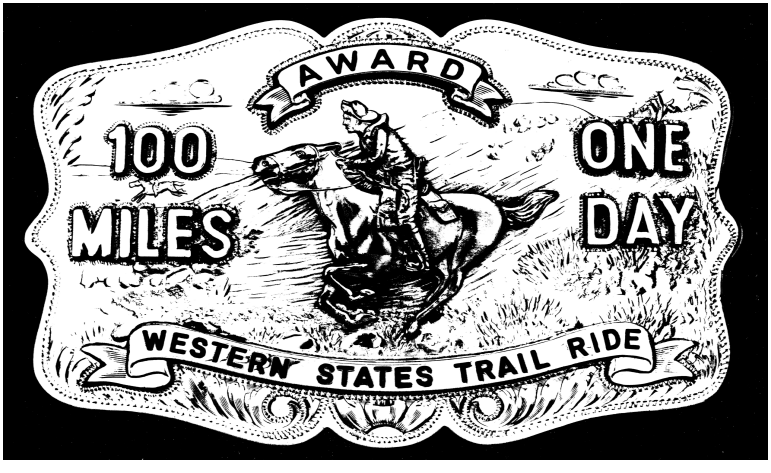
Since then, they have organized several Expeditions designed to research and reveal historically significant discoveries (trails, places, artifacts, new facts, etc...). The goal for each Expedition is to discover new findings and honor the historical protagonist's survivalism and heroism. The stories 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, Snowshoe Thompson and our Discovery Channel broadcast. You can also download a free digital copy of this book or our sister book, *The Places We Run*, and/or our book about the Grosh Brothers, all from our website.

About Western States Trail 100-Mile One Day Ride

The founders of Tevis offered their vision of a majestic riding trail penetrating the wild beauty of mountain peaks and valleys hallowed by the Washoe and Maidu tribes, and later crossed by explorers, settlers, and gold-seekers. These founders declared that the virtue of such a trail would lie in helping preserve the historic significance of its route and would encourage people to return to a simple life perhaps furthering their appreciation of nature, history, and the outdoors through the humane use of horses. Riders can trade the hectic world of traffic jammed freeways and skyscrapers for a realm of natural splendor while passing through cathedral-like groves of virgin forests that shelter vast numbers of wildlife. Therein lies the essence of the Tevis and the Western States Trail.



Buckle Award for Tevis Finishers

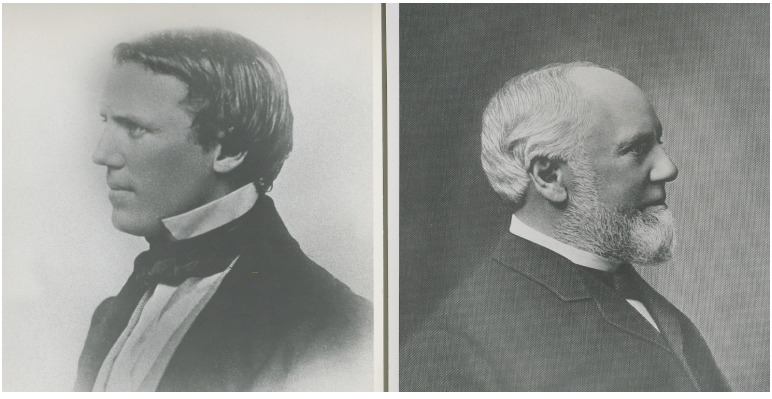
Since 1955, horsemen and horsewomen from throughout America and from around the world compete annually in the Western States 100 Miles One Day Ride. This event is the ultimate test of horsemanship, challenging both horse and rider of their strength, stamina, and expertise. The Tevis is the founding event of its kind and is the most arduous equestrian endurance riding event in the world.



William "Willy" S. Tevis, Jr., grandson of Lloyd Tevis

The horses, express riders, and stagecoaches of Wells Fargo & Co. are significant symbols of the American West. Lloyd Tevis, a financier who became president of Wells Fargo from 1872 to 1892, epitomized the spirit of that era through his many ventures in the making of the West. In 1959, the Lloyd Tevis Cup was established as an award of distinguishing merit for the fastest riding time and horsemanship during the annual Western States Trail 100-mile One Day Ride. Three brothers donated the award in honor of their grandfather, Lloyd Tevis.

William S. Tevis, Jr., (pictured above) set records in 1923 by riding Pony Express style, beating nine of the United States Army's best cavalry riders traveling 257 miles in 11 1/2 hours from the Nevada State line to the San Mateo County Fairgrounds. In 1932, on a $5,000 with movie director Hal Roach, Willy Tevis broke a world record by riding a series of polo ponies 200 miles in 10 hours, 2 minutes, and 3 seconds over a measured indoor arena in San Francisco. Both unbroken records have for years astounded America's most astute horsemen. During the 1960s, the Tevis Cup was proudly on display in the Wells Fargo Bank History Room on Montgomery Street in San Francisco, California.



Lloyd Tevis (left) and James Ben Ali Haggin (right)

The James Ben Ali Haggin Cup is the other equally coveted award of the Western States Trail Ride. Donated in 1964 by Louis Haggin in honor of his grandfather, James Ben Ali Haggin, a business and law partner with Lloyd Tevis, during the early days of California. The Haggin Cup honors superior horsemanship from the first ten to finish "as demonstrated by the superior condition of the contestant's horse during and after the ride."

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.[139]

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 20 hours and 42 minutes, Gordy arrived in Auburn.[140]

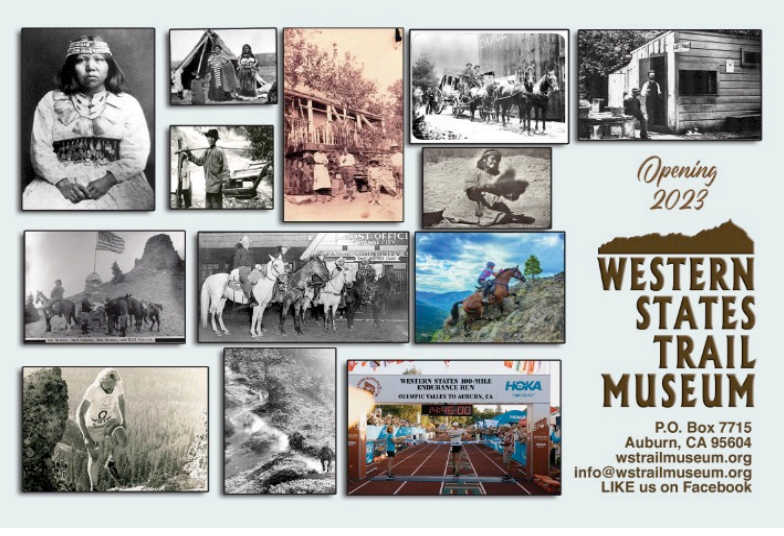
In 1978, the "Gang of Four" (Phil Gardner, Mo Livermore, Shannon Weil, and Curt Sproul) created an independent annual running event for the last weekend in June.[141] States continues to grow with international interest far exceeding the 369 annual entrants allowed for the once-in-a lifetime experience of running States.[142]

The Western States Endurance Run (States) is the crown jewel of ultra-trail marathons, and the most demanding one-day event in the world. Like Tevis, States is the founding event of its kind.

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[139] Auburn Journal, Aug. 3, 1972
[140] https://www.wser.org/how-it-all-began/
[141] Ibid.
[142] Ibid.

Western States Trail Museum–Coming to Fruition



The history of the Western States Trail began in the prehistorical 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 stand ready for display and interpretation in the 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 or visit their website at: www.wstrailmuseum.org.

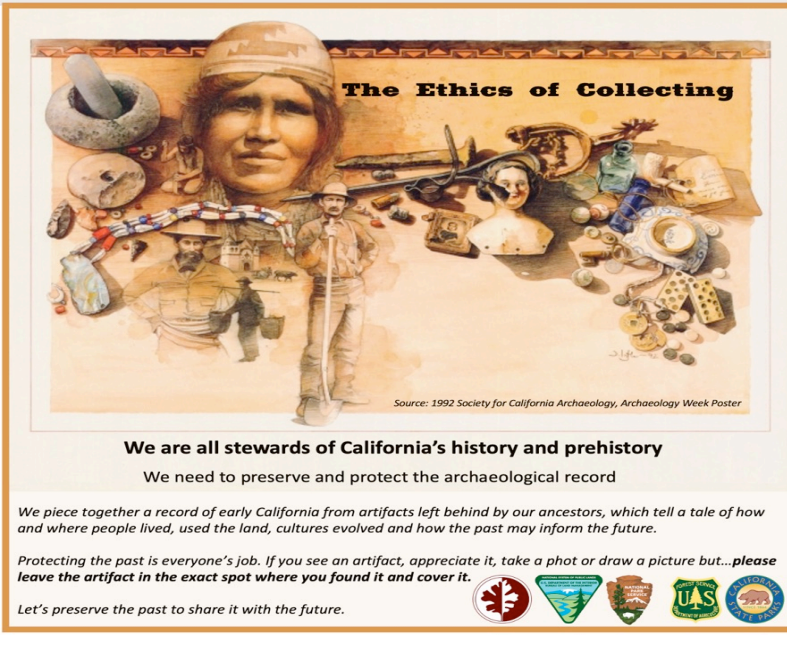
The Ethics of Collecting

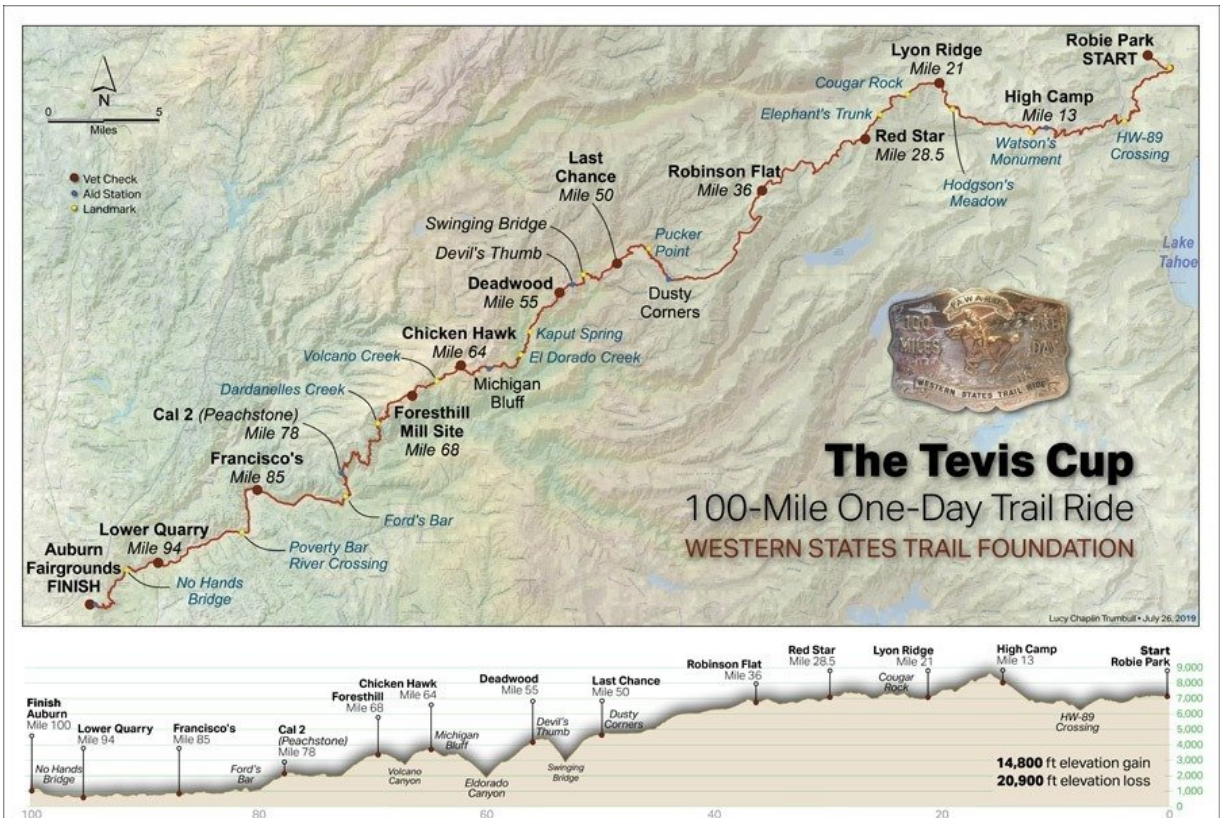
It's common knowledge, right? We all say it, "If you find an artifact on the ground, it's okay to pick it up. Just don't dig!"

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

Artifact collection on public lands 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.




N
0
5
Miles
Vet Check
Aid Station
Landmark
Robie Park
START
Lyon Ridge
Mile 21
Cougar Rock
High Camp
Mile 13
Elephant's Trunk
Red Star
Mile 28.5
Watson's
Monument
HW-89
Crossing
Hodgson's
Meadow
Robinson Flat
Mile 36
Last
Chance
Mile 50
Swinging Bridge
Devil's Thumb
Pucker
Point
Deadwood
Mile 55
Dusty
Corners
Lake
Tahoe
Chicken Hawk
Mile 64
Kaput Spring
Volcano Creek
El Dorado Creek
Michigan
Bluff
Dardanelles Creek
Foresthill
Mill Site
Mile 68
Cal 2 (Peachstone)
Mile 78
Francisco's
Mile 85
Ford's Bar
Lower Quarry
Mile 94
Poverty Bar
River Crossing
Auburn
Fairgrounds
FINISH
No Hands
Bridge
The Tevis Cup
100-Mile One-Day Trail Ride
WESTERN STATES TRAIL FOUNDATION
Lucy Chaplin Trumbull • July 26, 2019
Finish
Auburn
Mile 100
Lower Quarry
Mile 94
Francisco's
Mile 85
Cal 2
(Peachstone)
Mile 78
Foresthill
Mile 68
Chicken Hawk
Mile 64
Deadwood
Mile 55
Last Chance
Mile 50
Robinson Flat
Mile 36
Red Star
Mile 28.5
Lyon Ridge
Mile 21
High Camp
Mile 13
Start
Robie Park
No Hands
Bridge
Ford's
Bar
Volcano
Canyon
Michigan
Bluff
Eldorado
Canyon
Swinging
Bridge
Devil's
Thumb
Dusty
Corners
Cougar
Rock
HW-89
Crossing
14,800 ft elevation gain
20,900 ft elevation loss
9,000
8,000
7,000
6,000
5,000
4,000
3,000
2,000
1,000
0
100
80
60
40
20
0