



THE TRAVELER

LINCOLN HIGHWAY ASSOCIATION - CALIFORNIA CHAPTER

www.lincolnhighwayassoc.org/ca/traveler



EDITOR
Gary Kinst

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SUMMER

JULY, 2015



The Duarte Garage turns 100

COVER

The July 11th Chapter meeting will be held at the Duarte Garage which is celebrating its 100th anniversary. The California Chapter of the LHA is very fortunate to have this beautifully restored and authentic icon located in its original location on the Lincoln Highway. The Livermore Heritage Guild and the docents at the Garage do an outstanding job in representing the history of Livermore and that of the Lincoln Highway. I can't think of another building on the Lincoln Highway in California that is totally original and still represents its original intent. There have been numerous articles written about the Garage over the years as well as numerous events showcasing the vehicles and artifacts on display. Their Lincoln Highway display is one of the finest in the State. Will Bolton, Curator of the Garage, will give a presentation on the history of the Duarte Garage. You don't want to miss this meeting.....



Articles on the Garage can be found on line at the Livermore Heritage Guild's web site. Click on newsletters to view past issues.

Past issues of the Traveler also contain features and photos of the Garage.

Vol. 8 No. 1 January 2007

Vol. 14 No. 1 January 2013

Vol. 14 No. 3 August 2013

APRIL CHAPTER MEETING

The April Chapter meeting was held at the Pacific Street Cafe in Roseville. Secretary Jackie Ferreira reported that there were 29 members and guests in attendance and among those were Shelly Blanchard and Lee Trechette, representing the City of Rancho Cordova and the Cordova Community Council. Teresa Compton of Grass Valley and Stephen-David Linter (an acquaintance of Bryan Butko) from Pennsylvania were guests. Members paused to reflect on the passing of founding member of the California Chapter, Lloyd Johnson, who passed away on February 27, 2015. Lloyd was remembered as being a loyal Chapter member "who was a soft spoken man, who loved to talk about the Lincoln Highway with interested parties".



Special memories of Lloyd were shared by Chapter members: "Lloyd knew about so many places on the Lincoln Highway and the various alignments." He was one of the most gracious and elegant people, I have met. He always had a kind word and was always such a gentleman. His personality was wonderful." More information regarding Lloyd can be found in the April edition of The Traveler newsletter.

Member Bob Chase gave a slide show presentation to the Auburn Travel Club. The 100 year old club consists entirely of women. The 1 1/2 hour presentation was followed by good conversation, delicious coffee and home baked items. Bobs presentation goes to reiterate that the Lincoln Highway cannot be properly represented in a 30 minute presentation.

Photos courtesy of David and Jackie Lee



Member Mike Kaelin reported that the City of Rancho Cordova has become a lifetime member of the LHA. Future sign locations have been surveyed and approx. 20 signs will be posted along the Rancho Cordova and Citrus Heights route. Signage in Oakland is complete thanks to Bob Glaze, President of the Optomist Club in San Leandro, the City of Oakland as well as Mike Kaelin. Stockton is continuing to add more signage and Mike is working with the City of Lodi as his signage program works its way north towards Sacramento

A motion to purchase a digital projector and screen was submitted and passed. The Chapter has had to rely on Paul Gilger or the local establishments where meetings are held to provide a means of viewing films and power point presentations. A field trip to the Carnegie Library/Museum followed the meeting.



BLACK WALNUT

By David W. Lee August 20, 2014

The only thing that came 'tween you and me
Was a big and ugly old black walnut tree
I cut it down but how was I to know
I cleared a path for our new love to grow

You complained that the tree was a messy louse
Dropping pitch on your back yard and house
Its massive trunk blocked out your winter sun
How could I know that you would be the one

That sappy tree towering from above
Brought together the deepest kind of love
We went out to eat after a while
I fell in love with your Pollo Loco smile

My searching now is over, I've finally found the one
To be my only true love, and share my life in fun
Dedicated partner, soul mate to the end
Team mate and companion, lifelong loving friend

Who'd believe my fence would be the cover
Hiding the one I would discover
Eggs and guitar, the neighbors on the wire
Our fun so hot we set the place on fire

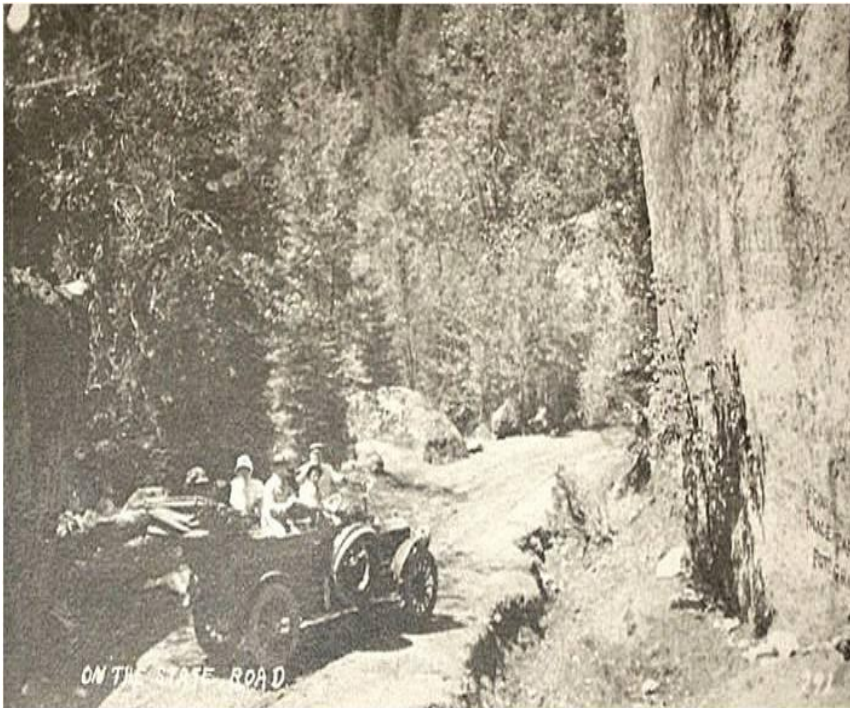
Now our friends, they have all come to see
Two ladders take the place of that old tree
Two ladders bridge the gap of loneliness
And forged a love that's built to pass the test

You are the one I want to hang around
In some abandoned desert ghost town
How many can we see in just a day
You won the race, you take the prize away

You choose the route, or we could go my way
There's more to see, on the Lincoln Highway
Our love, as endless, as the open road
Our time together, more precious than gold

If you don't mind, I'd like to ask you whether
If you don't mind, could we please stay together
I need you, Babes, to help me with my life
If you don't mind, would you please be my wife

REGISTER ROCK



Split Rock or Register Rock is located on the Lincoln Highway along the American River below US 50 at mile tract 34, seven and one half miles west of Strawberry. A high clearance vehicle is recommended if you plan on investigating this section of old highway.



Visible in 2004, the 1920's inscription on Split Rock read; "Pianos, Organs, Violins, Accordeons, etc. Write to F.R. Girard, Oakland, Cal"

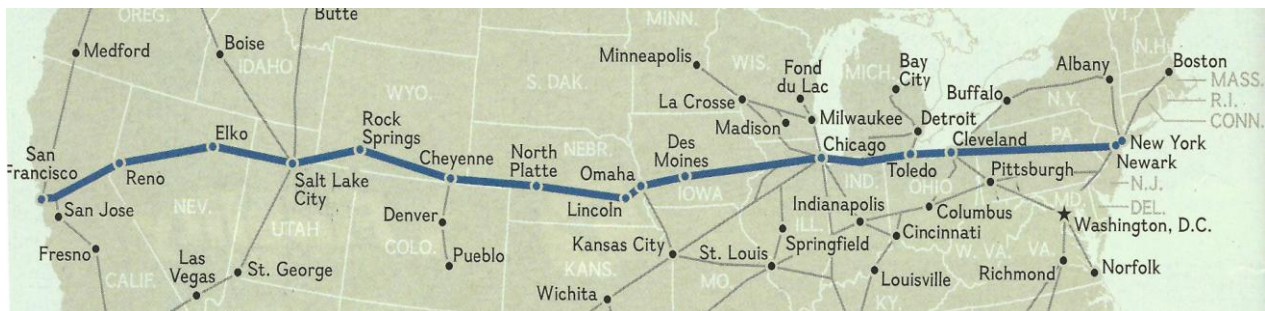
THE US AIRMAIL BEACON SYSTEM

An article in the October, 2014 Traveler, by Joel Windmiller, told the story of the Richfield Beacons which were erected in 1929 as a means to guide motorists and aviators in California. I noticed in the photos of the beacon near Livermore that there also existed a secondary beacon, though only 50 feet tall as compared to the Richfield tower at 125 feet . Sometime later I came across a article at www.sometimes-interesting.com entitled "Pointing the Way" which told the story of the Postal Service's development of a system of navigation beacons between New York and San Francisco in 1924. New York to San Francisco ? Does that ring a bell ? Aircraft of the day lacked advanced electronic and radio guidance, limiting flights to daylight and fair weather which required utilizing ground visual landmarks. These towers were installed at 3-5 mile intervals ,and when practical , atop a 50-70 foot long concrete foundation in the shape of an arrow. The arrows were painted bright yellow.

What drew my attention to these beacons was the similarity in routing of the Postal Service air route and that of the Lincoln Highway.

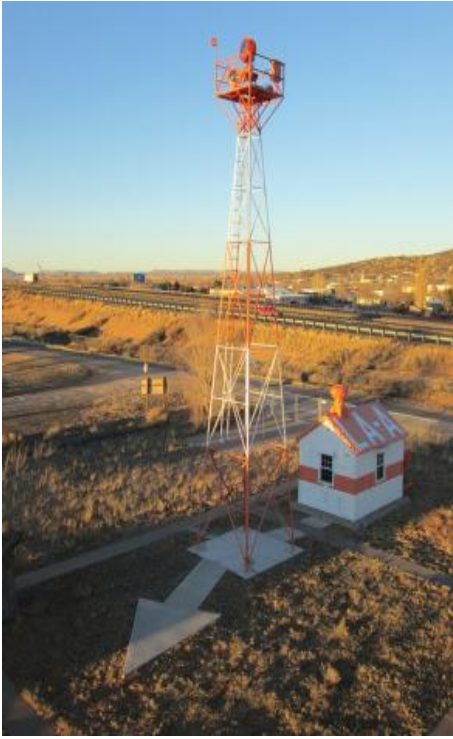


The Lincoln Highway



U.S. Federal Air Route Nov, 1931

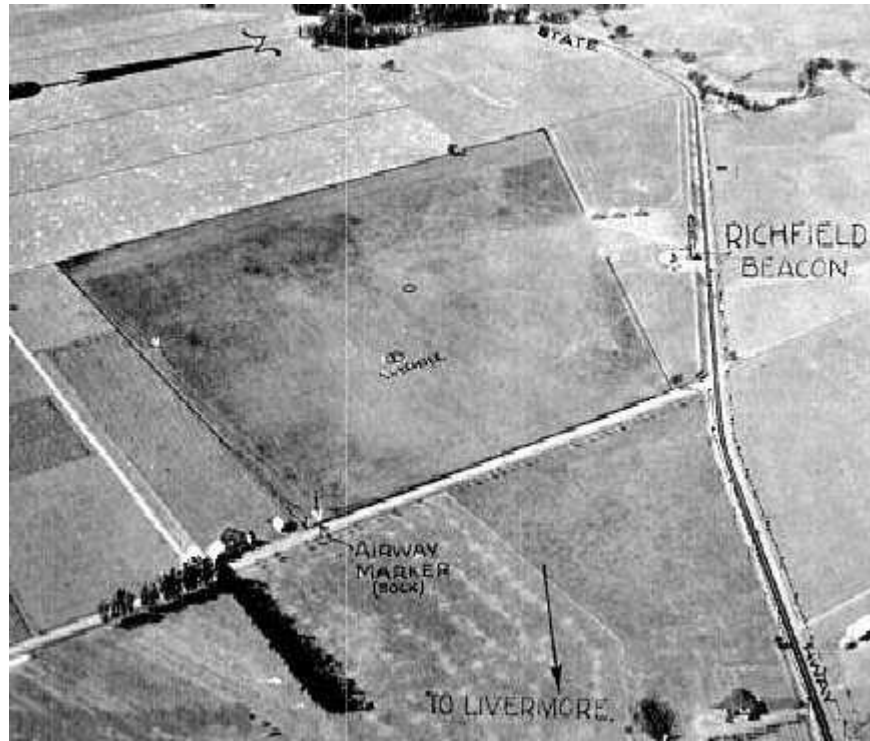
Remnants of towers and arrows can be still be seen outside of Reno, Tahoe National Forest above US 50, Verdi, Vacaville and Walnut Creek. Check www.sometimes-interesting.com 2014/2014 concrete arrows.



Typical tower and arrow



A worn and deserted arrow



Airport beacon can be seen in left center of photo (marked) at the Livermore airport

1849



PAST

Appeal for State Highway along the Old Pioneer Route from Sacramento to Placerville via Folsom, Clarksville, Shingle Springs, El Dorado, and Diamond Springs.

OLD PLACERVILLE & SACRAMENTO
PIONEER EMIGRANT ROAD CLUB

1911



PRESENT

OLD ROAD BOOSTER CIRCULAR issued 23 years ago emphasizing pictorially the need of a bigger and better highway between Sacramento and Placerville to meet the advance in transportation facilities from the stage coach of 1849 to the speed demon auto of 1911 and handle the commerce that was coming through the Panama Canal.

A ROAD TRIP

Having never been through Ely, Nevada, or on the Loneliest Highway in America, the wife and I decided it might be a chance to scratch an item off the " 'Ole Bucket List". Along with friends we decided to celebrate our 45 anniversary on the highway. Day one brought us to Reno (10+ hours isn't my idea of an enjoyable road trip). Day two took us through Fernley, Nevada and onto the Loneliest Highway . Keeping eight eyes peeled for LH signs, markers and the Loneliest Highway signs we headed for Ely. A handful of signs appeared along the highway especially in the towns of Austin and Eureka. Markers were found at historical points of interest such as Carroll Summit and Austin Summit . What wasn't found was a single Loneliest Highway sign. It wasn't until we headed home that we discovered two signs; one when leaving Ely and the other leaving Eureka. We were amazed how much of the old highway is still present and in many sections still drivable. We found many of the historic attractions on the route closed, we assumed due to the time of year. The folks at the Northern Nevada Railroad stated the Ely area is booming in the spring and early summer.



Original LH marker in McGill, Nevada



Replica marker several blocks south



First of two signs between Ely and Fernley

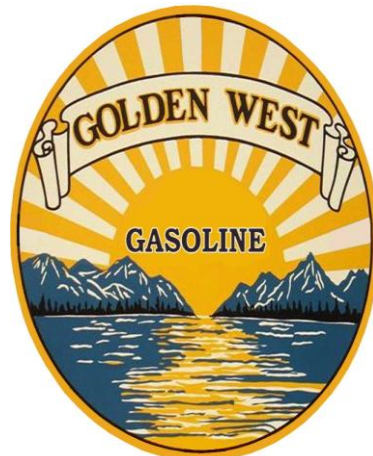
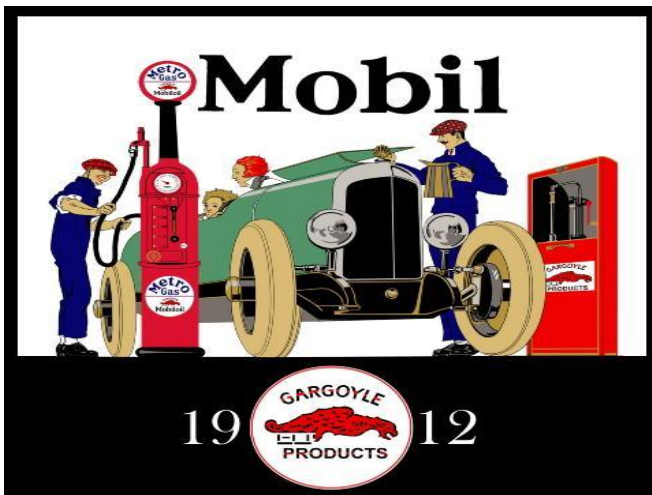
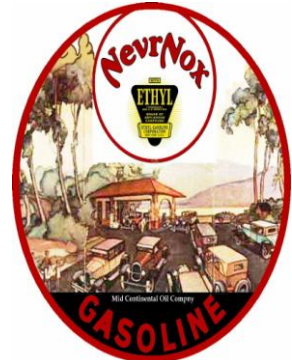


This photo hanging in the Nevada Hotel is dated 1908 and shows Aultman Street 5 years prior to the Lincoln Highway.



Some folks may recognize Mr. Mark Bassett, Executive Director, of the Nevada Northern Railroad and occasional guest on the History Channel's "American Restoration" television show. Mark has had several items of railroad memorabilia restored at Ricks Restoration in Las Vegas and has them on display in the museum and car barn. We were fortunate to have Mark as our tour guide through the machine shop and rail yard. A very thorough and interesting tour. After the tour I questioned a statement he had made that the only way to reach Ely in the early 1900's was by horse and/or wagon. I challenged that by stating that the LH came thru Ely in 1913. His rebuttal was that auto traffic didn't appear in the area until the 1920's.

VINTAGE OIL COMPANY LOGOS

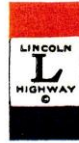


A LETTER FROM GAEL HOAG



VER - HIST. SS 214 - Lincoln Highway

"A CONTINUOUS CONNECTING IMPROVED HIGHWAY FROM THE ATLANTIC TO THE PACIFIC"



NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
GENERAL MOTORS BUILDING, DETROIT, MICH.

SECRETARY'S OFFICE
1227 POPLAR STREET, OAKLAND, CALIF.

Secretary's Office - 1227 Poplar Street
Oakland, California

February 11, 1939

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Oakland Public Library
14th and Grove Streets
Oakland, California

OAKLAND
FEB 15 1939
FREE DELIVERY

Gentlemen:

For many years you were an ardent supporter of the Lincoln Highway. You watched it, speeded it, and assumed a measure of responsibility for it. You recall how President Henry B. Joy in 1913, by laborious travel, ranch-to-ranch inquiry, taking down fences and fording streams, laid out the shortest route between New York and San Francisco.

You know that your efforts helped to connect these two terminals by a completely paved road, and that our Lincoln Highway "seedling miles" are swallowed up in a national network of pavement. The Lincoln Highway Association literally laid the foundation for a highway system which is the envy of the world.

This year there is a World's Fair at each terminal of the Lincoln Highway, which makes this the ideal year for a celebration of our achievement. We tried to throw a single lane of pavement across the country in time for the 1915 World's Fair at San Francisco, but this was too great a task. We have succeeded, magnificently beyond our own expectations, NOW.

The February 18th issue of THE SATURDAY EVENING POST carries an article and photographs in color, honoring this achievement which you helped to bring about. You will want to read this account of thrilling American energy, and to think back upon your own share in the big job.

The Lincoln Highway no longer exists. Numbered roads have replaced the familiar name. Your Association is inactive, so let us make this a year of celebration, and wind up our affairs. To do this on a national scale, as is befitting, we ask two things of you:

1. Go to your friend the newspaper editor. Show him the article in THE SATURDAY EVENING POST for February 18th. Tell him a few amusing little things about the hardships of motoring in the old days, and how you helped build the Lincoln Highway. Leave the enclosed statistics with him, to prove the change.

Tell him the Golden Gate International Exposition on San Francisco Bay has set aside July First - traditional date of our annual meeting - as Lincoln Highway Day. Tell him you will be there, driving westward over the road you helped to build.

2. Then come, meet your old friends, help us to arrange the proper ceremonies. The road is splendid. You will enjoy this glorious culmination of your years of effort, and you will be repaid for all the work you have done to make it possible.

You have rendered a priceless service to your community and to your nation. It was you who lifted America's transit out of the Dark Ages.

Your organization has accomplished its task. Probably this is our valedictory. Please accept it as a token of our gratitude, and join us July 1 in commemoration.

Sincerely,

Gael S. Hoag
Gael S. Hoag, Secretary
Lincoln Highway Association

OAKLAND
JUL 15 1939
FRANK W. BROWN

LINCOLN HIGHWAY BOOSTERS



Collection of Gary Kinst

This original photo was purchased from SFX archives through Lelands.com Auctions in May 2008. The photo is identified on back as "Lincoln Highway boosters 11-13-16." The exact location is unknown, but assumed to be somewhere in Alameda or San Joaquin County. The San Francisco Examiner was the owner of the photo prior to purchase but it is also unknown if the photo ever went to press. The banners carried by the women read; "I helped build the Lincoln Highway". Why they are climbing the fence is yet another question. A farm house appears in background, suggesting they were standing inside a pasture/field while watching a motor caravan pass.

SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE, SUNDAY, MARCH 15, 1914.

CALIFORNIANS NOW STRONG LINCOLN HIGHWAY BOOSTERS

Consul-at-Large Frederickson in a six-cylinder Buick car leading the California Lincoln highway boosters in a trip to the snow line.

A. E. Denison addressing the Placerville school children from his Buick Six relative to the importance of the Lincoln highway.

GREAT ENTHUSIASM FOR LINCOLN ROAD

C. A. McGee and Party Tour
Central California in Buick
"Six" to Boost Highway.

THOUSANDS GREET CAR

Representatives of Howard
Auto Company Make In-
teresting Trip.

If the enthusiasm which is being shown in California is general throughout the country, there should be no question about the Lincoln highway being in good shape for the thousands of automobiles which are sure to visit the exposition next year, says C. A. McGee of the Howard Automobile Company, who has just returned from a three days' trip over the Lincoln highway.

The other members of the party who filled the big six-cylinder Buick were Fred Gross, also of the Howard Automobile Company, who acted as pilot; H. E. Frederickson, consul at large of the Lincoln Highway Association; A. A. Denison, secretary of the Oakland Chamber of Commerce, and Ed Crinion, a member of the local press.

The trip was made for the purpose of inspecting the portion of the highway already definitely decided upon and to secure data which will enable the Lincoln Highway Association to decide on the exact location of the entire route in California.

The Emigrant Gap and Truckee route was followed as far as Auburn, the up-trip from Sacramento being made through Roseville, Rocklin, Loomis, Penryn and Newcastle, while the rest was over the old Auburn-Sacramento stage road, through Folsom. Both these roads are receiving favorable consideration from the highway association, and as there seems to be little choice in the two routes, the highway will no doubt go to the road which works the hardest for it.

MUCH ENTHUSIASM.

In commenting on road conditions and the trip in general, McGee has the following to say: "I was very much surprised at the enthusiasm which is being shown all along or near the route of the Lincoln highway. There were about thirty people, among whom was J. E. Caine, State consul of the Lincoln Highway Association, in the party which followed our big six-cylinder Buick out of Oakland last Monday morning, bound on an inspection and boosting trip over the portions of the Lincoln highway below the snow line. The first stop was made at Hayward, where arrangements were made for a mass meeting and banquet later in the week. The Dublin boulevard was then followed to Livermore, where the party was met by an enthusiastic crowd, who insisted on being informed more fully regarding the highway.

After a short address by Denison, the party continued on to Tracy, where we were met at the edge of the town by some forty or fifty automobiles, and escorted to the main street, where a lunch was served the boosters by the ladies of Tracy. The schools were dismissed and the school children marched to where the addresses were being made, and were interested listeners to all that was said.

Stockton was the next stop. From this place the lower Sacramento road was taken. Near the town of Lodi automobiles were lined up alongside of the road for more than a mile awaiting our arrival. They followed our party into Lodi, where a very enthusiastic meeting was held. Sacramento was made a night stop. They were so busy with the army of the unemployed that they had little time for the entertaining of highway boosters. However, a well-attended highway meeting was held at the City Hall Monday evening.

Tuesday morning the big Buick was headed out over the Ben Ali boulevard to Roseville, Rocklin and Loomis. The president of the Loomis Chamber of Commerce was profuse in his apologies of the size of the crowd which was there to greet us. He explained the apparent lack of enthusiasm by saying that the postoffice had been robbed the night before, and that all the citizens had turned man hunters.

At Penryn school was dismissed while the highway speeches were being made. A few minutes was spent in Newcastle, and Auburn was reached by lunch time. Here we were met by an enthusiastic lot of boosters from Colfax, and after lunch an hour was consumed by Frederickson, Denison and Kane in explaining the highway proposition to an interested audience.

STOP AT PLACERVILLE.

A few minutes was spent in Folsom and the night stop Tuesday was made at Placerville, where an enthusiastic open-air meeting was opened at 8 P. M., with a crowd of approximately 1000 people deeply interested in everything that was said. This meeting ended the official part of the trip, and the Buick was started back to San Francisco at 8 A. M. Wednesday morning, arriving at its destination early in the afternoon.

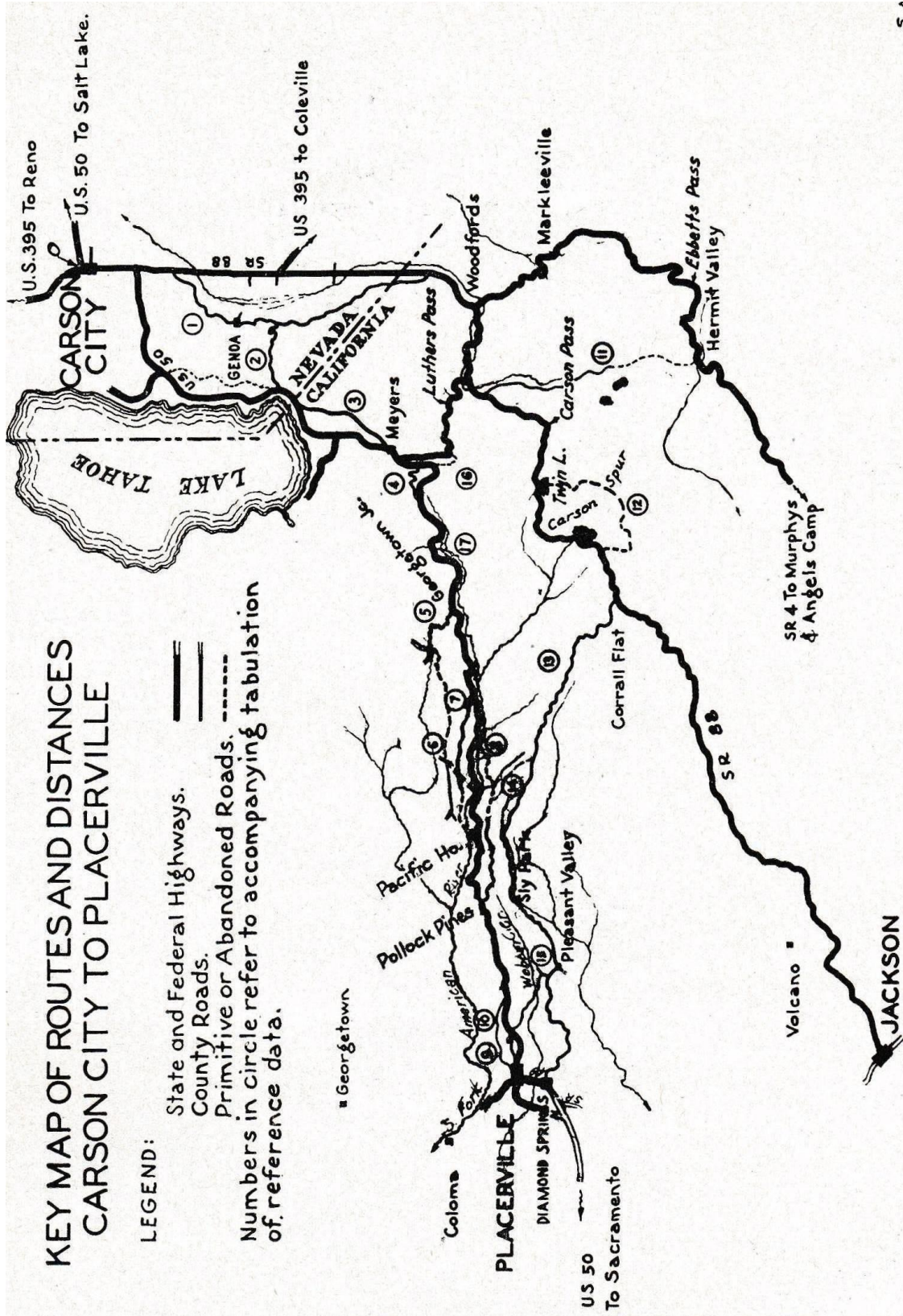
Road conditions are normal except between the Sacramento county line north of Stockton and Sacramento, where there are stretches of the highway in very bad shape.

The road between Folsom and Placerville is always bad, and at this time it is worse than usual. There is some work being done on it at present, and it is to be hoped that it will be improved somewhat before the touring season to Lake Tahoe opens.

Collection of Gary Kinst

Maps of US 40 and US 50

The two maps shown on pages 20 & 22 are from the California Highway and Public Works Centennial Edition magazine of September 1950. The accompanying reference data provides the history of many key locations on US 40 & US 50.

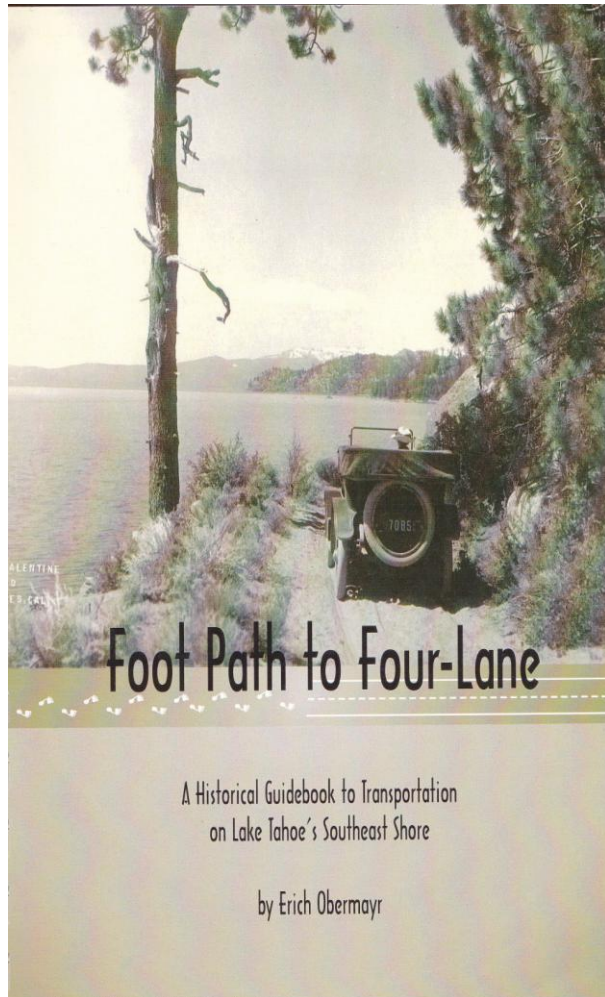


GENERAL NOTE: U. S. 40 follows in general the route of the Central Pacific Railroad and, except for highway realignments in the vicinity of Dutch Flat and Cisco and routes (1) and (7) noted below, is on the general route of both immigrant and stage roads. The latter known as the "Dutch Flat and Donner Lake Wagon Road" connected with the railroad as it was built eastward. (Newcastle, May, 1864; Colfax, 1865; Cisco, 1867.) Stage and freight business was practically diverted from the Placerville road by 1867.

- (1) County road on the immigrant trails to Donner Summit and Henness Pass. It was also the "Dutch Flat and Donner Lake" stage road and maintained as the state highway until the present highway was built through the Truckee Canyon in 1926. (Immigrants descended into Dog Valley but the road follows the ridge and the "Dog Valley Grade.")
- (2) "Henness Pass road, now a graveled road east of Weber Lake and unimproved west to Jackson's Meadow where it divides, one branch via Forest City and the other via the "San Juan Ridge" (3). Used by immigrants during the fifties and by stages and teams 1860-68. (Second in importance to the Placerville road.)
- (3) Graveled road via Bowman Lake, Graniteville (Eureka) and North Bloomfield to Nevada City. Road built by the Henness Pass Turnpike Co. in 1860.
- (4) Unimproved road on the route followed by immigrants coming through Henness Pass. Stages first ran to Camptonville, the terminus of the stage line from Marysville. (A road ran north from Forest City to Goodyears Bar and Downieville.)
- (5) County road from Forest City to North San Juan connecting with the stage road through French Corral and Smartsville. Route followed by immigrants and later by the stage road built by the Truckee Turnpike Co. in 1860. Both companies (See (3)), cooperated in building the road east of Jackson's Meadow.
- (6) An unimproved county road, built as the "Culbertson Grade" in 1864 to connect the railroad and the Dutch Flat road at Emigrant Gap with the Henness Pass road.
- (7) Immigrant route, Bear Valley to Johnson's Ranch (near Wheatland). Now unimproved roads or trails.
- (8) Route of "Placer County Emigrant Road" (1852). Now a county road as far as the summit.
- (9) County road to Wentworth Springs and from McKinneys to Miller Lakes. Route used to some extent by immigrants. (Surveyed by D. B. Young, 1856).

- (1) County road via Genoa. On the route followed by immigrants via the Carson Canyon (just west of Woodfords), and used by stages going via Lutbers or Daggetts Pass.
 - (2) "Kingsbury Grade" over Daggetts Pass, completed in the summer of 1860 and used by stages and freight teams until traffic was diverted to the present route via Spooner Summit ("Waltons Road" completed November, 1863, now U. S. 50).
 - (3) Stage road, via the Sierra House. A graveled road maintained as a state highway until 1931 when the present highway via Bijou was built. Stages also traveled via "Lake House" located on the lake shore east of the Upper Truckee River.
 - (4) "Meyers Grade," completed in the fall of 1860, crossing Echo Summit and used as the state highway until 1940 when the upper portion was rerouted via the Hawley Grade ("Henderson's") summit. (The reconstruction of the lower portion completed 1942.) The emigrant road over "Johnsons Pass" reached the Echo Summit in a distance of about three-fourths mile starting near the site of the Lake Valley Ranger Station.
 - (5) An unimproved county road which was a portion of the Georgetown-Virginia City stage road. It leaves U. S. 50 at the site of "Georgetown Junction" (chimney) and is somewhat below line of the immigrant trail which climbed to the top of Peavine Ridge.
 - (6) Existing primitive roads and stock trails which follow the route of the immigrant road down Peavine Ridge to Bartlett's Bridge (site near Pacific Ranger Station) and, after 1855 to Brockliss Bridge (at site of present bridge below Pacific House).
 - (7) Road built by the counties in 1858 from Brockliss Bridge to Cedar Rock, near Silver Fork, and used by stages and freight teams during 1859-61. Used by stages and westbound (light) freight wagons afterward. Route of the first transcontinental telegraph. Generally abandoned to the west of the Riverton-Ice House road and still unimproved road to the east of it.
 - (8) "Oglesby Grade," toll road used by stages and teams during 1861-64 leaving U. S. 50 about the 14-mile stone (west end of Pollock Pines) and joining it again east of Whiteball. Bridge and road at east end out are abandoned. Road still used at west end. Road, along the present general highway route, via Fresh Pond
- and Riverton (Moore's Station), was built about 1864 at which time Oglesby Road was being rebuilt on lower grade on opposite side of the river.
 - (9) Existing oiled county road via the "Hill Road" east of Placerville. It follows the general route of the immigrant road and was also used by stages.
 - (10) Existing oiled county road via Smith's Flat, the route of the stage road and of the state highway until 1932.
 - (11) County road from Hope Valley to Blue Lakes and a forest trail to Hermit Valley. On the route of the original "Big Trees" road which generally follows the existing oiled State Route No. 4. Stage road to Silver Mountain and Markleeville built in 1864 from Hermit Valley over the present Ebbetts Pass.
 - (12) Abandoned route of the immigrant road over the Carson Spur ("West Pass"). The present oiled State Route No. 88 follows the stage road (built 1863-64 as the "Amador and Nevada Wagon Road") via Silver Lake and around the end of the Carson Spur.
 - (13) Unimproved county road along the ridge, on the route followed by immigrants going to Placerville (Hangtown) or Diamond Springs via the Carson Pass.
 - (14) Unimproved roads and trails along the emigrant route of the fifties which left the present county road near Iron Mountain and followed down the divide between Plum and Sly Park Creeks, via "Cold Springs" (near Zumuwalts), to a junction with the Johnson's Pass road above Fresh Pond. Road branched near the "Junction House" to Pleasant Valley and Diamond Springs.
 - (15) Various county roads, graded and oiled, follow immigrant and stage roads used at various times, via Stonebreaker Grade to Sly Park and Pleasant Valley and then to Placerville (via Newtown), to Diamond Springs or to the Cosumnes River mines.
 - (16) Forest trail on the "Hawley Grade" built by El Dorado County in 1858 on the stage road via Luther's Pass. Used during 1859-60, when traffic was diverted to the Kingsbury Grade. See (2).
 - (17) "Slippery Ford Grade" on the stage road, and maintained as the state highway until 1931 when highway was rerouted between Strauberry and Sayles Flat.

Book Review



The cover illustration is a Putnam and Valentine photo from 1908 capturing a vintage touring car on the Lake Tahoe Wagon Road in the Logan Shoals area. Cave Rock lies around the bend to right. In 5 more years this would be the route of the Lincoln Highway. Photo below taken in 2005.



This is an amazing book which covers a great deal of history in 71 pages. It measures 8 1/2" x 7" and is ring bound. Containing maps of the early trails and roads it reveals the story of early transportation around the South Eastern shore of Lake Tahoe. The Lake Tahoe Wagon Road and the Lincoln Highway are shown in vintage photos as well as famous locations such as Cave Rock, Spooner Summit, Glenbrook and Stateline.

The book was funded in 2005 by the State of Nevada Department of Transportation and authored by Erich Obermayr. Current availability is unknown. Leon Schegg, a California Chapter member, was a contributor and may know where to find a copy. If you can locate a copy you won't be disappointed.

California's **GHOST HIGHWAYS**

"A Series by Joel Windmiller"

Ridge Route "The Road That United California"

Harrison Irving Scott

Images from the collection of Joel Windmiller



Part 3

Ridge Route "Alternate"



Opening Ceremonies October 29, 1933

By 1929 it became evident that a new high speed road was needed. An alignment was chosen through Piru Canyon. The new lower elevation "Ridge Route Alternate" highway would not only be 9.6 miles shorter it would be engineered to handle a much higher rate of speed. A three lane concept was employed in building the road in hopes that it would minimize the passing maneuver that constantly plagued the old highway. The greatest problem encountered during construction was the necessity to remove a small mountain. Avoiding the difficulty would compromise the high standards of alignment that were agreed upon at the beginning of the project. In a stretch of 400 feet, 230,000 cubic yards of rock were removed. This herculean effort created a huge pyramid that became a prominent landmark of the highway. Pyramid Lake severs the Ridge Alternate and derives its name from the once prominent landmark. Work began on the new highway in 1930 and by 1933 the 27 mile stretch between Castaic and Gorman opened to traffic.

Like the original Ridge Route that opened in October of 1915, the Ridge Alternate officially opened on October 29, 1933 as US Highway 99. The new three lane highway "Suicide Lane" extended from Castaic to Gorman. From Gorman north, the 1915 Grapevine Canyon alignment was still in use. Year later when the Interstate number system was implemented, it became State Highway 99. By 1936 a new six and one half mile, three-lane alignment replaced the old tortuous Grapevine Grade of the original Highway.

From the beginning, economic studies indicated that within two and a half years the new road would justify itself. Speculation was that anyone using the highway would save time because you could safely maintain a higher rate of speed. You would also use less gasoline because the new road was shorter and the grades were less severe. In other words, in two and a half years these savings in time and gasoline would equal the cost of building the highway. The new road, thought to be safer, was plagued by accidents from the very beginning. Just 10 days after the road opened, three truck drivers died in a fiery crash on Five Mile Grade, just above Castaic. On the old road, head-on collisions were attributed to the numerous blind curves. On the new highway it was excessive speed. Far too often motorists would rear-end a slow moving truck. This perception problem with speed would be similar to freeway conditions today when in a split second you suddenly realize the traffic in front of you is at a standstill and you frantically apply your brakes to avoid colliding with the cars in front of you.



Pavers Laying 3 lanes of Portland cement concrete Ridge Route Alternate

In 1933 there were no freeways; however, the Ridge Route Alternate was similar to one if you considered speed. The third "middle passing lane" was also contributing factor for accidents because it could be used by traffic traveling in either direction. It was soon referred to as the "suicide lane" Impatient drivers would abuse the purpose of the lane and use it as an additional path for travel in their direction. The third lane soon became a major concern when it came to the matter of safety.

The Ridge Alternate was good for some time but increasing truck traffic began testing the limits of the highway. Studies were initiated in 1940 to address the capacity problems; however, the Second World War prevented any improvements. In 1947 construction crews began to upgrade and widen the highway. By 1952 the Ridge Route Alternate had been converted into a four lane expressway. Almost overnight it became the most heavily traveled long distance roadway in the world. A cement barrier separated the north and southbound lane.

Grapevine Canyon:

When the Ridge Alternate was under construction west of the old highway, Leonard once again approached Mr. Chandler and successfully renegotiated his lease for a site on the new road. The new location was on the east side of the new highway a short distance up the grade from his original place. The new operation would host a grocery store, post office, motel, café and bar, garage, three wreckers, a six pump 24 hour Union Oil 76 service station and an ambulance. A Union Oil bulk distributing plant with two trucks was also located on the property. Several employees were on the payroll to run the operation, including a storekeeper, bookkeeper, chef, bartender, two waiters, two waitresses, three attendants, two mechanics and a cleaning person. Like all locations along the Ridge Route it was difficult to get and keep good employees due to the remote location. Because of this, room and board was part of the wage compensation for enduring the isolation.

Ridge Route Alternate

June 1932 California Highways and Public Works

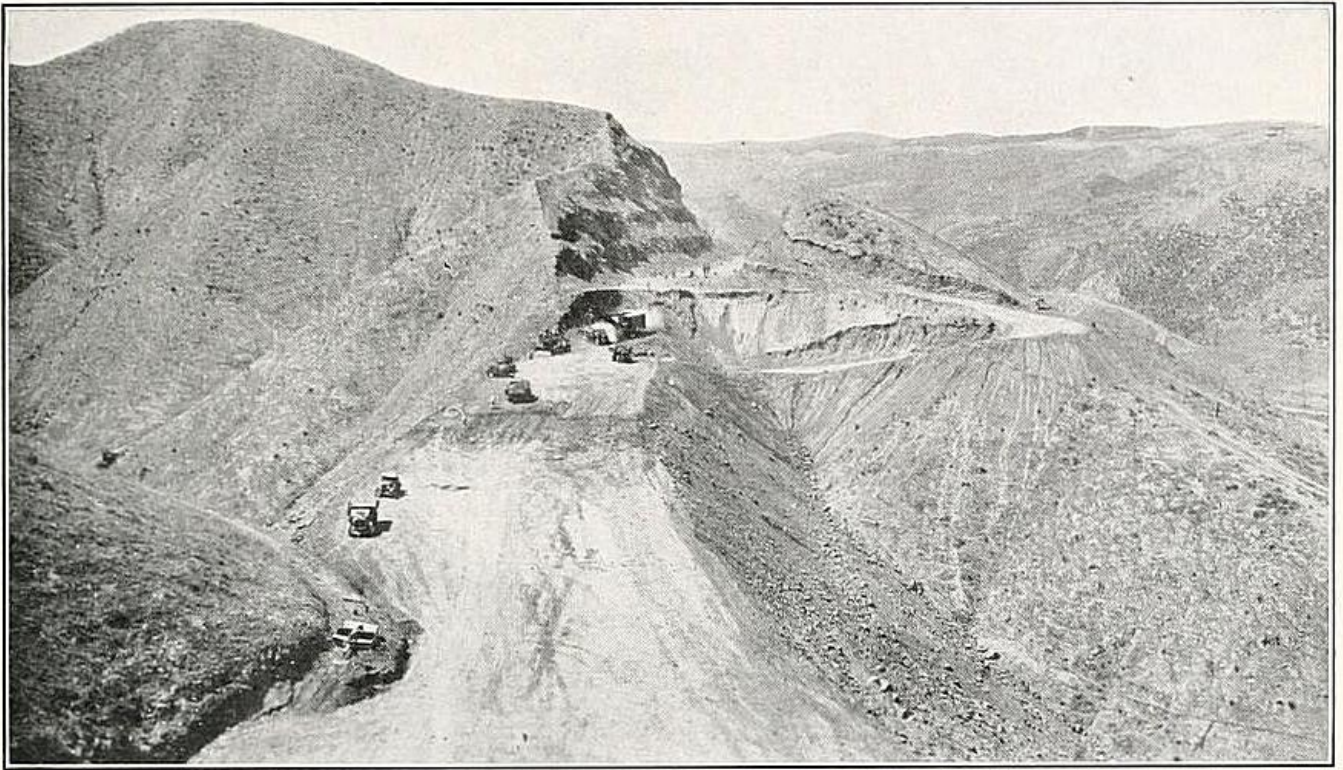
By shortening the distance between Los Angeles and Bakersfield by nearly ten miles, the Ridge Route relocation will save the motor traffic \$ 887,000 annually in straight operating cost as compared with the present route. It's easier grades and fewer curves reflect another lowered power of \$ 392,000, while the reduced driving time figures an additional \$110,000 expense economy for commercial vehicle. From an engineering standpoint it is a prodigious undertaking of which many interesting details are given.

BY C.V. Cortelyou District 10 Engineer

The Ridge route Alternate highway now under construction in Los Angeles County, on the route connecting the San Joaquin Valley, and Southern California, is one of the largest and most important projects ever undertaken by the State Highway Department.

In order to grasp the underlying reasons for this enterprise it is necessary to go back to the early days of the State Highway Department in 1912, when the problem was being considered of determining the most direct and practicable route for a main truck highway to connect the San Joaquin Valley and Southern California.

Two principal routes were under consideration at the time. One of these was the so called Tehachapi Route, extending easterly from Bakersfield through Tehachapi and Mojave, thence through Antelope Valley and Mint Canyon to Saugus. This route was substantially that followed by the Southern Pacific Railroad and involved comparatively light construction.



Fifty Miles Shorter

The other route known as the Ridge Route, followed the Tejon Pass and was a much more direct line, being about 50 miles shorter than the Tehachapi Route. A large portion of the Ridge Route was across extremely rough mountainous country which would involve correspondingly high construction cost. The problem at that time was to locate a highway if possible along the shorter route and at the time make the location so that the road could be built with the limited funds available for the purpose.

The Ridge Route, following the most readily traversable and least expensive location on this general route was surveyed and finally adopted and built. This highway was considered one of the most important links in the State highway system.

It was a great achievement in highway construction, principally on account of what was considered at that time the enormous amount of excavation involved. It conformed to the recognized standards of alignment and grade of that time. It was 50 miles shorter than the shortest alternate route. On its completion the run from Los Angeles to Bakersfield could easily be made by automobile in less time than was required by the fastest limited train.

The Original Ridge Route has been a wonderful road and has served its purpose well. It had saved its cost many times over in providing the fastest and most direct highway outlet from northern California and the San Joaquin Valley to Southern California.

It became increasingly evident that the original Ridge Route would have to be either reconstructed or replaced. With the increase in revenue derived from the gas tax it seemed probable that a more satisfactory though more costly route could be found.

Several reconnaissance surveys were made, following shorter route. The one which promised the most permanent location was one which extends in nearly a direct line from Castaic School at the southerly end of the present Ridge Route, to Gorman, near the Kern County line. This new line lies to the west of the present Ridge Route the entire distance. In 1929 a survey party started the actual survey and locations of the Ridge Route Alternate which is to replace the present Ridge Route. It follows a lower line through Violin Canyon and Piru Gorge.

Surveys demonstrated that the new road had so many advantages over the old one that all thought was given up of reconstructing the highway on the old route.

- The new route is 9.6 miles shorter than the original Ridge Route.
- It has only about 1/14 the total curvature of the old.
- The new route has a minimum radius of curvature of 1000 feet as compared to a minimum radius of 70 feet for the old route as originally constructed. This high standard of alignment will permit all curves to be safely driven at high rates of speed.
- The highest elevation attained on the new road will be 684 feet lower than the highest elevation on the old route.
- In 1929 when the study of the alternate route was being made, the average daily traffic over the Ridge Route was about 2100 autos, 200 trucks, and 620 tons for freight.

The culmination of more than four years of active construction endeavor was marked on October 29, 1933, by the opening of the Ridge Route Alternate new super highway, which is to supplant the already famous Ridge Route between Los Angeles and Bakersfield.

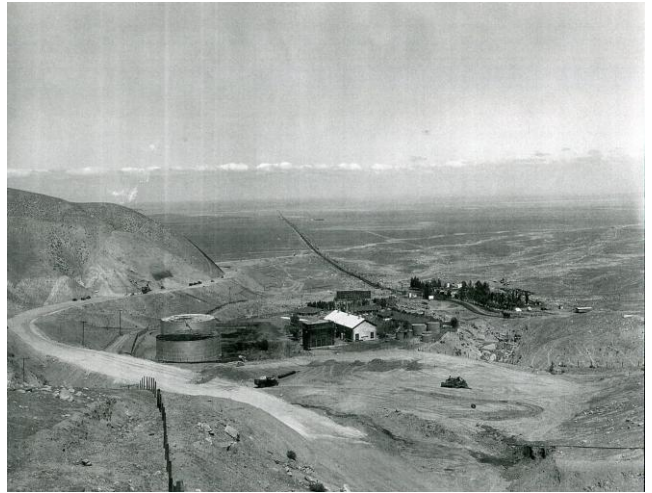
Thousands of interested spectators gathered at the "Channel Change" about midway between Gorman and Castaic, where with fitting ceremony, an appropriate spot where Piru Creek has been diverted from its natural course in a concrete-lined channel which was constructed to avoid building two bridges across this creek. Harry A Hopkins formally accepted this new highway on behalf of the state and Governor Rolph.

A multitude of cars were waiting at Castaic and at Gorman where the barriers were removed simultaneously at 10 am and two long caravans were formed, one coming from the north and the other from the south, meeting at the "Channel Change" the location selected for the dedication. The closing act of the official ceremony was the cutting of a barrier of blue and gold ribbons across the new three lane highway by Chairman Hopkins releasing to the public one of the greatest units of mountain highway in the country.

Ridge Route Alternate Gallery



1933 Grapevine Grade southern end of San Joaquin Valley



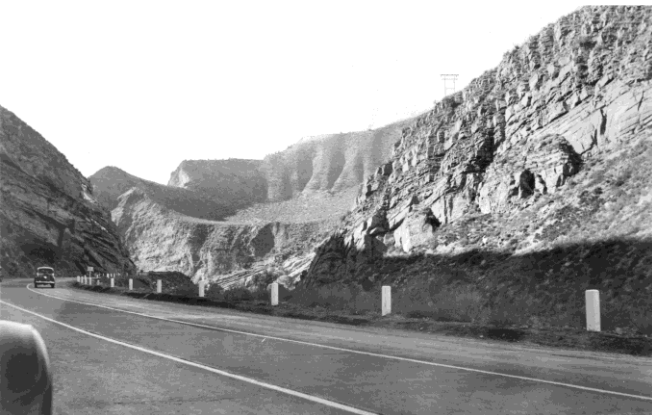
1932 site of Grapevine Café and Garage



SB Grapevine Canyon just north of Lebec



SB Grapevine Canyon JNO Grapevine Creek Bridge



Piru Gorge just south of Pyramid Cut



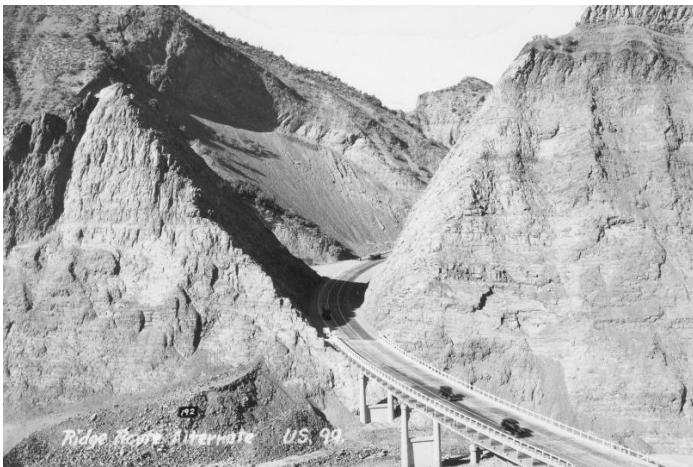
SB US 99 entering Gorman



SB 1933 Piru Creek Bridge & Pyramid Rock



Today Looking North Pyramid Rock, Cut and Dam



Looking North Pyramid Rock, Cut & Piru Creek Bridges



Piru Gorge just south of Pyramid rock

MARK YOUR 2015 CALENDAR

Saturday **JULY 11, 2015**
Lunch 12:00 Noon

State Chapter Meeting
1:00 pm



Pre-meeting lunch at Castle Rock Restaurant
1848 Portola Ave
Livermore 94551
(925) 456 7100



July, 2015 Chapter meeting Duarte Garage
Portola Ave. & No. L Street
Livermore 94551

NOTE: The California Chapter will be joining the folks from the Livermore Heritage Guild in the Centennial Celebration of the opening of the Duarte Garage

Saturday **SEPTEMBER 12, 2015**
9:00 am Sharp
\$20/person

Car Cruise
1913/1927 Central Valley route
Sacramento to San Francisco
via Altamont Pass

NOTE: Tour will begin at the California Auto Museum parking lot 2200 Front Street Sacramento

Saturday **OCTOBER 05, 2015**
12:00 Noon

State Chapter Meeting
Stockton **

Saturday **OCTOBER 24, 2015**

Sports Leisure Travel Bus Tour
Sacramento to Reno
via Donner Pass

NOTE: Announcement of Chapter Meeting locations are mailed via postcard to all current members approximately 2 weeks prior to the actual date. They are also posted on the California Chapter web site. Contact Joel Windmiller regarding mailing of postcards.

NOTE: Chapter Meeting Locations marked ** are tentative

NOTE: For information on Car Cruise and Sports Leisure Bus Tour contact Paul Gilger, paulgilger@att.net or Joel Windmiller, joelwindmiller@att.net

MARK YOUR 2016 CALENDAR

Saturday **JANUARY 09, 2016**

12:00 Noon

State Chapter Meeting

Ranch Cordova**

Saturday **APRIL 02, 2016**

12:00 Noon

State Chapter Meeting

JUNE, 2016

2016 Annual LHA Conference

(Location / Date TBA)

Saturday **JULY 09, 2016**

12:00 Noon

State Chapter Meeting

Saturday **OCTOBER 01, 2016**

12:00 Noon

State Chapter Meeting

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NOTE: Chapter Meeting Locations marked ** are tentative



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