

Over The Henness Pass

Road Barons & Risk Takers

Including GPS Guide with Historic Stage Stops,
from Bridgeport to Virginia City



By Chuck Scimeca

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Over the Henness Pass

Road Barons & Risk Takers



David Wood



Charles Crocker



Myron Lake

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Preface

I had given some thought on writing this book over the last several years, but it was not until I met Maria Brower of Nevada County's Doris Foley Library for Historical Research in Nevada City, that I actually decided to write this book. Her encouragement was invaluable. Maria is a member of the Nevada County Historical Society and is an accomplished author, having written several books on the local history of the Gold Country.

My background as a California State Park Ranger assigned to the South Yuba River State Park in Nevada County, California for over 10 years allowed me the opportunity to slowly gather the material to write this paper. In retirement, I continued to work on this book as well as leading field trips over the Henness Pass Road for history enthusiasts in our community.

While at Bridgeport, location of the 1862 Bridgeport Covered Bridge, I was on assignment to instruct the State Park volunteers, rangers and docents about the cultural and natural history of the area. It was here at the park while teaching and working alongside the many wonderful volunteers that I became motivated with their boundless enthusiasm which made my job such a pleasure. This energetic group inspired me to be the best possible teacher that I could be. In turn, I hope I have inspired them to study and learn more about the exciting fabric of our local history here in the Gold Country and thereby have fuller enjoyment of all that it has to offer.

I would like to acknowledge State Park Superintendent Ray Patton and Larry Clark, Supervising State Park Ranger, both now retired from South Yuba River State Park, for allowing me the time and support to instruct the many hundreds of hours required for a quality docent program. I would like to thank my kind friend Torben Eriksen, an accomplished Danish explorer of Greenland and the Arctic, for the guidance and assistance given as my backcountry partner and Search and Rescue Team Leader. Torben accompanied me on many field trips over the Henness Pass Road. Together we located the historic stage stops and toll stations. His encouragement and expertise made this project a reality, as well as, an exciting and enjoyable trek

I am especially grateful for the tireless advice given by Bernie Zimmerman, Chairman of the Nevada County Historical Landmarks Commission, and his wife Grace Suarez, without whose help this project could not have been completed. I am grateful for the efforts of Carol Fegte, an accomplished writer

and quality editor, who put up with me during long sessions, trying to communicate to me the art of writing basics.

It is with the greatest respect, I would also like to acknowledge four of those wonderful and positive docents that volunteered so much of their valuable time over the years researching our local history and inspiring others to do the same: Docents Burt Hall, John Tamagni, Dr. Dick Alexander and Steve Pauly. They have left their mark and their work will go on as part of the historic record. All of them have now passed on to their final resting place and were indeed my good friends.

Most importantly, I cannot overstate the steadfast encouragement, constant review of this project and the support and encouragement over the last several years, given by my partner and loving wife Pam Scimeca.

Chuck Scimeca,

South Yuba River State Park Ranger, retired

Nevada City , California

December 2020

Introduction

This story is an attempt to shed light on the importance of some of the lesser-known men who affected the development of Northern California and Northern Nevada transportation history. A few of the more notable who are mentioned in this work are Matthew and Henry Sparks, Thomas Hess, Thomas Freeman, Samuel W. Langton, Myron C. Lake, and David Isaac John Wood.¹

Their story took place in three major periods over almost three decades. The first period began with the early emigrant wagon trains to Oregon and California starting in the mid 1840s, then hitting their peak during the 1850s. By 1846, California had surpassed Oregon as the preferred emigrant destination. Between 1841-1845, many emigrants followed what became known as the California Trail, which included a difficult crossing of the Sierra at Donner Pass. In the late spring of 1845, Caleb Greenwood, on a trip east, found a safer bypass through Dog Valley to Verdi, which later became known as the Henness Pass Road.

The second period was the California gold rush of 1848-49 that witnessed the intense and somewhat chaotic growth of the soon to be new State of California. The Comstock Strike ushered in the third period that caused the rapid development of the stage and turnpike companies and concluded with the playing out of the mines in the 1870s. This is often referred to as the “second gold rush” ignited by the Comstock Strike, as would be miners and merchants rushed to the new discovery of silver and gold in 1859 near Mt. Davidson in Virginia City, Nevada Territory.

The story concludes with Charles Crocker and the Central Pacific Railroad entering Myron C. Lake’s Crossing in the spring of 1868 (Reno), ending the great popularity of the turnpike era and relegating the teams and stages to back roads of local communities. By 1869 the great inland movement period of emigration aided by animal drawn wagons had ended as well with the symbolic driving of the “Golden Spike” in Promontory, Utah, celebrating the final link of east meeting west by rail transportation.

¹ Determining the exact middle name of David Wood has been problematic. Historic researchers have been divided on whether the middle name is Isaac, Ingerfield, John or a combination. See Appendix E for further discussion.

Chapter I

The Emigrants Arrive

Caleb Greenwood

Large scale emigration to California began in the 1840s. One milestone includes the physical ordeal of the Stephens-Townsend-Murphy Party in the fall of 1844. Following directions given by the Washoe Chief Truckee,² they crossed the Truckee River multiple times with their heavy wagons and finally arrived exhausted at Truckee Lake (today Donner Lake). Many members of the party ran out of supplies and could go no further. Thankfully, a rescue party made their way to them and guided the party to Sutter's Fort in February of 1845. The next year, the Donner Party followed a similar route with disastrous results.

In the late spring of 1846, Old Caleb Greenwood, mountain man, trapper and path finder, at eighty-four years of age³, traveling east to Salt Lake City found a safer bypass to the Truckee Lake by going through Dog Valley and down the steep grade to Verdi. A short time later the "Greenwood Cutoff" would become part of the Henness Pass Road system. From this point on many California bound emigrant parties, traveling through Truckee Meadows (present-day Reno metropolitan area), used the Caleb Greenwood cut-off to Dog Valley to avoid the steep and torturous Truckee River Canyon.

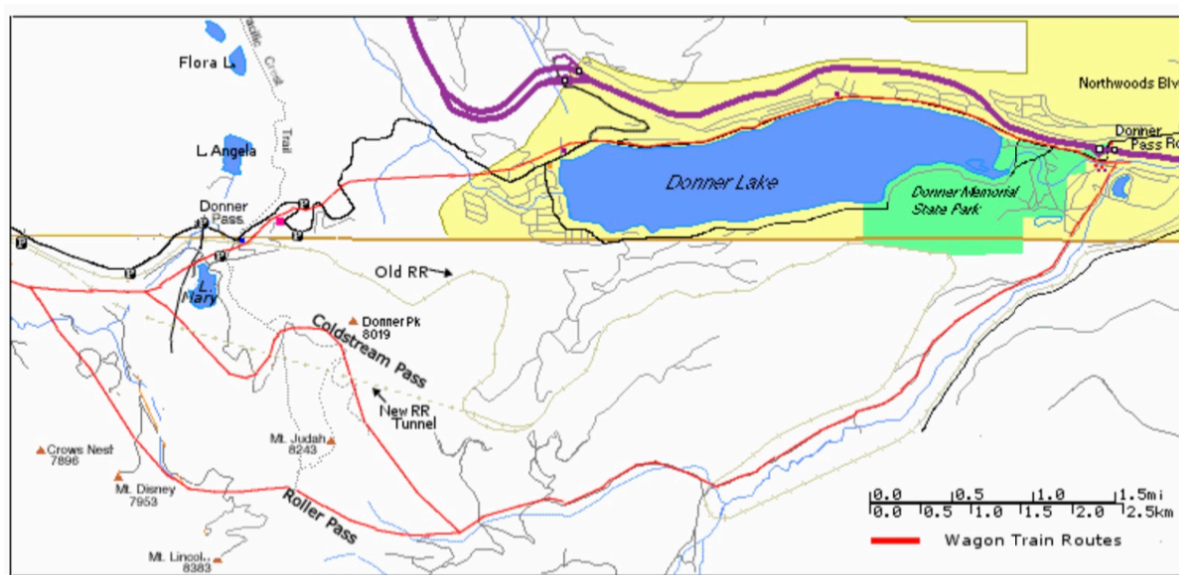
Segments of what we know today as the Henness Pass Road were primarily developed as an easier way for the emigrants to reach California. The Donner Party disaster of 1846 horrified emigrants so much that, to avoid the steep rugged cliffs above Donner Lake, they often choose to turn northward from the Truckee Meadows, taking the somewhat longer route discovered by mountain man James Beckwourth in 1850. Many others would choose to follow the Carson Trail, a segment of the California Trail further to the south that crossed the 40 mile desert, the Carson River and went over Carson Pass ending at Hangtown (Placerville today), rather than the Truckee route of the California trail. In 1850, 45,000 emigrants, or ninety percent of the westward migration,

² Echos From The Past, an article in the Sierra Sun by Gordon Richards, October 2004

³ Kelly, Charles (1936) *Old Greenwood*, page 105, 123, Jack Bacon & Company, Reno, Nevada 2005. Caleb Greenwood was born in 1763 in Virginia and died near Oroville, CA around 1853.

chose the Carson branch of the California Trail. In that year only ten percent of the emigrants selected the Truckee route of the California Trail.⁴

Many of the early emigrants would rest and take on supplies after spending several days in the high grass of the Truckee Meadows (present day Reno), feeding and watering their livestock near what later became known as Jamison's Station (circa 1852) on the north side of the Truckee River. They then would go on to follow the Truckee Trail, avoiding the deep and hazardous Truckee river canyon. Instead, they climbed the steep ridge above Verdi and followed Caleb Greenwood's Cutoff through Sardine and Dog Valleys.⁵ Turning southwest, they would follow the emigrant trail to Donner Lake and over the



difficult "Roller Pass".⁶ At this point the oxen teams under control of able handlers would pull and drag up each wagon, one by one, using "log rollers" beneath the wagons, up and over the near vertical wall of the pass.

⁴Buck, Don (2016) *History of the Truckee Trail and the Nevada City Road*, publisher Trails, West Reno, Nevada

⁵ Kelly, Charles (1936) *Old Greenwood, the Story of Caleb Greenwood, Trapper, Pathfinder and Early Pioneer of the West*. Western Printing, Salt Lake City.

⁶ Roller Pass was one of three early mountain passes above Donner Lake to Summit Valley. The first was Donner Summit Pass (Stephen- Townsend-Murphy Party) established 1844, then Roller Pass by October of 1846 and finally the Dutch Flat Wagon Road in 1864.

As noted in the diary of Nicholas Carriger:

We made a roller and fastened chains to gether[sic] and pulled the wagons up withe [sic] 12 yoke oxen on the top and the same at the bottom."

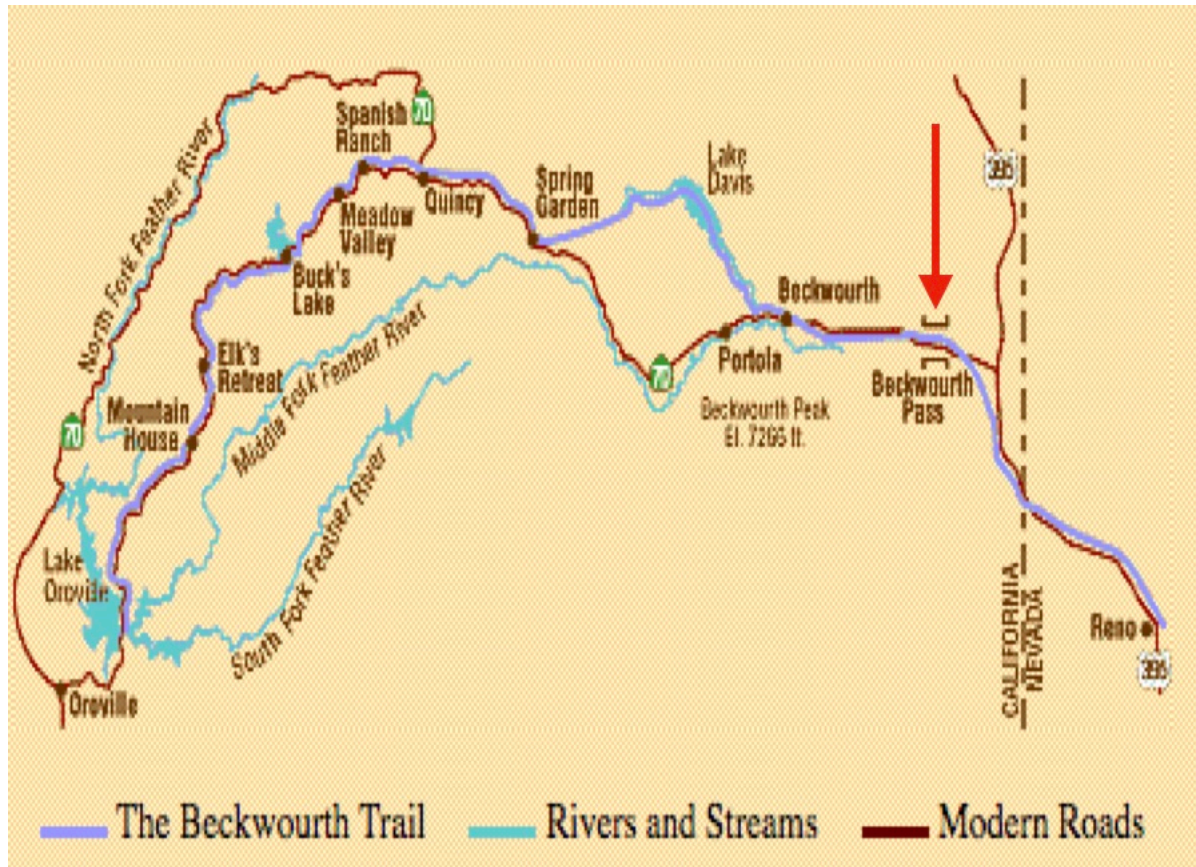
Nicholas Carriger, September 22, 1846

Roller Pass was abandoned later in 1846 for the much easier Coldstream Pass which did not require the ox teams to be led to the top of Roller Pass high above Donner Lake. Coldstream Pass became the main route for the emigrants that chose the Bear Valley/Nevada City branch of the the California trail which was established in 1850. The Dutch Flat Wagon Road came into existence in 1864. This road quickly became the road of choice for the next four years, even taking business away from the more popular Carson route. However, the Dutch Flat Wagon Road was never intended to be a permanent road by its founders and it fell out of favor once the Central Pacific Railroad reached Reno in 1868. Otherwise in the years 1852 to 1864, many of the early emigrants traveling west chose to turn north and then west following the much easier but longer emigrant trail of the Henness Pass Road to the Northern Mines. They would travel through Dog Valley, along the Little Truckee River in Hoek Valley, continuing over the Henness Pass, elevation 6916 feet, rest at Jackson Meadows, then continue westward along the ridge above the Middle and North Forks of the Yuba River, following branches to Sierra City, Downieville, Nevada City, and Marysville.

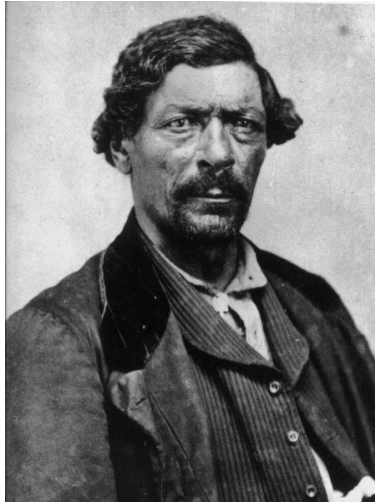
Jim Beckwourth

Some of the emigrants found the Beckwourth Trail a good alternative for traveling to the Northern Mines. Although it was considerably longer than the Henness Pass route, it was the lowest mountain pass over the Sierra at an elevation of 5,221 feet. Trapper and mountain man Jim Beckwourth discovered this pass in 1850. This route followed the Feather River Canyon west into the great northern valley with destinations from Oroville to Chico and points further north in the Sacramento Valley. (See map 1 below)

By 1851, Greenwood's Cutoff and portions of the Henness Pass Road became the preferred route of the California Trail that thousands would follow to California Gold fields. A decade later during the 1860s, it would again become the preferred route going east from California to the silver mines of Nevada Territory.



1. BECKWOURTH PASS 5,221 FEET



**2 & 3. JAMES P. BECKWOURTH,
PATH FINDER AND FUR TRAPPER**

Chapter II

The Rush for Gold, Gold, Gold

Why did they come to California and to Nevada County? It was for “gold, gold, gold.” By 1849 there were early mining towns developing along the river bars where the gold was the easiest to find such as Nyes Landing, later named Bridgeport after the first bridge built by Matthew Sparks in summer of 1850. The camp boasted 900 miners and a tent city. Park’s Bar had 600 miners, 6 stores and two churches, Jones Bar had six saloons and 400 miners and Rose’s Bar had more than 500 miners near where gold was first discovered on the Yuba River by Jonas Spect, in the spring of 1848.⁷

From Jonas Spect’s diary:

When I arrived at a point on the Yuba River a little above Timbuctoo Ravine, I washed some of the dirt and found three lumps of gold worth about seven dollars. I pitched my tent here on the night of June 2, 1848. In about a week I moved down the creek and remained there until November 20, when I left the mines forever.



4. JONAS SPECT

⁷ Blair and Rives (April 5, 1852) *The Congressional Globe, the United States Congress*, page 970, fourth paragraph.

Less than a year later, in April of 1849, miners met at Jonas Spect's store at Rose's Bar and drafted one of the earliest legal codes by miners to resolve their claim disputes.⁸ In these early years the tent cities of the river bars came and went out of existence as the easily found placer gold was played out. "Bar Claims" consisted of gold in low collections of sand, or gravel in rivers exposed at low water. In the spring of 1849, gold seekers poured into the Yuba River Canyon and its tributaries concentrating along the many river bars such as Rose's Bar, Negro Bar, Liar's Bar (later known as Rice's Crossing), Condemned Bar, Frenchman's Bar, Missouri Bar, Bullard's Bar, Banjo Bar, Illinois Bar, Jones Bar and Champion Bar, which later became Hoyt's Crossing (one half mile upstream from the HWY49 bridge on the South Yuba River).

After Jonas Spect left the "gold fields" he moved to Yolo County. Remembering his past experiences in the Yuba River gold fields, in 1849-1850 he helped write the first mining laws for California as the first State Senator from the Sonoma District at the Constitutional Convention.⁹

By 1852, there were 14,220 people in Nevada County, 7,127 or 50% of the population was white. Negroes were 305, foreigners 803, Chinaman[sic] 3866 and Indians 2119.¹⁰

Bridgeport, a Tent City on a River Bar

The first community at Bridgeport was known as Nyes Landing or Nyes Crossing. It first had a ferry, operated by the Nye brothers. A landing has no bridge and is a place which a boat may reach and which may have a ferry. Bridgeport was such a place.

Nyes Landing first consisted of a "tent city" made up of hundreds of miners. In those days, the nearest Judicial Court of Law was in Marysville, more than 30 miles away over narrow, dangerous mule trails and river crossings.

This situation led to the miners at Nyes Landing and other "tent cities" at times taking matters into their own hands, in the form of Miner Courts. Miner

⁸Drought, Water Law, and Origins of California's Central Valley Project by Tim Stroshane University of Nevada Press, Reno 1957

⁹ [Winfield J. Davis](#) (1893) History of Political Conventions in California, 1849-1892

¹⁰The California 1852 census

Courts continued in practice in the region as late as July of 1851, when the Yuba County Court of Sessions directed the creation from its boundaries, the smaller County of Nevada in August of 1851. The addition of Judicial Courts dictated that Judges and Justices of the Peace had to be elected by local community members that were registered voters. Up until that time the Miner Courts or “Lynch courts” prevailed.

At Nyes Landing (Bridgeport) Miner Courts were held for those who violated the laws of the camp. On March 1, 1851 “Yankee Jim,”¹¹ Jim Knowlton, was found guilty and hung at Bridgeport for mule stealing, convicted by twelve Miners of the Court after a three-day trial.

More than a thousand people from the region came to witness the hanging. Yankee Jim was driven out on a wagon, tied to the crossbeam of Matthew Sparks' Bridge and hung for 30 minutes until dead. “Although he was probably not guilty of the crime of which he suffered death, the people approved of the hanging on general principles as it is claimed that he confessed to the commission of crimes of a revolting character.”¹²

Regrettably, in the absence of an accessible judicial system these courts filled the void and were viewed by most miners as an absolute necessity.

Travel to the Gold Fields

During this period men, animals and supplies followed narrow trails and scabbled over rough terrain without the benefit of roads or bridges and found their way to the gold fields by word of mouth and sheer luck. Some drowned trying to cross the swift moving waters of the Yuba River. Roads and bridges were desperately needed. By the summer of 1849 ferries, crude bridges and rough roads were starting to be built.

¹¹ Not to be confused with “Yankee Jim,” Jim Robinson, an Australian horse thief who was hung in San Diego County in 1852 and from whom the town of Yankee Jim’s in Placer County takes its name. CA State Registered Landmark No. 398

¹² Thompson & West (1880) History of Nevada County, p. 105

On May 29, 1851, the Marysville Daily Herald reported a meeting that occurred at Parks' Bar to help resolve a terrible loss of life.¹³

Twelve Men Drowned at "Parks' Bar" Yuba River!!

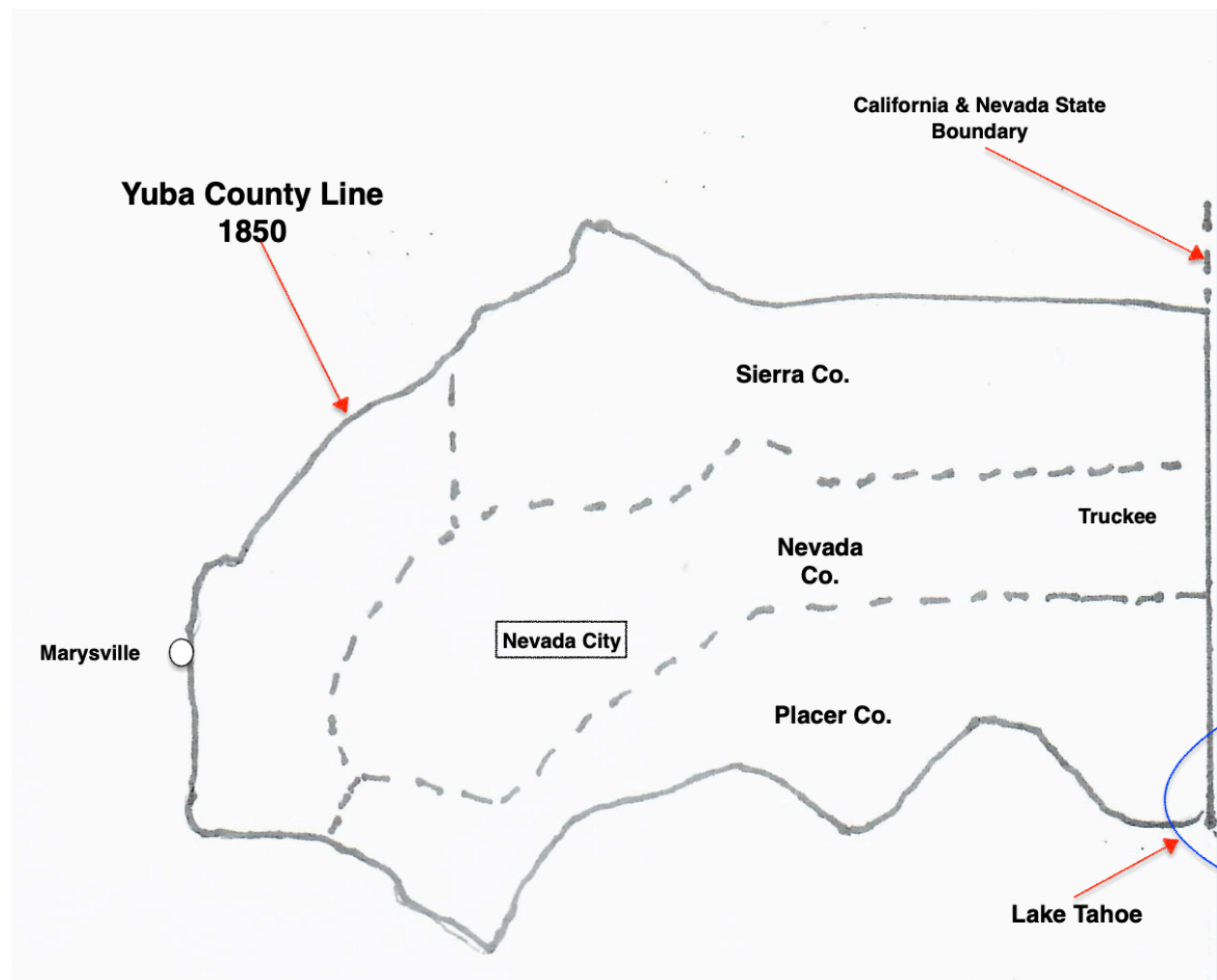
A meeting of the citizens of Parks' Bar, held at the house of Squire Nash, to take into consideration the circumstances of the loss of a boat of men while crossing the river at the ferry this morning, Hiram C. Hodge, of Nevada City, was called to chair, and T.S. Myrick of Parks' Bar appointed Secretary. After stating the object of the meeting in an eloquent and forcible manner, the Chairman called on those acquainted with the facts to give a statement to the meeting.

Mr. Spear stated that there were some twenty persons in the boat at the time the catastrophe occurred, which was about 6 o'clock this morning. He was one of the number in the boat that were saved.

Mr. Devolt stated, that a few days since the ferryman was cautioned in reference to the insecurity of the ferry; that three times within two weeks past the ferry rope has been broken, endangering life at each time; that the rope is not over one inch in diameter, when it should be one and a half or two inches at a stream so rapid as the Yuba at this place. Mr. Baxter stated that he counted 21 persons in the boat as it left the shore; that there was a rock in the stream which the boat had hit several times before this, because the ferry rope was not so high upstream as it should be; that the ferry was not considered safe on that account; that the ferryman had been cautioned about the same, and that the boat struck the rock this morning and upset, when the ferry rope broke and left those on the boat to the mercy of the waves.

¹³ David Parks, from whom the bar derived its name, came to the river bar on September 8, 1848. Taken from Thompson & West, History of Yuba County 1879 page 88.

Formation of Yuba County



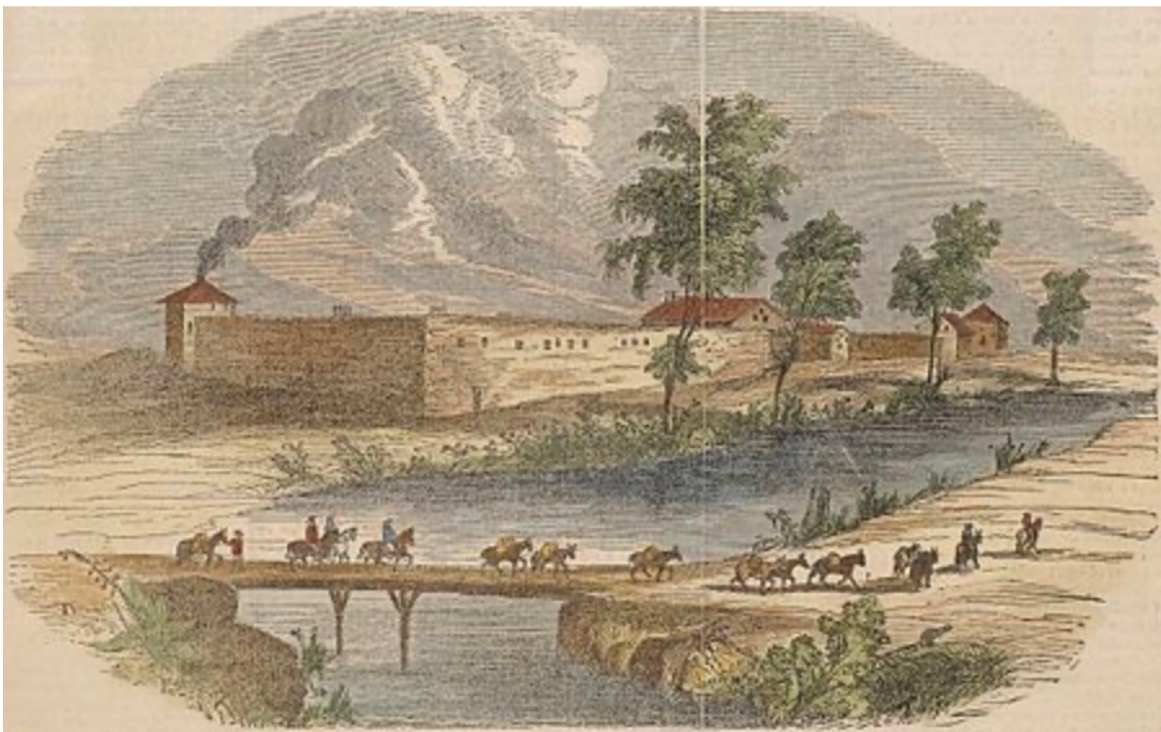
5. FORMATION OF NEVADA COUNTY FROM YUBA COUNTY

When California became a state on September 9, 1850, Yuba County and the future County of Nevada had not yet been formed. It is important to point out that with the signing of the peace treaty between the United States and Mexico on February 2, 1848, California became American territory. But it wasn't until September of 1849 that the constitutional convention was held in Monterey. It would take a few more months of deliberation by the delegates to form the counties of the new State.

General Mariano Vallejo, just prior to the Convention, had been released from prison after spending two months at General Sutter's Fort as a prisoner of the

recent Mexican American War. Vallejo must have had tremendous wealth and the respect of both the Californios¹⁴ and Americans because he went on to chair the California State Constitutional Convention in Monterey. The members there voted to establish the original 27 counties, with one of them being Yuba County, established on February 18, 1850. Yuba County at that time included all of present day Nevada County and large segments of Sierra, Sutter and Placer Counties (see map 5 above).

In August of 1851 Nevada County was split off from the larger Yuba County by order of the Yuba County Court of Sessions at the direction of the State of California. The population of Yuba County then was roughly 9,673. This made it the third largest in the state of California according to the 1850 US Census. Not counted in the 1850 census were the Native American members of the Maidu, Koncow, Nisenan and Washoe tribes.

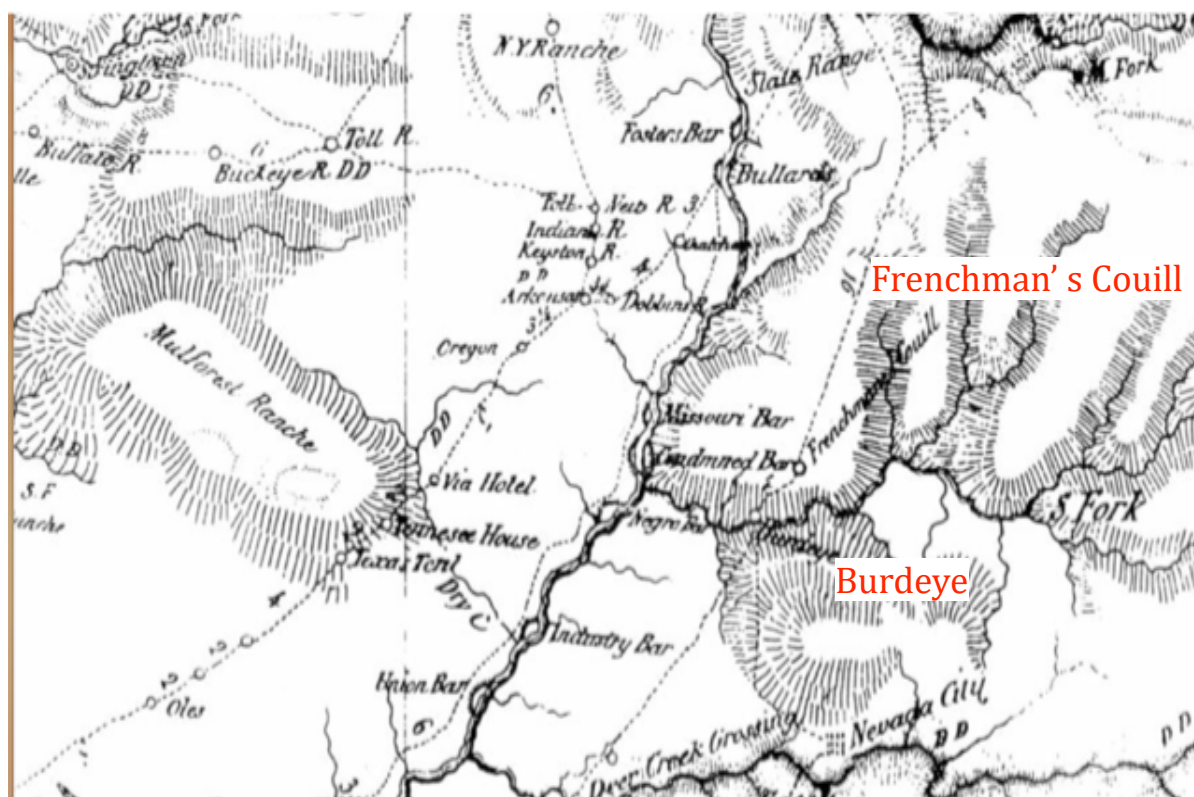


6. SUTTER'S FORT CIRCA LATE 1840S. GENERAL VALLEJO WAS HELD PRISONER HERE FOR TWO MONTHS.

¹⁴ **Californios** are Hispanic people native to the State of California, who are culturally or genetically descended from the Spanish-speaking community that has resided there since 1683, of varying Criollo Spaniard, Mestizo, and Indigenous Californian origins.

People from all over the world were now on the move to take part in the California Gold Rush.

One of the earliest maps, the 1851 Eddy map (below), shows present day Bridgeport (Nyes Landing) listed as the town of Burdeye just below Frenchman's Couill, adjacent to the crossing of the South Yuba River. The name "Burdeye" on the map remains a mystery as to its origins. On all maps created after 1851 it is named Bridgeport. The only references I could find for Burdeye was to a veteran of the Revolutionary War with that surname, Thaddeus Burdeye, of the Fourth Regiment, State of Connecticut.



7. 1851 EDDY MAP

The other possibility is that the word was misspelled on the 1851 Eddy map. It is possible the correct spelling referred to John C. Birdseye, who was a miner in 1850 along Deer Creek. He later became a successful banker, mine and mill owner in Nevada City by 1859.¹⁵

¹⁵ Comstock, David Allan, *The Nevada County Chronicles*, Vol. 2 (1987) *Brides of the Gold Rush* 1851-1859, p, 349; Vol. 3 (1995) *Greenbacks and Copperheads* 1859-1869, p. 112, Comstock Bonanza Press

The name “Frenchman’s Couill,” also on the 1851 Eddy map, is interesting as well. We know the town today as French Corral as it has been identified on every map since the Eddy map. The word Couill from the French is translated “balls” or more precisely, Frenchman’s testicles. Is this an early attempt at political correctness, to change the name of the town to French Corral? I personally think so, but such is the challenge of interpreting old maps for the historical researcher.

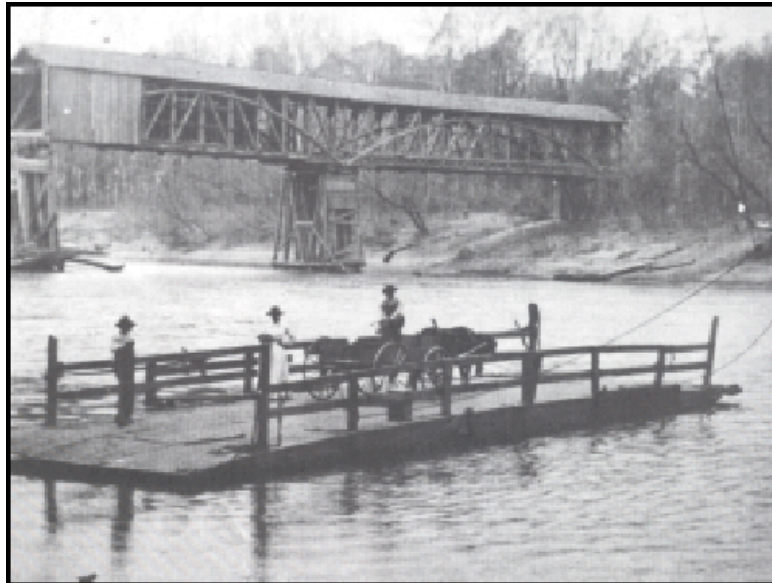
Chapter III

The Ferry Crossings, Urias & Emanuel Nye and the First Bridge Builders, Matthew & Henry Sparks



8. URIAS NYE

As mentioned previously, Nevada County and its Court of Sessions were formed on August of 1851 from the larger Yuba County. The Court House and offices of the Supervisors were established in Nevada City in that year.



9. TYPICAL 1850S FERRY CROSSING. WITH AN ARCHED TRUSS BRIDGE SIMILAR TO BRIDGEPORT'S IN THE BACKGROUND .

Tragically, in 1856, a fire burned down the Nevada County Court House, destroying many of the legal documents from 1851-1856. This has made it very difficult to get an accurate picture of those early years.¹⁶

Drawing on available sources, the following is the author's opinion of the events that occurred involving the Nye brothers and Matthew Sparks from 1850 to 1851.

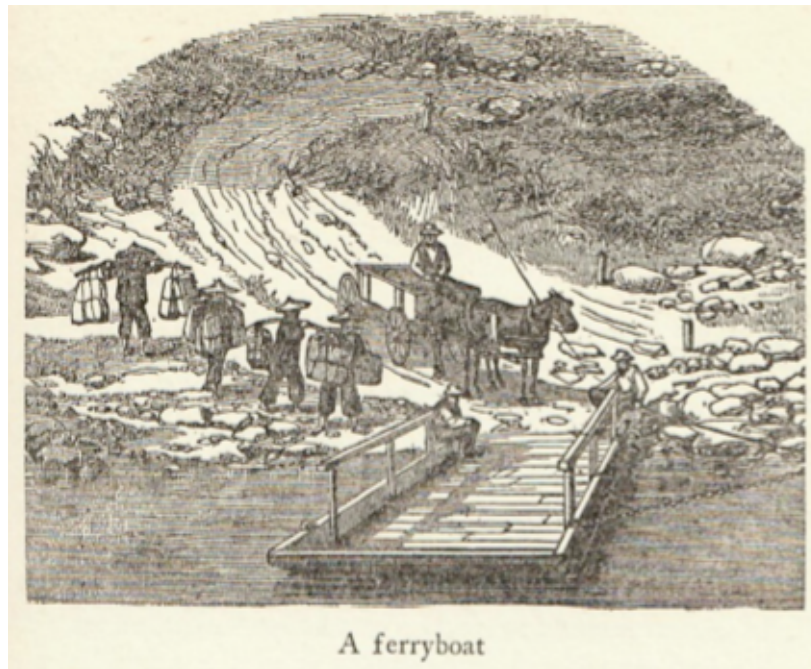
¹⁶Much of the research for this paper and the following section, in particular, describing the relationship between the Nye brothers and Matthew Sparks is reconstructed from newspaper articles of the day, as archived by the California Digital Newspaper Collection (compiled at UC Riverside).

In addition, my research was aided by the Nevada County Historical Society records, the Yuba County Court of Session records from 1850 to August 1851, the Nevada County District Court records and California Supreme Court records from 1855 through 1864.

Ferries

With the frenetic gold rush activity on both sides of the rivers, safe crossings were vital. Ferries came first; some of the early ones were simply formed by overturning wagons, removing the wheels and connecting them to make barges to travel across the water. Ferries rapidly became an expensive venture. Usually a ferryman needed several investors to place the ferry in operation. One example is ferryman Sam Ward, who borrowed more than \$18,000 dollars to establish his ferry on the Tuolumne River in 1851.¹⁷ Sam Ward describes his new ferry:

And thus launched and baptized the A-1 new ferry barge, 'Never-Say-Die'. No craft ever floated more lightly upon Omar's green water, destined to impartial transportation from one river bank to the other. With aid of fifty auxiliary red-skins, we warped her triumphantly up stream. We drew her to her birth—the new cable had been stretched –by nightfall she was in fine running order.



10. FERRY, CIRCA 1849

¹⁷ Ward, Sam; Sam Ward in the Gold Rush (autobiography) edited by Carville Collins, Stanford University Press 1949, page 126

Next came the low-level bridges, cart paths, mule trails and finally wagon roads.

Early in 1849, brothers Urias and Emanuel Nye established a ferry crossing on the main Yuba River near Point Defiance. According to the History of California by James M. Guinn:¹⁸

In 1849 General Sutter sent a man across the plains after his family and in the train which returned to California, under the command of Captain Allman, Mr. Nye {Urias S. Nye} made the journey to the Pacific coast. He had a splendid equipment of mule teams, provisions, etc., and after his arrival in the state he located on the Yuba river with his brother Emanuel, with whom he conducted a pack-train to the mines. His work was to ferry people across the Yuba river, an old wagon bed serving as a raft, the rate of passage being \$1.50.

Why Point Defiance is so named is not known. What is known is an early reference to a naval explorer, Charles Wilkes, who named a point of land near Tacoma, Washington "Point Defiance" on his navigation map in 1841.

Point Defiance is located one mile downstream from Bridgeport in Nevada County, California, at the confluence of the North Fork and South Fork of the Yuba River, forming the northern portion of present day Lake Englebright. The main body of Lake Englebright is divided down the middle, sharing joint boundaries with Nevada and Yuba Counties. The Nye brothers also set up a trading post and ferry at Nyes Landing, known today as Bridgeport at South Yuba River State Park.

The Nye brothers, in 1849, had also established the first ferry crossing on the middle fork of the Yuba River, below North San Juan. In 1850, the Nye brothers sold out all their ferry interests at Bridgeport and the middle fork of the Yuba River to Matthew Sparks and his younger brother Henry and in that year returned to Missouri.

Several other crossings were served by ferries until as late as 1856. The Jones Bar Ferry (sometimes referred to as the Rush Creek Ferry) started operation

¹⁸ Guinn, James Miller (1902) History of the State of California, Biographical Record of Sacramento Valley

in 1850. It was located just downstream of present-day Highway 49 crossing below Nevada City on the South Yuba River.

The Jones Bar Ferry operated until 1856. The ferry was owned and operated by Michael C. Jones and Richard C. Armour from 1850 to 1853.

Below is a public notice from the Nevada Journal dated December 26, 1851:

Notice is hereby given to packers and miners that the Rush Creek Ferry is still in "full float" and the only way of crossing the South Yuba River between Washington and Bridgeport. Persons will therefore save themselves by bearing it in mind.

Jones and Armour ¹⁹

Robinson's Middle Ferry was in operation until 1853, located at what we now know as Purdon Crossing on the Purdon North San Juan Road in Nevada County.

The ferries often served a vital need; the early miners found at times the only "safe" way left to cross the rapidly moving rivers was on the established ferries. Often, major floods occurred. One such flood in 1853 washed away almost all the low-lying bridges on the South Yuba River and other rivers in the lower Sierra Nevada, including Matthew Sparks' bridge at Bridgeport. Below is an early account of how important the Jones Bar Ferry was in an article published by the "Nevada Journal," April 15, 1853, posted by the then operators of the Jones Bar ferry, Kimbal and Hansen:

¹⁹ Nevada Journal, December 26, 1851, page 3, column 1

We notify the public and the traveling community in general, that the well-known ferry, which is sometimes known as Sweetland's or Jones Crossing on the South Yuba, first ferry above Bridgeport is in full operation and can cross animals with little or no danger. Having the largest boat on the river, good new cable and tackle, and two experienced ferry men, we have been in constant attendance for two years, and witnessed all stages of the river. Would recommend to the public, for their personal safety, to cross at the above-mentioned ferry. There is a good road cut on both sides of the river, for easy access to both sides.

Likewise, not to be daunted by floods, Samuel W. Langton, one of the earliest expressmen²⁰ in the gold country, owner of the Langton Pioneer Express Company, announced that the flood of January 1, 1853 had washed out all bridges on the South Yuba River.

He declared in local newspapers that a ferry had recently been established at Bridgeport, to replace the severely damaged bridge. Pack trains would now have no difficulty in crossing at this location.²¹ Matthew Sparks quickly worked at rebuilding his bridge, which was completed by the summer of 1853 replacing the ferry.

This now becomes the second bridge located at Bridgeport built by Thomas Hess and owned by Matthew Sparks.

The First Bridges

Matthew Sparks & His Bridge Builder, Thomas Hess

Between 1850 to 1854, 27 year old Matthew Sparks, Matthew's younger brother Henry Sparks and Thomas Hess established the first bridges at Bridgeport and on the Middle Fork of the Yuba River. Matthew Sparks and his

²⁰ The express company and expressman came about because of the urgent need for the miner to communicate with loved ones or send money back home to the east. At first the express was carried by mule, then by mule teams and later by stage.

²¹ Advertisement posted in the Sacramento Daily Union January 19, 1853 by Samuel W. Langton

bridge builder, Thomas Hess,²² replaced the ferries on both the South Yuba and Middle Yuba Rivers with bridges. They built the first three bridges on the South Yuba and Middle Yuba during the summers of 1850 and 1851. One bridge was located at Point Defiance, the other at Bridgeport,²³ the former Nyes Landing, and the third replaced a ferry at the Middle Fork of the Yuba River in 1851, also known as Nyes Crossing.

The following are the tolls granted by the Yuba County Court of Sessions on February 17, 1851 for Matthew Sparks' bridge at Nyes Crossing:²⁴

Footman	\$.20
Horse or mule with rider	\$.50
Cattle per head	\$.25
Wagons loaded	\$3.00
Wagons empty	\$2.00

After Matthew Sparks took over this ferry operation from the Nye brothers in 1850, the crossing became known as Sparks' Crossing. He then had his builder Thomas Hess construct the first bridge on the middle fork of the Yuba River a few months later in the summer of 1851.²⁵ In 1852, Thomas Hess purchased the bridge and the right to operate it from Matthew Sparks.

By 1853 the crossing was re-sold to Thomas Freeman, who owned and operated it until his death in 1892.²⁶ The crossing, renamed Freeman's Crossing, was located about 3/4 miles downstream from Oregon Creek and just a few hundred yards downstream from the present Highway 49 bridge on the Middle Fork of the Yuba River, between Camptonville and North San Juan.

²² Bancroft, Hubert Howe (1891) *Chronicles of the Builders of the Commonwealth: Historical Charter Study*, V. 5 page 189 last paragraph.

²³ Sparks v. Hess (1860) 15 Cal. 186, California Supreme Court Decision.

²⁴ Thompson & West (1880) *History of Nevada County*, p. 132.

²⁵ Sparks v. Hess (1860) 15 Cal. 186, California Supreme Court Decision.

²⁶ The Oakland Tribune, August 15, 1954

The other bridges established on the South Yuba River during the years 1856 to 1870 were M.F. Hoyt's Bridge (1856) located one and half miles upstream of Jones Bar, William E. Robinson's Lower Bridge (1856) the Purdon Crossing Bridge today, Robinson's Upper Bridge (1855) the Edward's Crossing Bridge today (1870) and the Illinois Bar Bridge (1856) owned by J.D. Cooper and C.P. Flaughter, one mile above the Edwards Crossing bridge.²⁷ On a more sobering note, on November 24, 1866 James H. Cooper and J.L. Kite were brutally murdered at their Illinois Bar bridge, apparent victims for their tolls.²⁸ The two murders have never been solved.

David Wood's 1862 Virginia Turnpike Bridgeport Bridge,²⁹ is located just 100 yards downstream from the 1850-1854 Sparks Bridge location. (Sparks Bridge was originally located at the general location of Nevada County's Pleasant Valley Road bridge).

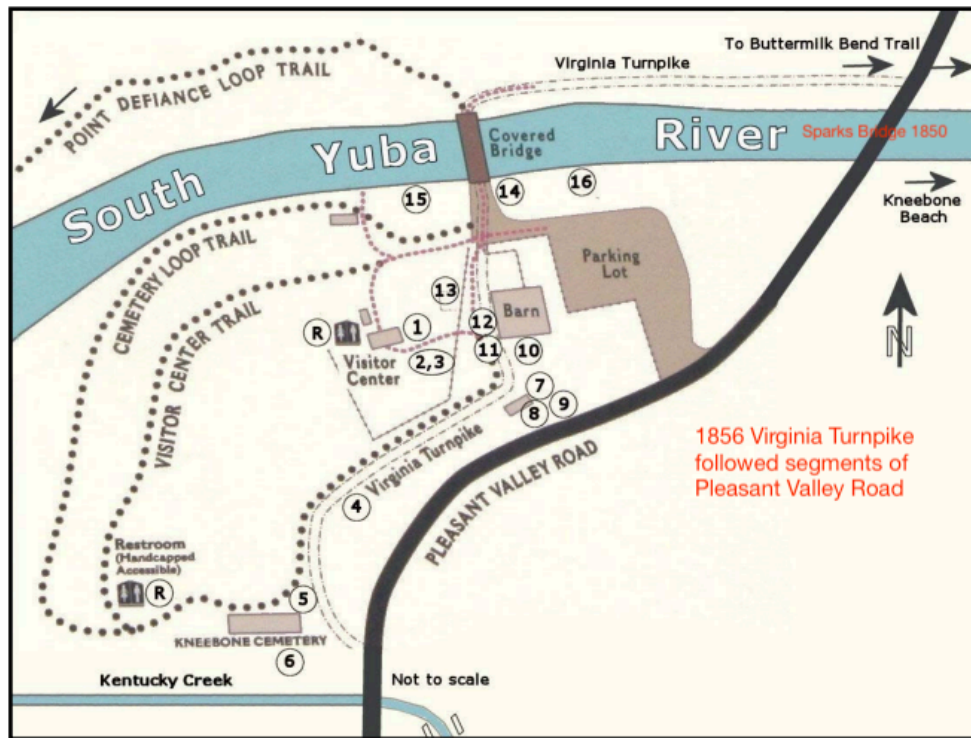


11. MATHIS PRINT OF WOOD'S BRIDGEPORT BRIDGE, NOTE "WING WALL PORCH ENTRY" REMOVED PRIOR TO 1970 RESTORATION

²⁷Tamagni, John (1998) History of the South Yuba River State Park, Bridgeport to Illinois Bar, resource located at the Sears Library, the Nevada County Historical Society.

²⁸ Nevada Gazette, November 25, 1866

²⁹ George Mathis print above, "wagon and team" going through the bridge. Original in black and white, color added by wife, Jean Mathis. Original color Mathis prints in their entirety may be seen at the visitor center within Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park.



12. MAP SHOWING DAVID WOOD'S COVERED BRIDGE, CIRCA 1862 AND MATHEW SPARKS' BRIDGE, CIRCA 1850.

Sparks Sells His Bridgeport Bridge in 1854

In 1854 Matthew Sparks sold his interest in the Bridgeport Bridge to Thomas Hess. Shortly thereafter in August of 1855 Thomas Hess sold his interest in the Bridgeport Bridge to David Wood of Point Defiance.

For and in consideration of
the sum of Five Hundred Dollars
To me Paid I sell and convey to
David & Wood My title and
interest in the Bridge known
as Sparks Bridge crossing the
South Yuba River at Bridgeport
in the township of Bridgeport and
County of Nevada, California
and I also agree to withdraw my
interest in the Charter for the
above mentioned Bridge
Point Defiance Nevada County
California August 14th 1855
Thomas Hess

13. THE "BILL OF SALE." THOMAS HESS SOLD HIS INTEREST IN THE SPARKS BRIDGE TO DAVID WOOD FOR \$500 IN AUGUST OF 1855

It appears Matthew Sparks then left the area and moved further south to the lower Bear River region not far from Auburn California, where he became a successful cattle rancher.

Chapter IV

David Wood Arrives at Point Defiance in 1850

Bell (Isabella Jane) Fagg Fowler states in an oral history (circa 1937) that her grandfather, David Wood, arrived in the Bridgeport area sometime in 1850-51 and purchased two “old bridges,” one at Point Defiance and one at Bridgeport.³⁰ However this is incorrect. David Wood owned and operated the fourth and current covered bridge at Bridgeport, which he and the Virginia Turnpike Company built in summer of 1862. (This bridge is currently a unit of the California State Park System at South Yuba River State Park.)

Current research shows that David Wood arrived at Point Defiance, one mile downstream from Bridgeport at the confluence of the South Yuba and North Yuba Rivers, as early as 1850 or 1851. In 1854, Thomas Hess made a down payment for the Bridgeport Bridge to his employer, Matthew Sparks. Sparks continued to hold a lien on the bridge until Hess paid him the full price they had agreed, \$8,000.³¹ The historical record shows that David Wood had no economic interest or presence at Bridgeport until August 14, 1855, at which time he purchased Thomas Hess’s interest in the old Sparks Bridge. In December of 1856 a flood washed away the old Sparks Bridge, the same bridge Wood had just purchased. David Wood and the Virginia Turnpike Company quickly replaced the bridge at Bridgeport using some of the original abutments of the Sparks Bridge. The new bridge was completed by summer of 1856.³² This became the third bridge at Bridgeport.

³⁰ David Wood is still in Bates County Missouri recorded by U.S. Census of 1850

³¹ The \$8,000 Hess paid for the Bridgeport bridge (Sparks Bridge) would be equivalent to \$240,000 today due to inflation.

³² Sparks v. Hess (1860) 15 Cal. 186, California Supreme Court Decision.



14. DAVID ISAAC JOHN WOOD & WIFE JANE
DODGE WOOD

I

The first official record of David Wood's presence in the area is listed on the 1852 Canal Map (see Map 17 on p. 32), which clearly shows "Wood's Bridge" near Point Defiance on the South Yuba River, not at Bridgeport. I believe David Wood purchased the old Point Defiance Bridge³³ from Matthew Sparks in 1850 or 1851 and built his home there, where the South Fork meets the Yuba River. David Wood offered his home at Point Defiance as a voting precinct in 1856 and again in 1859.

Some earlier articles on the history of Bridgeport state Wood had acquired the old Bridgeport bridge from the Nye brothers in 1850 or 1851. This is incorrect. The Nye brothers did not operate toll bridges and were not bridge builders; they also had returned to Missouri by 1850.

David Isaac John Wood³⁴ was to become a successful merchant and early bridge and toll road owner throughout a large region of the gold country. His political and economic influence during this early period in Nevada County's history must have been substantial.

In November of 1854 Sparks sold to his partner, Thomas Hess, his 1850 Bridgeport bridge, which David Wood later bought in 1855. In 1856 David Wood and his family incorporated the Virginia Turnpike Company that ran

³³ There are only two written references found for Point Defiance as a location for the actual bridge crossing, the *Sacramento Daily Union* article, Feb, 20, 1855, "*Proposals for Carrying the Mail, from Round Tent, by Lower Crossing of Deer Creek, Point Defiance, French Corral, Sweetlands, Cherokee and Moores Flat, to Minnesota, in Sierra County, 47 miles and back, once a week.*" The second is the Canal map of 1852, showing Wood's Bridge near Point Defiance.

³⁴ See Appendix E on David Wood's middle name

between Bridgeport and North San Juan. Wood also operated general stores in the mid 1850s at French Corral, Forest City and owned a sawmill in Plum Valley which he purchased for \$5000 in 1858. In 1864 he purchased another general store in Virginia City.



15. PHOTOGRAPH OF POINT DEFIANCE TAKEN BY A DRONE OWNED BY STEVE HILLIS IN JULY OF 2020. THE LEFT HAND SIDE OF THE PHOTO FACES NORTH

The 1852 location of David Wood's toll bridge near Point Defiance is shown in the center of photograph 15 above by the long red arrow pointing to the narrowing of the large sand bar, about 200 yards upstream from the confluence of the Yuba River. The bridge would have crossed from the south to the north near where Wood's family home was located. The left side of the photo would be the north side of the South Yuba River.

The location of David Wood's home is shown on photo 15 by the short red arrow. It is believed to have been near the actual point of land (Point Defiance) where the South Fork meets the Yuba River. The photograph shows the Yuba River in the foreground with the South Yuba joining the Yuba River toward the lower right hand side. The large sand bar surrounding the South Yuba River is typical in July due to reduced summer flows. The sand bar, however, mainly exists because of the presence of the Englebright Dam which was completed in 1941 as a hydraulic mining debris catchment dam. Prior to the construction of the dam, the South Yuba River flowed freely and was much deeper where it joined the Yuba River. In fact, free run salmon were caught as late as 1939 near

the present Bridgeport Covered bridge, one mile further up stream below the park visitor center.

Wood's 1852 bridge location shown on the photograph should not to be confused with the 1850 Sparks bridge which was located at Bridgeport, a mile further upstream. By 1855 Wood's wagon and toll bridge near Point Defiance was no longer in use. The bridge was abandoned or may have been a victim of the spring 1854 flood and not rebuilt. However, Wood still operated a foot bridge near Point Defiance in November of 1855.³⁵

Great Flood of January 1861-1862

As Providence would have it, the largest recorded flood in California history to the present date occurred in 1861. This extreme storm struck Northern California with a vengeance and on December 14, 1861, David Wood's Covered Bridge at Bridgeport--the third bridge—was washed away once again. Nevada City had more than 108 inches of rain in less than 60 days. Not only did David Wood and the Virginia Turnpike Company lose the bridge that they had recently built, in fact, almost all the bridges in the entire Sierra were lost in this one great flood.

By the summer of 1862 David Wood and the Virginia Turnpike Company once again built a new bridge, the fourth bridge, utilizing Wood's saw mill near Forest City. Wood's sawmill was operated by Joseph D. Fagg,³⁶ the brother of George Fagg, David Wood's son-in-law, recently hired to mill the timbers for the bridge. This sawmill produced the sugar pine shingles as well as the Douglas fir for the bridge's truss and arch. The bridge was built using the Howe Truss and the Burr arch in combination. It was basically, a wooden arch with an iron interior support system, modeled after similar bridges on the east coast that were designed to carry very heavy loads, such as trains.³⁷ Wood also moved the bridge a few hundred feet downstream and placed it higher above the river, for good reason. This covered bridge now became the fourth bridge

³⁵ Comstock, David (2019), *Lives of Nevada County Pioneers page 35*, a digital book. David Wood and N.W. Clark said they would apply for a renewal to the Board of Supervisors, to keep a foot bridge at Point Defiance November, 14, 1855. The record does not show if this was successful.

³⁶ From the notes of Bell Fagg Fowler, located in the Anabel Fowler archive.

³⁷ See Appendix G, Restoration of the Bridgeport Covered Bridge, for more information on the bridge's construction.

to be built at Bridgeport on the South Yuba River and is the one that survives today.³⁸

The same storm system, not surprisingly, destroyed the few bridges that crossed the Truckee River in Truckee Meadows, Utah Territory cutting access temporarily to the Henness Pass Road and Virginia City. Sacramento flooded three weeks later due to the massive runoff created by this storm. Sacramento was under 10 feet of water by January 10, 1862, the day that Governor Leland Stanford was inaugurated. The 1861 flooding was so bad that one could only travel by boat through the city. The legislature, unable to function, finally gave up and moved to San Francisco on January 22, to wait out the floods.



16. SACRAMENTO FLOODED, JANUARY 10TH 1862,
ANTHONY ROSENFELD LITHOGRAPH

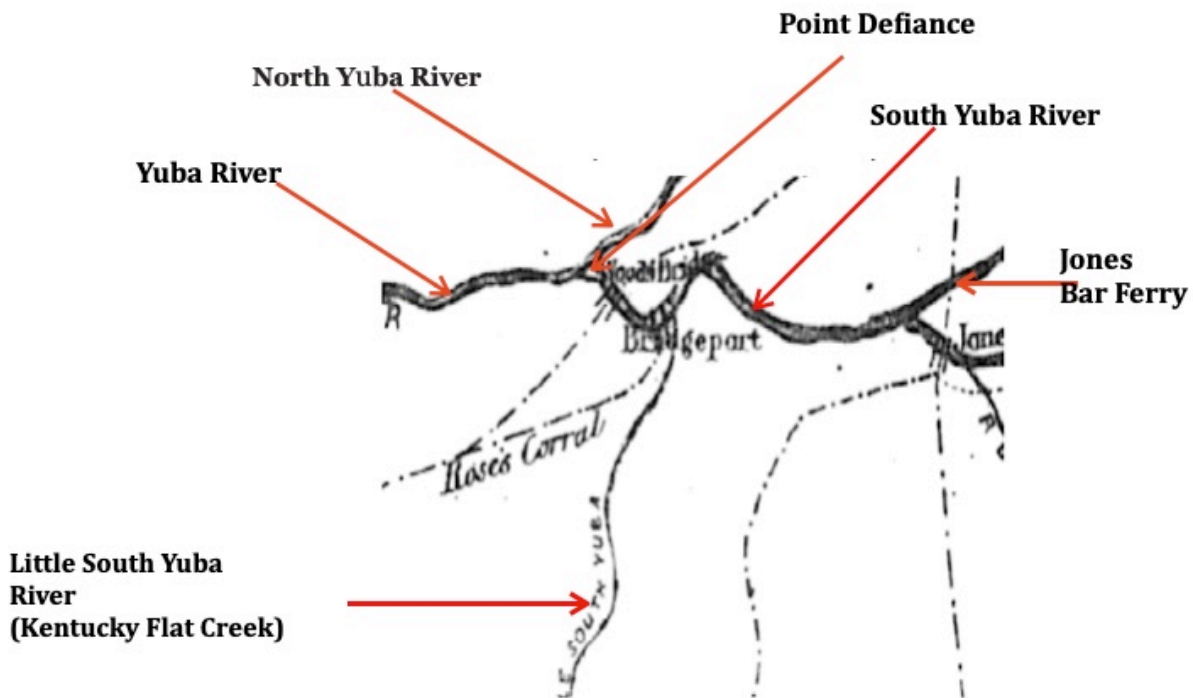
The continuing floods ripped out bridges, homes and businesses throughout the foothills, and an inland sea at least 300 miles long and 20 miles wide formed in the Central Valley.³⁹

Many lost their entire livelihoods including Lewis Keseberg, Donner Party survivor, whose Phoenix Brewery business was lost to the Great Flood.⁴⁰

³⁸ Who actually constructed the 1862 bridge is not known. If Thomas Hess, Matthew Sparks' bridge builder, was still in the area, he very well may have been the engineer that built the Bridgeport Covered Bridge.

³⁹ *California Megaflood: Lessons from a Forgotten Catastrophe*, Lynn Ingram, January 1, 2013

⁴⁰ McGlashan, C.F. (1879) "The Donner Party a Tragedy of the Sierra" page 186



17. THE CANAL MAP SHOWING THE MINING CAMP AT BRIDGEPORT AND WOOD'S BRIDGE NEAR POINT DEFIANCE

This map shows the location of the first bridge built at Bridgeport in 1850 and owned by Matthew Sparks. Bridgeport is located one mile upstream on the South Yuba River from Wood's bridge, which was near the confluence of the South Yuba and main Yuba River at Point Defiance. Jones Bar Ferry is shown six miles upriver from Bridgeport, crossing the South Yuba River and one mile downstream of present day Highway 49 Crossing bridge (mid right corner of map).

Special note. Rose's Corral as shown on the 1852 Canal map, circa 1848-1849, is considered the first permanent European settlement in Nevada County. On the map, you will see it on the south ridge just above Bridgeport near the present-day junction of Pleasant Valley and Bitney Springs Roads in Penn Valley.



18. DAVID I. J. WOOD

Wood was a successful merchant, President of the Virginia Turnpike Company from 1856-1864,⁴¹ and the third and fourth bridge owner at Bridgeport after Matthew Sparks and Thomas Hess.

⁴¹On Jan. 7, 1864 David Wood released property & franchise of the Virginia Turnpike Company to family members. In 1901 the Virginia Turnpike Company was “absolved”, the roadway and bridge were turned over to Nevada County as a public road. No more tolls were charged. *History of the South Yuba River State Park, Bridgeport to Illinois Bar*, page 2, 3 by John Tamagni, Park Docent 1998.

Chapter V

First by Mule Train, Then Teamsters and Stages

When the miners first arrived, it was difficult for them to reach the Northern Mines and the placer gold in the nearby rivers. A reliable means of transportation was needed to help them on their difficult journey. And that was the trusty mule or burro. These animals allowed them to bring goods to the mining camps. One mule could carry up to 300 pounds of supplies. The mule was above all things extremely surefooted, a critical need for a traveler navigating the steep and dangerous trails.



19. MULES & HORSES WERE USED ALL YEAR



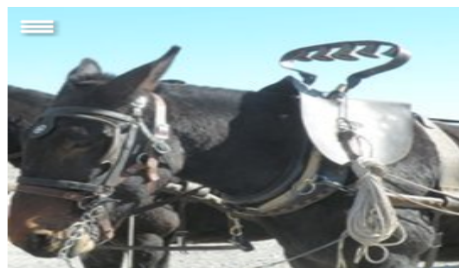
20. HORSES PULLING SLEIGH



21. CARRYING 300 POUNDS OR MORE



22. HORSES WITH SNOWSHOES AT JOHNSVILLE



23. LEAD MULE AND BELLS

Within a few years thousands of mules were in use in dependable pack trains hauling the needed supplies. There were as many as 825 mules alone in Nevada County by 1852.

At one point on May 13, 1859 even camels were considered as the optimum pack animal for use in the Sierras. A company out of Downieville, the “California and Utah Camel Association,” filed Articles of Incorporation, stating, “that the object for which this corporation is formed is the introduction, and employment of the Camel on the Pacific Coast.”⁴² It noted that the camel could carry up to 600 pounds of freight.⁴³



24. CAMEL TEAM, HAULING SALT TO THE COMSTOCK

An article from the Sierra Democrat, March 17, 1860 read:

If you want to travel to the Silver Country – if you want to get there quick, and ride all the way – take the stage at Marysville, and come to Downieville. We will have a camel train by Jamison in a few months, but meantime mules are cheaper than legs.

“Jamison” or Jamison’s Station⁴⁴, mentioned in this newspaper article, was named after H.H. Jamison, a Mormon. In 1852 he established a trading post in Truckee Meadows near present day Sparks, Nevada. It is considered by some as the first permanent settlement in the area. The crossing on the Truckee River was located near present day Sparks, Nevada.

⁴² State Archives, Office of the Secretary of State, Sacramento, CA

⁴³ Sinnott, James J. (1991) History of Sierra County, Volume I, Downieville Gold Town of the Yuba by, Mountain House Books, page 20

⁴⁴ Not to be confused with Jamison City, an early 1850s gold mining town in Plumas County CA, near present day Plumas Eureka State Historic Park. State Historic Landmark Number 196.

The Jerk Line Team

The roads in the rugged Sierra mountains were very crooked and rough. In fact, in the early 1850s, they were merely trails. As more toll roads and bridges were built, use of the mule pack train decreased and the wagon “jerk line” team of mules under the steady control of the teamster took their place. The jerk line wagon team could carry tons of cargo and became the primary freighter of choice to Virginia City. The team was made up of one or more heavy wagons, pulled by teams of mules consisting of four to as many as thirty-six mules.

Merriam-Webster defines a jerk line as:

a single rein used originally in the western U.S. that was fastened to the brake handle and ran through the driver's hand to the bit of the lead animal.

Keep in mind the rein ran from the driver’s hand, who rides on the left mule nearest the wagon, “the near wheeler,” then ran down under the entire team and up to the left leader mule in front of the team. The driver “teamster,” drove the team pulling the jerk line through the hame or spreader rings all the way up to the Leaders.⁴⁵

A brief description of how the jerk line team works is as follows: The team working on the tongue was called the wheel team. The team on the end of the tongue was called the pointers. The teams in front of the pointers are the sixes and the eights, up to and behind the leaders were called the swing teams. From the lead wagon, a long chain was fastened to stretcher bars which were hooked to each team.

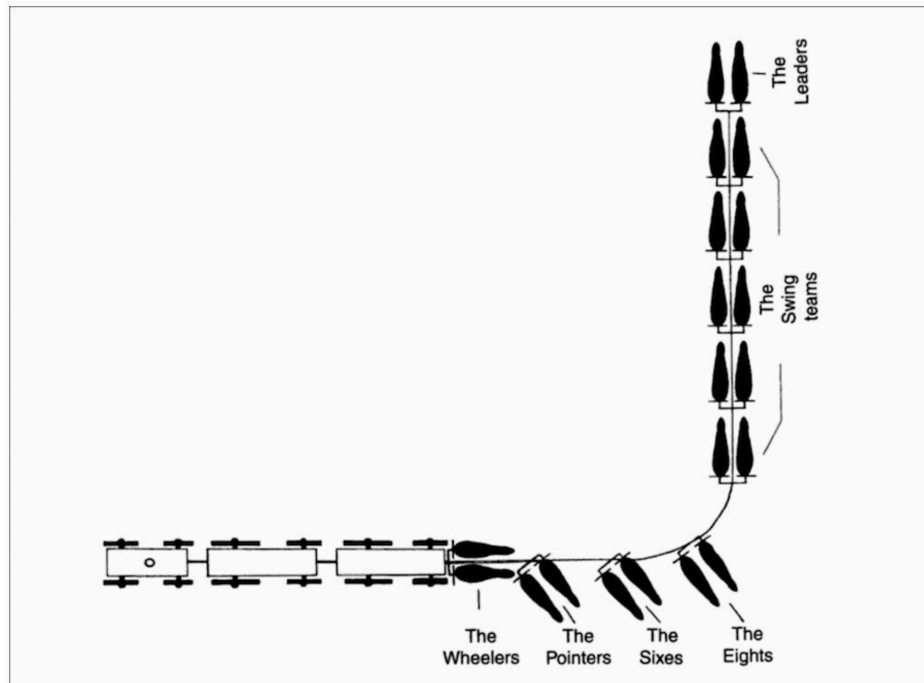
The following video link shows a jerk line team in action.⁴⁶

<https://youtu.be/sRGmkYxQXDc>

Jerk line teams of 16 mules would be strung out over 100 feet. To negotiate the precipitous mountain passes and sharp curves, the teams had to step over the

⁴⁵ Farm Collector 1964, Ed Vogel “The Jerkline and Its use in the Freight Line Days”,

⁴⁶ (video is a courtesy of www.hansenwheel.com)



25. THE 20 MULE JERK LINE TEAM MAKING A TURN

long chain and pull to the outside of the turn to keep the wagons from overshooting the curve and dropping off the steep canyon walls.

With the discovery of silver at Washoe Diggings (Virginia City) in the spring of 1859, thousands left the gold fields in northern California in the next few years and headed east over the mountains, often referred to as, the Second Gold Rush. Many of these hopeful “Argonauts” used the newly upgraded Henness Pass Road that David Wood and Thomas Freeman surveyed in October of 1859 and completed during the summer of 1860. Good quality wagon roads such as this one would yield substantial toll incomes. David Wood’s Virginia Turnpike Company, using the Henness Pass Road would be one of them.

Chapter VI

The Expressmen and Mail Carriers Arrive

Samuel Brannan (Scoundrel or Saint)



26. SAMUEL BRANNAN

The first attempt to establish an express mail company west of the Sierra Nevada Mountains was by Samuel Brannan, a wealthy business man and Mormon from San Francisco.⁴⁷ Brannan had located to Yerba Buena in early 1847, the year the settlement was renamed San Francisco by US Naval Lt. Washington Allon Bartlett, the Alcalde and Chief Magistrate.⁴⁸

A native of Maine, Brannan brought a contingent of Mormons with him by sea from New York to San Francisco at the direction of the prophet Brigham Young, to establish the first Mormon community there.

Brannan also established the first newspaper in San Francisco, the California Star, and he is the one that was first to yell in the streets of San Francisco, "Gold! Gold! Gold found on the American River!" announcing to the world the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill at Coloma on January 24th 1848.

Shortly thereafter, Samuel Brannan organized the California Star Express Company. This was to be a special Mule Train destined to carry the U.S. mail

⁴⁷ Davis, William Heath (1967), *Seventy-Five Years in California*, John Howell-Books

⁴⁸ On January 30, 1847, US Naval Lt. Bartlett's proclamation changing the name Yerba Buena to San Francisco took effect.

and Brannan's newspaper, *The California Star*,⁴⁹ all the way to the East Coast starting on April 1, 1848. Brannan tried this only once and then found it far too logistically challenging. He then moved on to other business ventures. Brannan was soon to become California's first millionaire.

Samuel Brannan was also a key player in early San Francisco politics, holding office as Councilman and later a State Senator in the new State of California. Among other community interests Brannan was instrumental in establishing the San Francisco Committee of Vigilance ("the vigilantes"), whose often preferred method of justice was hanging the accused after a quick, if any, trial.⁵⁰

Vigilantes in San Francisco during the 1850s should not be compared to the Miner Lynch Courts of the gold fields. Generally, Lynch Courts had a twelve member jury of "miners," held a trial and then passed sentence. Missing most times was a judge and the Sheriff. The punishment rendered would range from so many lashes to banishment from camp or hanging, for what were considered more serious offenses, such as horse or mule stealing.

Samuel W. Langton & His Pioneer Express Company

In 1850 at 21 years of age Samuel W. Langton founded Langton's Pioneer Express, a mule express service between Marysville and Downieville.⁵¹ He later founded the Langton & Brothers Yuba River Express and the Langton & Brothers Treasure Package & Letter Company located in Washoe⁵², which he owned and operated from 1850 to 1864.⁵³ The Pioneer Express served the Northern Mines in the early years 1850 to 1859. Langton's Pioneer Express was the major express company for the Northern Mines, long before Wells Fargo. Langton's express freighting ran from Marysville to the towns of

⁴⁹ Brigham Young wanted Brannan's printing press confiscated for not paying the tithes owed to the Mormon Church.

⁵⁰ Bagley, Will (1999) *Sam Brannan's Collected Works, Scoundrel's Tale*, Utah University Press

⁵¹ Downieville, *Gold Town of the Yuba*, James J. Sinnott 1991 page 111, first paragraph.

⁵² Washoe, several gold mining towns in the region east of the Sierra Nevada including Virginia City and Humboldt.

⁵³ *The Pioneer Miner and Pack Mule Express* by Ernest A. Wiltsee 1931 California Historical Society, page 100

Bridgeport, Grass Valley, Downieville, Forest City, French Corral, North San Juan, Nevada City and many others. Prior to establishing his Pioneer Express, Langton himself carried the mail to Downieville on foot.⁵⁴

Langton began his express company in Downieville where he built his residence, express business and the Langton & Company Bank.⁵⁵ Samuel Langton's influence in the development of the Northern Mines cannot be overestimated. Langton was surely the most successful of the independent expressmen during the 1850s and early 1860s. Langton was indeed an industrious sort and he did not hesitate to take risks at other business ventures related to freighting. One such opportunity came his way when he signed on as one of the officers to the Charter of the California and Utah Camel Association in 1859. Great expectations of great success were found in advertisements in the Downieville, Marysville and Sacramento newspapers about future camel trains to Virginia City. However, the camel business venture was an apparent failure.

Research shows that no camel freighters ever left Downieville for the silver mines. Why this occurred is unknown. Perhaps, the camel herd in California, being sold as surplus by the US Army, were so few in number, it simply could not meet the huge demand of the freighters. As it turned out, most of the camels that were purchased ended up in small operations, working in Virginia City and at nearby salt mine companies. This likely left Langton and company not enough access to camels to make a going business of it.

After the Comstock Strike, Langton's Pioneer Express stages and freighters serviced routes from Marysville to Virginia City and then from Virginia City to the new mines at Humboldt. His new Nevada Territory routes became very profitable, so much so, that he moved his family and headquarters to Virginia City in 1859. Once in Virginia City he continued to expand his operations, establishing the Nevada Mail & Express Company and by 1863 the Humboldt Express.⁵⁶ It seemed nothing could stop Sam Langton, then suddenly at his most productive high point, tragedy struck just outside of his new home of Virginia City. A terrible accident occurred while carrying a load of freight.

⁵⁴ Downieville, Gold Town of the Yuba, James J. Sinnott 1991 page 111

⁵⁵ Downieville, Gold Town of the Yuba, James J. Sinnott 1991 page 51, 89

⁵⁶ *Marysville Daily Appeal*, April 29, 1863

Langton lost control of his wagon team of oxen going down a steep grade and was crushed. He regrettably died three days later.

Samuel Langton was just 34 years of age at the time of his death. His family tried to continue his successful business but within a year they were forced to sell, not having the energy and skill of its young founder. A year later, beginning in November of 1865, the remainder of Langton & Co. routes were sold off by Mrs. S.W. Langton to Lamping & Company.

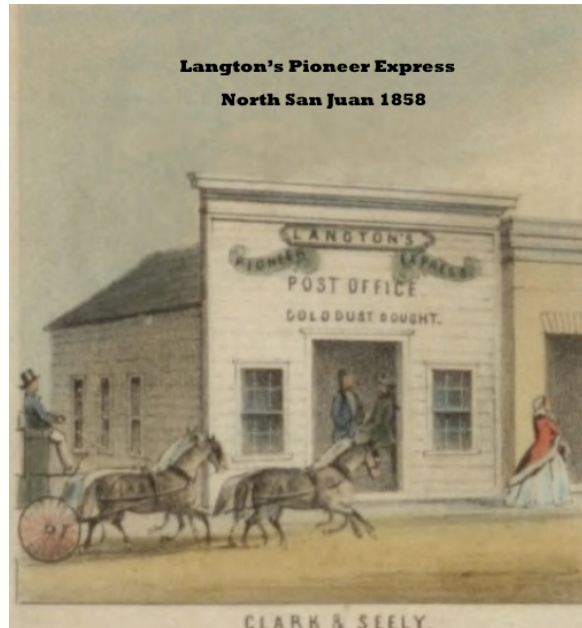
The November 25, 1865 Marysville Daily Appeal reported, "Messrs. Lamping & Co. have purchased from Langton & Co.'s Express, and will after conduct business in all its branches on the routes now occupied by the 'Pioneer Express.'⁵⁷ Within a year Wells Fargo & Company purchased Lamping & Company. Sadly, as fate would have it tragedy continued to follow the Langton family. Shortly after Samuel died, his wife Anna and daughter Ethel were killed in a devastating avalanche near Sierra Buttes.⁵⁸

Wells Fargo, in the years 1850 to 1864, left the greater Yuba River region freight business to Samuel Langton's company. They didn't have a major presence in the Northern Mines until after 1864, when they began purchasing most of the earlier established freight companies in California and Nevada, known as Wells Fargo's "Grand Consolidation." It was not until October of 1865 that Wells Fargo & Company purchased most of the Langton Companies' business, including the "route from, Marysville to Timbuctoo, [Bridgeport], French Corral, Sweetland, North San Juan, Nevada City and thence to Virginia."⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Western Express, Research Journal of Early Western Mails, Vol. 70, No. 275 March 2020, article, Langton's Humboldt Express by Gordon L. Nelson, Ph.D. page 31.

⁵⁸ Western Express (Western Cover Society) Vol. 1, No. 7 October 1951

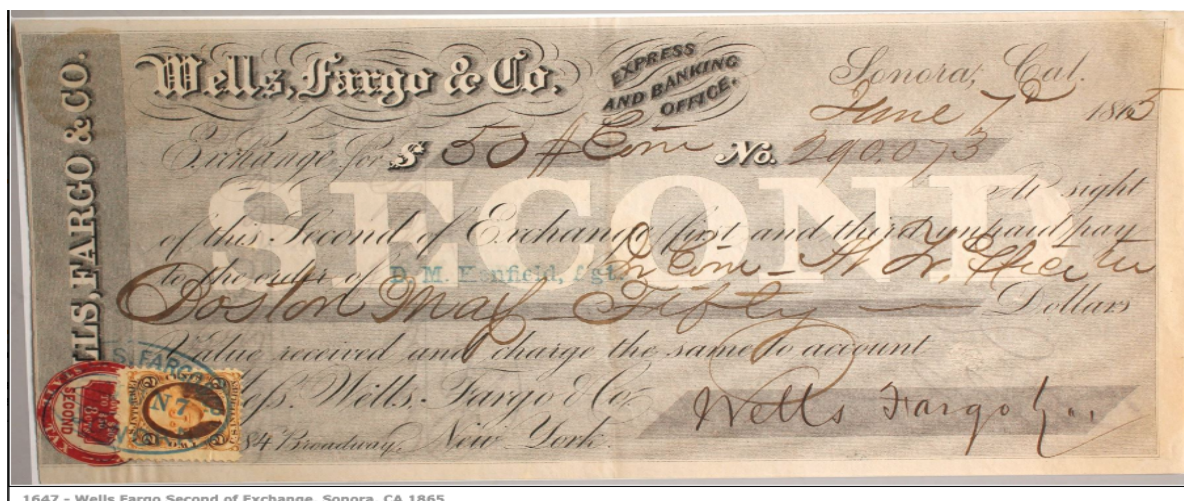
⁵⁹ Gold Hill Daily News. *Gold Hill Daily News, Article in the October 5, 1865 edition* Chronicling America, the Library of Congress: <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov>



27. LANGTON'S OPERATIONS IN NORTH SAN JUAN,
AND DOWNIEVILLE.

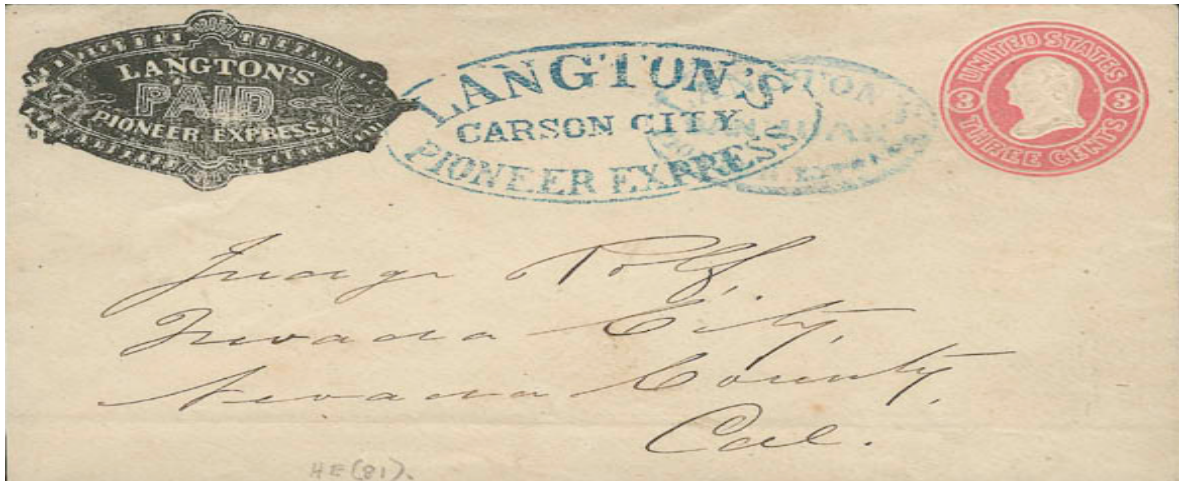


28. SAMUEL W. LANGTON ON THE LEFT, MAJOR WILLIAM DOWNIE ON RIGHT AT THE DOWNIE CABIN, DOWNIEVILLE CA. EARLY 1850S.



29. LANGTON'S COMPETITOR, WELLS FARGO. NOTE THAT IN 1865 THE NAME WAS LISTED AS "WELLS, FARGO & CO," NOT WELLS FARGO & COMPANY.

Competitors and mutual business associates, Wells Fargo and Langton's Pioneer Express worked together in the early years. Wells Fargo simply shipped their customer's merchandise using Langton's Pioneer Express as the agent, much like Amazon utilizes the US Postal Service today.



30. LETTER CARRIED FROM CARSON CITY TO SAN JUAN THEN TO NEVADA CITY BY STAGE.

Wells Fargo began building their own express offices throughout the Northern Mines after their 1864 “Grand Consolidation,” an effective buyout of all their competitors. This action created one of the Western United States powerful great monopolies.



31. NOTE THE WELLS FARGO STAMP, BOTTOM LEFT

The California Stage Company

In August 1849, at 21 years of age, James E. Burch founded the California Stage Company, which became the largest stage company, not only in Northern California but throughout California, during the 1850s. James Haworth became President of the California Stage Company by 1856. He greatly expanded the company and developed routes to Oregon as well. By 1858, the California Stage Company was running 28 daily lines of stages. The company had a stable of 1,000 horses, and employed 184 agents, drivers, and hotelkeepers statewide.

Era of Toll Roads, Stage Stops and Hotels

From the mid 1850s through the late 1860s, the need for stage stations and hotels was great. Humans and animals needed to rest and get supplies. The stage stops or hotels were an average of 10 to 15 miles apart. After leaving the hotels and stage stops, the trek to the Virginia City could be quite difficult. Eventually these roads led over the passes, down through the deep eastern valleys, through Truckee Meadows and on to the Comstock strike in Virginia City in Utah Territory.

Charles Cole, a homesteader, farmer and miner who arrived at Bridgeport in 1849, is given credit for building the Bridgeport House or Hotel circa 1862, the year David Wood constructed his new covered bridge in the summer. The 1862 date of construction is based on the first documented record of visitors staying at the Bridgeport House; the McMillan wagon train from Kansas stayed at the Bridgeport House on October 22, 1862 and took refuge in the bridge there during the rainstorm.



32. BRIDGEPORT HOUSE "HOTEL" CIRCA 1862,

However, this date could be as early as the summer of 1860, which would have coincided with the demand of increased traffic to the Comstock, that occurred with the silver discovery in the spring of 1859. The Bridgeport House had 19 rooms to accommodate its overnight guests; by 1862 many of the guests were miners that were on the road to Virginia City with hopes of striking it rich.

A true story that captures the hospitality of the day at Bridgeport House involves the wagon train of the Duncan B. McMillan party. They were tired, wet and near exhaustion from several days of rain and storm by the time they reached Bridgeport while making their way from the east and trying to get to Marysville. During this two-day storm in October 1862, the hotelkeepers, Charles and Mary Cole, took in and sheltered members of the McMillan wagon train.⁶⁰ The McMillans were nearing the end of their long journey from Lynn County, Kansas. The ten wagons were shoehorned into the covered bridge, the stock was placed in the barn, and the families were invited into Bridgeport House until the storm was over. The McMillan family reached Marysville on October 10, 1862.⁶¹ They were very grateful for the kindness given.

⁶⁰ Cultural History of South Yuba River State Park, South Yuba River Park Association

⁶¹ McMillan Genealogy and History, Duncan Buchanan McMillan, page 246

The Bridgeport House burned to the ground August 19, 1919. The fire's cause remains a mystery to this day. At the time Alfred and Lucille Kneebone lived at the home.⁶²

⁶² On August 17, the Bridgeport House, early home of Charles J. and Mary Ann Cole, was destroyed by fire. Alfred A. Kneebone and family were living there at the time. They lost everything. Morning Union, August 19, 1919, "Fire Breaks Out in Noted Old Structure and Occupants Have Barely Time to Make Escape."

California Legislature's 1850 Toll Road and Plank Act

Shortly after the first California State legislature met in 1850 the Toll Road and Plank Act was passed allowing private owners to build road and bridges in the new State. However, the requirement that road builders have stock subscriptions of \$2000 dollars per mile was so excessive that only eighteen roads were built in the entire State between 1850 to 1853. Just three companies during those years applied to build toll roads or operate bridges in Nevada County. In May 1853, with the passage of the Plank and Turnpike Road Act Revision, it became much easier for toll road companies to form. The new laws reduced the stock subscription rate to only \$300 per mile, and left the county governments to set the tolls and rates. After 1853 more than twenty roads and bridges were built in Nevada County.

Thus individual toll companies and private landowners could lay out their own routes and hire their own surveyors, submitting the routes to the Nevada County Court of Sessions for approval. The 1853 law did have some restrictions, but the general effect was to see a large increase in toll road builders throughout California as well as an increase in bridge builders. David Wood and others took full advantage of this new law.⁶³ David Wood held the first organizing meeting for the proposed Virginia Turnpike Company at his home at Point Defiance, November 24, 1855. All present at the meeting formally signed an official notice that was printed in the local newspaper:

Notice—We, the undersigned, hereby declare our intention to organize a company for the construction of a Turnpike Road in the County of Nevada in pursuance of the provisions of an Act of the Legislature passed May 12th, 1853, entitled: ["an act to authorize the formation of Corporations for the Construction of Plank or Turnpike Roads,"]⁶⁴

Soon after this meeting, the project would become a registered Toll Road and Bridge Company.⁶⁵

⁶³ Klien, Daniel B. and Majewski, John (2008) *Turnpikes and Toll Roads in Nineteenth Century America*, Santa Clara University and University of California.

⁶⁴ Nevada City Democrat, November 14, 1855

⁶⁵ The Nevada County Book of Incorporations page 12, October 11, 1856

David Wood was elected President and several members of Wood's immediate family became officers and shareholders of the new corporation. In 1856 the Virginia Turnpike Company sold \$40,000 in Capital Stock, which would be worth more than \$1,200,000 today. The 14 mile route was described as follows:

Commencing at a point on the road running from the lower Crossing of Deer Creek [Anthony House] to French Corral, one and quarter miles south of the Scotchman's or Halfway House, thence by the most practicable route by way of French Corral and Sweet-land to the town of San Juan.

The historic Anthony House built in 1849, mentioned in the above quote, was razed in 1970 by the Boise Cascade Corporation in order to build its Lake Wildwood home development project. Remnants of the Anthony House are submerged under water near the Lake Wildwood Dam (officially the Anthony House Dam) in Penn Valley, California. The Anthony House site is a Nevada County Historical Landmark and is located off of Pleasant Valley Road at the Lake Wildwood Dam overlook.⁶⁶



33. ANTHONY HOUSE

⁶⁶ Landmark registered, plaque dedicated 2010 by Nevada County, NEV 10-01: Anthony House and Ranch.

Chapter VII

The Rise of the Henness Pass Road

Discovery “June 1850”

Patrick Henness and his partner Mr. Jackson⁶⁷ first discovered the pass on a gold prospecting trek east of the Little Truckee River in Sierra County. During the next 10 years emigrants used the road traveling west.

In contrast to the earlier emigrant routes mentioned previously, the Henness Pass Road, in this context, is transportation between California and what became the State of Nevada, and refers to a system of toll roads and bridges that primarily led eastward, not westward, to the “Washoe.” Washoe referred to the great eastern side of the Sierra which included a vast area of northern Utah Territory and from 1859 on, specifically to the silver and gold discovery at Virginia City. Historians often refer to this period, as the “Second Gold Rush.”

In the early 1860s the primary route to Washoe or Virginia City taken by the gold and silver seekers described in this work, took two different roads. One was from Marysville to Bridgeport and then on the Virginia Turnpike to North San Juan. The other was from Marysville to Nevada City. Both routes would join up at the Jackson Ranch and then on to Virginia City. Two secondary roads met up at the same location and will be discussed later.

From North San Juan the teamster or stage driver would take the toll road to Freeman’s, cross the Middle Fork of the Yuba River; cross over the Oregon Creek Bridge, connecting to the Truckee Turnpike at Plum Valley; travel along the Pliocene Ridge through the mining community of Forest City, following the road to the Jackson Ranch junction; continue past Webber’s Station near the Henness Pass; then continue over the crest of the Sierra, passing through Dog Valley into Verdi. The teamster would then continue to follow the Henness Pass Road, cross the Truckee River at O’Neil’s and Hunter’s Crossings or via Lake’s Crossing in the Truckee Meadows. Once across the Truckee River one would travel another 18 miles or so up the Geiger Grade and arrive at Virginia City located in Utah Territory.

⁶⁷ No record of first name in the historical record.

The route from Nevada City would cross at Edward's Crossing on the South Yuba River then on to Lake City, Eureka, Bowman Ranch arriving at the Jackson Ranch junction and meeting the Henness Pass Road.

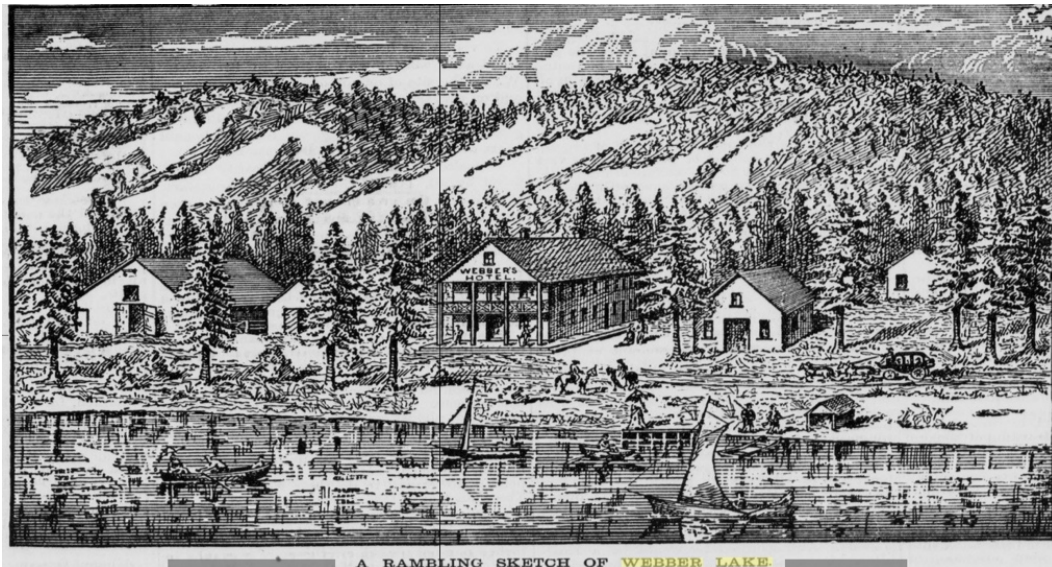
From here the turnpike roads became one road and followed the same route as described previously. The primary destination the same, Virginia City and the Comstock lode.

The following is an article that features Patrick Henness and Mr. Jackson from the Marysville Daily Appeal dated June 7, 1860.⁶⁸

In June of 1850 these gentlemen set out on a prospecting expedition above Downieville. They passed on through Sierra Valley into Sardine Valley and from thence turned there're [sic] course westward keeping to the right of the "old Truckee Route." Until they noticed the remarkable depression, near what they subsequently found to be the headwaters of the south fork of the middle Yuba River. Pushing on through the gap, which was subsequently called Jackson and Henness Pass, they soon came to a spot now known as Jackson Ranch, which at the time was covered with luxuriant crop of grass, ready for the scythe. They immediately gave up their prospecting for gold, and sent to Sacramento for the necessary implements and commenced cutting the hay, which they packed down to Downieville at great profit. Mr. Henness soon after left the country and returned to the Atlantic states. Mr. Jackson has ever since remained in possession of the Ranch and has made great efforts to bring it up to notice. In 1857, he laid out and constructed a good wagon road through it at the cost of \$6000 which he generously threw open to the public free of toll. He is fairly entitled to give his name to the pass.

In 1855 Henness Pass Road was surveyed by D.B Scott as part of a bid for selection as the California State Wagon Road. Scott's survey described the road as the preferred route with lower costs and better elevation grades. However, the route was passed over in favor of the Placerville route in El Dorado County. The merchants and politicians there carried the day.

⁶⁸ Marysville Daily Appeal, Volume 1, Number 118, June 7, 1860



34. WEBBER LAKE STAGE STOP ON THE HENNESS PASS ROAD

In 1860, Dr. David Gould Webber developed his resort hotel and stage stop at what was called Little Truckee Lake until 1859, to take advantage of the increased stage and freight traffic going to the recently discovered Comstock Strike in Virginia City.⁶⁹

In 1865 Meadow Lake experienced a short gold rush boom and increased traffic and business was the result for Webber Lake Hotel and stage stop. After 1867, Dr. Webber's business took advantage of Charles Crocker's Central Pacific Railroad reaching Coburn's Station⁷⁰ (Truckee) and the tourism it soon brought to his hotel. Dr. Webber died in 1883, by 1884 San Francisco businessmen purchased the property to operate it as a private hunting and fishing resort, which it remained for more than 130 years, until the Johnson family sold it to the Truckee Donner Land Trust in 2012.

⁶⁹ Also called Truckee Lake, page 436, Lardner & Brock 1924, Placer and Nevada Counties Illustrated, Historic Record Company, Los Angeles.

⁷⁰ Coburn's Station took its name from S.S. Coburn, a blacksmith who in 1864 settled along the Truckee River south of Donner Lake. From 1864 to 1868 Truckee was known as Coburn's Station.

The Webber Lake Hotel, the last existing of 21 hostelryes built along the Hennes Pass Road, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2018.⁷¹



35. 1873 PUBLIC SURVEY MAP SHOWS THE HENNESS PASS ROAD OF THE 1860S RUNNING NEAR THE EARLIER 1850S EMIGRANT ROAD GOING BY WEBBER LAKE AND “WEBBER’S HOUSE.”

⁷¹ SF Chronicle 12-3-12, Peter Fimrite Staff Writer, article “Webber Lake, Lacy Meadows saved in deal.” Report, National Register of Historic Places, Webber Lake Hotel, page 19.

Chapter VIII

Emigrants and Mormons of Truckee Meadows

Emigrants coming from the east and traveling west to California early on made use of Henness and Jackson's discovery of a better road to the California gold fields in the early 1850s. By 1850 many of these emigrants were abandoning the pioneer Truckee Trail because of its difficult course through the deep Truckee River canyon on the way to Donner Lake and the challenges of the near vertical mountain pass beyond. Instead they began using two new trails, the Beckwourth and Henness Pass trails, which now attracted a burst of emigrants to Truckee Meadows near Jamison's Station.

Jamison's Station was a trading post established in 1852, taking advantage of the increasing emigrant traffic going west. This station was located on the north side of the Truckee River near present-day Sparks, Nevada. Jamison's is considered one of the earliest settlements in Truckee Meadows.

Before moving to his Truckee Meadows river station, H.H. Jamison was an agent near Mormon Station for the Chorpenning Mail Company that had the US Mail contract between Sacramento and Salt Lake City.⁷²

Mormon Station was established in 1850 by Abner Blackburn⁷³ and Hampton Beatie, veterans of the Mormon Battalion,⁷⁴ as an outpost to supply emigrants and young men seeking the gold fields of California and to oversee an early mail route. These undertakings met with the approval and encouragement of Brigham Young back in Salt Lake City, who had been appointed the Governor of Utah Territory on February 3, 1851. In 1855 Brigham Young appointed Orson Hyde, one of the twelve apostles of the Mormon Church, Probate Judge, and sent him to organize the Mormon community at Mormon Station and to

⁷² Paher, Stanley W. *Emigrant Shadows* page 190

⁷³ Beatie, *First in Nevada* pp. 170-171. Reese, *Mormon Station* page 188. Abner Blackburn is considered the first man to have discovered gold near Dayton in Utah Territory in May or June 1849.

⁷⁴ Fleek, Sherman L. (2006) *History May be Searched in Vain: A Military History of the Mormon Battalion*. The Mormon Battalion, the only religion-based unit in United States military history, served from July 1846 – July 1847. It was approved by President James Polk during the Mexican-American War of 1846–1848. The **Battalion** was a volunteer unit of between 534 and 559 Latter-day Saint men, led by Mormon company officers commanded by regular U.S. Army officers.

subdue the complaints brewing from the non-Mormon gentiles. Hyde began his task and renamed the community Genoa in 1855⁷⁵

But by 1855 many of the non-Mormons living in Carson Valley and Truckee Meadows were becoming frustrated by Mormon law being forced upon them, coming from the morally righteous Territorial Governor Brigham Young, in far off Salt Lake City. These gentiles wanted no part of it. So much so, that on November 23, 1855, a group of non-Mormon gentiles petitioned the California legislature for the annexation of Carson County to the State of California.⁷⁶ The California legislature was excited by this prospect and urged the United States Congress to pass this proposal and move California's boundary to the 118th meridian. However Congress took no action on this land grab by California, for many in Congress thought that California was already much too large.

Mormons were indeed among the first European settlers in the Truckee Meadows and Washoe Valleys. But that all that changed in 1857 when Brigham Young called all Mormons and their families back to Salt Lake City to fight an impending war, solving the non-Mormon population's long standing grievances with Brigham Young and his Mormon Church.

Why Were the Mormons Called Back to Salt Lake City?

In 1857, the United States Army requisitioned by force all Mormon properties in the greater Salt Lake, eastern Utah Territory. The United States, by order of Jefferson Davis, Secretary of War, rescinded Brigham Young's right to govern Utah Territory. It seems Brigham Young had overstepped his authority as the Territorial Governor with the United States government in his attempt to establish an independent Provisional State of Deseret.

This action is referred to as the Utah War (1857-1858). The Mormon State of Deseret was an area encompassing large segments of present day Utah, Idaho, Arizona, Nevada, California and parts of southern Colorado and northern New Mexico. Mormons were called back by Brigham Young from all corners of the Provisional State of Deseret, with orders to return to Salt Lake and fight an

⁷⁵ Zanjani, Sally, (2006) *Devils Will Reign How Nevada Began*, University of Nevada Press, p. 56

⁷⁶ Hershiser, Beulah, *Society Report 1 (1907-1908)*: page 123 "The Adjustment of the Boundaries of Nevada," Nevada Historical

impending war to defend the Mormon Zion. Though no pitched battles were fought, many civilians were killed. Most Mormons did return to Salt Lake City, including the entrepreneur Samuel Brannan, leader of the San Francisco Mormon settlement.⁷⁷ Brigham Young's action left a void in western Utah Territory that was rapidly filled by non-Mormon, emigrants--farmers and miners seeking gold and silver in Truckee Meadows and the surrounding areas.

Alfred Cumming was appointed by President James Buchanan as Governor of Utah Territory in 1858, replacing Brigham Young following the Utah War. Anger among many non-Mormons ran high. Some outspoken individuals actually advocated summary execution for Brigham Young,⁷⁸ understandably, during this time Young had lapsed into depression, became reclusive and suspended services in the Tabernacle.⁷⁹

The President definitely wanted a non-Mormon governor in charge. The US Army remained in Salt Lake City until 1861 to make certain no uprisings occurred. By the time the Army were pulled out to help with the impending American Civil War, activities throughout greater Salt Lake area had already returned to a prosperous normal, under the leadership of Brigham Young.

A Movement Towards Nevada Statehood

On September 7, 1859, Isaac Newton Roop was elected by a local citizens' convention in Genoa, Carson Valley, as the first provisional governor of the newly proposed Territory of Nevada.⁸⁰

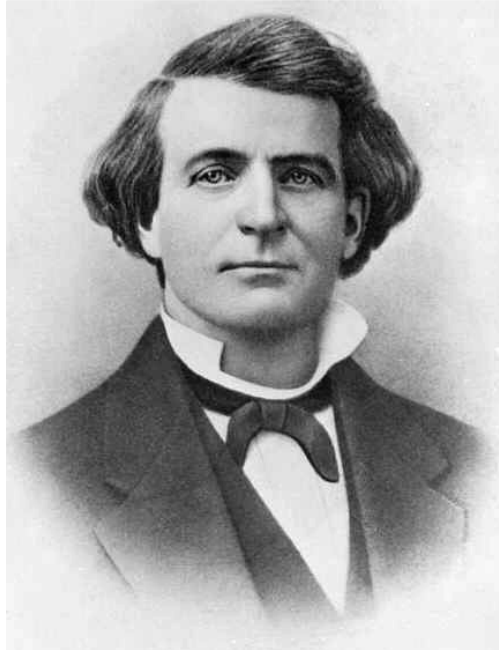
It was the sincere hope of members of the newly elected territorial legislature in Genoa, that the US Congress would soon act to make Nevada an official United States Territory, in part to protect the new settlers from any future claims by Mormons seeking to reestablish their lost properties.

⁷⁷ Tortorich, Frank (1998) Gold Rush Trail, Wagon Wheel Tours page 4.

⁷⁸ MacKinnon, William P. "Vita:Albert Gallatin Browne Jr., A brief Life of an Early War Correspondent:1832-1891". *Harvard Magazine* 111 November-December 2008

⁷⁹ Secretary's Office Journal, September 24 1858, Church History Library, Salt Lake City UT

⁸⁰ Bacon & Co., Printers & Publishers, San Francisco, (1870)."Representative & Leading Men of the Pacific", Pages 405-410.

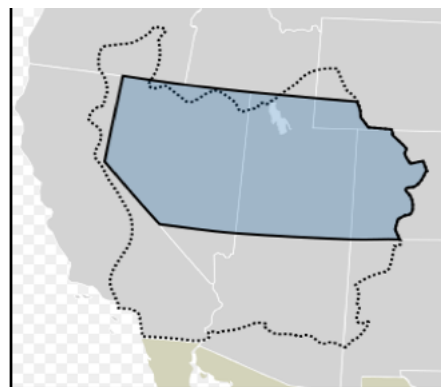


**36. ISSAC N. ROOP, FIRST
PROVISIONAL GOVERNOR OF
NEVADA TERRITORY**

Two years later, on March 2, 1861, the US Congress did officially act and created the Territory of Nevada. President Lincoln appointed Governor James W. Nye, while Congress greatly reduced the size of Utah Territory and the influence of Brigham Young. The new Territory of Nevada remained large and difficult to govern. See Appendix D for more information.



**37A. PROVISIONAL STATE
OF DESERET 1849**



**37B. UTAH TERRITORY
1850-51**

Chapter IX

The Great Silver Discovery, the Comstock Lode

One of the most important mining discoveries in North America was the discovery of silver and gold near Gold Hill, today Virginia City, known as the Comstock Lode or Strike.⁸¹ The richest silver ore strike in US history was found on the eastern slope of Mt. Davidson and was made known in the spring of 1859.

Henry Comstock, in fact, did not discover the lode; that credit should be given to Ethan Allen Grosh and Hosea Ballou Grosh who earlier in 1857 had made the discovery, but died before they could file their claim. Ethan ran a pick through his boot and died of an infection near the mine and his brother Allen, trying to cross the Sierra in a snowstorm, died from exposure.⁸²

This discovery, in effect, ended the California gold rush, which was winding down anyway, and started a new “silver and gold rush” to Virginia City in Utah Territory. Men and women now quickly left their homes in California and made the difficult trip east, as fast as they could, to the little town below Mount Davidson known as Virginia. By the late 1860s, from just a few prospectors, the town’s population grew to more than 40,000. More than 500 million dollars of silver and gold ore were found in the first 20 years making a few men very wealthy and helping build San Francisco into the financial power house it is today.⁸³

With this discovery in mind, David Wood and his friend and partner, Thomas Freeman of North San Juan, both road and bridge owners, saw the “overnight” need to supply the quickest and most dependable way for the new argonauts to get to Virginia City. So, in October of 1859 they set out on a journey to survey the best and fastest route to the new Comstock Strike.

An article from the San Juan Hydraulic Press dated October 22, 1859 reported:

⁸¹ Smith, G., History of the Comstock Lode, (1943)

⁸² McDonald, Douglas (1882) Virginia City & the Silver Region of the Comstock Lode, Nevada Publications, page 9

⁸³ Nielson, Norman (1991) *Tales of Nevada* page 1

On Monday the 10th A party composed of Thomas Freeman and David Wood both experienced road builders, with other persons, of who the writer of this was one, started from North San Juan on a journey to Carson City, Utah, and the new silver mines of the 'Eastern slope, by way of Henness Pass, with a view to ascertaining the most direct practicable route for a road connecting Marysville, North San Juan, and other towns in Yuba, Nevada, and Sierra Counties with the important regions on the eastern boundaries of our State, that is now being rapidly peopled. We propose to give as succinctly as possible, the results of this expedition, with direct reference to its special object, leaving whatever else of interest was learned for other occasions. The party pursued what is known as the Emigrant Road along the river dividing the north and middle Yubas, up the latter stream to the summit, through the Henness Pass into Truckee Lake Valley⁸⁴, down the Little Truckee with its succession of linked grassy valleys, to Dog Valley Hill, over the hill to the main Truckee, southward through Truckee Meadows, Steamboat, Smiths and Washoe Valley to Carson City and Eagle Valley, and thence Northward to the Virginia City or Washoe Diggings.

This made a total distance from North San Juan 107 miles, and from Marysville 143 miles. In return, the party avoided that circuitous route going from Steamboat Valley to the diggings, and across the range of mountains lying between them and said by a direct route which follows the course of a steep Canyon, thus saving 15 miles, and reducing the distance from Marysville to Virginia City to 130 miles making it shorter than any other route. Through this canyon parties are now engaged in building road.

The toll road built over the Henness Pass by David Wood and his son Samuel in the summer of 1860, was known as the Truckee Turnpike. The peak use period for the turnpike companies came between the years 1860 to 1868. So much so, that the Virginia Turnpike and Truckee Turnpike Companies periodically needed to regulate traffic. To accommodate the great increase in the number of wagon teams carrying heavy cargo and freight, wagon teams

81 The reference to "Truckee Lake Valley" refers to Truckee Lake, an earlier name for Webber Lake before 1859, later named after Dr. Webber, who established his hotel and lake resort there, circa 1859-1860.

were scheduled to travel by day. The express stages and passenger stagecoaches were relegated to only night-time travel.⁸⁵

This huge increase in the number of freighters and stages generated by the silver discovery in a Virginia City had immediate impact on the narrow roads and bridges. But the bridge and toll road owners stood to earn great profits. For example, more than 100 wagons per day were thought to have crossed the Bridgeport Covered Bridge. Competition for moving freight and people by team and stage was intense. One of the fastest movements of the express stage occurred on July 15, 1862, when the California Stage Company, running a Concord Coach, made the trip from Virginia City to Marysville in 24 hours, a total distance of 130 miles.⁸⁶

Many other stage and freight companies were formed during the “Rush to Washoe,” in the years 1860 to 1868. But most quickly disappeared due to the intense competition from better financed groups such as Wells Fargo & Company.⁸⁷ Wells Fargo & Co. by 1866 had purchased just about all of their once powerful competitors; Langton’s Pioneer Express, Louis McLane’s Pioneer Stage Line out of Placerville, the California Stage Company out of Dutch Flat and the failed Pacific Stage Co. started in 1859 by the famous mailman, John Snowshoe Thompson along the Placerville route.⁸⁸ Wells Fargo & Company came to control it all, in what newspapers of the day called “The Grand Consolidation of Stage Lines.”⁸⁹

Wells Fargo & Co. on December 10, 1866 after trying to keep it a secret for over a year, made it official and announced that they had consolidated the major express, mail, and stage lines west of the Missouri River, namely the Holliday Overland Mail & Express Company, the Overland Mail Company, the United States Express Company, and the American Express Company.

⁸⁵ This may have been a recommendation, not a requirement. I have seen it both ways, as a requirement in some research papers and as a request in others.

⁸⁶ The Marysville Daily Appeal July 15, 1862.

⁸⁷ Jackson, W. Turrentine, *California Historical Quarterly, Staging Over the Sierra*, No. 49, No. 2 (June 1970) page 99-133

⁸⁸ Record-Courier, Serving Gardnerville-Minden and the Carson Valley, December 19, 2001, *Better than Walking, but Stagecoach Business was Still Risky*, by Mark McLaughlin

⁸⁹ Jackson, W. Turrentine, *California Historical Quarterly, Staging Over the Sierra*, No. 49, No. 2 (June 1970) page 117

Below is a typical poster advertising one of those fast stages going to and coming from Marysville to the Comstock Strike utilizing the Henness Pass Road;



38. ADVERTISEMENT FOR A HENNESS PASS STAGE

The California Stage Company in the advertisement above, describes the routes followed which were developed by the newly formed Henness Pass Turnpike and Truckee Turnpike Companies in 1860.

The Henness Pass Turnpike Company formed by investors from Nevada City, and the Truckee Turnpike Company formed primarily by investors from Marysville and North San Juan, during the early months of 1860 began a race to see who would be the first to establish the route to Virginia City's Comstock Strike.

During the summer of 1860 road construction proceeded rapidly and by the fall of 1860 the two companies found mutual success by combining their resources to complete the improvements to the Henness Pass Road. The two companies joined forces from the junction of the Jackson Ranch to Dog Valley Hill down the steep grade to Verdi and then upgraded existing connecting roads in Truckee Meadows and on to Virginia City.⁹⁰

⁹⁰ Howard, Frederick Thomas, *Sierra Crossing: First Roads to California*, University of California Press, October 2000, page 160-161.

As the power and influence of James Haworth's California Stage Company increased, it is not surprising that in 1861 he was elected President of the Truckee Turnpike Company, succeeding John Bope of Plum Valley as the Director of Activities.



39. MAP OF THE HENNESS PASS ROAD

By the summer of 1861 David Wood and the Virginia Turnpike Company were becoming wealthy as well, due to the great increase in teamster and stage traffic, created by the Comstock Strike in Virginia City.

The Henness Pass road featured a lower mountain pass and shorter way to Virginia City compared to the Placerville route. This made the Henness Pass Road a preferred route during the early 1860s, especially in the winter. Teamsters could travel more months out of the year using sleigh wagons, equipping their teams of horses and mules with snowshoes.

The Placerville route following an early emigrant trail to California went over the higher Johnson Pass, elevation 7374 feet⁹¹ near Echo Summit, not far from South Lake Tahoe. This route was developed by John Calhoun Johnson in 1852.

⁹¹ California Mines & Geology Report June 1, 1886 survey by the Central Pacific Railroad

Chapter X

Building the Truckee Turnpike to the Comstock Lode

David Wood was a merchant, road builder and a risk taker. So it is not surprising being a major investor in the Truckee Turnpike Company, that in the spring of 1860, David Wood and his son Samuel were hired by the newly formed company, the Truckee Turnpike Company of North San Juan to build an improved road from the North San Juan to the California border below Dog Valley.⁹² With the road ending near present day Verdi, Nevada, this would be a demanding, expensive and dangerous project requiring a huge amount of resources and men.

The first stage stop and toll station was at John Bope's ranch, located on top of the ridge at Plum Valley, between the Middle Yuba and South Yuba Rivers. John Bope was the first President of the Truckee Turnpike Company. David Wood hired a large group of men to help him build this road over the old emigrant trail then known as the Henness Pass Emigrant Road, first surveyed by Henness and Jackson in 1852. His goal was to make it wide, well graded, contoured and fast. The following is from an article in the Nevada Democrat, May 4, 1860, describing that road building enterprise:

We learn that the Truckee Turnpike Company have completed an excellent road as far as Allegheny town. Mr. Tisdale, was on the road last week, informs us that it is a much better road than the turnpike between Nevada and Grass Valley, and there is scarcely a place where the grade exceeds three or four inches to the rod. There are now about a hundred men at work on the road, under the direction of Mr. Woods, the managing stock holder and as the the country between Allegheny Town and Jackson Ranch is nearly level, they expect to have the road completed to that point this week. At Jackson Ranch the Truckee and Henness Turnpikes intercept, and beyond that point the two new companies will join in doing whatever work is necessary. When completed, the road through the Henness Pass will be the best ever constructed over the Sierra Nevada Mountains

By early October of 1860 David Wood, working with 100 men and with the added help of the Henness Pass Turnpike Company, had completed the road to

⁹² Nevada Democrat, May 4, 1860. David Wood was a major investor in the Truckee Turnpike Company.

the California border near Verdi.⁹³ From that point on it followed a well graveled road to Virginia City.

The upgraded road to the Comstock Strike in Virginia City was now complete. But David Wood and his son were not paid for the work they did completing the road building. David Wood and his son sued the Truckee Turnpike Company, and won in the lower district court of Sierra County in 1861, obtaining a judgment in the amount of \$9,848. When the Company did not pay, the Sheriff seized its assets, including the Truckee Turnpike Road and its improvements, such as bridges, and then sold the assets to the Woods. At the Jackson Ranch in September of 1861 the Sheriff issued a deed to Wood for the Truckee Turnpike Company road. However, the Truckee Turnpike Company appealed to the California Supreme Court.

In April 1864, the California Supreme Court followed long-standing common law that no one can own public land or obtain it by establishing sole use over a period of time. The Henness Pass Road, which the Truckee Turnpike traverses, was such public land. Therefore, the Sheriff could not seize the public road and could not sell it to the Woods. Nor could he transfer the franchise for the Turnpike to the Woods, for it was deemed a personal privilege of the Truckee Turnpike Company. The Woods lost and were left unpaid for their work. By the ruling the California Supreme Court established a major precedent in California; that no one can establish a right of way and obtain ownership over public lands.⁹⁴

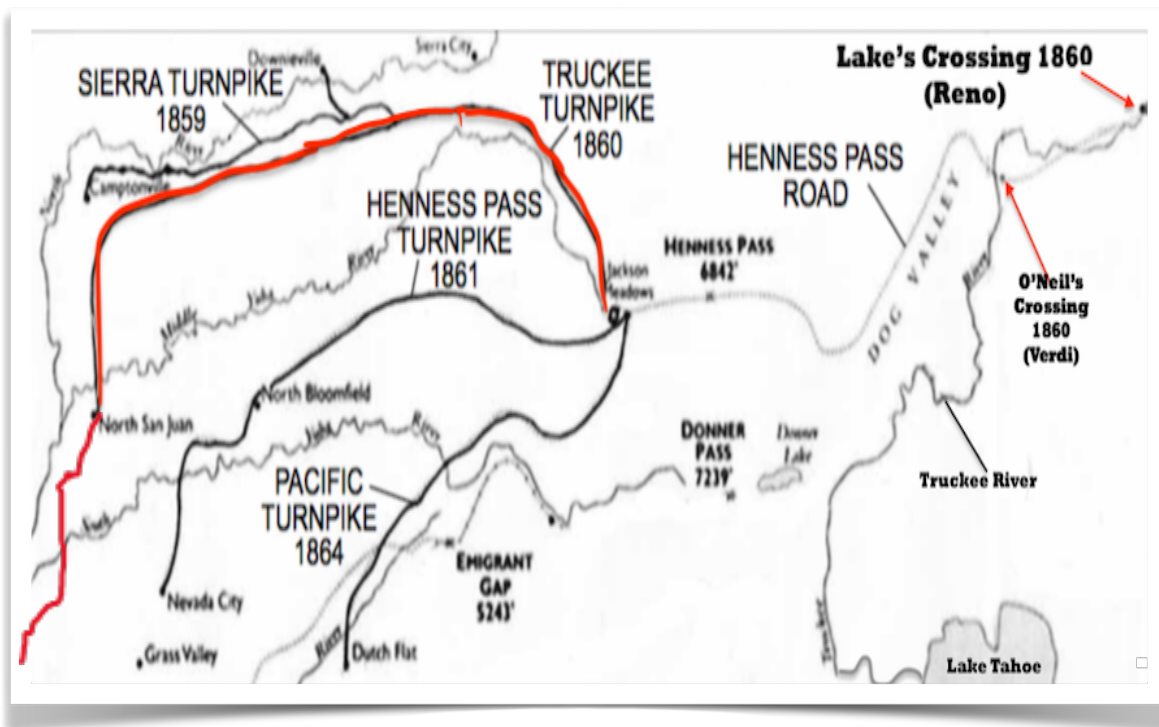
That ruling was followed by other states throughout the United States. As discussed earlier, David Wood had lost a previous case in the California Supreme Court to Matthew Sparks in 1860. Sparks was owed money for the 1854 sale of his bridge at Bridgeport by Thomas Hess and David Wood, who never paid the final installment of their contract. In the Supreme Court, Wood argued that the bridge that was the subject of the contract washed away in the winter storm of 1855 and was no longer present. As it had no value, he did not have to pay the debt. The California Supreme Court disagreed and set an early precedent for California when it ruled that he still must pay for property that

⁹³ Howard, Thomas Frederic, *Sierra crossings: first roads to California* Howard, U.C. Press Berkeley 1998, pages 160 and 161

⁹⁴ Wood et. al. v. Truckee Turnpike Co. (1864) 24 Cal. 474. California Supreme Court

had been destroyed by an “act of God, especially since Wood still had the land and other improvements that were part of the contract.”⁹⁵

Four Turnpike Roads Become One Road, Known as Bifurcations



40. MAP SHOWING THE FOUR PRIMARY COMPETING TURNPIKE COMPANIES OF THE 1860S MEETING AT THE JACKSON RANCH (JACKSON MEADOWS)

The map shows the four major turnpike companies. The Sierra Turnpike Company, owned by investors from Downieville (1859) and later owned by Peter Yore of Camptonville, the Truckee Turnpike Company (1860) owned by investors out of North San Juan and Marysville, the Henness Pass Turnpike Company (1861) owned by investors out of Nevada City, and the Pacific Turnpike Company, the “Culbertson’s Cut-Off” (1864), owned by investors out of Auburn, beginning at Dutch Flat. All four Turnpikes met at the Jackson Ranch and then became one road traveling east over the Henness Pass Road to Virginia City via Verdi, Truckee Meadows, Lake's Crossing to the Geiger Grade.

⁹⁵ Sparks vs. Hess, (1860) 15 Cal. 186

Thomas Freeman, Bridge & Road Builder

Thomas Freeman, David Wood's partner and fellow bridge and road builder, was as a key person in upgrading and developing the Henness Pass Road to the Comstock in the spring of 1859. While the actual road builders of the Truckee Turnpike were David Wood and his son Samuel Wood, Thomas Freeman had many years of experience building roads and bridges. More importantly he was a key figure in acquiring the capital needed to build the turnpike and various stage stops along the route. Later, he became a director of the Truckee Turnpike Company.

It is hard to ignore the fact that David Wood and Thomas Freeman's friendship must have been severely tested after the unsuccessful lawsuit, discussed previously, that David Wood and Samuel Wood brought against the Truckee Turnpike Company. Regrettably, David Wood, likely due to losing this lawsuit, was forced to file for bankruptcy in 1864. This may have had something to do with his moving to and purchasing and operating a store in Virginia City in 1864.⁹⁶

Although Thomas Freeman was one of the early bridge and road owners along with David Wood, he was not the earliest to establish his business ventures on the Middle Yuba River below North San Juan. Thomas Hess built the first bridge at this location for Matthew Sparks in 1851. This bridge was later carried away by the typical winter floodwaters, the bridge being too low in the water to survive the flood. Thomas Hess bought the rights from Matthew Sparks and built another bridge here in 1852. In 1854 Thomas Freeman purchased the bridge from Thomas Hess.

⁹⁶Lardner, W.B. and Brock, M.J. (1924) History of Placer and Nevada Counties California, Historic Record Company, Los Angeles 1924, page 573

Thomas Freeman within a year built a substantial hotel on the Middle Fork of the Yuba in 1855 that was again destroyed along with his bridge in the great storm of December 14, 1861. In the summer of 1862 he completed construction of his second bridge, the same as David Wood and the Virginia Turnpike Company were forced to do at Bridgeport.



41. FREEMAN'S CROSSING IN 1856

This view in 1856 shows several small buildings and the hotel at right with townspeople, horses and dogs standing nearby, and the bridge over the Yuba River at left. Freeman's Crossing was located about a half mile below where Oregon Creek flows into the Middle Yuba and about a mile and a half north of North San Juan. The first bridge was built by Thomas Hess in 1851 for Matthew Sparks, rebuilt in 1852, and sold to Freeman in 1854.

The English Dam Destroyed June 18, 1883

The trials and obstacles that bridge and road owners faced during these years would not be complete without relating the story of the fate that befell the English Dam, on June 18, 1883. Suddenly, without warning, the English Dam on the Middle Fork of the Yuba River catastrophically failed. Thomas Freeman's bridge and many other bridges were washed away along with a tragic loss of life. At the time, the dam was full, holding 650,000 cubic feet of water that washed down the Middle Yuba River and sweeping away

everything in its path. In an hour and a half it reached Marysville, causing disastrous flooding there. Freeman estimated his loss at \$12,000, but he was undaunted by this disaster. At once he initiated repairs and replacements, and on June 29th, he hired 50 men and began work on replacing his road. By August 1, 1883, he had completed repairs and began again to build a new bridge, which was finished later in the fall of 1883.⁹⁷

The huge wall of water spilling out of the burst dam also did great damage to his Oregon Creek Covered bridge.⁹⁸ It lifted the Oregon Creek Bridge off its abutments and deposited it down stream near the Middle Fork of the Yuba. With the effort of many men and teams using log rollers, Freeman had the bridge pulled back, and placed at its original location on Oregon Creek. Now, however, it was turned 180 degrees from its original position. The Oregon Creek Bridge remains the oldest covered bridge existing in California, originally built in 1860.

Disgruntled farmers had been losing crops and property in the Central Valley, due to flooding caused by hydraulic mining. Outraged businessmen and farmers from the Marysville area were suspected of blowing up the English Dam. The North Bloomfield Gravel-Mining Company and Milton Mining Company Superintendent, H.C. Perkins,⁹⁹ inspected the remnants of the dam shortly after its failure and concluded that the destruction was the result of sabotage. Perkins said there was indeed foul play and that the dam was blown up by a charge of powder. [Author's note: was this the Nation's first act of environmental terrorism?]

The following notice appeared in the local Marysville papers and was widely published throughout the newspaper of the region:

*The Milton Mining and Water Company offer a **reward of \$5,000** for information that will lead to the apprehension and conviction of the party or parties who caused the destruction of the dam of the Milton Mining and*

⁹⁷ Foley, Doris and Morley, S. Griswold California Historical Society Quarterly (Sep., 1949) Vol. 28, No. 3, pp. 233-242

⁹⁸ The bridge is located about 200 yards upstream on Oregon Creek from its confluence at the Middle Yuba River.

⁹⁹ Annual Report Rossiter W. Raymond, United States Commissioner of Mining (1877) *Statistics of Mines and Mining in the States and Territories West of the Rocky Mountains*, Eighth edition, page 92-93. H.C. Perkins was the Superintendent of both the North Bloomfield Gravel-Mining and the Milton Mining Companies which consolidated after 1875.

Water Company, on the 18th [Feb. 18, 1883], situated on the headwaters of the middle Yuba River.

No suspects were ever uncovered, and the crime remains a mystery to the present today.



42. CIRCA PRE-1880 ENGLISH DAM, MADE OF WOOD CRIBBING
PHOTOS COURTESY OF UC BERKELEY, BANCROFT LIBRARY



43. ENGLISH DAM, ROCK AND STONE, CIRCA 1883

The Decision that Heralded the End of Hydraulic Mining- the Sawyer Decision of 1884

On January 7, 1884, Judge Lorenzo Sawyer of the US Ninth Circuit Court sitting in Marysville, handed down a decision in the case of Woodruff vs. North Bloomfield Gravel Mining Company in which he ordered the hydraulic mines to contain their “slickens”¹⁰⁰ or debris from entering the rivers.¹⁰¹

The loss of the English Dam owned by the Milton Mining Company, is considered by many to be the spark that led to the nation’s first environmental law, now known as the Sawyer decision.

¹⁰⁰ Merriam-Websters definition; finely pulverized material from a quartz mill or washings of lighter earth sluiced away in hydraulic mining.

¹⁰¹ Woodruff v. North Bloomfield Gravel Mining Co., 18 F. 753 (CCD Cal. 1884). More commonly known as the Sawyer decision.



44. JUDGE LORENZO SAWYER,
NINTH CIRCUIT

After Judge Sawyer's decision one farmer, I.H. Hoag of Marysville praised Judge Sawyer in this article from the Sacramento, Daily Union, February 2, 1884:

It is true that twice within the last 10 years, in consequence of the filling up of the riverbed with hydraulic mining slickens, I have been compelled, at large expense, to boat my cows off my place to save them, and have suffered great damage from loss of crops from the same source, still knowing that the right would finally triumph, I have held to my farm, and by perseverance made it productive and valuable.

Now I would say to the hydraulic miners: Be not discouraged if you cannot use water to wash down the mountains to make them give up the gold that is in them.

Try some other process- some process that will not hurt our farms of the valley- and we will give you our best hopes, our encouraging good cheer, and you will succeed, and you will have the doubled satisfaction that comes from a success that is not secured at the expense of a brother's failure. The large water reservoirs in long water ditches that have heretofore supplied the power to wash down the mountains, will no longer be needed in the changed system of mining, but they are not, therefore, dead property.

Chapter XI

Early Crossings of Truckee Meadows, Bridges and Hotels

The goal of the Truckee Turnpike Company in 1860 was to reach Virginia City as fast as humanly possible over the Henness Pass. This was accomplished through the efforts of David Wood and his construction crew and through the cooperative efforts of investors from Marysville, North San Juan, Grass Valley and Nevada City. When Wood reached O'Neil's Crossing (present day Verdi, NV) in the fall of 1860, his work was complete. From O'Neil's a series of three more crossings and several road houses were established, continuing along the Henness Pass road to Virginia City.

The following is the story of the men whose determination, industry and courage, settled and built the economy of the eastern side of the Sierra. It was generally known then as the "Washoe,"¹⁰² an area that covered all the lands east of the Sierra from Pyramid Lake to the Humboldt region, to Virginia City, to the Carson Valley and more. Within the Washoe was located Truckee Meadows (present day Reno Metropolitan area), which was then the crossroads for all the early roads.

As mentioned previously, the earliest white settlers in the Truckee Meadows, were the Mormons. They had established many farms and trading posts in the Carson Valley, including Mormon Station near Genoa. An early seasonal settlement in Truckee Meadows on the north side of the Truckee River was H.H. Jamison's Station and Trading Post established in 1852. In 1858 historian John M. Townley noted that there were only 25 permanent residents in Truckee Meadows; most were ranchers.

After the departure of the Mormons in 1857 ordered by Brigham Young, George F. Stone and Charles C. Gates set up a permanent trading post on the Truckee River just downstream from Jamison's old trading post.

¹⁰² Richards, Kent D., Rudimentary Government In Nevada, Arizona and the West, (1969,) Vol. 11#3 pp. 213-232. Nevada became part of the United States with the signing of the [Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo](#) with Mexico in 1848. Mexico had never established any control in Nevada, but American mountain men were in Washoe (the early name for Nevada) by 1827.

The area later became known as Glendale and then Sparks, Nevada.¹⁰³ Stone and Gates established the first crossing here, a rope ferry. By 1860 they built the first bridge and hotel, serving emigrants and gold seekers going west to the California goldfields. Stone and Gates would soon have competition. In 1859-60, Charles Fuller established a hotel and bridge about 3 miles further upstream on the Truckee River, coinciding with the discovery of silver at the Comstock in the spring of 1859. Stone and Gates Crossing was destroyed in the winter storm of 1861-62 and not rebuilt.



45. FULLER'S CROSSING

¹⁰³ Ringhoff, Mary and Stoner, Edward, (2011) *River & the Railroad*, Archaeological History of Reno, University of Nevada Press, p.15

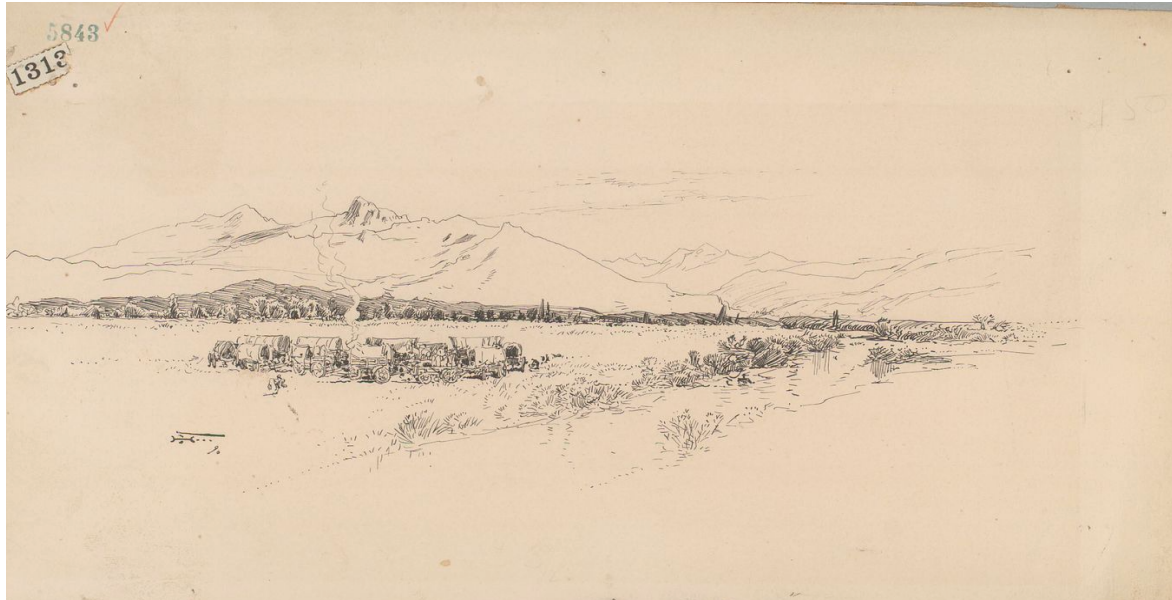
The Crossings of Truckee Meadows 1852-1873

Jamison's Station, "Seasonal Trading Post" was a ford crossing only in the shallower part of the Truckee River	1852-1853
Stone & Gates, a "rope ferry"	1857-1859
O'Neil's Crossing & Bridge (Verdi)	1860-1876
Stone and Gates Hotel & Bridge	1860-1862
Charles Fuller's Crossing & Bridge	1859-1861
John M. Hunter's Hotel & Bridge	1862-1872
Myron Lake's Hotel & Bridge	1862-1873



46. CAMP 12, CENTRAL PACIFIC RAILROAD, TRUCKEE RIVER THREE MILES
DOWNSTREAM FROM WADSWORTH, NEVADA CIRCA 1867

Charles Fuller and Myron C. Lake of Truckee Meadows



47. EMIGRANTS CAMPING AT TRUCKEE MEADOWS NEAR JAMISON'S CROSSING, MT. ROSE IS IN THE BACKGROUND. (FENN, HARRY 1845-1911) "THE OLD CAMPING RENDEZVOUS, THE RESTING PLACE AFTER CROSSING THE DESERT AND BEFORE STARTING TO CROSS THE SIERRA NEVADA."

Charles Fuller in 1860 filed papers to build a bridge at this crossing with the Utah Territorial government. The crossing was located at a narrows on the Truckee River near present day Virginia Street in Reno. He was granted a permit to charge tolls. Fuller wanted to take full advantage of the new "Rush to the Comstock." Unfortunately, the greatest flood in California and northern Nevada history also struck and washed away his bridge during the winter of 1862, like all other bridges in California and Truckee Meadows. Fuller rebuilt his bridge by the fall of 1862, but this cost him and left him near bankruptcy. A wealthy friend, rancher and merchant from Susan Lake, California, Myron C. Lake, traded his ranch near Susanville for Fuller's hotel and bridge later in 1862, taking full advantage of Mr. Fuller's loss. Charles Fuller moved back to his family ranch in Susanville. History still remembers him as the founder of Reno, Nevada.

Myron Lake then re-built the bridge, constructed a larger hotel at the location and graded the road for several miles on each side of the Truckee River. Myron Lake applied to the Territorial Government of Nevada and was granted permission to charge tolls and received a sole franchise for 10 years for one

mile upstream and downstream of his bridge, prohibiting all others from building a bridge.¹⁰⁴

By this action Lake established an “onerous and burdensome monopoly”¹⁰⁵ forcing most of the rapidly increasing traffic going to and from Virginia City to use his bridge and pay his tolls. The crossing in the Truckee Meadows was renamed Lake’s Crossing. But by 1872 the local people had had enough of Myron Lake and his heavy tolls, so much so that the Washoe County Commissioners refused to renew Lake’s toll road franchise and declared his bridge and road a “public highway.”

Myron Lake would have none of it, refused to acknowledge the government’s order and continued to charge tolls armed with a revolver. The Sheriff of Washoe County after several days of complaints went out to his toll station and arrested Lake. Lake paid a fine after spending some time in jail and was released. Still not satisfied, Myron Lake appealed his case to the Nevada State Supreme Court and lost, maintaining the State of Nevada’s authority of eminent domain.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ Townley, John M. (1983) *Tough Little Town on the Truckee*, pages 52-54, 146-147; Nevada Territorial Legislature, *Laws of the Territory of Nevada*

¹⁰⁵ Nevada Historical Society Quarterly, summer 1998, *Rival Road Builders: Private Roads in Nevada, 1852-1880*, page 87

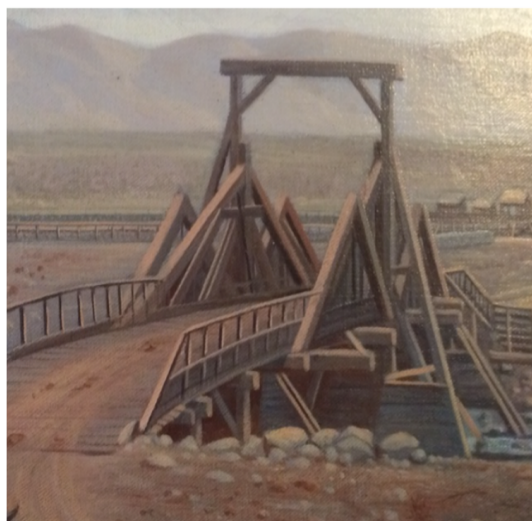
¹⁰⁶ *Tough Little Town on the Truckee* John M. Townley 1983, 146-47, *Territorial Enterprise* January 31, 1873

Two Roads Become One

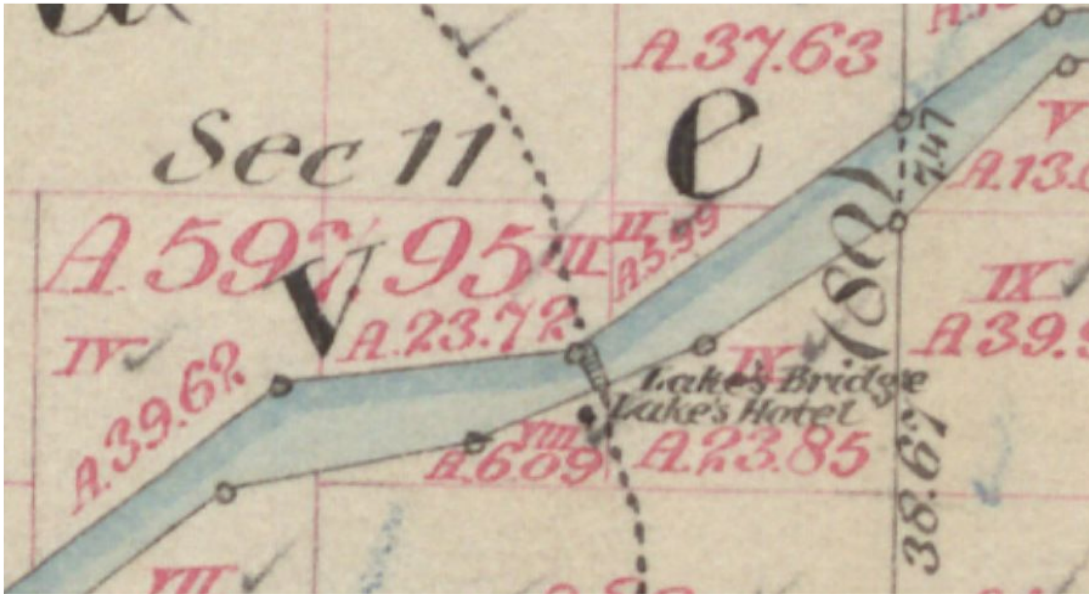
Once across the Truckee River, the two main roads, the Henness Pass Road crossing at Hunter's Station and the Sierra Valley Road coming from the north, the Beckwourth Pass direction, crossing the Truckee at Lake's toll bridge, then joined a few miles south at Anderson's Station. From here the road became one, the Henness Pass Road, and headed south towards Carson City or turned southeast after paying another toll at Lower Geiger Station, then climbed the steep grade to Virginia City.



48. MYRON LAKE AND CHIEF WINNEMUCCA AT LAKE'S CROSSING, CIRCA 1861 AND EXPANDED VIEW OF BRIDGE



Myron Lake's Bridge & Hotel on the Sierra Valley Road

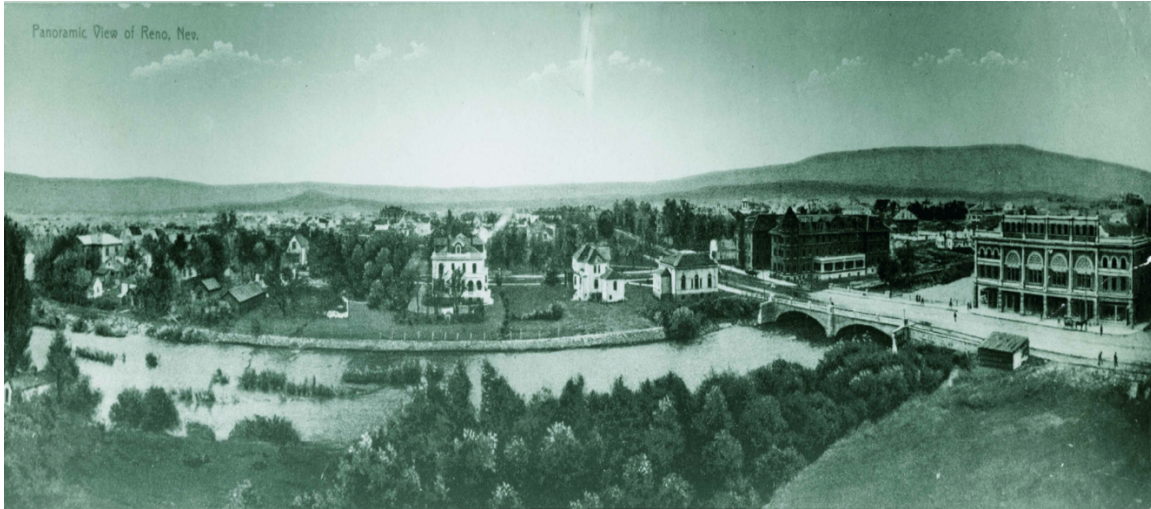


Myron Lake's Bridge and Hotel 1863 (General Land Office Survey)

49. MAP SHOWING LOCATION OF LAKE'S BRIDGE AND HOTEL



50. LAKE'S CROSSING CIRCA 1877, STEEL TIED ARCH
BRIDGE BUILT BY THE CITY OF RENO



51 THE WEDDING BRIDGE

At Lake's Crossing (Virginia Street Reno) the City of Reno 40 years later built the "Wedding Bridge" in 1905, demolished it in 2016 to make way for Reno's "River Walk" development.



52. LAKE'S CROSSING TODAY (RENO). THE 1905 WEDDING BRIDGE IS REPLACED, APRIL 12, 2016

Toll Roads of Truckee Meadows



53. MAP SHOWS ANDERSON'S STATION AND HOTEL, 1863 (LOWER RIGHT) AND LAKE'S CROSSING (UPPER RIGHT) ON THE TRUCKEE RIVER

The Truckee Meadows Roads Bifurcated at Anderson's Station, known as Junction House prior to 1859.

The Sierra Valley Road crossed the Truckee River at Lake's Crossing (in present-day downtown Reno). Heading north from this point, the Sierra Valley

Road went to Sierra Valley and Long Valley continuing on to the Beckwourth Pass, the Lassen Trail or the Nobles Trail, which allowed emigrants access to northern California or Oregon.

At Anderson's Station one could either take the Henness Pass Road southeast to Virginia City using the Geiger Grade or go west to Hunter's Crossing four miles east of Verdi, Nevada¹⁰⁷ and on to Marysville, Nevada City or Sacramento. The Junction House was an early settlement in Truckee Meadows, established as a trading post in 1853¹⁰⁸ by William H. Anderson. Historically, emigrants from the east crossed through Truckee Meadows at this point. The intersection was first known as the "Junction House" and later Anderson's Station during the 1860s. During this time Anderson's Station serviced turnpikes to Virginia City, Carson City and Washoe City.



54. JUNCTION HOUSE PLAQUE

Washoe City was established in 1860 as a lumber camp for Virginia City and was the first county seat of Washoe County in 1861, one of the original nine counties of Nevada Territory. Nevada became a state on October 31, 1864.

¹⁰⁷ Central Pacific Railroad Photographic Museum, www.cpr.org, Robert King 1999

¹⁰⁸ Nevada Bureau of Mines and Geology, A Field Guide September 1987 University of Nevada Reno.

Early Maps of Truckee Meadows Showing Hunter's, Stone & Gates and Lake's Crossings

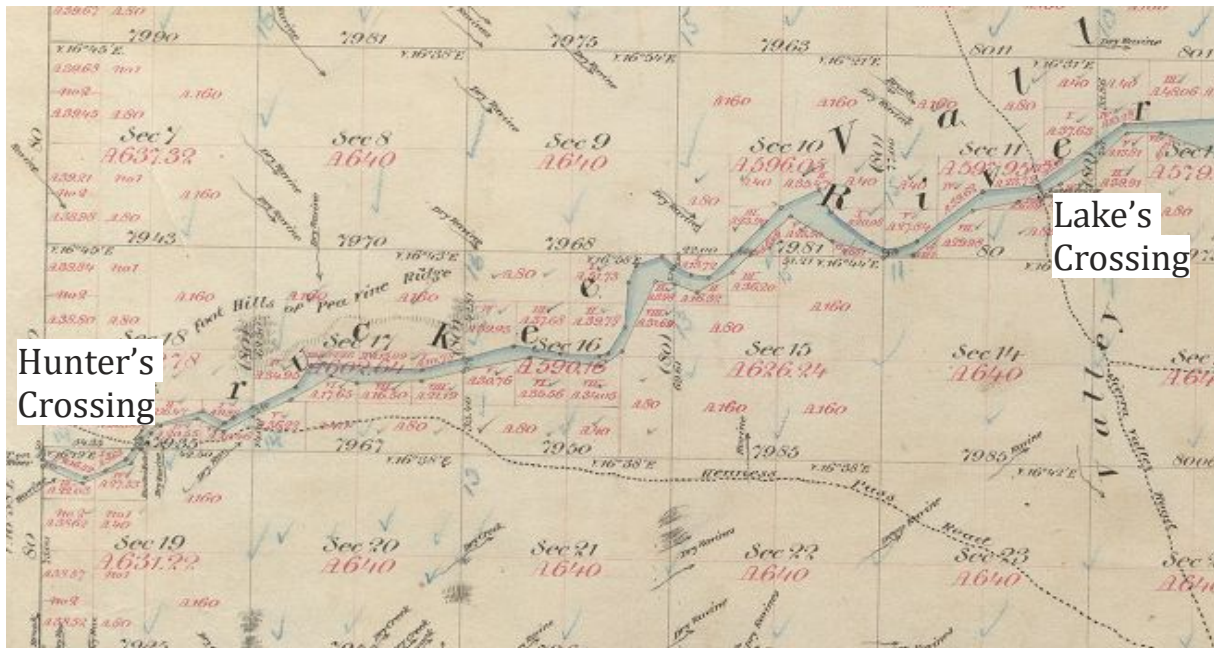
Hunter's Crossing was first established in 1859 by George Stout who built the first bridge there, but his bridge was carried away in the "great flood of 1861-62" in which he unfortunately drowned in the Truckee River.¹⁰⁹



55. MAP OF THE 1860 CROSSINGS OF TRUCKEE MEADOWS, SHOWING STONE & GATES CROSSING. THE DARKER GREEN ON THE MAP IS THE BOUNDARY OF TRUCKEE MEADOWS.

¹⁰⁹ General History & Resources of Washoe County, Nevada 1888, compiled by N.A. Hummel Page 17.

The Henness Pass Turnpike Company built a new bridge there in 1860 and the operation was turned over to John M. Hunter who owned a ranch and Hotel there. The Turnpike Company's franchise expired in 1872 the same year that Myron Lake's franchise expired. The bridge and toll road then became the property of Washoe County.



56. MAP CIRCA 1863 SHOWS HUNTER'S CROSSING (4 MILES EAST OF VERDI) AND LAKE' CROSSING (RENO AT VIRGINIA STREET TODAY), LEADING TO JUNCTION HOUSE TO THE SOUTH, SHOWING HENNESS PASS ROAD CROSSING THE TRUCKEE RIVER TO THE LEFT. THE SIERRA VALLEY ROAD CROSSES THE TRUCKEE RIVER TO THE RIGHT.

Huffaker's Stage Stop & Hotel

Myron Lake's Road (also called the Sierra Valley Road) traveled from Lake's Station, crossed over the Truckee River on Virginia Street in present day Reno, then travelled four miles south to reach Anderson's "Junction House" & Station (site is located near the Atlantis Casino today). Here the road met the Henness Pass Road coming in from the west (see Hunters Crossing on map).

From Anderson's, now joining the Henness Pass Road, one travelled about 6 miles south to the Huffaker's Station, Hotel and Stage Stop before moving on to the lower Geiger Station, the last station before climbing the steep Geiger Grade up the hill to Virginia City, making this one of the last stops to rest and take on more cargo and feed for the hungry teams.

In 1858, Granville W. Huffaker drove 500 head of cattle from Salt Lake City into the Truckee Meadows, establishing his ranch. When the Comstock Lode and its mining needs focused attention on the Truckee Meadows valley, Huffaker went into the business of running this toll station and stage stop and established his stagestop and hotel in 1859.

Samuel W. Langton's Pioneer Stage Line at Huffaker's

Langton's Pioneer Express route also stopped here, on its way from Downieville to Virginia City. The first U.S. Post Office was also operating here by 1862. For ten years Huffaker's was a most active stage-stop and a center for local people often gathered here for dancing, horse racing and settling "land squabbles."



**57. SITE OF HUFFAKER'S RANCH AND HOTEL,
OFF OF OLD HIGHWAY 395, NEVADA HISTORIC
MARKER 238**



58. MAP SHOWS HUFFAKER'S HOTEL & STAGE STOP, UPPER LEFT CORNER, ONE OF THE LAST STOPS FOR FEED AND REST BEFORE THE CLIMB UP THE GEIGER GRADE TO VIRGINIA CITY. (MAP COURTESY OF BLM)

Geiger Toll Station at the Bottom of the Grade

The largest station in Truckee Meadows, a few miles south east of Huffaker's Station, was built by Davison Geiger & John Tilton in 1862. Located here were the toll house, three barns, several corrals, and an inn, Magnolia House. The station was located at the bottom of a steep 11-mile grade that made its way along a difficult winding road with many steep drop-offs, ending at Virginia City. The toll road fell into disuse after 1872 when the Virginia City & Truckee Railroad connected to Reno and a few years later it became a public highway. The Geiger Grade climbs to its summit at an elevation 6,799 Feet.¹¹⁰

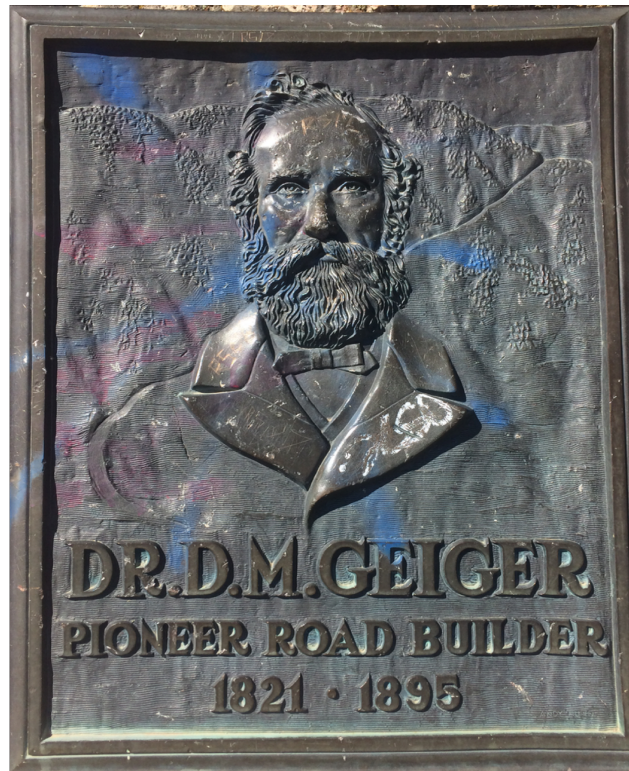
¹¹⁰ At this elevation on the Geiger Pass many times stages, as late as March, met with major snow or mud and passengers needed to unload and transfer to horseback or snowshoes to reach Virginia City. *The Daily Tresspass*, March 6, 1867, page c 3.2.

Geiger Toll Station at Virginia City

Here the Henness Pass Road ended after 130 miles from Marysville via Bridgeport, San Juan, traveling on the Truckee Turnpike to the Jackson Ranch, Webber Lake, Little Truckee River, Dog Valley, Verdi, Hunter's Crossing, Lake's Crossing, Anderson's Station, Huffaker's Station, Geiger Station and arriving at Virginia City.



59. THIS 1862 MAP SHOWS THE GEIGER TOLL STATION. THIS WAS THE END OF THE HENNESS PASS ROAD ENDING AT VIRGINIA CITY.

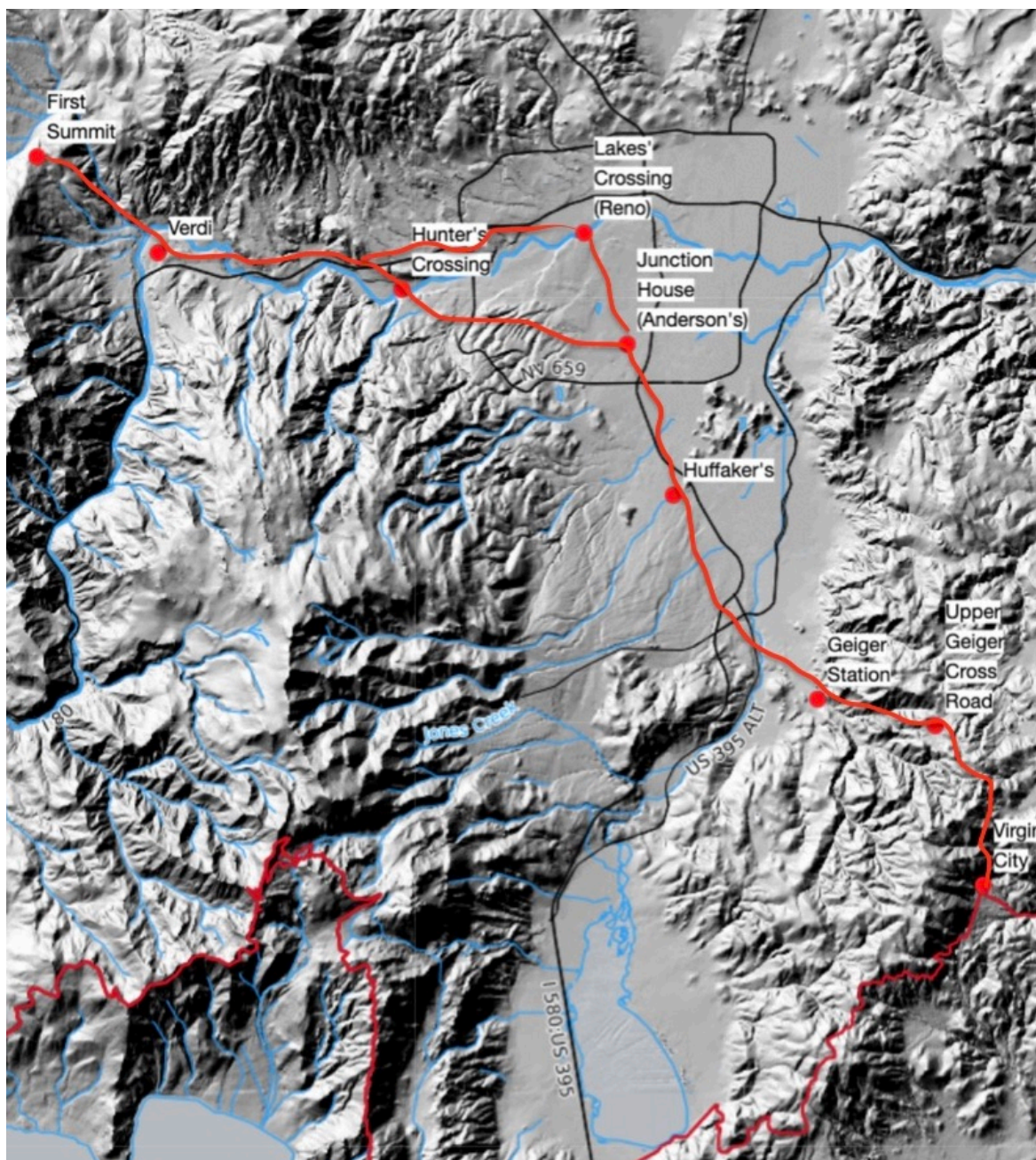


60. THIS MONUMENT PLAQUE HONORING DR. DAVISON M. GEIGER, A LOCAL PHYSICIAN, IS LOCATED NEAR THE HIGHEST POINT ON THE GEIGER GRADE AT A PUBLIC PARK, OVERLOOKING TRUCKEE MEADOWS AND THE RENO METROPOLITAN AREA FAR BELOW.

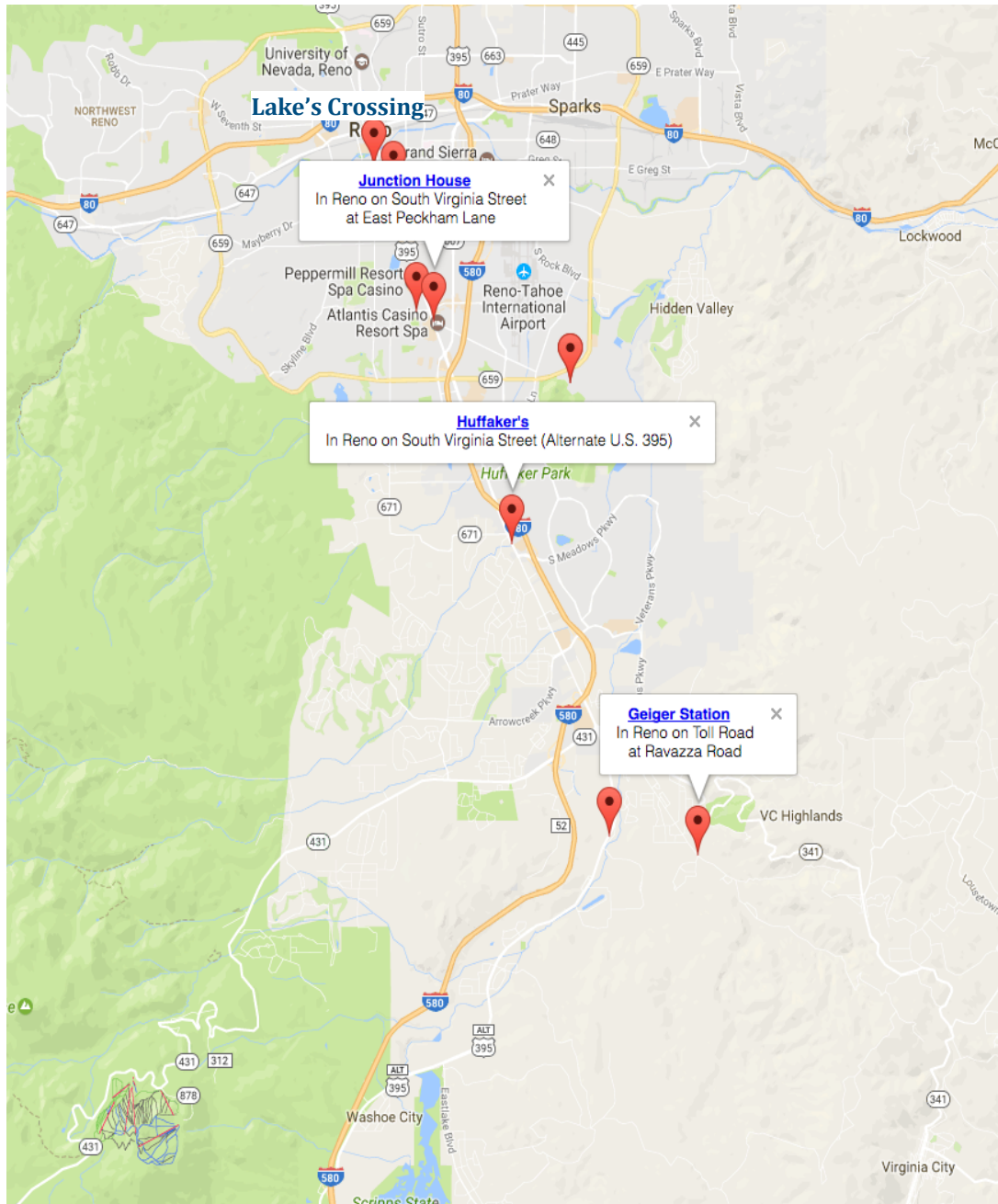
The Geiger monument and park were built in 1938 by the Works Progress Administration, WPA. Two years prior in 1936 the WPA built the new highway to Virginia City you see today. The 1940 guidebook, *Nevada: A Guide to the Silver State*, commissioned by the WPA Federal Writers' Project writes that;

Whereas the old Geiger Grade road had steep stretches that taxed the ability of even the best motor cars, the new Geiger Grade can be driven to the top in high gear. The foothills are dotted with second-growth juniper. Mile after mile the road climbs, offering many broad views of the valley with the magnificent Sierras beyond in the west.

Map of Reno Metropolitan Area & the Truckee Meadows



61. MAP OF STAGE AND FREIGHT STATIONS TRUCKEE MEADOWS 1860-1868



62. TRUCKEE MEADOWS STAGE STOPS AND HOTELS SHOWING WHERE THEY ARE ALONG US HIGHWAY 395, PRESENT DAY.

Chapter XII

The Pony Express, Telegraph & Coming of the Railroad

While the stage and turnpike companies were rapidly developing their enterprises to reach Virginia City entrepreneurs William H. Russell, Alexander Majors and William B. Waddell had invested their entire fortune in the “dot com” of the day to connect the west coast to the east by express mail. During an 18-month period from 1860-1861 the Pony Express was active carrying the mail from San Francisco to the East Coast. Mormon Station located along the route, was a Pony Express Station near Genoa, Nevada. The Pony Express captured the imagination of the country; what had taken months now could be done in a few short weeks. But it did not last and William H. Russell, Alexander Majors and William B. Waddell lost their fortunes. Suddenly, in October of 1861 the Pony Express stopped all operations. Their service was no longer necessary. Coinciding with the Pony Express was the completion of the Transcontinental Telegraph in October of 1861 ending not only the express but signaling new era in all human history, the electronic age. A short time later the stage and turnpike companies would suffer a similar fate.



63. WELLS FARGO ISSUED PONY EXPRESS STAMPS

Wells Fargo managed the Pony Express from April 1, 1861, until its demise in October. During that time the company issued five “Horse and Rider” stamps of this type in different colors and denominations. These semi-official stamps were used only on eastbound mail originating in San Francisco.

Competition from the Central Pacific Railroad

The Central Pacific Railroad, created by the “Big Four,” Collis Huntington, Leland Stanford, Charles Crocker, and Mark Hopkins, merchants from San Francisco and Sacramento. They formed a powerful monopoly along with the aid of grants and concessions from the federal government to construct the railroad from Sacramento eastward. This epic enterprise would soon mark the end of the dominance of turnpike and staging enterprises. By 1869 the toll roads, freighters and stages were relegated to small operations serving local traffic and commerce only.

Dutch Flat Wagon Road

The “Big Four” wanting to take advantage of the increased demand for freight traffic going to and from the Comstock in Virginia City built a wagon road to transport freight and supplies for their newly developing railroad. This helped avoid critical construction delays, created toll revenue and controlled shipments over portions of the road.¹¹¹

On November 27, 1861 the Dutch Flat and Donner Lake Wagon Road Company was formed to run from Illinoistown (Colfax) to Virginia City and to Washoe utilizing much of the path of the old emigrant trail. Charles Crocker was named President and Mark Hopkins Secretary and Treasurer. By June of 1864 the railroad opened the Dutch Flat and Donner Lake wagon road at a cost of \$350,000. The Dutch Flat Wagon road after passing Donner Lake and Truckee, joined the Henness Pass Road near Sardine Valley at Ingham’s Station.¹¹² Traveling on the Henness Pass and Dutch Flat Wagon Road during the winter months could be difficult and at times disastrous. Here is an article from the Stockton Independent dated March 8, 1867.

Frozen in The Snow, —We are informed by E.I Robinson, who has recently returned from Virginia, Nevada, says the Sacramento Union, that John Bezan, lately a butcher at Colfax, was frozen to death February 20th, in a

¹¹¹ Protteau, Lyn, (1988) The Dutch Flat Wagon Road & Company: Its History and Location, courtesy of the Placer County Archives and Research Center

¹¹² See in Appendix A, map 78, Second Summit & Ingham’s Station, Road Trip Over the Henness Pass Road

snow storm on the Dutch Flat Wagon Road. On the day mentioned he left Ingham's on foot for the Virginia House, some three miles distant, but perished before reaching there, and the body was found February 23d, buried four feet under the snow. The remains were taken to the Virginia House for burial. He was a native of London, and aged 26 years.

The Central Pacific Railroad announced on June 15, 1864 that it would charge no tolls for all teams without load traveling west from Virginia City.

On July 16, 1864 Charles Crocker signed a contract with the Henness Pass Turnpike Company agreeing to pay half of the normal tolls from Ingham's Station to the summit of Dog Valley Hill for shared use of this small portion of the Henness Pass Road, for wagons owned by the Central Pacific Railroad (Dutch Flat Wagon Road Company). The company needed to deliver men, supplies and materials to their ever-expanding railroad.

The presence of the new Dutch Flat Wagon Road in conjunction with the continually advancing railroad diverted a significant amount of the freight traffic away from the other turnpike companies, that prior to 1864, would have utilized the Henness Pass Road from Nevada City, North San Juan, Downieville and other northern mine locales.

In fact, just two years later (July 28, 1866), all wagons owned by the Central Pacific Railroad could use the entire road owned by the Henness Pass Turnpike Company free of tolls per a modification of the original contract.¹¹³ The Henness Turnpike Company likely agreed to this deal knowing the Central Pacific Railroad would soon reach the new town of Coburn's Station (the name would soon be changed to Truckee). On April 12, 1868, the Nevada City Daily Transcript announced: "The name 'Coburn's Station' has been discarded by the people of that town and it is now called 'Truckee.'" ¹¹⁴

The Henness Pass Turnpike Company knew that when the railroad reached Truckee Meadows at Lake's Crossing, their toll road freight and passenger business to Virginia City would evaporate before their eyes.

¹¹³ Stanford Special Collection. Green Library Hopkins Documents M0097 Box19 Vol#1, Page 18

¹¹⁴ Truckee for a brief time was actually considered to be located in Utah Territory, not California, See Appendix D.

They agreed to get what they could in the short term, reduced toll fees, before the railroad reached Reno. In addition, the Company was forced to share the use of their toll road with the Dutch Flat Wagon Road Company and agreed not to build any other competing toll road.¹¹⁵

It is interesting to note, that Charles Marsh of Nevada City was on the Board of Directors of the Henness Pass Turnpike Company and a major investor. Charles Marsh was Nevada City's first surveyor, an advocate of the transcontinental railroad and a good friend of fellow surveyor Theodore Judah. On April 30, 1862, he was appointed to the Board of Directors of the Central Pacific Railroad. It is not surprising the Henness Pass Turnpike Company would soon be a part of the railroad's self-serving deals.¹¹⁶

For a time, many in northern California, especially other toll road owners, thought that the railroad would never be built past Dutch Flat and that the remainder of travel would be by wagon using the Central Pacific wagon road to Virginia City. But soon it became apparent that the CPRR was being built as presented and had the full weight and support of the federal government. The toll road owners now had to face the fact that their days were numbered. The actions taken by the Central Pacific Railroad, to direct freight traffic to their wagon road including, "free tolls" going west without load, appeared on its face to be a heavy-handed tactic and in a large part contributed to a backlash by other toll road owners and business men from nearby communities. This and other questionable business dealings by the Central Pacific Railroad became known in the press of the day as the "Dutch Flat Swindle."

These calculated aggressive business decisions by the Central Pacific Railroad resulted in making the Dutch Flat Wagon Road the preferred route of the teamsters and stages needing to reach Virginia City via the Henness Pass Road. Indeed, the least expensive road to Virginia City.

¹¹⁵ Stanford Special Collection/ Hopkins documents/Green Library M0097 Box 19 Vol. #1 page 13

¹¹⁶ Newell, Olive (1997) Tail of the Elephant, The Emigrant Experience on the Truckee Route of the California Trail 1844-1852, page 366.

The Henness Pass Road became one of the the most important "Trans-Sierra highways"¹¹⁷ until the railroad reached Reno in 1868, which radically curtailed the toll road and horse drawn freighting business.

DUTCH FLAT WAGON ROAD.

This new route over the Mountains, by way of Dutch Flat and Donner Lake, can now be traveled by Teams without load, and will be open for loaded Teams

JUNE 15th, 1864.

IT IS

**The Shortest, Best and
Cheapest Route to Wash-
oe, Humboldt and Reese
River.**

Its grade going East at no place exceeds ten inches to the rod, and it is wide enough for Two Teams to pass without difficulty. All teams coming West, without load, can travel the New Road FREE OF TOLL until further notice. All those taking loads at Newcastle, the terminus of the Central Pacific Railroad, three miles from Auburn, can travel the New Road going East, Free of Toll, up to July 1, 1864.

**Teams starting from Virginia City will
take the Henness Pass Road to Ingram's,
at Sardine Valley, where the New Road
turns off to the left.**

CHARLES CROCKER

Sacramento, June 6, 1864

Pres't of the Co.

64. ADVERTISEMENT FOR THE DUTCH
FLAT WAGON ROAD

Below is a description of the Central Pacific Railroad's wagon road from a local paper of the day, the Sacramento Daily Union, January 1, 1864.

DUTCH FLAT AND DONNER LAKE WAGON ROAD.

Commencing at Dutch Flat, in Placer county, sixty miles from the city of Sacramento, the Dutch Flat and Donner Lake Wagon Road follows the general course of the Pacific Railroad line along the "divide" or water shed between the Yuba and American rivers in nearly a direct line, without

¹¹⁷ Magazine of the California Historical Society Winter 1998-1999 page 263, Volume LXXVII number 4

descending grade, to the summit of the Sierra Nevada mountain at the Donner Lake Pass, and, by a descending grade, to the Truckee river, a distance of forty and a half miles — thence across the Truckee river and over an undulating plain, a distance of fifteen miles, to Ingham's Station, on the Henness Pass Wagon Road, and distant from Virginia City twenty-nine miles— making a total distance by this route of 144½ miles from Sacramento to Virginia City. The road bed in rock cuts and mountain-side excavations is in no place less than sixteen feet in width, and is nearly all twenty feet wide, affording ample room for two loaded teams to pass each other. The ascending grade over the mountain in no place exceeds ten inches to the rod.

The road has been constructed during the past year, giving employ to from 300 to 500 men for more than six months, under the direction of Henry Polly, General Superintendent, at an aggregate cost of about \$200,000, and by competent judges who have passed over the road it is said to be superior to any mountain road of equal length in the State. The California Stage Company will early in the Spring put on a daily line of stages to run over this route from Auburn to Virginia City, in connection with the Pacific Railroad from Sacramento.

In 1868, the Central Pacific Railroad reached Lake's Crossing (Reno). This dealt a final blow to the turnpike companies operating out of California, losing the freighters to the Central Pacific Railroad, who otherwise would have used their toll roads on their way to Virginia City. The toll road companies did continue to operate locally in Nevada and California, but on a much smaller scale. The local Nevada teamsters and stages in 1868 now would leave Reno's new CPRR train station, loading disembarking people and cargo, for team and stage travel the last 20 miles using the Geiger grade up to Virginia City and the Comstock.

This too in time would pass with the completion of the Virginia City & Truckee Railroad, which first steamed into Reno on August 24, 1872.

The Historic Partnership of Myron Lake, Charles Crocker and the Central Pacific Railroad



64. MYRON C. LAKE



65. CHARLES C. CROCKER

Myron Lake became increasingly wealthy (considered Nevada's first millionaire) as freight and stage traffic used his hotel and toll bridge. He continued to prosper and his luck seemed to have no end. By March 1868, the Central Pacific Railroad under the leadership of Vice President Charles Crocker arrived at Lake's Station.

Myron Lake seeing the great benefit, in a calculated move decided to Charles Crocker and the Central Pacific Railroad about 600 acres of "free land" on the north side of Lake's Crossing. In a second transaction, Crocker then conveyed back to Myron Lake about 100 of the town lots that he had surveyed for the new town. Charles Crocker, being an excellent engineer, laid out the town site on the north side of the Truckee River across from Lake's Station and renamed

Lake's Station and Crossing, "Reno," after Major General Jessie Lee Reno, a hero of the Civil War. He then built his train station. This was the beginning of modern day greater Reno and Sparks, Nevada, and opened the way for Myron Lake and the Central Pacific Railroad to chart the course for Reno's future development and that of Northern California as well.

The Stage and Turnpike Era Draws to a Conclusion

The ceremony that drove the "Golden Spike," on May 10, 1869 at Promontory, Utah, was a little less than a year after the first passenger train left Sacramento and steamed into the new town of Reno at the end of a very long day, June 20, 1868.¹¹⁸ This historic event signaled the end of the "glory days" of the stage and turnpike era. Thus marking the beginning of a new age in modern transportation history that we are still witnessing today.



66. THE MEETING OF THE CENTRAL PACIFIC AND UNION PACIFIC RAILROADS, PROMONTORY, UTAH MAY 10, 1869

¹¹⁸ The Daily Alta California, June 28, 1868

EPILOGUE



. SOUTH YUBA RIVER STATE PARK, HENNESS PASS DOCENT FIELD TRIP, OCTOBER 2015, POSING IN FRONT OF THE LAST EXISTING HOTEL AND STAGE STOP ON THE HENNESS PASS ROAD. AUTHOR CHUCK SCIMECA LEFT FRONT, DANIEL SCIMECA RIGHT FRONT, BACK ROWS SOUTH YUBA RIVER STATE PARK DOCENTS

Webber Lake Hotel

The Truckee Donner Land Trust now owns and operates the Webber Lake Hotel; <https://www.truckeedonnerlandtrust.org/webber-lake-lacey-meadow>. The facility is open to the public, call (530) 587-2267, Camp Host for information on camping and day use. Or the Land Trust at (530) 582-4711.

Appendix A

Road Trip Over The Henness Pass Road

***Virginia Turnpike Company route of 1856 from
Bridgeport to North San Juan***

&

***Truckee Turnpike Company route of 1860 that David
Wood & Company built from
Freeman's Crossing to Verdi, Nevada***

A Few Pointers for this Modern Day Road Trip

Below are GPS coordinates and mileages for the stage stops and points of interest to assist you in locating your way along the Virginia Turnpike and the Truckee Turnpike built by David Wood and his son Samuel Wood. Mileages are estimates. They will vary with your vehicle tire size and your odometer. The route follows the Henness Pass Road to Verdi, Nevada.

GPS readings are in UTM coordinates, WGS 84 datum. The second set of coordinates, provided by Nevada County office of GIS, are the conversions from the UTM coordinates. The GIS format is NAD 1983. The units are in decimal degrees, and this is a standard coordinate system used by Nevada County and across the US.

Warnings: only one of the stage stops is still in existence, that being the Webber Lake Hotel. It is highly recommended that you first go with someone that is familiar with the Henness Pass Road, its road hazards and the locations of the now razed historic sites, which are fully protected government archeological sites.¹¹⁹

It is very important to drive a high clearance 4-wheel drive or all-drive vehicle. I recommend going on this extended day trip, which is 90 miles from Bridgeport to Verdi, Nevada, with two or more vehicles just in case one breaks down and has to be left behind. Always be prepared for any mishaps. Bring proper clothing, food, emergency vehicle equipment, first aid supplies and enough gasoline (a full tank) to make it to Verdi. There are very few restrooms on this trip, be prepared. Expect to drive all day, eight to nine hours, to reach Verdi, Nevada.

At Verdi there are gas stations and restaurants.

¹¹⁹ If you discover any archeological sites please leave them alone and report your discovery to the Forest Archeologist (530) 994-3401, or in writing to Tahoe National Forest, P.O. Box 6003, Nevada City, CA 95959

Bridgeport Covered Bridge, the Starting Point

Bridgeport is located at South Yuba River State Park off Pleasant Valley Road at the South Yuba River. The Virginia Turnpike Company was established here in 1856 and built this covered bridge in 1862 under the direction of David Wood, President of the company. The turnpike went from the historic Anthony House, now under water, located on the north side of the Lake Wildwood Dam and continued on to Bridgeport, French Corral, Birchville, Sweetland, then turned north to North San Juan.



67. BRIDGEPORT BRIDGE, SEPTEMBER 2019. CURRENTLY UNDERGOING RESTORATION

Mile 0
UTM 10S 0655654E X 4350761
GIS 39.2922-121.1950

French Corral

Mile 2.6

10S 0658303E X 4352531

39.3077-121.1639

Note, this 1850s building is the last existing brick building in French Corral. It is not the Wells Fargo Office (as the painted sign on top suggests). The Wells Fargo building no longer exists, but it was located about one hundred yards further down the street adjacent to the monument for the "World's First Long-Distance Telephone Line," CA State Historic Landmark #247.

The building in the photo below was torn down in 1954 and sold for its bricks over the strong objections of the Nevada County Historical Society and other historic groups. Note the similarities of the brick building you just saw, likely by the same builder.



68. WELLS FARGO BUILDING AND OFFICE OF THE RIDGE TELEPHONE COMPANY (NO LONGER EXISTS)



69. BIRCHVILLE HISTORICAL LANDMARK

Birchville

mile 5.2

10S 0659993E X 4354851

39.3282-121.1437

Early mining town established in 1851, later in 1865 the site of the San Juan and Bridgeport Armory, which in 1869 became Saint Columcille's Catholic Church (Nevada County Historic Landmark rededicated 4-8-2019).

In 1971 the church was moved to Malakoff State Historic Park 15 miles further east, up the San Juan Ridge.¹²⁰

¹²⁰Bart "Babe" Pinaglia, bought the church in 1969 and donated to the State Park. Park employees dismantled it in 1971 and reassembled it at the park. The original plaque disappeared at that time.



70. SAINT COLUMCILLE'S CHURCH. MOVED TO MALAKOFF STATE PARK IN 1971

Sweetland

mile 7.0

10S 0661973E X 4356550

39.3432-121.1204

One of the oldest towns on the San Juan Ridge, Henry Sweetland started digging for gold here in 1850. Today just a few residences remain, along with Peterson's Corner bar & restaurant.

Turn left here and drive north to the town of North San Juan.

North San Juan

mile 9.4

10S 0663274E X 4359538

39.3698-121.1045

This town was the most prosperous hydraulic gold mining town on the San Juan Ridge in the 1860s. It was where the Virginia Turnpike coming from Bridgeport ended. It was also the major hub for Samuel Langton's Pioneer Express and later, after 1864, Wells Fargo Express.



71. NORTH SAN JUAN - 1858

To reach Freeman's Crossing continue north on Hwy 49 and cross the bridge over the Middle Fork of Yuba River, then turn left off of Hwy 49 onto Moonshine Road and drive another few hundred yards. The crossing was located just behind the private residence. The residence is built partly on the abutments of the old bridge.

Freeman's Crossing 1853-1890s (Hess's Crossing 1851-1853)

mile 12.6

10S 0664755E X 4361717N

39.3892-121.0868



72. FREEMAN'S CROSSING CIRCA 1878



49 Bridge circa
1921

**73. FREEMAN'S CROSSING, ORIGINAL
LOCATION**

This crossing was destroyed during the great flood of 1861. Later in 1883 the sabotage of the English Dam also resulted in the washing out of Freeman's Crossing bridge and the Oregon Creek bridge. John Freeman's wife who was blind was led away from her home to higher ground by her husband , nearly avoiding the on coming flood waters.¹²¹

¹²¹ *The 1883 Flood on the Middle Yuba River*, Foley, Doris & Morley S. Grisworld (1949)
California Historical Quarterly Vol. 28, No. 3 (Sept. 1949) pp. 233-242

At this point turn around, go back to Hwy 49 and cross the highway then turn right into the Oregon Creek picnic area.

Oregon Creek Covered Bridge, 1860

mile 13.2

10S 0665104 x 4362570N

39.3968-121.0826



74. OREGON CREEK BRIDGE

The Oregon Creek Covered Bridge was built by John Freeman in 1860 and is the oldest covered bridge in California. The Bridge was closed to vehicle traffic for more than 10 years. However, Yuba County restored the old covered bridge. It reopened for vehicle traffic in January 2018.

Continue on and drive through the bridge up Alleghany Road to the Ridge Road intersection.

Corner of Alleghany and Ridge Road

Mile 15.5

10S 0667320E x 4364066N

39.4098-121.0565

This location is not far from the Grizzly Fort stage stop of the early 1850s. See the iron railroad trail marker placed by Trails West Inc., www.emigranttrailswest.org HP-14, just a few yards east up the road on the north side. Continue driving east on Ridge Road past the Pike City Fire Station to the Camptonville Road intersection.

Camptonville Road

mile 22.2
10S 0674830E X 4368118N
39.4448-120.9682

The old road to Camptonville met here. Continue on to Plum Valley.

Plum Valley (Bope Ranch)

mile 22.6
10S 0675406E X 4368483N
39.4480-120.9614

Established here in 1860, Plum Valley was the first toll station of the Truckee Turnpike Company by way of Freeman's Crossing and the Oregon Creek Bridge. John Bope, the first President of the company, had a ranch here. Take a few minutes and walk a few yards east up the road, right hand side of road and find CA State Historical Landmark #695. "The Plum Valley House," <https://www.hmdb.org/marker.asp?marker=65932>

Oregon Creek Road

mile 24.3
10S 0677330E X 4369709N
39.4586-120.9388

This intersection to the left is the road to the gold mining town of Forest City and on to Mountain House and Downieville. David Wood's lumber mill established in the mid 1850s was near here. The exact location is not known, but it is within one mile of Forest City and is the mill where the timbers that built the Bridgeport Covered Bridge were milled.

"The Cross Roads"

mile 28.3
10S 0682898E X 4371252N
39.4714-120.8737

Three roads met the Truckee Turnpike here: the road to Forest City & Downieville, road to Alleghany, road to Virginia City via Henness Pass to Verdi. Be careful to follow the road marker, "Pliocene Ridge Road." The road is just a few feet north of the large stone monument and plaque, "Pioneer Emigrant Trail," placed here in 1941 by the Native Daughters of the Golden West #268. Stay on Pliocene Ridge Road and continue driving east to Fred's Ranch (do not drive down the road to Alleghany).

Fred's Ranch

mile 30.0
10S 0684978E X 4372607N
39.4831-120.8491

This is the crossroad of Pliocene Ridge & Hells Half Acre Roads. It is also another way to the town of Forest City. Local residents say that during the gold mining period men would travel through mining tunnels that connected the towns of Forest and Alleghany in the winter months to avoid the snow. They would also travel through the tunnels to party and visit. Continuing driving to Cornish House.

Cornish House

mile 34.7
10S 0690523E X 4375332N
39.5065-120.7839

The Cornish House is located near the headwaters of Kanaka Creek. It is also a good place to have lunch. If you take this field trip in the early spring, normally, this is as far as you would go. Snow will block the road only a few miles ahead and the pavement ends. **Warning: paved road will end a short distance ahead.**

Special Note: Travel on the Henness Pass Road from Cornish House on is only advisable from summer to early fall, due to road conditions and snow. CHECK WITH USFS FOR ROAD CLOSURES [\(530\) 288-3231](tel:5302883231) or with the Sierra Co. Road Department (530) 287-3245.

“Pavement Ends Here”

mile 36.7
10S 0692976E X 4374759N
39.5008-120.7556

USFS RD. 98 is on right. You continue straight ahead on Ridge Road.

Middle Waters

mile 41.5
10S 0699242E X 4377530N
39.5243-120.6819

Keystone Gap, elevation 6,530 ft.

mile 42.8
10S 0700658E X 4379025N
39.5374-120.6650

Wayside Inn. View of Sierra Buttes and Keystone Mountain.

Summit Marker, elevation 6783ft.

mile 45.0
10S 0703624E X 4379049N
39.5369-120.6305

The Summit marker, a railroad tie post placed by Trails West Inc. at this location, has a statement taken from the diary of Charles Schneider, dated September 14, 1852. He writes "we now find ourselves on the highest ridge of the mountains." This statement is misleading, since Henness Pass elevation 6920 is actually higher.

Caution! The road becomes very rutted, dusted and rocky from here on to Milton Reservoir. Logging operations can also present difficulties.

Milton Reservoir

mile 49.5
10S 0708396E X 4377605N
39.5228-120.5755

Small town of Milton established in 1861 was located here. A stage road connecting Bassett's Station, Sierra City and Downieville to the Henness Pass Road, a distance of only five miles, connected here. Then the stage went on to Virginia City. By 1869 stage traffic shifted to the new train station in Truckee meeting the Central Pacific Railroad there.

(Restroom and picnic area here)

Jackson Reservoir Dam (PG&E project completed in 1964)

mile 51.4

10S 07**10**3234E X 437**6**171N

39.5087-120.5197

See the old wood bridge below on Middle Fork of the Yuba. It is more than 200 feet below the Dam (elev. 6052 ft.), viewed from across old quarry lake (photo opportunity). The Henness Pass Road went across this old bridge and through Jackson Meadows long before the present dam was built by PG&E. The original dam, the English Dam, was the first dam on the Middle Fork of the Yuba River. It was located several miles upstream of the present Jackson Reservoir Dam.



75. ENGLISH DAM (WOOD CRIB) CIRCA 1858

Henness Pass elevation is 6920 Feet

mile 58.1

10S 07**20**447E X 437**5**430N

39.5002-120.4361

Warning, dangerous to pull off road here. Use turnout on left hand side of road, if you want to stop. Then continue driving on the paved road for about one mile and turn right at the Webber Lake turnoff.

Webber Lake Turn off

mile 59.7
10S 07**22**653E X 4375035N
39.4961-120.4106

Drive about 1 mile to the Webber Lake Hotel and campground.

Webber Lake Hotel

mile 60.2
10S 07**22**488E X 4374369N
39.4901-120.4128

The Webber Lake Hotel is the last remaining stage stop and hotel on the Henness Pass Road. It is the original structure built in 1860 by Dr. Webber. The Webber Lake Hotel and campgrounds is now owned and operated by the Truckee Donner Land Trust. As of August 2017 Webber Lake opened to the public for camping & day use. Prior to 1860 Webber Lake was known as Truckee Lake by the early emigrants. The hotel is currently undergoing restoration.



**76.WEBBER LAKE HOTEL ESTABLISHED 1860. ON
THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

Leave Webber Lake Hotel, drive back to Henness Pass Road, the paved road. Now drive east about 8 miles, turn right at Independence Lake turnoff.

Independence Road Turnoff

mile 67.3

10S 0732342E X 4374880N

39.4921-120.2981

Turn right and cross over the Little Truckee River bridge, drive 300 yards more, to metal sign railroad tie post on right, Trails West Inc. Helen Carpenter, Sept 21, 1857 HP-4.

“Original Wagon Trail Visible”

mile 67.8

10S 0733172E X 4374737N

39.4906-120.2885



77. RUTS OF ORIGINAL WAGON ROAD

View the original alignment of Henness Pass Rd. to the east and west crossing the road here (marked by red arrow above). See the old ruts of the original wagon road. Find the iron trail T post marker on the west side of the road with the diary excerpt:

Came to a small spring branch called Little Truckee. This we followed and camped right among the beautiful pine tree....found more grass than could have been expected in such a shady place. Helen Carpenter, Sept. 21, 1857

U TURN here, Turn around and drive back the way you came to paved Henness Pass road, turn right & drive to Hwy 89.

HWY 89 Junction

mile 69.9

10S 0733625E X 4376414N

39.5056-120.2827

Turn right and drive south on Hwy 89 towards Truckee, about 1 mile to Henness Pass Road to

mile 71

10S 0735267E X 4376474N

Be looking for the brown colored highway sign, "Kyburz Flat Interpretive Area," on Hwy 89, then turn left near the sign onto Sierra County 450 (Henness Pass Road), and drive about 1 mile east on this dirt graveled road, to Mores Station.

(Note; if the gate is closed at the start of Sierra County 450, just open and make certain it is closed after you drive through. The gate is designed to keep wildlife off the highway to lessen the chances of animals being hit by cars.)



Mores Station

mile 72.3

10S 0737097E X 4376554N

39.5059-120.2423

Stop & walk along the boardwalk exhibit. This includes several interpretive panels on a short loop trail. Now continue driving on Henness Pass Road to Junction House at the junction of Lemon Canyon Road. (Restroom available here.)

Junction House

At Lemon Canyon Rd. & H.P. Rd.

mile 76.4

10S 0742794E X 4377137N

39.5095-120.1759

This junction was a major intersection via Lemon Canyon to Sierraville. It is today the road to Sardine Lookout as well which is now available for overnight camping (contact Sierraville USFS office for information). Continue driving on Henness Pass Road to the Sardine House intersection.

Sardine House

mile 78.3
10S 0745578E X 4377473N
39.5118-120.1434

Turn right at intersection, follow Sierra County 860 (Hennes Pass Road) towards Second Summit, (Do not turn left here. Smithneck Road will go to Sierraville).

Second Summit & Ingham's Station, Junction of the Dutch Flat Wagon Road (6539 ft.)

mile 83.5
10S 0751863E X 4379293N
39.5263-120.0697

This location was where the emigrant trail of the 1840s & 1850s came out of Dog Valley and continued over the summit and went on to Donner Lake. It is also where the Central Pacific Railroad's Dutch Flat Donner Lake Wagon road met the Hennes Pass Road at Ingham's Station in 1864.

A segment of the transcontinental telegraph followed this route beginning in 1864 and continued to Virginia City. Look for the Oregon California Trails Association (OCTA) large metal T post T-28, which marks the direction of the emigrant trail,

After dinner (In Dog Valley) ascended a gradual rise of two miles to the top of the ridge (Second Summit) where we made for the first, had a peep at the snowy mountains. -Cyrus C. Loveland, Sep. 11, 1850



78. MAP CIRCA 1864 SHOWING THE “DUTCH FLAT ROAD” AND TELEGRAPH LINE LEAVING TRUCKEE AND MEETING THE HENNESS PASS ROAD EAST OF STAMPEDE VALLEY AT INGHAM'S STATION

Continue driving on Henness Pass Road to First Summit.

First Summit (6155 feet)

mile 86.0

10S 0754416E X 4381869N

39.5488-120.0391

First Summit marked a long and difficult climb for the early emigrants driving their wagons up from the Truckee River, near present day Verdi, Nevada.

Then down a tremendous steep into a small valley where there was some grass and a fine cold spring. Ansel James McCall, Sept. 5 1849

From this intersection be sure to keep to the right and drive south down the canyon to Verdi, Nevada. This road, Dog Valley Road (Henness Pass Road) is steep and rough, use caution and watch for oncoming traffic.

Von Schmidt Historic Park

mile 89.1

10S 0757710X 4379294

39.5246-120.0018



Now take a few minutes and go ahead and walk through Von Schmidt Historic Monument Park¹²² located on the right side of the road, just across the street from the California State Line sign. The park is just inside the State of Nevada. There are several interpretive panels here that give a good overview of Hennes Pass, native Americans, the early emigrants and the historic town of Crystal Peak that predated Verdi.

Continue driving down the road and cross the steel bridge into the town of Verdi, Nevada.

You have just crossed a “Parker Truss bridge.” A Parker Truss is a Pratt Truss with a polygonal top chord (each of the two principal members of a truss). A Parker Truss is generally used for spans of 100 or more feet, but may be found in spans of 40 to 200 feet. Traffic drives through the actual truss, much like the similar Purdon Crossing Bridge at South Yuba River State Park.

¹²² The 1872 California-Nevada State Boundary Marker marks the initial point for the 1872 Von Schmidt survey delineation of the state line between California and Nevada. It is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The monument is a four-sided cast iron pylon eight feet tall. It includes the words "CALIFORNIA" on the west face of the pylon, "NEVADA" on the east face.

O'Neil's Crossing

mile 89.5

11S 0242700E X 4379213N

39.5240-119.9933

The original bridge was built by Felix O'Neil in 1860 and crossed the Truckee River near here. O'Neil ran a stage stop located near the bridge which became known as O'Neil's Station. In 1928, the bridge was replaced with the present single span Parker Truss bridge you see below.



79. PARKER TRUSS BRIDGE

Continue driving on the road and cross old Hwy 40. Drive over the Union Pacific (Central Pacific reached Verdi in 1867) railroad tracks and park on the right hand side of the road next to the Nevada State Historic display.

Nevada State Historical marker #128, "The Great Train Robbery."



The West's first train robbery occurred near this site on the night of November 4, 1870. Five men, led by a stage robber, Sunday School superintendent John Chapman, boarded the Central Pacific Overland Express at Verdi, Nevada. Two took over the engine, one the express car, and two the rear platform. One-half mile east, the engine and express car were halted and cut free, then proceeded about five miles, where they were stopped by a barricade. Here the robbers forced the messenger to open up. Seizing \$41,600 in gold coin, they rode off. The uncoupled cars coasted downgrade and met the engine. The train proceeded to Reno. After a two-state chase, all were caught, tried and convicted. About 90 per cent of the gold was recovered.

The Town of Verdi

mile 90.0
11S 0243091E X 4378467N
39.5174-119.9885

The town of Verdi was established by the Central Pacific Railroad in 1867. Charles Crocker named the town after a famous Italian opera composer, Giuseppe Fortunino Francesco Verdi.

Appendix B

Hennes Pass Road Trip to the Comstock Lode

Verdi to Virginia City

Hennes Pass Road Trip to the Comstock Lode Verdi to Virginia City

**Town of Verdi est. 1867
by Central Pacific Railroad**

mile 0
11S 0243063E X 4378594N
39.5185=119.9888

Start at the junction of old Hwy 40 and Bridge Street. The Sasquatch Tavern & Grill and the Verdi Distillery are located at this intersection.
Drive east on Hwy 40 and get on the east bound Hwy 80 freeway on ramp.
Continue east for about 4.4 miles.

Hunter's Crossing 1860

mile 6.3
11S 0251678E X 4377000N
39.5067-119.8882

Take exit #8 for 4th St West. Drive to mile (5.9) east on 4th St West (old Hwy 40), turn right onto Mayberry Drive and cross over the Truckee River on the Mayberry bridge. Turn left into the Dorostkar County Park, mile (6.3). Across the street from the park is a paved pedestrian bike path that goes past Hunter's Station which no longer exists and crosses the Truckee River on a foot bridge. The bridge is near the original location of Hunter's Bridge. The old bridge and station was located about one half mile upstream from the Mayberry Bridge you just crossed.

Hunter's Crossing was one of two bifurcations in Nevada Territory in 1860 that led to the Hennes Pass Road that went to Virginia City; the other was at Lakes Crossing. Both roads met at the Junction House and became one. The Junction House today is the Atlantis Casino.

Spend a few minutes here at the County park. Now turn around and go back over the bridge, the way you came. Turn right on to 4th Street and drive east to downtown Reno, staying on 4th Street to the intersection of 4th and North Virginia Street (mile 11.2), turn right on Virginia Street.

Drive three more blocks on Virginia Street and cross over the cement arched bridge (mile 11.5) then turn left at Mill Street and park by the old Reno Post Office building (West Elm Building). You have just crossed over the Virginia Street Bridge, the original location of the 1860 Lake's Crossing Bridge.

Lake's Crossing 1860

mile 11.5

11S 02**58**241E X 437**88**03N

39.5248-119.8126

Walk along the Truckee River. This is Reno's famous River Walk District, where S. Virginia St. crosses Truckee River. Spend a few minutes here enjoying the interpretive panels along the walkway. Locate the brass plaque that tells the story of Lake's Crossing (hint, it's on the south west side of the bridge). Now walk south about 75 yards to the Major Jessie Lee Reno Monument.

Major General Jesse Lee Reno, Monument

mile 11.6

11S 02**58**291E X 437**86**45N

39.5234=119.8119



80. MAJOR GENERAL JESSE LEE RENO

The City of Reno was named for this Civil War Major General by Charles Crocker in March 1868. Reno was shot and killed by a confederate sharpshooter at the Battle of South Mountain. His plaque is across the street from courthouse on S. Virginia Street. Now drive to S. Virginia Street, turn left and drive south to the Junction House Stage Stop.

A Side Trip: If time allows, take an informative side tour of the Myron C. Lake Mansion, allow at least 45 to 60 minutes. The mansion stands at the corner of Court and Flint Streets, about three blocks to the west.

Self-guided tours are available Tuesday through Thursday, from 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Click on this link for a video tour of the mansion, <https://www.artsforallnevada.org/rent-the-mansion/lake-mansion-virtual-tour/>

Lake Mansion

11S 0258011E X 4378587N



81. MYRON LAKE MANSION

Now drive back to S. Virginia St, turn left and drive south on Virginia St for about 2.7 miles, turn left at Sierra Market Place into the Atlantis Casino lot.

Junction House

mile 14.2

11S 0259649E X 4374775N

39.4890-119.7947

By 1853 this stage stop was known as the Junction House and by 1861 the three major roads to the Comstock met here and continued as one to Virginia

City, the Henness Pass Road via Hunter's cut-off and the Sierra Valley Road. The Sierra Valley Road was also known as Lake's Crossing Road.

Hint, the plaque is located directly in front of the Atlantis Casino on the east side of the road. <http://www.nv-landmarks.com/wa/shl4.htm>



82. ATLANTIS CASINO

Huffaker's Hotel and Stage Stop

mile 17.8

11S 0261140E X 4369417

39.4412-119.7755

Continue several **miles** south on S. Virginia Street, then turn right into the Willey Brothers Fire Arms Guns parking lot. Granville W. Huffaker established his ranch, this hotel and the Stage stop in 1859. Langton's Stage Line Express and the area's first Post Office were in operation here by 1862. For ten years Huffaker's was an active stage stop and center for the community. The first school house was built here in 1868.



83. GUN SHOP

The historic plaque is located in front of the Gun shop on the west side of the road. <http://www.nv-landmarks.com/wa/shl238.htm>



84. HUFFAKER'S PLAQUE

Now drive another 3 miles S. Virginia St. get in the left hand turn lanes (mile 20.8), turn left at the Virginia City Hwy (SR 341 east), go under the freeway, turn right out of the roundabout and then turn right onto Toll Road. Drive to historic Lower Geiger Station NV historic plaque just under 2 miles.

Lower Geiger Stage Stop & Hotel on Old Toll Road

mile 23.5
11S 0266081E X 4361984N
39.3756-119.7156

The Stage stop and hotel was also known as the Magnolia House. Note, this historic plaque, (NV #218), is on the corner of Ravazza Road, located on the left side of the road driving east. The actual old Geiger toll road, toll station and hotel is located two miles further down the road on private property. The **road is not passable**. You must turn around here.

You will need to return to new Geiger Grade road, Nevada State HWY 341, by driving back about 1/4 mile and then turn right on Kivett Lane (.6 miles), then another 1/2 mile to new Geiger Grade, turn right and continue driving up the State highway east towards Virginia City. Look for Geiger Lookout Wayside Park on your right.<https://livingnewdeal.org/projects/geiger-grade-lookout-park-virginia-city-nv/>

Geiger Overlook (Geiger Lookout Wayside Park)

mile 27.9
11S 0267104E X 4362886N
39.3840-119.7040

Recommended stop. A commanding view of Reno and Truckee Meadows. Park and walk down the rock stairs, out the path to the overlook rock for the best view. Look for the brass plaque monument for William Geiger on the high rock pinnacle.

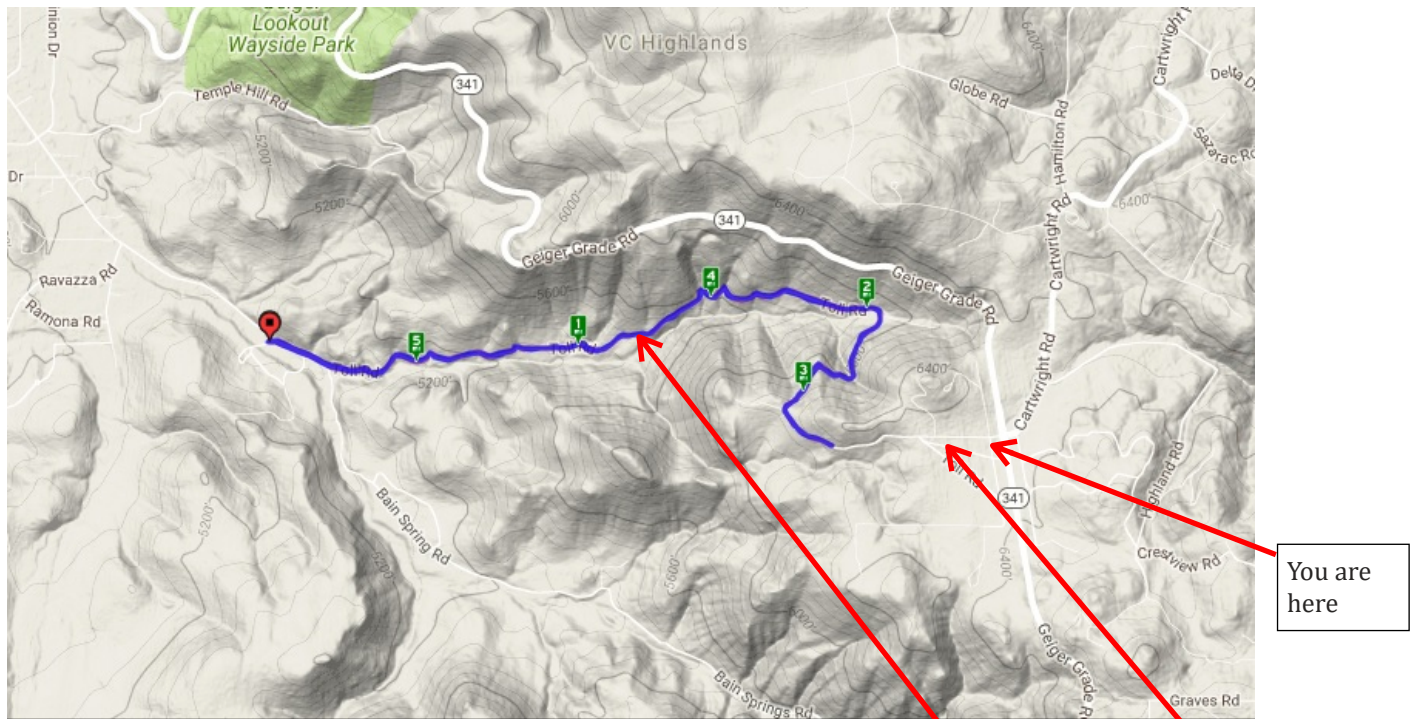
Old Geiger Toll Road Meets the Newer Geiger Grade, Nevada State Hwy 341

mile 31.0
11S 0270234E X 4360932N
39.3673-119.6670

Now drive another 3 miles until you reach “Old Geiger Toll Road.” Turn right off of Hwy at the Toll Road intersection. Park on the paved frontage road in this small valley. Look to the west and you can see that the road will drop off into the valley below.

You are looking at the original alignment of the “old toll road” that enters from the west, meeting the Geiger Grade (Hwy 341) at this intersection. The old toll road climbs up a very steep canyon, much steeper than the one you just drove up on.

This section of the “Old Toll Road” is the actual route that David Wood and Thomas Freeman surveyed in 1859. It is located to the west and covers about five miles from the valley floor below. Note, the “old Geiger toll road” today is impassable except on foot, horseback or 4 wheel-drive due to severe erosion and not being maintained.



85. OLD GEIGER TOLL ROAD COLORED BLUE ON THE MAP

Dirt Trail

Paved Road

Map above, shown by the bold colored line, outlines the original route that was bypassed by the modern state highway you have been driving on. Today the old Geiger road (original toll road) is a dirt road used as a horse trail and hiking trail. It is washed out in many locations, not advised for 4 wheel drive vehicles.

Continue driving on the highway about five miles (**5 miles**) to Virginia City. Stop and park at the Virginia City Welcome Center, is located on left hand side of the road. A small paved parking lot and restroom are located here for your convenience. Now take a few minutes to rest and view several interpretive displays here that will give you an overview of Virginia City history.

The Virginia City Welcome Center

Mile 36.3

11S 0271770E X 4355208N

39.3161-119.6473

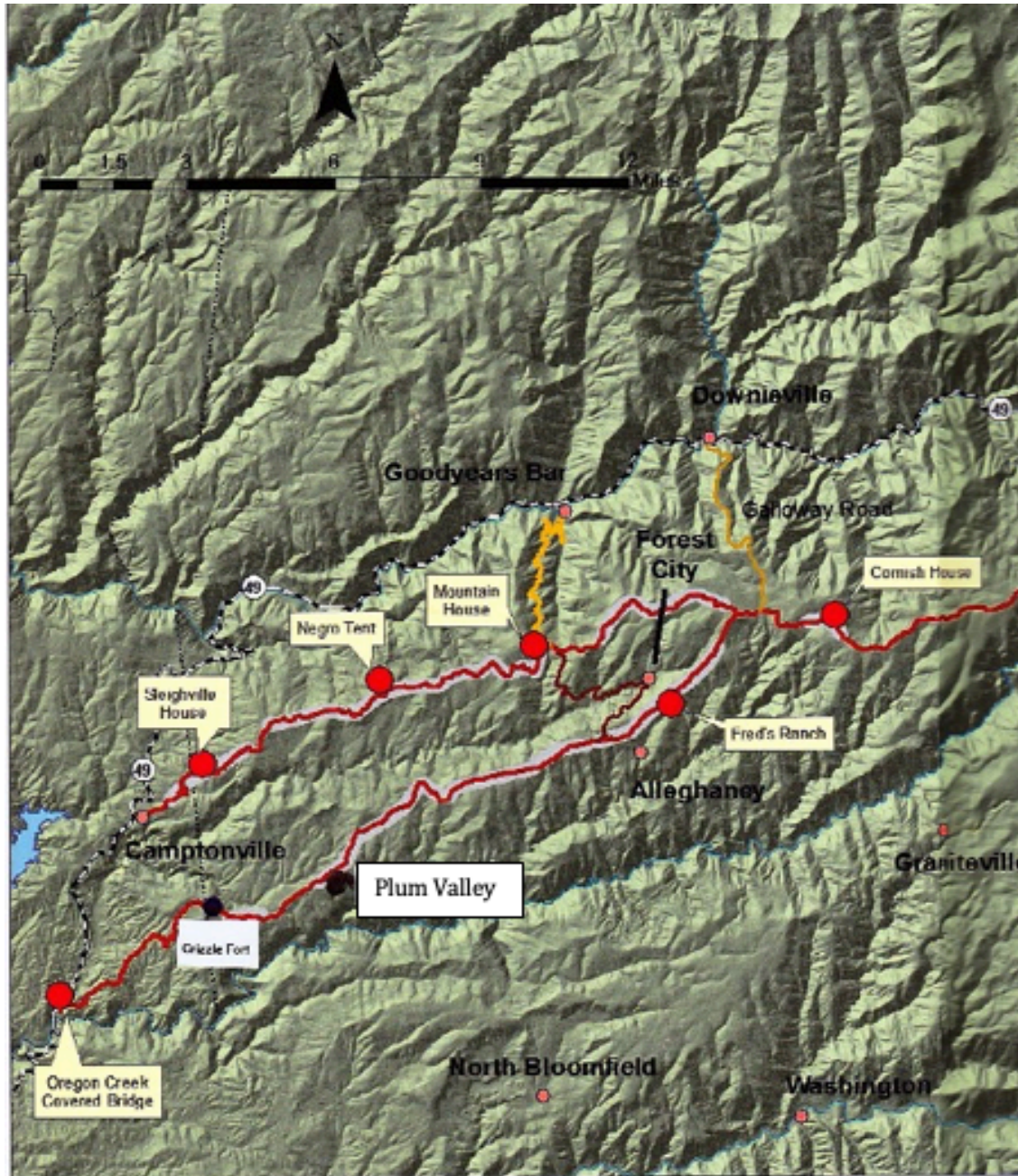


Virginia City was considered the termination and destination of the Henness Pass Road during the 1860s. Many historians feel that Marysville, California marks the beginning of the road that began in 1859 with the silver discovery of the Comstock Lode. Prior to 1859 the Henness Pass Road was primarily an emigrant road, with travelers going from east to west. After 1859 with the discovery of silver and gold, the Henness Pass Road saw use both from west to east and east to west, linking Virginia City to the economic engine of the rapidly growing State of California.

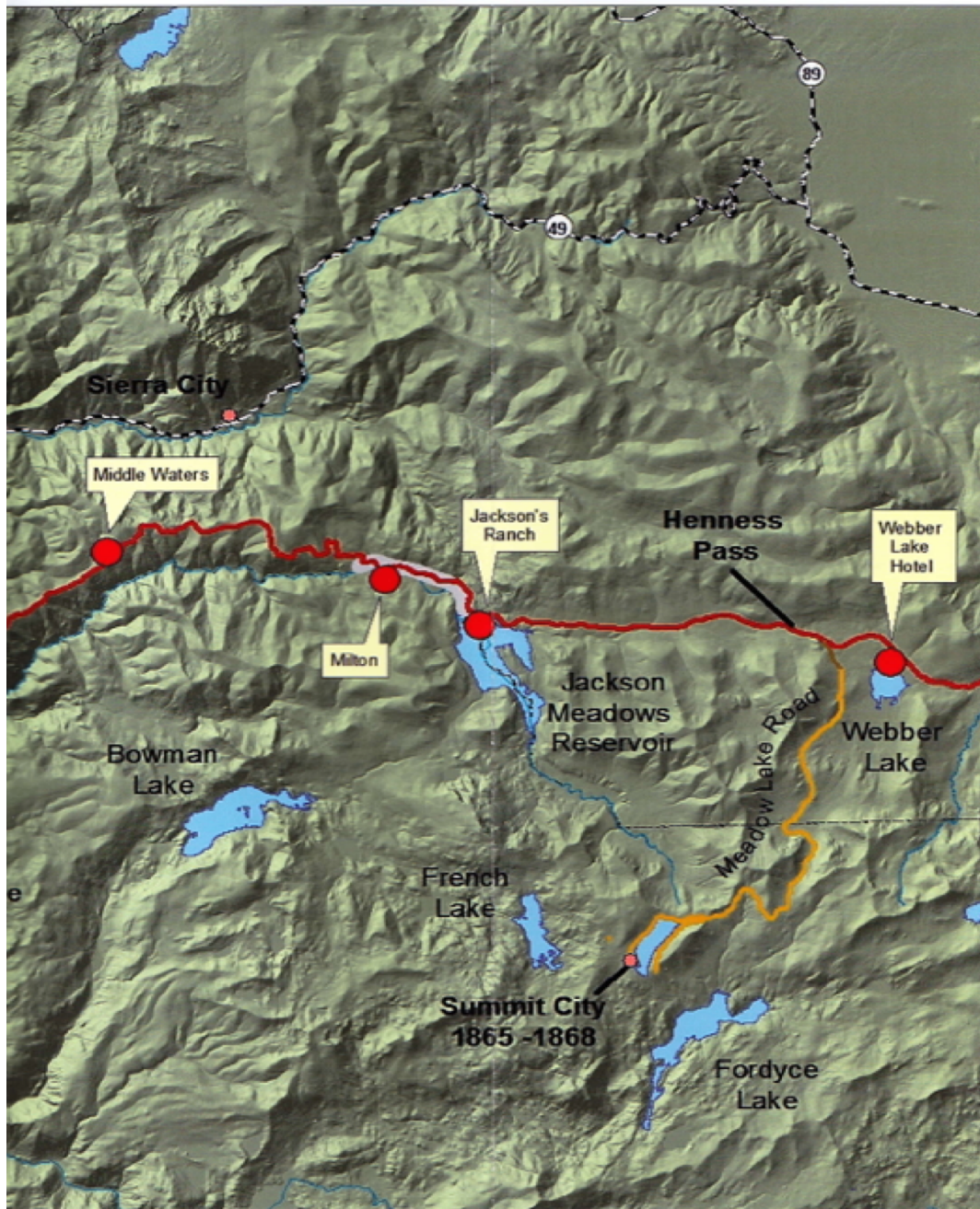
End of the Road

Appendix C

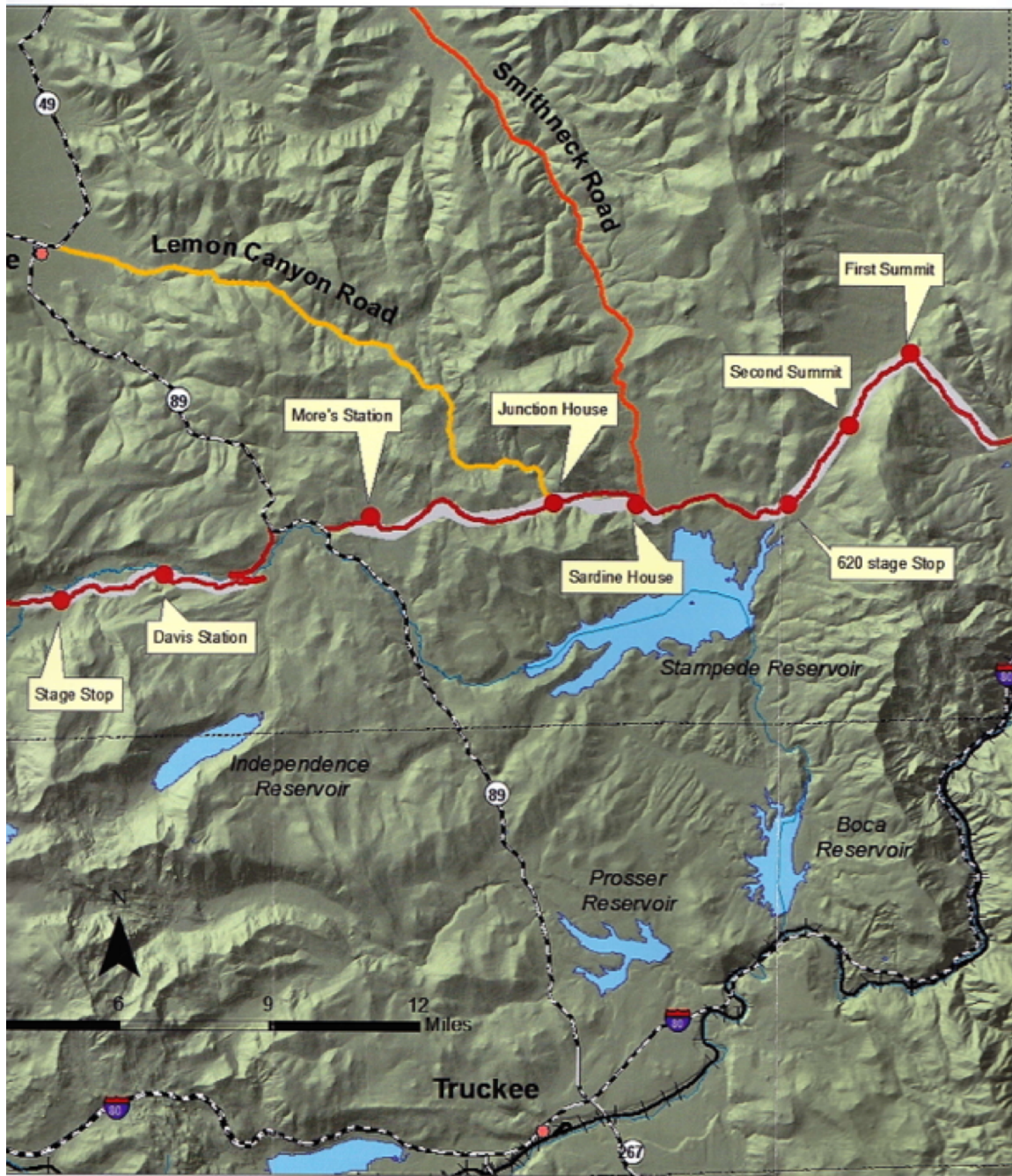
Maps of the Henness Pass Road & Stage Stops



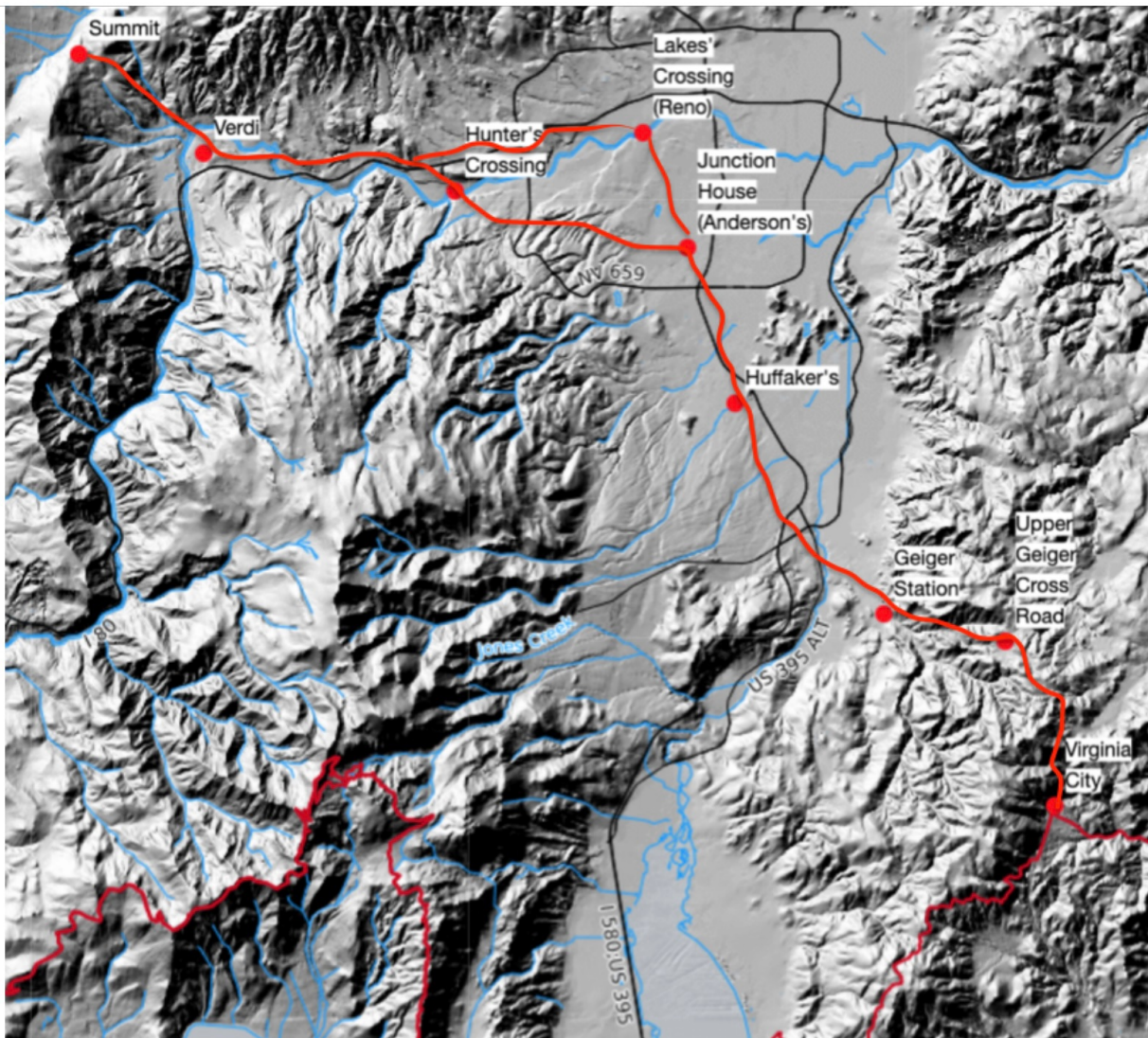
86. HENNESS PASS ROAD MAP-WESTERN SECTION



87. HENNESS PASS ROAD MAP-CENTRAL SECTION



88. HENNESSY PASS ROAD MAP EASTERN SECTION



89. HENNESS PASS ROAD MAP, SOUTHEASTERN SECTION

Appendix D

Historical Images



90. 1858 WAGON SURVEY MAP OF UTAH TERRITORY

This “blowup” by the Bureau of Topographical Engineers, United States Army, shows Coburn’s Station (modern day Truckee) in Utah Territory, not California. Note, Lake Bigler is the prior name for Lake Tahoe. Lake Bigler was named after John Bigler the second governor of California by the state legislature in 1854. The name Lake Tahoe was not officially adopted by the California until 1945.

Lake Bigler on this survey map is located entirely in Utah Territory. The congressional acts that created Nevada Territory (1861) and the State of Nevada (1864) provided for a western boundary at the “Sierra Nevada Crest,”

if the California state legislature would agree to change its existing boundary from the 120th parallel (meridian). However, California declined to relinquish any territory that was in question, particularly its portion of Lake Tahoe which is located east of the Sierra Crest. In fact, California wanted the boundary to be even further to the east, as far east as Washoe which would have included Carson City and Virginia City. The California and Nevada dispute was not officially settled until 1899 when the present boundary became finalized.

The 1858 Utah Wagon Routes Map

Geographical Survey by Captain J.H. Simpson, Bureau of Topographical Engineers, United States Army



91. CAPTAIN J.H. SIMPSON 1859 SURVEY TO ESTABLISH THE CALIFORNIA AND UTAH BOUNDARY - GENOA, UTAH TERRITORY

Most of the early settlers in the foothills north and west of today's Reno were not certain about the political jurisdiction that they were in. Many thought that they were in Utah Territory. In fact, in 1861 when Isaac Roop was appointed the first Territorial governor of the new Nevada Territory, the capital was located at Genoa, Nevada on the Carson road. Congress in 1861 formed the territory of Nevada, listing its western boundary as the "dividing ridge separating the waters of the Carson Valley from those that flow into the Pacific," or the crest of the Sierra Nevada range. With one caveat, that being, California must agree. California did not. This left the matter undecided until

the 1872 survey by Alexey Von Schmidt that defined the present boundary farther to the east, between Nevada and California.¹²³



92. SKETCH OF GENOA, EAST FOOT OF SIERRA NEVADA

This sketch by John J. Young shows a unit of men on horseback entering the town of Genoa. This sketch is Plate VIII in Lt. J.H. Simpson's 1859 Journal of Explorations in Utah

¹²³ Nevada Magazine, September-October issue 2018

Map of Nevada Territory 1861-1864



93. MAP OF NEVADA TERRITORY 1861-1864

On October 31, 1864, anxious to have support of the Republican-dominated Nevada Territory for President Abraham Lincoln's reelection, the U.S. Congress quickly admitted Nevada as the 36th state in the Union.¹²⁴

¹²⁴ <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/the-u-s-congress-admits-nevada-as-the-36th-state>

Appendix E

David Wood's Middle Name: David Isaac Wood, David John Wood, David Isaac John Wood, or David Ingerfield Wood?

The middle name of David Wood has long been problematic. Historical researchers have been divided on whether the middle name is Isaac, Ingerfield or John? South Yuba River State Park Docent Steve Pauly, now deceased, spent several weeks researching this question and arrived at the following conclusion. The middle name of David Wood is John. The following is a quote from Pauly's research "Anabel (Fowler) Higgins, Wood's great great granddaughter, extensively researched the Wood, Fagg and Fowler family letters and left the following clarification from her transcribing an 1860 family bible, regarding David Wood's middle name: "For those of you who wonder about the correction I have made in the name of David I. Wood to David John Wood, David John is the name listed in the family Bible. His grandson, David Ingerfield Wood (son of Samuel D. Wood) was so named for Peter Ingerfield Dodge, his grandfather on Kate Dodge's side. Likely the confusion over the years resulted from the fact that "I" and "J" are almost identical in the written script of the day."

Since Steve Pauly's death I have continued to research this ongoing controversy and gathered the following facts to help clarify the issue. During an oral history interview in October of 2018, I was given several documents to review from the early 1850s and 1860s by Pat Browning, a longtime resident of French Corral. Several of the documents were "Bills of Sale" from the David Wood and George Fagg General Store in French Corral. George Fagg was the son-in-law of David Wood. The General Store documents clearly show printed in bold type, "**Bought of D. I. WOOD & CO.**" (See image 95 of the "bill of sale").¹²⁵

Recently, Richard Fowler, the nephew of Anabel (Fowler) Higgins, provided me with new information that his aunt had found in the family bible that George Fagg had given to his mother-in-law Jane Wood in 1860. This bible listed David Wood's middle name as John as compared to the much earlier original 1829 family bible of Jane Wood, that listed her husband's middle initial as David I.

¹²⁵This document comes from the collection of Pat Browning, a long time resident of French Corral. It is one of just a few documents that were saved from a disastrous fire.

Wood. Richard Fowler also told me that the middle initial I is for Isaac and has been passed down through the family's oral history.

In addition, the grave site where David Wood and his wife Jane Wood are buried in Wheatland, CA, has clearly imprinted on their stone monument, the names **David I. Wood and Jane D. Wood** (photo 94 of burial plot). Wheatland Cemetery District Manager Holly Welch provided through the cemetery's registry, the middle name for David Wood. His name in the registry is recorded as David Isaac Wood. With this new physical information it is logical to conclude that David Wood's middle initial is **I for Isaac, not I for Ingerfield or J for John**, even though in some court records, and a 1862 family bible listed as John and newspapers of the day, Wood's middle initial appeared in print as David J. Wood. Leading to the conclusion that the conflict began due to the fact, that "I" and "J" were almost identical in the written cursive handwriting of the 1850s and 60s. This would have led to the misinterpretation of David I. Wood's hand written signature then as now. However, to think that David Wood, would have allowed his middle initial to be incorrectly printed as the letter I on "bills of sale" for his French Corral general store and then issue them to his customers for years, in this author's opinion, is inconceivable. Most importantly, for the family to have buried their beloved parents, David and Jane Wood in the Wheatland cemetery and have the middle initial for their father clearly imprinted on the grave stone, as David I. Wood in error and allow it to stand unchanged, would be just as inconceivable.

My research has shown, the middle initial used by David Wood in all of his business dealings was I for Isaac. But as Richard Fowler the great, great, great grandson of David Wood states, "Many of the family had multiple middle names, some as many as four. It's also entirely possible that David Isaac John Wood could be the complete name." With this in mind the whole confusion on the middle name could well have started with a decision by David Wood to only use his middle initial I and drop the J to simplify his day to day business dealings. As the years past, the full birth middle name to include John or J was ignored in most cases and only the initial I was used by Wood.

FYI

Conclusion, David Wood's birth name is likely David Isaac John Wood (David I.J. Wood). Something David I. Wood would rarely use, if at all.

David I Wood

BIRTH	9 Mar 1810
DEATH	14 Nov 1875 (aged 65)
BURIAL	<u>Wheatland Cemetery</u> Wheatland, Yuba County, California, USA
PLOT	6 3 7
MEMORIAL ID	108079753 · View Source



94. BURIAL PLOT OF DAVID I. WOOD AND
JANE D. WOOD, WHEATLAND CA
CEMETERY

French Corral, Dec 31 1861

M. Williams Co

BOUGHT OF D. I. WOOD & CO.,

DEALERS IN

GROCERIES, PROVISIONS, WINES, LIQUORS, LUMBER, &c., &c.,

FIRE-PROOF BRICK, MAIN STREET.

8	36 feet Lumber	¢ 1	1 68
10	596 "	" "	17 88
17	324 "	" "	9 72
28	12 "	" "	5
13	12 "	" "	
16	157 "	" "	
28	700 "	" "	31 00
10	76 "	" "	3 28
28	175 "	" "	2 25
Pay Mr D I Wood & Co			
J R Turner			

95. BILL OF SALE FROM DAVID I. WOOD AND GEORGE FAGG GENERAL STORE IN FRENCH CORRAL CA, DATED DECEMBER 31, 1861

Appendix F

Freeman's Crossing (rock walls)



96. FIVE FOOT TALL TURNPIKE ROCK WALLS ON BOTH SIDES OF THE TURNPIKE ROAD APPROACHING FREEMAN'S CROSSING FROM THE SOUTH EAST SIDE OF THE MIDDLE YUBA RIVER.



97. MAP OF FREEMAN'S CROSSING ROCK WALLS

The rock walls shown in #96 can be accessed from Drunken Miners Road, left hand turn off of Hwy 49 just before you cross the Middle Yuba River bridge on the North San Juan side of the river. Daniel Scimeca is standing on the North San Juan side (south east) of the Middle Yuba River, looking toward Freeman's Crossing, which is on private property.



98. ROCK WALLS AT BRIDGEPORT

At Bridgeport, rock walls, sometimes referred to as “tossed walls,” were used for many purposes other than for turnpike security. Here are two examples. The walls in the photo above delineated the farm fields of hotel owner and farmer Charles Cole, as well as provided for security of the turnpike owned by David Wood, preventing animals from wandering onto the turnpike road.

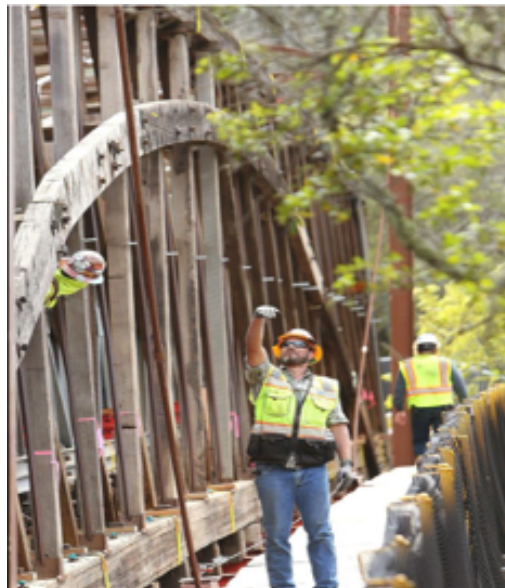


**99. ROCK SIDE WALLS FOR CHANNELING WATER
INTO THE GOLD SLUICE BOX OF A LONG TOM
FLOWING INTO THE SOUTH YUBA RIVER JUST
BELOW THE COVERED BRIDGE**

Appendix G

Restoration of the Bridgeport Covered Bridge

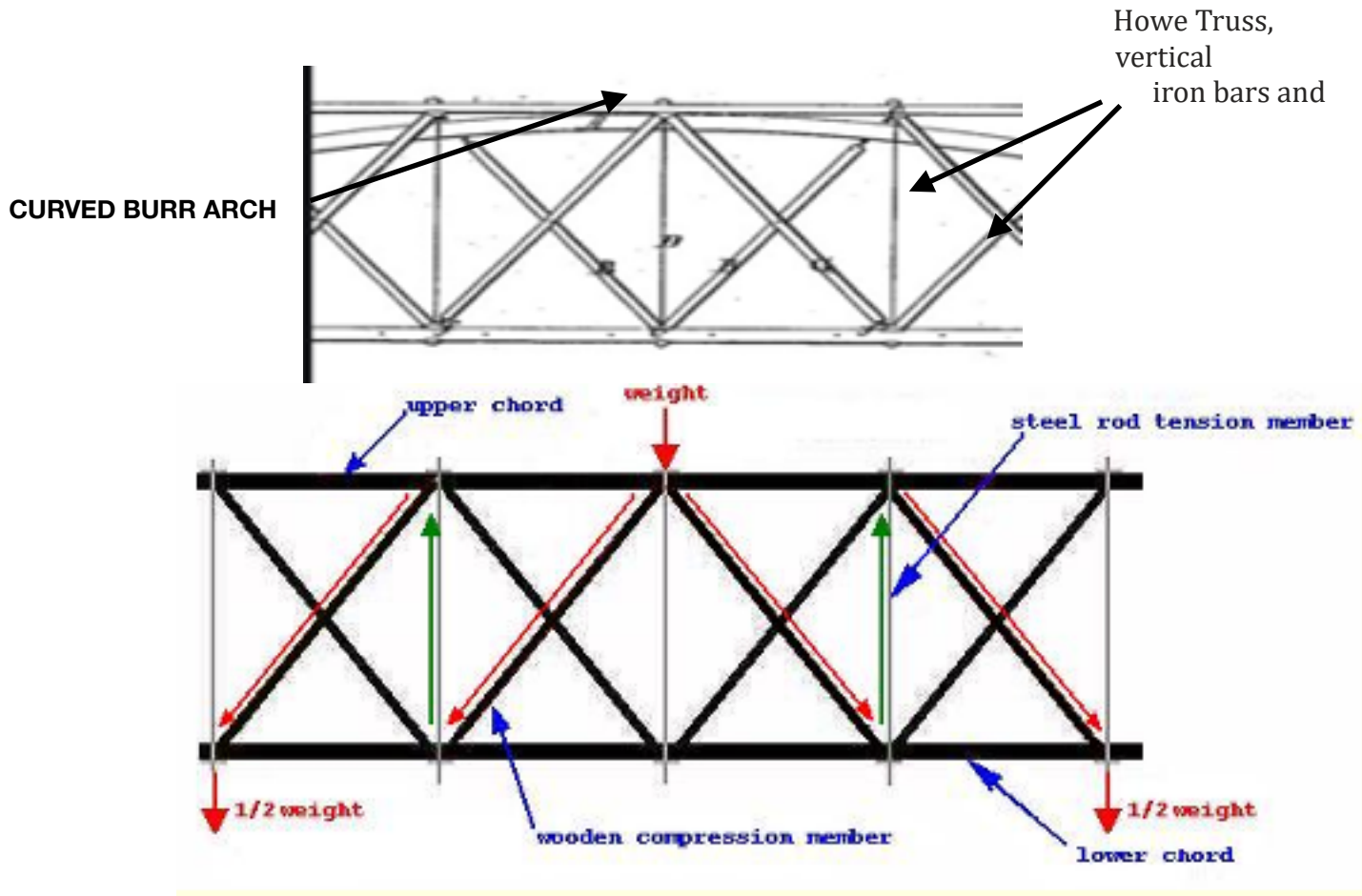
The Bridgeport Covered Bridge that exists today has had at least four major restorations. One, completed in 1970 by Nevada County, raised the bridge several feet higher. At the same time, steel cables anchored in huge cement blocks were placed at the bridge's four corners. The second restoration followed the January El Nino storm of 1997, when I personally witnessed flood waters rip the downstream wall away along with the south arch support. Later that week, Ranger Tom Bookholtz of the Army Corps of Engineers called to inform me that he had located the south arch stuck in a sand bar near the Parks' Bar Bridge, more than eight miles downstream from Bridgeport. The next restoration by the California Department of Parks & Recreation occurred in 1998 also raised the level of the bridge and removed the old stabilizing cables at a cost of nearly three quarters of a million dollars. Currently, a fourth restoration by the California Department of Parks & Recreation, begun in April of 2019, is raising the bridge an additional 18 inches at a cost of nearly \$4.2 million dollars. Currently, the bridge is closed to the public during the restoration. A reopening of the bridge is planned for early 2021. For more information call, (530) 432-2546.



**100. BRIDGEPORT BRIDGE
RESTORATION**

Photograph 100 is of employees of Spectra Historic Restoration, working on the Bridgeport Bridge in April 2020. After raising the historic bridge off of its foundations, they replaced the original structural members. The curved Burr arch (pat. 1817) and the Howe iron truss (pat. 1846) are clearly visible.

The Howe Truss



101.HOWE TRUSS DIAGRAMS

The addition of the vertical iron rods were William Howe's contribution to bridge building. His trusses hastened the development of the West and became the most popular bridge building style.¹²⁶

¹²⁶ Covered Bridges of the West, A History and Illustrated Guide by Kramer A. Adams, Howell-North, Berkeley, CA 1963



CROSSING TRUCKEE RIVER, SIX MILES EAST OF BOCA, C. P. R. R.

102. CENTRAL PACIFIC BRIDGE CROSSING TRUCKEE RIVER CIRCA 1870

The Central Pacific Railroad Bridge, in the background, crossing the Truckee River six miles east of Boca. This is an example of the style of bridge thought to be the inspiration for David Wood's covered bridge, wood & iron combination truss. Note the Burr arch and Howe truss.



"wingwall,"
entry
portal

103. BRIDGEPORT BRIDGE CIRCA 1930

The 1862 bridge still stands proud today. Note the curved Burr arch. The “wingwall” entry, no longer exists. It may have been removed during the 1970 restoration. The “wingwall” adds added protection from wind and rain.

The Bridgeport Bridge

The Oldest Single Span Covered Bridge in The United States



104. ARTIST'S RENDERING BRIDGEPORT BRIDGE



105. BRIDGEPORT BRIDGE 2014

Appendix H

The difficulty of Bridgeport travel in 1851



Dolly B. Bates (1826-1908)

In 1851, Dolly Barton Bates and her husband Captain William Henry Bates traveled to Bridgeport. Her diary graphically described the perilous trip.¹²⁷

Finally we came to a little mountain town called Bridgeport. It consisted of three little shanties and a toll-bridge, which spanned the Yuba River. The setting sun was just gilding the tops of the surrounding mountains, as we halted in front of one of the dwellings to inquire the distance to French Corral. They informed us it was about five miles. They told us there was a pretty high mountain just beyond, and advised us to discontinue our

¹²⁷ Bates, Dolly B. (1857) *Incidents on Land and Water, or Four Years on the Pacific Coast* (1857). Photo courtesy Sierra Gold Parks Foundation.

journey for that night. They seemed so particularly solicitous for us to remain all night, their shanty was so filthy dirty, and they themselves were such savage, hirsute-looking objects, that I entreated my husband to go on. I thought, out of two evils, we were choosing the least by proceeding. I came to a different conclusion, however, before we reached our destination.

My husband paid one dollar and a half toll, and we crossed a high bridge, under which rolled the Yuba. At this place, it was a rapidly rushing stream. It went foaming and dashing over innumerable rocks which intercepted its progress, overleaping every barrier, acknowledging no superior power. Unceasingly it rolled on its course, its waters mingling with those of her sister rivers, and all tending to one point, viz., the broad Pacific.

Directly after crossing the Yuba, we commenced the toilsome ascent of the highest mountain we had yet encountered. At the commencement of the ascent, my husband alighted to walk up the mountain, and I was to drive up. The poor horse started with all the energy he possessed, in the hope, I suppose, of speedily gaining the top. I quickly lost sight of my husband, who was trudging on in the vain hope of overtaking me. Soon I began to perceive evident signs of exhaustion in the horse. I tried to stop him, but could not. The buggy drew back so, that, if he attempted to stop, it drew him back too. And oh, what an awful road it was! Deep gullies worn by streams of water, which had flowed down when the snow had melted, deep enough to hide myself in! I tried several times to get the carriage crosswise the road, but could not, on account of those gullies and huge rocks....

When we reached Bridgeport, [on the return trip] we were accosted by the toll-gatherer with 'Well, I reckon as how you had a, right smart heap of trouble that night, before you reached the top of the mountain. I allowed you would be for turning back; but I have always heard say, "them Yankee women never would give up beat."'

Mrs. Bates and her husband returned to the East by ship in 1855, and she published her diary in 1857.

IMAGE CREDITS AND SOURCES

The author wishes to thank all of the following for their courtesy in providing the images used in this book.

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5. Author
6. Gleason's Pictorial Drawing Room Companion. (1840's engraving) Printed (on verso): F. Gleason, publisher and proprietor, Boston, Mass, from Wikimedia, Gleason's #309. Public domain. Robert B. Honeyman Jr. Collection, Bancroft Library.
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8. Sierra Gold Parks Foundation Cultural History, photo credit Steve Pauly
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Courtesy UC Berkeley, Bancroft Library |
44. Wikipedia, Public Domain
45. Illustration by Reno artist Loren Jahn for the book *The Genesis of Reno: The History of the Riverside Hotel and the Virginia Street Bridge*,” by Jack Harpster.
46. Timothy O’Sullivan, The King Survey Photographs 1867
47. Fenn, Harry 1845-1911, “The old camping rendezvous, the resting place after crossing the desert and before starting to cross the Sierra Nevada.”
48. Reno artist C.B. McClellan, circa 1882, on display at the Lake Mansion, Reno NV.
49. Bureau of Land Management
50. Western Nevada Historic Photo Collection
51. UNR-Special Collections: On Line, original May 6, 1914
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61. Tahoe Meadows Regional Planning Agency (map modified by author)
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65. A. Portrait by Cyrinus B. McClellan (1827-1883), Nevada Historical Society, <https://www.artsforallnevada.org/>. B. Pre 1872 Portrait by Stephen W. Shaw. Wikipedia
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