Bicycling Through Time

History Along the Sacramento River Trail

By

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Introduction

Each day hundreds of people enjoy Redding's Sacramento River Trail. But how many of them know the rich and full history of the area through which they travel? Granted, they probably recognize the Diestelhorst Bridge and realize it is a piece of our history. After all, it's pretty hard to miss a *whole bridge*, but do they know that it is only one tiny piece of a large, albeit sometimes not so beautiful, history that lies greatly ignored by the joggers, walkers, cyclists and other seekers of fresh air?

Turtle Bay

Turtle Bay, named for the abundance of turtles that once occupied this part of the Sacramento River, has worn many faces over the years. Originally occupied by the Wintu, this area was later owned by the Kutras family [1], who operated a cattle farm in the area where the Turtle Bay Exploration Park now welcomes visitors from around the world. Over the years this site would play host to some very important industries that helped to shape the area where we now live.

In 1896, the Wengler and Buick sawmill was constructed at Turtle Bay, near the site of today's Convention Center. [2] Built by John Buick and Matt Wengler, owners of the Big Bend Wood & Lumber Company, this mill processed logs that were floated down the Pit and Sacramento Rivers, then loaded onto rail cars on a Southern Pacific rail spur that ran down Trinity Street to Continental, south on Continental to Tehama, then east on Tehama to the sawmill. [3]

Wengler and Buick mill at Turtle Bay in Redding

Wengler and Buick's company, the Big Bend Wood & Lumber Company, supplied wood to the Mountain Copper Company and Bully Hill Copper Mining & Smelting Company for their smelters. This was no small feat, as the company annually supplied the Mountain Copper Company with 20,000 cords, and Bully Hill 15,000 cords. [4]

In 1908 the mill was bought by Thomas Benton and renamed the Benton Sawmill. Mr. Benton enlarged the mill and built a box factory and door plant. Mr. Benton's mill was to suffer a setback when the sawmill and lumber yard burned in 1910. Although the mill was rebuilt, it was closed in 1916 when a flood took the entire season of logs. The buildings at the site burned in 1935, ending the era of lumber processing at Turtle Bay. [5]

Turtle Bay played a crucial role in the building of Shasta Dam, by providing the gravel needed to strengthen the massive amounts of concrete used to build the dam. The curve of the riverbed here slows the flow of water, depositing the rocks and aggregate along the riverbed.

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[1] *The Monolith,* presentation by Buster Simpson
[2] *Covered Wagon 1979* – page 94
[3] *Dictionary of Early Shasta County History*– Dottie Smith, Page 19
[4] *Dictionary of Early Shasta County History*– Dottie Smith, Page 19
[5] *Dictionary of Early Shasta County History*– Dottie Smith, Page 19

In 1938, the Columbia Construction Company constructed the Kutras Tract Aggregate Plant to harvest and process gravel for the construction of the Dam, over nine miles away. The main processing building, later to be known as "The Monolith" still stands today on the southeastern end of the Exploration Park property.

The southern side of The Monolith in 2005
Photo copyright Buster Simpson

This building may be less than inspired in aesthetic terms, but it played a very important role in the evolution of Redding and Shasta County. This simple concrete building once held the key to the successful building of Shasta Dam, the creation of Shasta Lake, and the taming of the Sacramento River. Without this local source of materials, the cost of the dam would have been much higher, and the dam may not have been built.

During the dam's construction, the river was to have one last statement of its awesome power. In February 1940, the river swelled in a tremendous flood, inundating the town, including its secondary nemesis, The Monolith. This was to be the last unchecked major flooding event in Redding. In 2003, historical observations and the recollections of the Kutras family were used to establish a "high water silt mark". Local red silt was used as a stain to mark this water level as part of the historical restoration of the building. The mark is only present on surfaces of The Monolith that have remained unchanged since the flood. [6]

The Monolith is innundated by floodwaters in February, 1940
Photo copyright Covered Wagon 1979

Gravel from Turtle Bay was hauled out of the river in twelve-yard buckets. The material was then sent to the plant where it was sorted, crushed and washed before being sent to the Shasta Dam construction site. Since more than 12 million tons of aggregate would be needed for the project, Henry Kaiser thought of the ingenious method of transport by conveyor belt. Over nine miles long, and 32 inches wide, the conveyor consisted of 26 sections of varying length. Each section had its own belt and was powered by a 200-horsepower engine. [7] The sections were at varying heights to accommodate the changes in elevation needed to carry the material such a great distance. Nozzles were positioned to the side of the belt to spray water on the passing load, minimizing dust.

Although this was the longest conveyor in the world when built, little remains today of this fantastic feat of ingenuity and engineering. The most obvious signs of this magnificent conveyor are at Turtle Bay. Some footings of the conveyor can be seen running parallel to, and just west of, the Sundial Bridge. There is also a land footing that has been preserved and marked at the northern edge of the McConnell Arboretum, near the east gate. A symbolic line of cypress trees has been planted near The Monolith where the conveyor left the building, heading southwest before making a sharp turn north to cross the river. A close study of Google Earth reveals the path of the conveyor, but no other demarcation exists.

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[6] *The Monolith,* presentation by Buster Simpson
[7] *Images of America – Redding* p. 125

Following the River Trail across the Sundial Bridge takes you past the entrance to the McConnell Arboretum, an extension of the Turtle Bay Exploration Park. Another view of the conveyor footings can be seen here, including a mound of river rock that once held the first land pier on the north side.

Benton sawmill at Turtle Bay in 1908

Continuing west on the trail, another interesting piece of history can be spotted, if the river is running low enough. As you approach the small pond that sits to the north of the trail, a close examination of the river in the dry season will reveal what looks like tree stumps sticking out of the water. (The rodeo grounds can be seen directly across the river on the south bank.) These are actually the remnants from the era of the Wengler & Buick / Benton sawmill that operated on the south shore of the river from 1896 – 1916.

Some trees for the Turtle Bay mill were cut as far away as Flat Woods, near Montgomery Creek. The logs were placed in greased chutes and skidded into the Pit River, then floated down the Sacramento River to the mill. Men called "River Rats" would help navigate the logs through the river waters toward the mill. It was not unusual for two to three men per season to drown during this process. Logs were moved to the mill using this method until 1908.[8]

Remains of the Turtle Bay lumber mill log diversion

Near the mill the logs were diverted from the main flow toward the conveyors that would haul them up to the mill facility. The "stumps" that are seen today are the remnants of that diversion system. Although only two pairs remain clearly visible, it is amazing to think that these pieces of wood have been battered by the river's waters for a century or more. Whoever installed them certainly did a fine job of it!

Caldwell Park, the A.C.I.D Dam, and Lake Redding

Continuing west along the north bank you will come to Caldwell Park. The first thing you may see is a bronze statue of a man sitting on a park bench. This statue is a likeness of Chauncey Carroll Bush (1831 – 1907).

"C.C." Bush arrived in Shasta in 1851, and was elected County Judge in 1861. Oddly enough, he wasn't admitted to the Bar until 1867, a bit backward from the way things are done today. Mr. Bush is referred to as the "Father of Redding", namely because of his many contributions to the town. Chauncey holds many "firsts" to his credit: he built the first house in town, and was the first merchant, fire chief, Mayor, postmaster and Chairman of the Board of Trustees. He was also a judge and Justice of the Peace. Mr. Bush was also part of the group of residents who lobbied to bring the county seat from Shasta to Redding in 1881.[9] As an interesting side note, Mr. Bush named one of his sons George W. Bush.

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[8] *Images of America – Shasta County* – Page 49
[9] *Dictionary of Early Shasta County History*– Dottie Smith, Page 29

Local artist John Welsh was commissioned to create the statue of C.C. Bush.[10] Mr. Welsh was a college art student, but is a self-taught carver. He lives in Shingletown and has many works on display in the county.[11]

Beyond the statue of C.C. Bush is the Anderson / Cottonwood Irrigation District (A.C.I.D.) diversion dam. On the shore is a modern fish viewing station where you can observe steelhead using the fish ladders during spawning season. Beyond this facility, in the river, is the A.C.I.D. dam.

Completed in 1917, this dam was the source of water for the irrigation canal that provides water to the Anderson, Cottonwood and Churn Creek Bottom areas. The area that backed up behind this dam was named Lake Redding.

Prior to the A.C.I.D. dam, the south side of the river was the location of a large paddle wheel that ran a generator which provided the first hydro-electric power to the city of Redding. Owned by the Redding Water Company and built in 1885, the area the wheel occupied became known as The Wheel Ditch. This ditch later became, and is still today, the inlet for the A.C.I.D dam.

Diestelhorst

Continuing our tour, we follow the trail past the Lake Redding boat ramp to the area under the new Lake Redding (Court Street) Bridge and near the Diestelhorst Bridge. This area contains the most obvious historical landmarks, but the significance of many goes unnoticed.

In 1851, Shaw's Ferry operated at the site of the present-day Diestelhorst Bridge.[12] The Ferry was purchased by Edward Reid in 1860 and renamed Reid's Ferry. Edward and his brother thought this might be a wise investment, thinking that steamer traffic would eventually make its way up the river to this point. They made plans for towns on either side of the ferry crossing, naming them Union and Lincoln, but the steamers never materialized, so neither did the towns.[13]

The Diestelhorst family arrived in Shasta in 1852 and established a laundry and produce business. In 1859 they purchased 84 acres at Poverty Flat that included much of the present downtown Redding area. By 1907 Reid sold the ferry to the Diestelhorst family, who operated it as a free ferry until 1917.[14]

In 1909 the voters of California passed a bond issue to construct highways connecting all the county seats. However, the bond only covered the cost of building roads, not bridges, so the route was initially planed to make use of the existing Free Bridge, which stood south of today's Cypress Street bridge. The merchants of downtown panicked at the thought of the tourist dollars from the new roads being diverted away from their Market Street locations. It was soon realized that there would need to be a new bridge over the Sacramento River if the merchants wanted to keep traffic flowing past their businesses.[15]

Discussions of the bridge and its funding continued to be the focus of the meetings of the Trustees in 1912 and through June of 1913, when it was finally decided to hold a bond election. The bond was

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[10] City of Redding Convention and Visitor's Bureau
[11] Artist's Biography
[12] *Dictionary of Early Shasta County History*– Dottie Smith, Page 171
[13] *Dictionary of Early Shasta County History*– Dottie Smith, Page 158
[14] *Dictionary of Early Shasta County History*– Dottie Smith, Page 54
[15] *Covered Wagon 1979*– *The Bridge at Reid's Ferry* – Page 50

passed by a landslide and the task of designing the bridge and accompanying roads began. When the bridge opened to traffic on July 29, 1915, it was the first reinforced concrete bridge over the Sacramento River. At this time it was still called the Reid's Ferry Bridge. Redding's bridge and highway were finally accepted to the state highway system in 1923.[16]

No sooner had the bridge been built than the locals had discovered that the road to the old ferry gave access to a fantastic swimming hole on the south side of the bridge. The property along the bridge approaches was owned by the Diestelhorst family, who seized the opportunity to open a gas station on the southeast bank near the bridge. On the southwest side of the bridge they built an auto camp, which included cabins, a store and a concrete dance pavilion. The local swimming enthusiasts formed a swimming club at the site.[17] With the presence of the Diestelhorst dance pavilion, the bridge became the center of summer social activities, including boat races, beauty contests, water carnivals, and diving exhibitions.[18]

In 1923 the city took over the operation of the swimming area, hiring a supervisor and life guard. At this time improvements were made to the area, adding bleachers and concrete steps to a "kiddie pen", and swim platforms to the first two piers of the bridge.[19]

Looking over the west edge of the bridge on the south side, the concrete steps to the old "kiddie pen" are still visible when the water is low.

Also added were three dive platforms on the first pier. The platforms were at graduated heights and connected by ladders. A fourth ladder led to the bridge itself, where the railing was used as a jumping spot. A pecking order was established among the swimmers, based on their bravery at jumping off these platforms and into the river. Not be limited by the available ladders, the elite were the ones who shimmied up the light poles and jumped into the river.[20]

By 1934 the town had outgrown the swimming area on the south side of the river near the Diestelhorst auto camp. The city used the labor of the WPA program to construct a swimming resort on the north end of the bridge.[21] A large set of concrete steps was constructed, and are still in use near the modern picnic pavilion. As you traverse the trail today, you may notice they are well away from the water's edge and may have a hard time imagining swimming taking place from here. Remember that the steps were built before Shasta Dam, so the river was higher then.

Swimming and WPA-built steps on the north shore of the river. The "Regatta" sign under the bridge (arrow) can still be seen today.

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[16] *Covered Wagon 1979– The Bridge at Reid's Ferry* – Page 52
[17] *Covered Wagon 1979– The Bridge at Reid's Ferry* – Page 54
[18] *Images of America – Shasta County*– Page 84
[19] *Covered Wagon 1979 – The Bridge at Reid's Ferry* – Page 55
[20] *Covered Wagon 1999– Heat!* – Page 58
[21] *Covered Wagon 1979 – The Bridge at Reid's Ferry* – Page 49

The north side swimming area never achieved the popularity of the old facility on the south side. The current here was too swift for leisurely swimming.[22] With the construction of Shasta Dam, swimming in the river became all but impossible. The water being released from the dam comes from the bottom of the lake and is icy cold[23], making swimming not only uncomfortable, but dangerous.

The bridge has endured many hazardous events, even being overrun by floodwaters during its construction. On January 12, 1915, the Redding *Searchlight*, then a semi-weekly paper, reported the bridge had been struck by an old dredger that had been moored upstream. The impact tore away some of the construction "false work", but the bridge was undamaged. Residents during the Depression recall large trees, killed by the toxic fumes of upstream copper smelters, being washed into the river and jamming against the concrete arches. People would pull the logs away from the bridge and use them for firewood.[24]

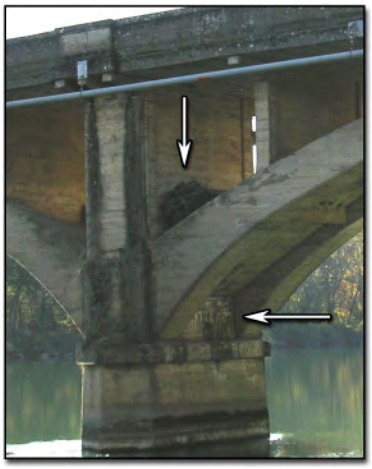
February 1940 - the Diestelhorst's last (and perhaps most spectacular) flood.

The most spectacular flood in the Diestelhorst Bridge's history is the one of February 1940. The flood produced all-time record flows. It was estimated that the flow of the river was at more than 185,000 cubic feet per second.[25]

The construction site for Shasta Dam had two new bridges, each designed to withstand twice the volume of water ever recorded to that time.[26] The flood overwhelmed and destroyed both of these bridges, in addition to washing out the north end of the new Market Street bridge and the east approach to the Free Bridge.

Both approaches to the Diestelhorst were underwater, rendering all three of Redding's bridges unusable. Redding residents found themselves using the new railroad trestle as a footbridge to the area north of town.[27] The Diestelhorst took the beating and when the waters receded, it stood proud and unscathed. Today you can see a large tree trunk wedged into the arch near the north side of the bridge. It is unknown when this tree became lodged, but it likely happened during the 1940 flood.

The flood of February 1940 took many structures, including the cabins at the Diestelhorst Auto Camp. They were washed away that week, never to be rebuilt.[28] The flood also changed the river. The waters eroded away part of the southern bank, moving the path of the river slightly to the south, making today's position of the WPA-built steps even farther from the water's edge.



History hides in plain sight - A tree trunk stranded by a flood, and the "Regatta" sign mentioned earlier.

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[22] *Covered Wagon 1979* – *The Bridge at Reid's Ferry* – Page 49
[23] *Images of America – Redding* – Page 63
[24] *Covered Wagon 1979* –*The Bridge at Reid's Ferry* – Page 49
[25] *Images of America – Shasta Lake: Boomtowns and the Building of Shasta Dam*– Page 54
[26] Joe Crowe, lecture of November 29, 2006
[27] *Images of America – Shasta County*– Page 10
[28] *Covered Wagon 1979* –*The Bridge at Reid's Ferry* – Page 50

On January 29, 1936, the California State Division of Highways returned jurisdiction over the bridge to the City of Redding "to abandon or maintain as may be found necessary".[29] For nearly 30 years, the bridge's maintenance went largely ignored. Concrete chipped off, exposing steel reinforcement, light standards were broken and not replaced, and the roadway deteriorated. In the 1960's, development on the north side of town increased and the City began a regular maintenance program.

As development continued and traffic swelled, the bridge's narrow frame – only 24.3 feet wide – became an increasing problem. The bridge was obsolete and would need replacing. In a remarkable feat of foresight, the City made a brilliant decision – save the bridge.

The building of the new Lake Redding Bridge would have some special requirements. Not only would construction have to take place quickly so as not to disturb spawning beds, but an elegant "mirror" design was specified. The five arches of the new bridge reflect the arches of the Diestelhorst, creating a parallel, yet distinct, compliment to the old bridge. The design of the new bridge uses structural elements that are thinner than normal in an effort to keep the new bridge from imposing upon the old[30].

Court Street bridges, now and then - the Lake Redding Bridge on the left, Diestelhorst Bridge on the right

While the City Council could have chosen a less expensive alternative, they made the decision to create a new landmark that would embrace the history created by the Diestelhorst Bridge. The decision to modernize without sacrificing history is one rarely seen in budget-conscious times.

Located just 35 feet downstream from the Diestelhorst, the new Lake Redding Bridge was opened to traffic in 1997. The Diestelhorst is now used as a footbridge that connects the north and south sides of the Sacramento River Trail.

The last surviving Diestelhorst family member sold the family ranch land to the City of Redding in 1977 so that a park could be established.[31] And with that, the name Diestelhorst began to slowly fade from Redding's present, slipping quietly into its past. Only the bridge and a few commercial developments remain to remind future generations of the legacy of this family who contributed so much to the Redding we know today.

Mining

Continuing on the north side of the river, the trail moves along Harlan Drive for a block, entering another trailhead at the end of the street. This section of the trail is where the most visible signs of Redding's mining history can be seen.

The first thing you may notice is a change in the vegetation. There is a lack of trees - the landscape is harsh and consists mostly of manzanita bushes. There are two reasons for this: first, the original

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[29] *Covered Wagon 1979 –The Bridge at Reid's Ferry* – Page 49
[30] Concrete Reinforcing Steel Institute - Presentation "Reinforced Concrete Bridges"
[31] *Dictionary of Early Shasta County History* – Dottie Smith, Page 54

vegetation of this area was killed by toxic fumes coming from copper smelters at Iron Mountain Mine and Keswick. Second, the soil was acidified by these toxic fumes, making it difficult for anything to grow. [32]

This area of the river is also lined with ancient lava rock, which also contributes to the desolate feeling of the area. But this geological combination of water and ancient rock formations gave rise to what made Shasta County famous: mining.

The area to the west of Redding is rich in mineral deposits. Since the 1850's, many minerals have been coaxed from this area, including gold, iron, and copper. The first gold miners in Shasta County used hand methods, such as panning and rockers. But as the fever for gold increased, methods became mechanized.

One mechanized method was hydraulic mining, which used pressurized water to crumble hillsides and expose the gold buried deep in the soil. This was an effective method, but horribly crude. Entire hillsides were washed into the sluices, examined for gold, and then the debris was washed back into the river.

Evidence of hydraulic mining is still visible

When hydraulic mining first began in 1855, the methods of creating water pressure were not very sophisticated. Miners used nozzles of not more than an inch in diameter, and the debris water was discharged through a canvas or rubber hose. As the fever for gold increased, so did the technology of hydraulic mining. With the invention of the "Little Giant" and "Monitor" machines, nozzle sizes increased to four to nine inches in diameter, with as much as 500 to 1,000 cubic inches of water being sent as far as three to four hundred feet. A machine such as this could discharge 185,000 cubic feet of water in an hour, with a velocity of 150 feet per second. [33] This mining method not only destroyed the river banks and its habitats, but threatened to destroy the river itself, both locally and far downstream.

As early as 1877 farmers along the rivers in the Yuba City and Marysville areas began filing suits against the mining companies, claiming they were losing valuable farm lands to the sediments being deposited from hydraulic mining taking place upstream. In the landmark case *Woodruff v. North Bloomfield Gravel Mining Co* (18 F. 753, 1884), it is stated that the beds of the Yuba and Feather Rivers, along with their affluents, had filled "many feet deep, -- at some places to the depth of 150 feet" with debris from upstream hydraulic mining. The case further quotes a state engineer in 1879, who estimated the deposits of silt and debris from upstream mining operations to be a total of 71,746,100 cubic yards. Of this the court stated "…in light of later information, it seems probable that this estimate is altogether too low". [34]

In 1884, Judge Lorenzo Sawyer found for plaintiff Woodruff, granting an injunction against the dumping of debris into the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers, and the streams and creeks that flow into them. This decision became the basis of the Anti-Debris Act, which banned all hydraulic mining.

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[32] *Dictionary of Early Shasta County History* – Dottie Smith, Page 99
[33] *Woodruff v. North Bloomfield Gravel Mining Co.,* 18 F. 753 (1884)
[34] *Woodruff v. North Bloomfield Gravel Mining Co.,* 18 F. 753 (1884)

In 1893, Congress adopted the Caminetti Act, forming the California Debris Commission. This act and subsequent later laws forced mines to impound their tailing behind dams to keep debris out of streams and rivers.

Unfortunately, this legislation came too late to save some of the banks of the Sacramento River near Redding. Even today, more than 100 years after the ban of hydraulic mining, the scars of this terrible practice can be seen. A small monument is on the side of the south trail, pointing out areas on the north bank where the devastating effects of this devastating practice can still be seen.

Another method of mining that was popular in this area was dredging. Unfortunately for the river, this method was no less destructive than hydraulic mining. Dredgers floated in the water, using large buckets to scoop up river bottom material. The material was washed through screens to separate the rock from gold, and then the waste was pumped out and deposited into rock piles. This method of mining destroyed the river by sending waste downstream and turning the soil upside down, destroying and washing away valuable topsoil.[35] The rock waste that was left behind also wreaked havoc on the river, forever changing the riverbed. Gravel piles from dredging on the Sacramento River can still be seen, especially near the mouth of Middle Creek.

Gravel piles from dredging still remain
Photo copyright Donna Pearson 2006

The first dredger in Shasta County was built and operated by John and Charles Diestelhorst, around 1885. The dredger first operated on the Sacramento River, near the mouth of Middle Creek, and then later moved to Clear Creek.[36] Dredging of the Sacramento River took place until 1948.[37]

A gold dredge operating at Middle Creek
Photo copyright Images of America - Shasta County

Quartz mining was another method of finding gold in them-thar-hills. Tunnels were dug or blasted into the hills, then the quartz was blasted with gunpowder to break it loose. This material was then brought out of the mine and processed by crushing to separate the gold from the quartz.[38] Extracting the crushed gold from the crushed quartz was often complicated, unpleasant, expensive and toxic.

Some quartz deposits were mined for their silica content. Silica was used as a fluxing agent in copper smelters, including at the nearby Iron Mountain Mine. One such mine can be seen just off the River Trail, on the north side. A small informational monument on the south side of the trail marks the location.

Opening to an abandoned quartz mine next to the trail
Photo copyright Donna Pearson 2006

[35] *Dictionary of Early Shasta County History* – Dottie Smith, Page 56-7
[36] *Dictionary of Early Shasta County History* – Dottie Smith, Page 57
[37] Informational Plaque – Sacramento River Trail
[38] *Dictionary of Early Shasta County History* – Dottie Smith, Page 152

Copper mining was also a major industry in the area in the 1880s, even replacing gold as the top mineral produced in the county in 1897. Copper was mined and then purified in large smelters. Unfortunately the smelting process produced toxic sulfurous dioxide gasses, which were freely released into the air. These toxic fumes killed the vegetation with which it came into contact.[39] Two such smelters were in the vicinity, Iron Mountain and Keswick, Keswick being the closest.

The toxic releases from these smelters sparked violent protests from nearby citizens. Eventually legal action was taken, and citizens were able to prevail in the courts, winning damages from the copper companies that operated the offensive plants. By 1919 all the smelters in this area had been shut down, but not before serious and far-reaching ecological damage had been done. In 1983 the Iron Mountain Mine site gained the dubious distinction of being on the Environmental Protection Agency's Top 10 Hazardous Sites List.[40] This has been but one of the long-lasting consequences of copper mining in the area. As mentioned previously, the destruction of the local vegetation also devastated the area, and hazardous waste from the smelters continues to leach into Shasta Lake and the Sacramento River, wreaking havoc on the local ecological systems.

Ribbon Bridge and Keswick Dam

Continuing our trip west along the north side trail, we come to the second trail bridge across the river. This concrete-stress-ribbon bridge was the first of its kind in Northern America. The structure is 418 feet long and 13 feet wide, providing a clear span of the entire floodplain. Hidden inside the deck are 236 steel cables that are connected to rock anchors drilled into the solid bedrock. This unique design was chosen to "avoid damage to the natural rock outcropping along the river, or encroachment into the floodplain with earth fill or bridge piers". The bridge was formally opened to the opened to the public on April 14, 1990[41], and provides a lovely view of the river.

Just upstream from the ribbon bridge you can see Keswick Dam. The dam was part of the Central Valley Project, which also included Shasta Dam. The Central Valley Project was first conceived by engineers in 1871[42], and was designed to prevent the valley from "retrogressing to its original state". The major purposes of this project were river regulation, domestic water supply, navigation, irrigation, improved fisheries and wildlife and improved water quality[46]. The project was endorsed by California voters in 1933 and approved as a United States Bureau of Reclamation undertaking in 1935.[44]

Located nine miles downriver from Shasta Lake, the Keswick Dam is overshadowed by the dimensions of her big sister, Shasta Dam. The Keswick dam and the reservoir it created serve a dual purpose: it provides another opportunity for the water leaving Shasta Lake to generate power through Keswick's Spring Creek Power Plant, and it evens out the flow of water going into the river and through Redding. The power plant has three generators with a combined generating capacity of 90,000 kilowatts. The dam also houses a fish-trapping facility for salmon and other migratory fish, which are captured and sent to the Coleman Fish Hatchery for spawning.[45]

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[39] *Dictionary of Early Shasta County History* – Dottie Smith, Page 44
[40] *Dictionary of Early Shasta County History* – Dottie Smith, Page 44
[41] Dedication plaque at ribbon bridge
[42] *The Source Book of Shasta County History* – Dottie Smith, Page 158
[43] *The Source Book of Shasta County History* – Dottie Smith, Page 164
[44] *The Source Book of Shasta County History* – Dottie Smith, Page 166
[45] *The Source Book of Shasta County History* – Dottie Smith, Page 166

The Spring Creek Power Plant is located on the site where the Keswick copper smelter used to operate. The power plant now holds the remote controls that operate many local power houses, including Shasta, Judge Francis Carr and Trinity; and remotely controls the spill gates for Lewiston Dam.[46]

Waugh

Following the trail across the river to the south side, we continue our tour heading east. On the south side of the trail is a gathering of homes and a road that is now barricaded into a dead end. This is Middle Creek Road, and the former location of the town of Waugh.

During the 1880's, Shasta was a thriving gold town. Frequent shipments of gold and goods made their way from the town to the railroad depot in Redding. Around 1883 the merchants of Shasta requested that a rail stop be built between Redding and Keswick to shorten the journey. The California & Oregon Railroad (later to be known as the Central Pacific, then the Southern Pacific) answered this need by establishing the Middle Creek Train Depot and Shasta Station near the existing ferry of Joseph Waugh, at the mouth of Middle Creek.[47]

Established in 1851, the ferry was originally owned by Otis Seaman and Eugene Wright, and was named Wright's Ferry.[48] Mr. William Potter bought the ferry in 1852, renaming it Potter's Ferry.[49] In 1855 the ferry was purchased by Joseph Waugh, and he began operating it under the name of Waugh's Ferry.[50]

In 1883 Mr. Waugh granted the railroad a right of way through his property to build the depot, and closed his ferry. Being a good businessman, Mr. Waugh used the proceeds from the railroad grant to build the Middle Creek Hotel near the rail depot. The hotel became the center of a thriving community, which by 1885 contained a Wells Fargo office and a telegraph office, and boasted daily arrivals from both the stage and railroad. The Waugh post office was established in 1885 and continued in operation until 1906.[51]

The Redding-Weaverville stage that traveled through Shasta and Waugh was often loaded with gold bullion being shipped from the local mines. The gold traveled to Redding, where it was loaded on the train, and then sent to the Mint in San Francisco to be processed. On May 14, 1892, the stage was stopped by a highwayman on a hairpin curve about a mile and a half from Shasta. The robber stopped the stage and demanded the strongbox, which was thrown down by Wells Fargo messenger Buck Montgomery. Seizing the opportunity of distraction, Buck shot the robber as the strongbox fell to the ground. Unfortunately for Buck, a second robber came out of hiding and shot Buck, then fired several shots into the stage.[52]

As the first robber fell, the muzzleloader he was holding went off, sending buckshot toward the driver and a man sitting next to him. The driver, John Boyce, took the brunt of the shot in his knees. Mr. Suhr, who was sitting next to him took some shot, but was not seriously injured.[53]

At the report of the shot, the horses bolted and ran away with such force that the injured driver and passenger couldn't stop them. It was only when the runaway stage met a buggy driver coming up the

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[46] *The Source Book of Shasta County History* – Dottie Smith, Page 167
[47] *Dictionary of Early Shasta County History* – Dottie Smith, Page 197
[48] *Dictionary of Early Shasta County History*– Dottie Smith, Page 204
[49] *Dictionary of Early Shasta County History*– Dottie Smith, Page 150
[50] *Dictionary of Early Shasta County History*– Dottie Smith, Page 197
[51] *Dictionary of Early Shasta County History*– Dottie Smith, Page 197
[52] *Covered Wagon 1967 – Twice Told Tales – The Ruggles Stage Robbery* – Page 6
[53] *Covered Wagon 1967 – Twice Told Tales – The Ruggles Stage Robbery* – Page 6

road that they were able to be stopped. After Mr. Boyce gained control of the stage, he drove it to the Middle Creek Hotel where doctors attended to the wounds of the injured. Buck Montgomery sustained the worst injuries, dying within a few hours. Mr. Boyce recovered, but was slightly lame afterwards. Mr. Suhr sustained only minor injuries and recovered quickly.[54]

When news of the robbery reached Redding, a search party was immediately organized to find the robbers that had murdered the Wells Fargo messenger Buck Montgomery, who was a very popular figure in the area. The next day the injured robber was found hiding in the woods near the robbery site. He was identified as Charles Shaw, aka Charles Ruggles.[55]

Charles Ruggles was the youngest son of a Woodland Board of Supervisors member. He was moderately successful, described as well-liked, and had attended college in Stockton. Until captured in the woods near Shasta, he had never had trouble with the law.[56]

The same could not be said for Charles' older brother, John. John led the life of a wanderer and had previously run afoul of the law. In 1878 he was sentenced to seven years in San Quentin Prison for a robbery, but was released early in 1880. Though Charles would not reveal the name of his cohort, the senior Mr. Ruggles suspected John had been involved.[57]

A few Redding women took pity on the young and handsome Charles, and began lavishing attention on him, sending food to the jail, and even proposing marriage. This attention raised ire and resentment among those who had been friends of Buck Montgomery and the others who were injured during the robbery.[58]

But the attention was no match for Charles' suffering. Being wounded and locked up in jail, he soon succumbed to the pressure of his situation and admitted that his brother John had been involved in the crime. Charles gave a detailed account of the holdup and admitted that John had been the one who shot Buck. John was soon captured near Woodland and brought to Redding to join his brother in jail.[59]

On July 24, 1892, resentment against the brothers finally reached the boiling point. A party of men stormed the jail, forcing the man on duty at the courthouse to give up the keys that locked the brothers in their cells. The two brothers were then marched out of the courthouse and taken to a lot on the northwest corner of Shasta Street near the railroad tracks, where they were lynched.[60]

Citizens pose with the corpses of Charles and John Ruggles

[54] *Covered Wagon 1967 – Twice Told Tales – The Ruggles Stage Robbery* – Page 7
[55] *Covered Wagon 1967 – Twice Told Tales – The Ruggles Stage Robbery* – Page 7
[56] *Covered Wagon 1967 – Twice Told Tales – The Ruggles Stage Robbery* – Page 5
[57] *Covered Wagon 1967– Twice Told Tales – The Ruggles Stage Robbery* – Page 7
[58] *Covered Wagon 1967– Twice Told Tales – The Ruggles Stage Robbery* – Page 7
[59] *Covered Wagon 1967– Twice Told Tales – The Ruggles Stage Robbery* – Page 8
[60] *Covered Wagon 1967– Twice Told Tales – The Ruggles Stage Robbery* – Page 8

The bodies of Charles and John Ruggles were left to hang near the railroad tracks for three days, in full view of the passengers on the trains going through town.[61] Local citizens proudly posed for photographs with the swinging corpses. Being July in Redding, it is easy to assume they were a doubly gruesome sight to see by the time they were cut down on the third day.

As with many other towns and communities associated with the gold rush, as the supply of gold faded, so did the towns that supported the mining efforts. This bustling stop on the rail line near Middle Creek became yet another ghost town. The railroad tracks, which inspired the town's creation in 1883, were still in use until 1938. With the building of Shasta Dam, it was necessary to change the route of the tracks out of Redding, since the lake was to cover several towns being served by rail. A new trestle was built through Redding, twelve new tunnels and many bridges were built to successfully reroute the tracks.[62] Traveling east on the south side of the River Trail past the former site of Waugh, you can still see the bed of the tracks to the south of a few sections of trail.

The old Southern Pacific railbed can still be seen to the south of the trail

From here the trail continues east along the river, crossing back to the north bank at the Diestelhorst Bridge, and we retrace the route over the Sundial Bridge to Turtle Bay.

Conclusion

"May you live in interesting times" is a phrase and curse that can easily describe even the microcosm of history around what is now the Sacramento River Trail. This land has seen boom, bust, development and destruction. The area is now preserved as a recreational area, and will hopefully be enjoyed by generations to come. It is my hope that other people will come to realize that this beautiful trail has a wealth of stories to tell, if only one is willing to listen.

[61] *Dictionary of Early Shasta County History*– Dottie Smith, Page 163
[62] *Dictionary of Early Shasta County History*– Dottie Smith, Page 30