



*Although some hunting and fishing might have been part of this outing based on the equipment in the camp, photography was clearly one of the major goals of the expedition. There are three stereo cameras visible. This photo was shot by a fourth camera that was not stereo, as we can tell by its horizontal format. Even with the major difficulties of lugging lots of equipment, photographers of the 19th century captured thousands of scenes that allow us all to envision what life was really like in the 1800s. This scene, probably in the 1880s, was shot at a logging camp on Slab Creek near Georgetown in what is now El Dorado National Forest.*

## Introduction

Trappers, adventurers, pathfinders, emigrants . . . even before the Gold Rush began there was a trickle of the truly hearty, wildly adventurous and amazingly tenacious people who began to settle California.

The discovery of gold in 1848 ignited hopes and dreams of thousands of people from the “States” and around the world. For a handful, those hopes and dreams came true. Most, however, battled bitter elements, a lawless society, disease and famine. Thousands suffered immeasurable hardships. Hundreds died. And a few -- a lucky few, made their “pile.”

It is on the backs of their labors, the graves of their dead, and the dreams of their dreamers that these early pioneers turned California into one of the most desired places to live and work in our country.

Feel the joy,  
anguish and  
determination of the brave  
people who settled this land.  
Enjoy their humor, admire  
their flair.



As you read about their adventures, in their own words, you'll be amazed by their ingenuity, resiliency, and stamina. You'll feel their heartbreak and pain. You'll laugh at their antics. And you'll wonder if you could have conquered the challenges these hardy pioneers faces every day.

This is their story, in their words with their photographs.

Culled from roughly 5,000 pages of primary source documents, in *The Golden Highway*, you witness the many monumental accomplishments, brave souls, and exciting times that made Northern California what it is today.

With the exceptions of the photo captions, forward and introduction, this book was written in the 19th century style. Key points of history are delivered in the colorful language of the time.



Our goal is to preserve these styles for you to enjoy, so we have intentionally done nothing that will make the chapters consistent in their presentation, punctuation, spelling or format as it would eliminate each contributor's personal style and flavor in doing so.

Also, as you read the core text in the chapter, the diary entries, letters and newspaper articles, you'll may find many different formats and writing styles. That's because the main body of text in each chapter comes from one source unique to that chapter and the side bar materials come from many different writers. Words were often spelled differently in those days. Punctuation and sentence structure were also different. Because of the many contributors and their individual writing styles, you'll find some that are challenging to read. But, they're well worth your effort. Our goal is to preserve these styles for you to enjoy, so we have intentionally done nothing that will make the chapters consistent in their presentation, punctuation, spelling or format as it would eliminate each contributor's personal style and flavor in doing so.

There were huge cultural biases that are reflected in the text. As ingenious as these brave pioneers were, they had yet to invent "political correctness." As degrading and disheartening as some of the terms and stories are, they do reflect history.

Keep in mind that history, as it was recorded in the 19th century, was often done so subjectively. Many of the county history books (from which most of the core text is taken) were underwritten with the support of the people whose lives were chronicled within them. Thus the poor or not so vain may have been omitted unless they were truly newsworthy.



See page 211



See page 123

*Photo restoration examples. These are the originals.  
See the noted pages for the restored version.*

We're fortunate that there were a number of photographers, especially after 1860, who traveled extensively through the area and took hundreds, if not thousands, of photographs. Even so, finding the one image that exactly illustrates a point in the text is often impossible. We must sometimes go out of the specific geography or era to give you the best illustrations of the places and events being discussed.

Many of the original photographs are so damaged that it's nearly impossible to see the detail in them. They are carefully restored to uncover details that have faded over the years. Sometimes we make amazing discoveries in the restoration process. Other times there's a tinge of disappointment that we can't fix the many years of degradation. Even so, some of those images are included because they illustrate important points of our history.

Hundreds of hours of restoration have gone into the photographs used in *The Golden Highway*. Many of the original photos are in the public domain and available through the organizations noted with each image. Some are from private collections. In all cases, the restoration work is copyrighted. If you'd like copies of these images for your own use, you must contact the libraries or archives noted and obtain them directly from the respective institution.

So have fun wandering *The Golden Highway* in the 19th century. Get a taste of the rich history. And, if this book has whet your appetite for more, pick up a copy of *The Golden Corridor*, which covers the area from San Francisco to Lake Tahoe, or *The Golden Quest* that covers Lake Tahoe and Northern Nevada. Or use the bibliography as a guide and find yourself a library with a good California reference section. Have fun with your studies!

## Side Bar Legend

Most of the side bars provide new information that is not contained in the main body of text. The nature of the information is denoted by the following icons:

*Text from personal letters will appear in this script font with the quill pen.*



Stories about crime will appear with the hangman's noose in this font.



Quotes from diaries or journals will appear with this image of President Taft's personal journal.



Call outs, text that appears in the main body of content, highlighted for emphasis, appears with this magnifying glass.



You'll also occasionally find direct quotes from old newspaper articles which are in this font and quoted and sourced.