



# PRESERVATION MATTERS

NEWSLETTER OF THE CALIFORNIA OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

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## Cultural Pursuits: Heritage Tourism and its Place on the Historic Preservation Landscape

Chances are that if you work for a government agency, belong to a preservation or cultural organization, or search the internet for ideas for your next vacation, you’ve encountered the term “heritage tourism.” So what exactly is heritage tourism? Who is engaging in it, how are they engaging in it, and what is its place and purpose with regard to historic preservation?

From an official standpoint, Section 7 of Presidential Executive Order 13287—“Preserve America”—defines heritage tourism as “the business and practice of attracting and accommodating visitors to a place or area based especially on the unique or special aspects of that locale’s history, landscape (including trail systems), and culture.” The National Trust for Historic Preservation adopts the term “cultural heritage tourism,” and defines it as “traveling to experience the places and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present. It includes historic, cultural, and natural resources.” From the National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers comes an understanding of heritage tourism as a focus “on the story of people and places told through interpretation of cultural landscapes and preservation or restoration of historic structures.”

These definitions of heritage tourism highlight a growing economic and cultural trend, one

that is addressed in *Sustainable Preservation: California’s Statewide Historic Preservation Plan, 2013-2017* (State Plan). As noted in the State Plan, “various studies over the past few decades have shown a growing interest in travelers’ desire to experience artistic, cultural, and historic activities, and indicate

that heritage or cultural travelers spend significantly more money per trip, resulting in a greater investment in the communities they visit versus other types of travelers.” Goals Three and Four of the State Plan call for communicating and improving the ways in which historic and cultural resources contribute to the sustainability of communities, and for cultivating a sense of stewardship for those

resources. The development and promotion of heritage tourism is one of the objectives identified as helping to achieve these goals. Spending by heritage tourists “provides direct support to cultural and heritage venues and

(Continued on page 2)



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Inside This Issue	Page
Preserving Heritage is a Main Street Affair	3
On the Path of History	6
High-Tech Heritage	8
Putting Historic Preservation on the Map	10
Heritage Tourism in the Mojave	13
Challenges of Heritage Tourism	16
A Landmark Effort	20

(Continued from page 1)



increases public and private support for preservation by demonstrating the economic value of historical resources to communities.” And it is believed that once Californians “have been informed about the value of historical and cultural resources and the benefits they provide to the livability and sustainability of communities, people will care more about these resources and acquire a sense of responsibility, of stewardship, for them.”

For all of its rewards, however, heritage tourism also presents some challenges. While communities are willing to support efforts to strengthen their cultural identity and legacy, they may be less willing to market that heritage to tourists whose increasing presence in the community may alter the very nature of the cultural environment they are seeking. Striking a balance between promotion and preservation will be critical to success in such cases. The State Plan notes that for heritage tourism to succeed, “historic preservation professionals and those in the tourism industry must build relationships and learn to communicate effectively, so that each can learn and benefit from the other’s strengths and knowledge. Heritage tourism also requires regular and effective communication between those agencies and organizations operating on a statewide basis and those that are more local and regional in their focus.”

The articles in this issue of *Preservation Matters* provide a look at some of the ways in which individuals, communities, and organizations in California perceive and engage in the practice and concept of heritage tourism. From Monterey, Sacramento, and the California Main Street Alliance, we learn of some of the innovative ways that California communities are connecting people to each locale’s unique cultural heritage. Articles about the Arroyo Seco National Scenic Byway and the Old Spanish National Historic Trail remind us that connections with the past, both tangible and intangible, can be found beyond urban confines. San Francisco Heritage shares a perspective on the challenges of heritage tourism, and discusses why not all communities embrace the concept. Our final article takes a personal look at heritage tourism as experienced by one man and his family. Because, ultimately, the success or failure of heritage tourism

is perhaps determined not so much by how well communities promote and utilize it. Rather, its effectiveness may be best measured by the degree to which it engages individual citizens in a relationship with the past—very often their own past—and nurtures an appreciation for the preservation of that past.



Historic Filipinotown Festival  
(©Balita.com)

We hope you find all of the articles in this issue engaging and thought-provoking. We welcome your comments: what are your thoughts regarding heritage tourism and its role in the cause of historic preservation?

— Diane Barclay, Editor  
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To view or download a copy of the Statewide Historic Preservation Plan, visit [www.ohp.parks.ca.gov/stateplan](http://www.ohp.parks.ca.gov/stateplan).

California Main Street is a community-based program that has significantly helped cities and neighborhoods with economic and cultural revitalization. As highlighted in the article below, the Main Street program also dovetails effectively with communities' heritage tourism efforts.

## Preserving Heritage is a Main Street Affair

By Laura Cole-Rowe, Executive Director, California Main Street Alliance

A research study by the Office of Travel and Tourism Industries, U.S. Department of Commerce, in 2009 shows that 78 percent of all U.S. leisure travelers participate in cultural and/or heritage



Main Street Martinez (©California Main Street Alliance)

activities while traveling, and spend an average of \$994 per trip. These travelers also go to food and wine festivals, visit farmers' markets, and enjoy local dining. They seek travel experiences where the "destination, its buildings and surroundings have retained their historic character."

Almost every downtown or business district in the California Main Street Program has history that attracts visitors and locals to their area to connect with the past. Some programs capitalize on this by holding events that reflect their past; others do tours, while still others promote their local museums as places

to learn more about the area.

California Main Street Alliance provides technical assistance to 27 designated programs to help them in their heritage

tourism endeavors by providing resources and guidance for these types of experiences and events, including the ability to post their events on the Alliance website. Highlighted below are some examples of the ways in which Main Street communities help tourists connect with local history and culture.

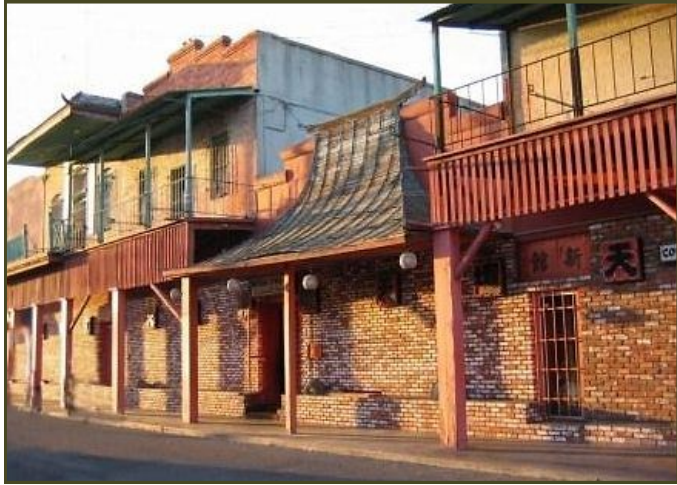
In Hanford, California, China Alley (named to the National Trust for Historic Preservation's 2011 list of America's Most Endangered Historic Places) traces its roots to 1877, when the Central Pacific railroad was extended into the area and the new town of Hanford was formed. Numerous Chinese came to the

(Continued on page 4)

*"78 percent of all U.S. leisure travelers participate in cultural and/or heritage activities while traveling."*

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area to help build the railroads and to farm. The alley grew to include homes, restaurants, grocery stores, laundries, herb shops, a Chinese school and a Taoist Temple. Buildings lining the alley, made from bricks formed and fired on site, are visually unaltered and remain largely as they did more than 100 years ago.



China Alley, Hanford, CA (©California Main Street Alliance)

China Alley houses the Taoist Temple (on the National Register of Historic Places) and each year the Taoist Temple Preservation Society presents several events that are free and open to the public, and highlight the area's cultural heritage. Events include Chinese New Year, a street fair, and the annual Moon Festival (in its 35th year), complete with Chinese dancers, food and crafts, and tours of the Taoist Temple and Museum, which brings visitors from throughout the country. The opening reception of the California Main Street 2014 Annual Conference was held at China Alley, with many of the attendees receiving a personal tour of the Taoist Museum.

The town of Grass Valley's Downtown Association centers many of its events on their local heritage of gold mining and the Cornish community. Business owners dress in costume for Gold Rush Days—a two-day event, free to the public, that includes living history

activities such as gold panning, blacksmith and hand weaving demonstrations, and a medicine show, presentations by local history writers, a "Succession Days" reenactment, and a "hoe-down." Western genre actors and filmmakers such as Clint Walker (Cheyenne), Johnny Crawford (The Rifleman) and Peter Sherayko (Tombstone, Deadwood) hold reenactments of scenes from Western films and television.

The annual Cornish Christmas Celebration, held downtown on weekends in December, started in 1967 as a way to preserve Grass Valley's Cornish heritage and holiday traditions. The Cornish Carol Choir performs traditional homeland Christmas carols on the steps of the historic Union Building. What is unique about this long-standing Cornish tradition is that some choir members are descendants of original Grass Valley Cornish Miners!



Cornish Christmas (©Downtowngrassvalley.com)

*(Continued on page 5)*

(Continued from page 4)

Many California Main Street communities have self-guided historic walking tour brochures available in their offices. These brochures give residents and visitors a brief historic background of buildings in the community as well as a route to see them. Many locals are surprised and delighted as they learn what used to be housed in those familiar buildings.

Some of these guides are researched and developed by Main Street staff; others are produced by the local historical society. The Downtown Encinitas Main Street Association has taken this a step further by having a downloadable audio tour (MP3 format) of their historic sites that can be played on a smartphone while seeing the sites ([www.encinitas101.com/encinitas/walking-tour/walking-tour-map/](http://www.encinitas101.com/encinitas/walking-tour/walking-tour-map/)).

Ghost “tourism” is a fairly new phenomenon that has become popular due to the many television shows that explore ghosts and paranormal activity. These tours are popular in places that have been centers of historic change—where architecture connects us to the past and, perhaps, to the macabre. The numbers of ghost tours and people who take them have grown substantially in the last few years. Some travelers actually design entire trips and/or vacations around ghost tours!

Benicia Main Street holds ghost tours twice a month. Paranormal investigator Devin Sisk combines Benicia’s history of the waterfront, railroad and historic building with K-2 meters to detect



Devin Sisk, center, leads a ghost walk tour in Benicia (Photo permission: Aaron Rosenblatt/Daily Republic, Fairfield/©2013 Daily Republic/All Rights Reserved)

spiritual energy and dousing rods to communicate with the spirits. The tour begins at the Benicia Main Street office (which is housed in the historic train depot and has spirits!) and wanders its way through downtown Benicia to former brothels, shops, and the waterfront.

Whatever type of heritage tourism California Main Street communities generate, it translates into economic benefit for the city, including hotel stays, dining, and retail sales, which helps boost their local economy, and can help support the preservation of a community’s cultural and historical heritage.



*Laura Cole-Rowe, CMSM, currently serves as the executive director of the California Main Street Alliance ([www.camainstreet.org](http://www.camainstreet.org)). She has worked as an executive director and a consultant for cities and downtown associations since 1988.*

Visit the OHP website to learn more about the California Main Street Program:  
[www.ohp.parks.ca.gov/mainstreet](http://www.ohp.parks.ca.gov/mainstreet)

Sometimes, connecting people to history and inspiring an appreciation for preservation can be challenging in a world of fast-paced modernity. However, as the City of Monterey demonstrates, build a path to local heritage, and the people will follow.



(Courtesy City of Monterey)

## On the Path of History: Heritage Tourism in Monterey

By Chip Rerig, Planning Department, City of Monterey

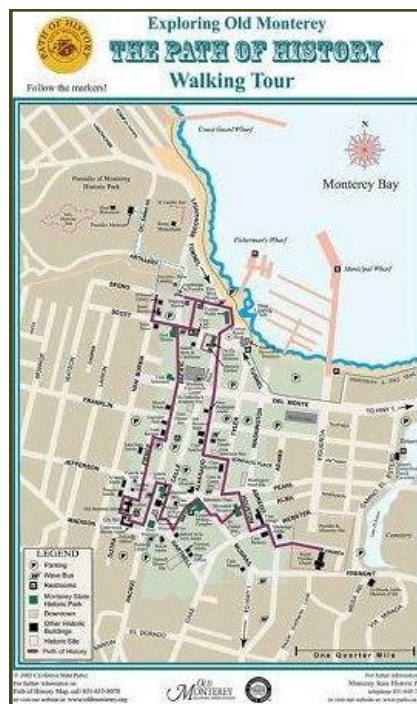
It is a warm summer day in Monterey; the morning fog is starting to burn off over Fisherman’s Wharf. Tourists are beginning to flood the adjoining parking lots: day-trippers from Salinas, Hollister and the Bay Area; weekenders from Fresno and the Central Valley; and foreign and American visitors making the coastal pilgrimage along Highway One between Los Angeles and San Francisco. Many will venture onto the Wharf for a taste of clam chowder or local calamari before making the short trek to the world-famous Monterey Bay Aquarium. Others will rent kayaks for a half-day of paddling among the otters and harbor seals, while still others will pedal a surrey or beach cruiser along the recreation trail that hugs nearly the entire length of the water’s edge from Pebble Beach to Marina.

It may seem likely, therefore, that with all Monterey offers along its salty shore, the historic resources and cultural heritage just a few blocks inland would be overlooked by the multitude of tourists, or considered merely the

bastion of locals and armchair historians. But in fact, that tangible legacy of historic adobes and other buildings (many now part of Monterey State Historic Park) is more than just a passing fancy or convenient sidebar for this true tourist destination. Indeed it’s a viable part of the region’s draw, thanks in no small part to the dedicated efforts of local citizens, past and present, to preserve and promote Monterey’s heritage.

Central to Monterey’s heritage tourism offerings is the Path of History.

Conceived and initiated in 1931 by legendary figure, and first president of the Monterey History and Art Association, Colonel Roger S. Fitch, the Path of History originally encompassed a mere 11 metal markers and a distinctive orange line on the City’s streets



*“That tangible legacy of historic adobes and other buildings is more than just a convenient sidebar for this true tourist destination.”*

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

indicating buildings and sites of historical importance: the Custom House, where in 1846 Commodore John Drake Sloat first raised the flag of the United States, declaring California part of the Union; the first State Theater in California; the Fremont, Serrano, Alvarado, Soberanes, and dozens of other adobes, each significant in the development of early Monterey; and of course Colton Hall, where the Constitutional Convention (that ended in October of 1849 with the signing of the California Constitution) officially made California the 31st state to join the United States.

Today, the original 11 markers have increased to more than 50, and embedded in the sidewalks in place of the original orange line are multi-lingual circles—in Japanese, Chinese, French, Spanish, and other languages—guiding tourists along the Path that now includes sites such as the Robert Louis Stevenson House, where the acclaimed author lived for a time; the 1847 Sherman Quarters, home to the general who would find eternal fame less than 20 years later during the Civil War; and many other sites that have all played a part in making Monterey what it is today. Thousands of visitors each year follow the Path of History and consistently respond positively about the experience.

Of course there are myriad other stories, each like a small stream joining together to form the giant river that is Monterey's past and present. There was the birth of Cannery Row in the early 20th century and the earning of the moniker "Sardine Capital of the World." In the 1940s, the enduring works of John Steinbeck brought the world's attention to this slice of the California coast; and much earlier, there were Native American



Custom House (© California State Parks)

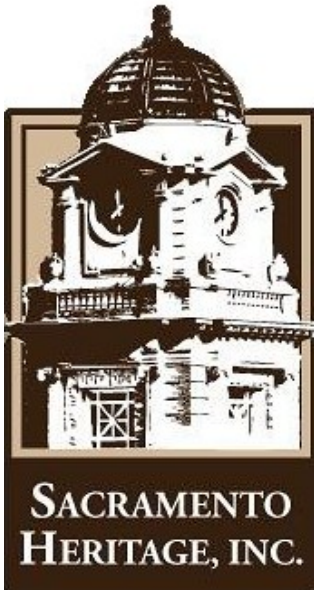
communities, Spanish and Mexican conquests, and the establishment of small forts and garrisons that would evolve into the Presidio of Monterey/ Defense Language Institute and Fort Ord. This history also is actively shared with visitors. One such effort was a collaborative project between the City of Monterey, the Cannery Row Business Association, the Monterey Bay Aquarium, and the Monterey History and Art Association that resulted in a series of interpretive panels along Cannery Row. The City of Monterey also works with partner agencies such as the Old Monterey Business Association, Fisherman's Wharf Association, and the Monterey County Visitors and Convention Bureau (housed in the historic First French Consulate adobe). For the City and its partners, the goal is to preserve Monterey's heritage while making it visible and captivating to visitors from around the globe.



*Chip Rerig, is Chief of Planning, Engineering, and Environmental Compliance for the Department of Plans and Public Works, [City of Monterey](http://www.cityofmonterey.org).*

For more information about the Path of History or to contact the City of Monterey and its preservation partners, visit the city's Historic Monterey website: [www.historicmonterey.org](http://www.historicmonterey.org), and the Monterey State Historic Park site: [www.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=25487](http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=25487)

Like the City of Monterey, Sacramento also has found ways to put people on the trail to the city's past, in this case, through an innovative use of modern technology.



## High-Tech Heritage Tourism: Sacramento Heritage's Walking Tour App

By William Burg, Historian, Registration and Environmental Compliance Unit, Office of Historic Preservation

One of the most effective ways to inform people about the historic places around them is a walking tour. Whether they are guided by a docent or self-guided via a brochure or signage in the neighborhood, walking tours provide the story behind the historic legacy of a specific locality, introducing visitors to the architecture, social history, or individuals associated with that past. However, walking tours also have limitations. Guided tours require a guide, scheduling, and a means of connecting those who want to take a tour with the guide. Printed tours require continuous funding to print more tours and locations willing to distribute the tours, and are often overlooked or forgotten by visitors or tourists.

Smartphone apps provide an alternative way to create and distribute walking tours that are portable, mobile, and immediately accessible to the public. Their primary limitation is the high cost of creating a custom mobile phone app, and portability across mobile phone platforms. Old Sacramento, a National Historic Landmark historic district, has a walking tour app available for iPhone, but currently there is no Android version of the tour, and the app is not extendable to tours in other parts of the

city. In response to such challenges, a growing number of cities throughout the United States, from Charleston, South Carolina, to Sparks, Nevada, are using a multi-platform app builder called TourBuddy to create local history walking tour apps. Currently, there is only one TourBuddy app for California, an audio tour of tourist attractions in the city of San Francisco. However, in Sacramento a nonprofit called Sacramento Heritage, Inc. is creating a series of local history and architecture tours using TourBuddy,



Sacramento's historic City Hall (©W. Burg)

set to launch in August 2014. These tours are geolocated using Google Maps to allow multiple tours throughout a city.

*(Continued on page 9)*



(Continued from page 8)

Individual sites can include modern photos, historic images, links to external sites, and audio recordings for narration or musical accompaniment.

Sacramento Heritage, Inc. is a nonprofit affiliated with the city of Sacramento, established in the mid-1970s to promote heritage tourism and preservation of local historic sites. Their past projects included printed tour brochures with walking tours of Sacramento's historic neighborhoods, and more recently a website featuring downloadable PDFs of walking tours that could be printed, or viewed on a laptop or mobile tablet. The TourBuddy app's difference is its portability, convenience, and platform independence.

The August 2014 launch will include four tours: a tour of municipal buildings along I Street from City Hall to the Southern Pacific Passenger Depot, a tour of Sacramento's downtown business district along J and K Streets, a tour around Capitol Park including the State Capitol and historic buildings around the park's perimeter, and a new Midtown Streetcar Tour along J Street in Sacramento's popular Midtown neighborhood. The tours combine contemporary photos of buildings with historic images provided by the Center for Sacramento History, Sacramento's city/county archives and museum collections center. More tours will be added in subsequent versions of



the app, including planned tours of Sacramento's downtown jazz venues and local jazz history, Capitol Mall and the Japantown neighborhood that preceded the Mall, and an LGBT themed tour of the portion of Midtown known as "Lavender Heights."

Local history nonprofits and California communities with an interest in heritage tourism, but limited resources, can reach a larger audience with a smaller investment using tools like TourBuddy to create local history tours. Several tours can

cover the same geographic area, documenting a community's heritage from different contexts, including architectural, political, social, ethnic, or women's history, or even combining these

elements to show the progress of California's heritage from multiple perspectives. The power of a smartphone app puts all of these stories in the palm of the user's hand, allowing modern-day tourists to experience a very personal tour of the past.



*William Burg is a historian in the Office of Historic Preservation, serves as president of the [Sacramento Old City Association](#), and has authored several books about Sacramento history.*



"Lavender Heights" neighborhood in Midtown Sacramento (© Amadscientist/Wikimedia)

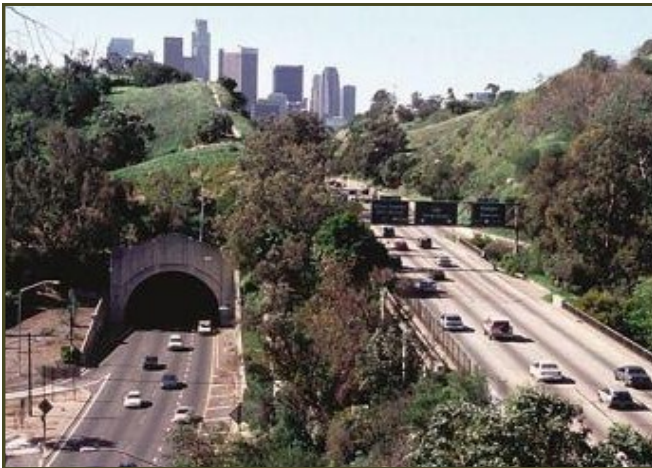
For additional information about the walking tour app, and other Sacramento Heritage Inc. activities, visit the organization's website: [www.sacramentoheritage.org/](http://www.sacramentoheritage.org/)

From urban pathways to history, to trails of another sort: as these next two articles illustrate, it is often the trail itself that is the destination, and the springboard for heritage experiences and the preservation of valued resources.

## Putting Historic Preservation on the Map: Arroyo Seco Byway's Heritage Tourism Initiative

By Nicole Possert, Principal, The Arroyo Guild

The Arroyo Seco National Scenic Byway is gaining new recognition as a heritage tourism destination, thanks in large part to a strong regional ethos of preserving local history and historical resources.



Arroyo Seco Byway (© Kathleen Bullard)

The Byway is considered the first modern freeway built in the West. Opened in 1940 as the Arroyo Seco Parkway, the route linked Los Angeles to Pasadena, and was noted for its innovative engineering and safety features.

In 2002, the Federal Highway Administration designated Arroyo Seco as a National Scenic Byway, the only such designation in all of southern California. The National Scenic Byway status recognizes the historic qualities of the Arroyo Seco Parkway and the surrounding linear corridor.

The layered history of the Arroyo Seco region is blessed with a densely rich and diverse narrative of California's cultural and natural history, including the:

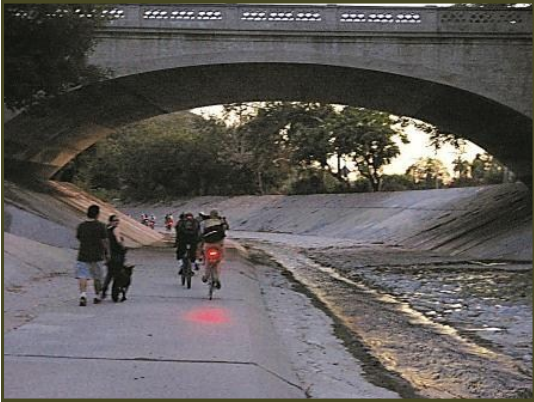
- Diverse layers of social, ethnic and cultural history that have shaped and reshaped this region of California going all the way back to the original inhabitants (Gabrielino/Tongva);
- Natural history and geography of the Arroyo Seco river valley and the channelization of the watercourse;
- Founding of the city of Los Angeles at the confluence of the Arroyo Seco River and Los Angeles River;
- Architectural innovations from the Victorian era to Mid-Century Modern, and significant contributions to the national Arts & Crafts Movement; and
- Layers of transportation history including the original Santa Fe transcontinental railroad, the Red Car, national Route 66, and the adaptive re-use of the Santa Fe right-of-way for the Metro Gold Line light rail.

The challenge was to find a way to promote all of these diverse assets located in the area between two tourist destinations (Old Pasadena and downtown Los Angeles) to bolster the region's economic development as a regional and heritage destination. To meet this challenge, a professional

*(Continued on page 11)*

(Continued from page 10)

project team, led by The Arroyo Guild, was selected to create the tourism plan



Touring along the Byway (© Martha Benedict)

for the Byway called “Interpreting the Arroyo Seco.” The team included, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Engaging Places LLC, The Community Land Use and Economics Group, Future Studio, Decision Support Partners, Writebrand Studio, Division 7, and Treehouse Design Partnership. The project was funded and managed in collaboration with the Mountain Recreation Conservation Authority, Caltrans, and over twenty-five local partners who provided critical matching funds and technical assistance.

The Plan was completed in 2012 by working closely with a wide array of organizations, business districts, tourist destinations, museums, nature centers, and two tourism agencies. Building upon existing work happening throughout the corridor by project partners, the team layered in, for the first time, a formal planning process to bring focus and support to the goal of regional heritage tourism. Valuable and substantial assistance was received from local preservation partners such as Highland Park Heritage Trust, Pasadena Heritage,

South Pasadena Preservation Foundation, Gamble House, and Heritage Square Museum, to name just a few. The Arroyo Seco Byway team undertook six key steps that built upon each other to create an overall integrated tourism model:

1. An inventory and database of tourism assets—destinations, historic sites, museums, businesses, restaurants, etc. that identified the dense abundance of historic resources and assets with which to work;
2. Market research including the first assessment of who was actually visiting the region and why, as well as a report on the tourism market, audiences and potential for attracting more visitors;
3. Development of an Interpretive Plan and the underlying heritage themes that could unite the region;
4. Creation of a Brand Platform with a logo, tagline and personality;
5. Development of a Marketing Plan that would be synergistic with the interpretive goals and brand; and,
6. A concept for regional design guidelines for wayfinding signage that would help in making the region more recognizable and unified to a heritage tourist.

Aligning authenticity of place with an audience to create an “aha!” experience was, and

*“Aligning authenticity of place with an audience to create an ‘aha!’ experience was, and continues to be, the goal of the heritage tourism initiative.”*



Gamble House, Pasadena, is an iconic example of Craftsman architecture (© Alex Vertikoff/Gamble House)

(Continued on page 12)

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To view a copy of the Initiative, "Interpreting the Arroyo Seco Parkway," visit the Caltrans District 7 Projects webpage and scroll to the bottom of the page:

[www.dot.ca.gov/dist07/travel/projects/details.php?id=6](http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist07/travel/projects/details.php?id=6)

continues to be, the goal of the heritage tourism initiative. To add a sense of fun and celebrate the diversity of experiences, history, and culture associated with the Byway corridor, a marketing tag line was developed: "Discovery Runs Deep." It debuted on a highly successful printed marketing piece that displayed the entire Arroyo Seco Byway region on one simple map. The map's introduction further emphasized the idea of discovery and heritage, stating in part, "Give the Arroyo Seco National Scenic Byway a day, and discover a Los Angeles you never knew. Whether you travel by car, bus, train, bike, or on foot, this is the perfect place to experience the eras, influences, and interests that have shaped our local history." The map included three ideal day trips based on a visitor's chosen mode of transportation.

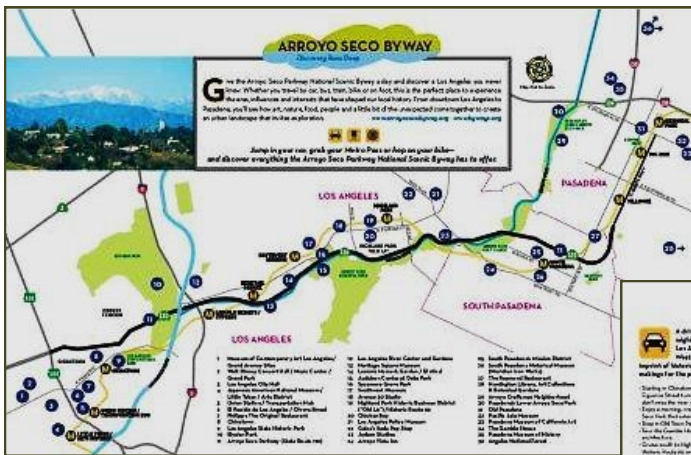
Twenty thousand maps were distributed to the public whose response was

overwhelmingly enthusiastic, with requests for additional copies. Equally positive was the response and participation of communities along the Byway corridor who recognized the opportunity to promote their local history and resources to this new source of tourists.

Funding challenges have temporarily slowed down efforts to implement further priorities of the interpretation and marketing plans, including additional printings of the map. Challenges aside, however, the Arroyo Seco Byway Heritage Tourism Initiative has successfully set the course by which Byway users can connect with the cultural, historical, and natural resources present along the Byway's path. This multi-year planning effort now serves as a template for how to think about, plan, and implement regional tourism efforts anchored in history and culture.



Nicole Possert is Principal, The Arroyo Guild ([aguild@pacbell.net](mailto:aguild@pacbell.net)), which led the Arroyo Seco Byway tourism project. The Arroyo Guild is an award-winning firm serving clients with a historic preservation, cultural, and environmental focus.



(© America's Byways/Arroyo Seco Byway)



## Heritage Tourism in the Mojave: The Old Spanish Trail

By Jack Prichett, President, Tecopa Chapter of the Old Spanish Trail Association

The Old Spanish Trail was a long, arduous trade route plied by mule caravans between 1829 and 1848. Herds of as

many as 2,000 horses and mules were moved along the trail, and historic figures such as Colonel John C. Frémont and Kit Carson also traveled its path. Linking Santa Fe, New Mexico, to Los Angeles, the Old Spanish Trail provided one of the first entryways to southern California from the desert southwest.



(Courtesy Jack Prichett/OSTA)

From Santa Fe, the trail followed a roundabout course through southern Colorado and Utah, then down through Nevada and into California. The first caravan, led in 1829 by Antonio Armijo, followed a more direct route, but suffered tremendous hardships in crossing the Grand Canyon. Later parties avoided the Canyon by following the Northern and Main branches, which also offered more plentiful water and grass for the animals. In California, the trail led across the Mojave Desert proceeding

from one desert spring to the next. From Barstow to Rancho Cucamonga, the

Interstate 15 freeway roughly follows the path of the Old Spanish Trail. From the foot of Cajon Pass, the trail wound through today's Pomona, El Monte, and on to Mission San Gabriel. The last leg went from the Mission to Los Angeles' Central Plaza.

Less famous than the El Camino Real, the Old Spanish Trail is nonetheless winning recognition as a historic trade route and a contemporary boon to heritage tourism in California's Mojave Desert. In 2002 Congress designated the Old Spanish National Historic Trail (OSNHT) as the 23rd of more than 30 National scenic and historic trails. The non-profit Old Spanish Trail Association (OSTA) provides trail maps, history, and other information through their website, and coordinates a number of trail-related activities ([www.oldspanishtrail.org](http://www.oldspanishtrail.org)). Barstow, California—a fuel and food stop for millions of motorists traveling between Los Angeles and Las Vegas—is using the OSNHT to boost its tourism appeal. Last fall, the city, together with the OSTA and the National Park Service, sponsored Old Spanish Trail Day, attracting more than a thousand participants. This year's event

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*“Tourists setting foot on the trail can vicariously experience the awesome challenge faced by 19th century travelers traversing the desert.”*

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is expected to be even bigger, according to OSTA organizer Viola Basulto. Barstow now plans to build Old Spanish Trail interpretive displays in the city's Desert Discovery Center.

In the desert town of Shoshone, California, Susan Sorrells, descendant of the town's founder and owner of the Shoshone Museum, includes an Old



Shoshone Museum (© Craig Deutsche)

Spanish Trail exhibit among the museum's offerings. Cynthia Kienitz, owner of Cynthia's Lodgings in the town of Tecopa, notes that "the Old Spanish Trail is as much a part of our local environment as the Amargosa Wild and Scenic River canyon, the old mines, or the Dumont Dunes Off-road

Vehicle Recreational Area. It's part of what fascinates both European and American visitors who visit Tecopa." Moreover, Kienitz says, tourists setting foot on the trail's rocky path can vicariously experience the awesome challenge faced by 19th century travelers traversing the desert. "They feel the heat and sense the vastness confronted by Mexican and Anglo traders traveling on foot and mule-back."

Amazingly, in a few California locations the single-track mule trace remains intact some 170 years after its last use. OSTA's Tecopa Chapter, working in the remote desert east of Tecopa, has recorded some seven miles

of trace. Other portions of the Old Spanish Trail have been recorded in the Silurian Valley, south of Tecopa. These remarkable vestiges of the trail are fragile, and to protect them their location is not made public. However, tourists are able to closely parallel the trail route when traveling on the Old Spanish Trail Highway from the Nevada state line to Tecopa. A Bureau of Land Management (BLM) roadside kiosk provides information, and the BLM is developing a self-guided auto tour that would allow motorists in California to hear trail descriptions at key desert locations. In short, the OSNHT uniquely fuses cultural heritage with awareness of the desert environment.

Yet, even as the OSNHT is growing in popularity as a heritage tourism attraction, it faces new threats in the desert: proposed industrial-scale solar and wind-powered electrical generation plants. The proposed 3,200-acre Hidden Hills solar plant would place 170,000 mirrors and two 750-foot high towers atop the trail corridor right along the Old Spanish Trail Highway. In the Silurian Valley north of Baker, a planned solar



Silurian Valley (© Bob Wick/BLM)

*(Continued on page 15)*

(Continued from page 14)

plant and wind farm would occupy 41,000 acres on BLM land that falls outside the agency's designated Solar Energy Zones. These massive installations would impact the OSNHT corridor and intrude upon the expansive vistas along California Highway 127. Heritage tourists passing by these industrial plants would lose connection with the Valley's wild beauty, which today makes it a fitting "southern Gateway to Death Valley."



(© Jack Prichett)

Just as groups in cities have organized to preserve historically significant urban settings, Mojave Desert residents, preservation and conservation

organizations, and local businesses have formed a broad coalition to protect the OSNHT and the desert environment. Coalition members include the National Parks Conservation Association, the Wilderness Society, OSTA, and owners of lodgings and tourist destinations. The coalition's goal is to have the Silurian Valley designated as a protected conservation corridor, linking the National Park Service's three desert properties (Death Valley National Park, Joshua Tree National Park, and the Mojave Desert Preserve) and the BLM's adjacent environmentally sensitive areas. David Lamfrom of the National Parks Conservation Association says, "The Silurian Valley, with the Old Spanish Trail running through it, represents a beating heart of the Mojave Desert in California."



*Jack Prichett is president of the Tecopa Chapter of the Old Spanish Trail Association. He has made numerous conference presentations on the trail in California.*

To learn more about the Old Spanish Trail, visit the website of the Old Spanish Trail Association: [www.oldspanishtrail.org/](http://www.oldspanishtrail.org/)

California is home to a wealth of historic trails, as those who are enamored of these types of resources well know. If you have traveled in just about any part of our state, you have probably followed or crossed many of these "paths of history." Numerous websites provide information about these historic routes of travel. Check out the following sites for more information:

- National Park Service List of National Scenic and Historic Trails ([www.nps.gov/nts/nts\\_trails.html](http://www.nps.gov/nts/nts_trails.html)): This page provides links to information about the trails themselves and links to the various non-profit organizations who help preserve and interpret each trail.
- Wikipedia Category Page for "Historic Trails and Roads in California" ([en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Historic\\_trails\\_and\\_roads\\_in\\_California](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Historic_trails_and_roads_in_California)): All historians know the caveats that come with referencing Wikipedia sources, but this page is such a handy list of links to various Wikipedia pages about each trail or road that we feel we would be remiss not to mention it.

So far we have looked at some of the ways in which heritage tourism can be a vehicle for revitalizing and sustaining the historical, cultural, and natural character of communities and regions. With this next article, we take an equally important look at the more ambivalent side of heritage tourism, when communities regard this type of tourism less as an answer than as a challenge to efforts to preserve cultural identity and resources. This perspective from San Francisco Heritage underscores the importance of striking balance between sometimes competing visions and voices at the preservation table.

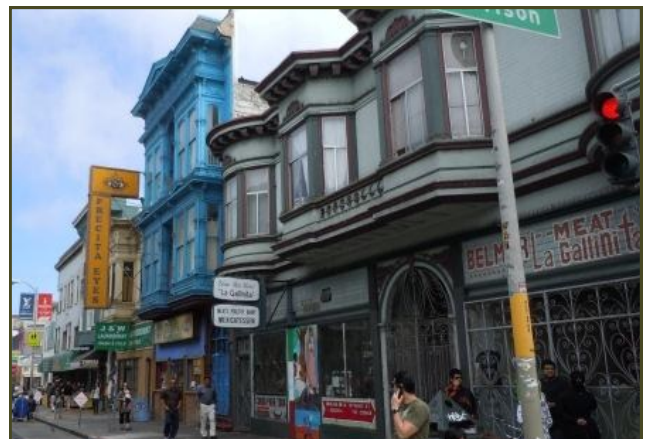
## Challenges of Heritage Tourism: A San Francisco Perspective

By Desiree Smith, Preservation Project Manager, SF Heritage

*“The city’s  
historic sites  
and  
attractions’  
ranked highest  
among ...  
visitors  
choosing to  
travel to San  
Francisco.”*

In San Francisco, neighborhoods, nonprofits, and City agencies are devising innovative new tools for documenting and sustaining the city’s full range of cultural heritage assets, encompassing historic buildings, public art, nonprofits, local businesses, festivals, and other traditional uses. Amid unprecedented real estate speculation, a recurring question is how to assure the long-term economic sustainability of cultural heritage assets without sacrificing their authenticity.

In 2013 San Francisco hosted 16.9 million visitors who spent over \$9.38 billion at local businesses—an all-time record.<sup>1</sup> Among self-described cultural travelers, the city’s “historic sites and attractions” ranked highest among ten arts and cultural attributes that visitors consider when choosing to travel to San



Calle 24 in the Mission District. © SF Heritage

Francisco.<sup>2</sup> Increasing the visibility of neighborhood cultural corridors among tourists would expand their customer base and bring in much-needed revenue, while bringing awareness to lesser-known parts of the city.

However, tourism in local communities also can present challenges that must be carefully managed and avoided. Potential negative impacts of heritage

*(Continued on page 17)*



(Continued from page 16)

tourism can include commodification and denigration of cultural traditions, loss of authenticity and cultural identity, displacement of longtime residents and businesses, controversy within communities over who should benefit from tourist activities, and conflicts related to land rights and access to resources.

One San Francisco neighborhood grappling with these very issues is “Calle 24,” a section of 24th Street in the city’s Mission District, which has served as the center of Latino activism, commerce, and culture in San Francisco since the 1940s. Activities and events that occurred within the district from the mid-20th century to the present created waves of social change that continue to reverberate throughout the world, establishing Calle 24 as a hub of Latino cultural expression in northern California. The district is home to cultural powerhouses such as Galería de la Raza, Mission Cultural Center for Latino Arts, Precita Eyes Mural Arts & Visitors Center, Acción Latina, and the Brava Theater; and is home to many of the city’s most beloved murals, many of which have contributed significantly to art history on the local, national, and international scale. The district demarcates San Francisco’s greatest concentration of

Latino cultural landmarks, businesses, institutions, festivals, and festival routes.

Designation of the Calle 24 Latino Cultural District comes at a challenging time in the neighborhood’s history, as



Balmy Alley mural, *No One Should Obey an Unjust Law*, by artist Juana Alicia, whose work reflects her commitment to social justice and human rights. (© 1996 by Juana Alicia. World Rights Reserved)

rising rents, evictions, and encroaching new development all threaten to destabilize the cultural corridor. Through the cultural district, community advocates and the City aim to “stabilize the displacement of Latino businesses and residents,

preserve Calle 24 as the center of Latino culture and commerce, enhance the unique nature of Calle 24 as a special place for San Francisco’s residents and tourists, and ensure that the City of San Francisco and interested stakeholders have an opportunity to work collaboratively on a community planning process.”

Like any preservation effort, the primary purpose of the Calle 24 Latino Cultural District is to ensure the longevity of the resource (in this case, a cultural corridor comprised of Latino businesses, nonprofits, festivals, visual landmarks, and cultural memory). Yet, while many view cultural heritage tourism as an economically viable tool for

(Continued on page 18)

(Continued from page 17)

preservation, some residents fear that increased attention from tourists in the city’s current economic climate will actually accelerate gentrification. In a press conference announcing the designation of the cultural district, distinguished artist and Galería de la Raza co-founder, Rene Yañez, passionately rallied the Mission community to “resist cultural tourism,” a line he repeated over and over during his remarks.



Carnaval on Calle 24 (© torbakhopper on Flickr)

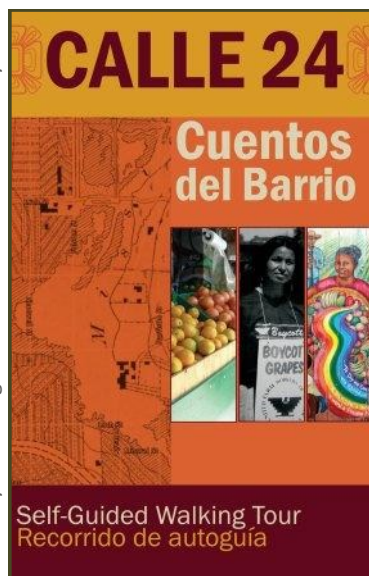
*“The oft-cited benefits of cultural heritage tourism are not guaranteed, but instead should be viewed along a continuum.”*

Another example illustrating the ambiguities and nuances associated with cultural heritage tourism can be found on the website for the Clarion Alley Mural Project (CAMP). Located in the Mission District, Clarion Alley is lined with street art that offers social or political commentary. Clarion Alley is often referred to as the “little sister” to the older Balmy Alley, which is located within the Calle 24 Latino Cultural District, and which helped to inspire the creators of CAMP. A website for CAMP explicitly states that the group does not support tours of Clarion Alley led by outsiders. Preferring to tell the story on their own terms, CAMP has gone so far as to request that specific tour guide companies and organizations cease leading tours of the alley, and asks those interested in a

tour to contact CAMP directly. Their reasoning, as described on the website, is to provide accurate information and ensure respect for the artists.

Certainly, the district already boasts its fair share of cultural heritage tourism—various organizations, companies, and individuals offer guided walking tours of Mission murals; and food tours of local taquerias and other eateries have exploded in recent years. Precita Eyes Mural Arts and Visitors Center, for example, offers regular mural tours with proceeds used to advance its nonprofit mission. A partnership between San Francisco Heritage and the San Francisco Latino Historical Society brought visibility to the Latino heritage of Calle 24 and promoted preservation of significant historical and cultural resources through a youth program that produced a printed walking tour booklet and a series of youth-led walking tours. Entitled, “Calle 24: Cuentos del Barrio,” the self-guided tour booklets were distributed to nonprofit

Courtesy SF Heritage and SF Latino Historical Society



(Continued on page 19)

*(Continued from page 18)*

organizations located throughout the district. Although the target audience for the program was local youth and community members, undoubtedly a fair amount of out-of-town visitors picked up the booklet too.

As these anecdotes reveal, the impacts of cultural heritage tourism are not easily quantified. The oft-cited benefits of such tourism are not guaranteed, but instead should be viewed along a continuum. Cultural heritage tourism, if initiated from within the community and carried out thoughtfully, is a proven model for supporting the financial sustainability of cultural assets. Important questions remain, however, about the long-term effects of this tourism: What purpose would tourism have in a community? Will it achieve identified goals (i.e., cultural, educational, conservation-related)? Who will stand to benefit from cultural heritage tourism? And finally,

who is shaping the narrative and what perspective is being shared? As the Calle 24 community embarks upon the process of defining and shaping a cultural district for 24th Street, the enigma of cultural heritage tourism, and its relationship to sustaining neighborhood identity, will be vigorously debated. What road is taken remains unknown. Fundamentally, it is critical that the community act as the primary agent for determining the best strategies to protect and perpetuate their own cultural heritage.



*Desiree Smith is a preservation project manager with [SF Heritage](#). She also is project manager for the San Francisco Latino Historic Context Statement, a joint project of Heritage and the [SF Latino Historical Society](#).*

To learn more about the Calle 24 Historic District, and about SF Heritage's participation in the San Francisco Latino Historic Context Statement project, please visit the SF Heritage website: <http://www.sfheritage.org/>

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<sup>1</sup> [www.sanfrncisco.travel/research/](http://www.sanfrncisco.travel/research/).

<sup>2</sup> In 2010, the San Francisco Travel Association (SF Travel) surveyed 4,000 cultural travelers from San Francisco's top 10 domestic feeder markets. See [www.sanfrancisco.travel/research/#tourism](http://www.sanfrancisco.travel/research/#tourism).

Finally, we offer a view of heritage tourism as experienced by an individual citizen. As will be seen, heritage tourism involves seeking those connections with the past that resonate on a personal level and instill an appreciation for the tangible and intangible touchstones of the past—even those that are smack in the middle of. . . we'll let Dave Schmitt tell the story.

## A Landmark Effort: One Man's Adventures in Heritage Tourism

By Dave Schmitt, Los Angeles, California

*"It is often easy in California to overlook the historic events that occurred, and places that exist, right where we live and work today."*

When I was asked to write an article on why I decided to visit all of the California Historical Landmarks, my first thought was that it should be easy. I've thought about this answer before, as I often feel the need to justify my hobby. I know that many people find it odd that I would devote as much time and energy as I do to see these plaques that most people drive right by without a glance. So I asked myself just what makes this hobby appealing to me, and I've found it's really a combination of three things.



All photos courtesy of Dave Schmitt

First, and most simply, I really enjoy history. California is interesting in that many of the places where we live are so new. My neighborhood is only 10 years old, and my city is only 62 years old. For

many parts of the country, with towns and buildings dating back a century or more, this is hardly history at all. So it is often easy, in California, to overlook the historic events that occurred, and places that exist, right in the midst of where we work and live today. The Landmarks program appeals to me because it highlights this history.

One example of this highlighted history is California Historical Landmark #452 Mule Hill, on the very northern edge of San Diego. On this hill, which thousands drive by daily on their way to work, the U. S. Army, during a battle in 1846, ran out of food and was

forced to eat their mules; thus the name, Mule Hill. How many of those commuters know they are driving right past this strange bit of history? Probably not many. I think it's kind of cool.

*(Continued on page 21)*

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Another example: On a corner in a Menlo Park neighborhood is #2 Portola Journey's End. Except for the plaque, there is nothing really to see here except a pleasant grassy lot. But I enjoy imagining Portola and his band of 63 men camping here, way back in 1769, and deciding, "Yeah, that's a big bay. We're not going to get around it. Let's call it a trip and head back." These dramatic events and many others like it are spread throughout our state waiting to be discovered. I like it that someone took the time to remember them as California Historical Landmarks.

The second reason I enjoy my Landmarks hobby is the travel. I like road trips, and visiting the landmarks has given me an opportunity to see far more roads and places in California than I ever would have otherwise. This is partly due to not just flying by things on the 5 as I head from Los Angeles to the San Francisco Bay Area. Instead, I like stopping and seeing a site like #1047 Colonel Allensworth State Historic Park, an amazingly well-preserved, 106-year-old settlement of early African American Californians. Likewise, stopping to see #934 Stockton Assembly Center at the



San Joaquin County Fairgrounds, where Japanese Americans were taken to be registered for internment during World War II, is extremely eye-opening. My understanding of the history of the state is enriched through seeing these sites I easily could have driven past.

Chasing landmarks has also taken me way, way off of the beaten path. The most remote sites I have visited thus far tend to be desert locations. One example is #193 Picacho Mines in Imperial County. To get there, go to the far lower left corner of the state, drive about 15 miles past any sign of human life, and there it is. Similarly, to visit #444 Bennett-Arcane Long Camp, travel about 20 miles on the *unpaved* side of Death Valley. At this spot, you can easily imagine the unlucky band of '49ers nearly perishing here in the heat. Finally, #785 Santa Catarina gets my vote for the most remote landmark I've ever visited. This plaque is deep in Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, accessible only by 4-wheel drive vehicle (or a really long hike) and

commemorates a spring where Anza camped in 1774. I visited this in pre-digital camera days, so can't share a good picture of the plaque. It's just as well, as you need to earn the experience by making the trip yourself.

The third justification for my hobby is that I just love lists. The fact that the landmark series is numbered sequentially makes



On the road to Santa Catarina, California Historical Landmark #785

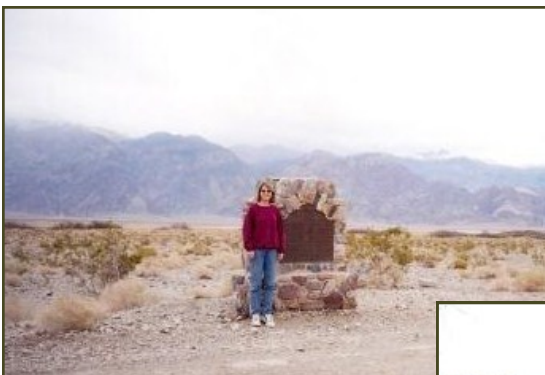
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the goal of seeing them all attainable and systematic, which is strangely fun for me. It also raises interesting questions regarding the numbering and designation of these landmarks. Why, for instance, did Mission San Francisco Solano get numbered landmark #3, but no other mission—arguably among the more famous of California landmarks—receive designation until #135? The site of the Donner Party tragedy, another world famous site, didn't get designated until #134, but the Site of Louis Rubidoux House, near Riverside, got #102, and there is nothing there but a parking lot. And maybe the greatest mystery to me:

how did the Gold Discovery Site in Coloma slip all the way down to #530?

Don't get me wrong, I'm glad the obscure sites were deemed worthy to be landmarks as well. If the program only focused on the places we've all heard of, it wouldn't be nearly as much fun. And this hobby is fun! I understand that my goal of visiting all of the California Historical Landmarks probably isn't for everyone. However, I think getting connected to California's past, by visiting the landmarks in the places where so many interesting things actually happened, is something more of us should do.



Bennet-Arcane Long Camp, CHL #444



Gold Discovery Site, CHL #530

*Dave Schmitt lives in Carlsbad, and works as a librarian at UC San Diego. He has been questing for landmarks since 1997; 899 visited and counting! Dave is sharing his love of history and road trips with his family.*

Dave maintains a detailed website of California Historical Landmarks and his quests: <http://www.landmarkquest.com/>  
 To learn more about the California Historical Landmarks Program, visit our website: [http://ohp.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=21747](http://ohp.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=21747)

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The mission of the **Office of Historic Preservation (OHP)** and the **State Historical Resources Commission** is to provide leadership and promote the preservation of California's irreplaceable and diverse cultural heritage.

To fulfill our mission we:

- ◆ Partner with local, state, federal, and tribal agencies, non-profit organizations, and the general public to help ensure cultural resources are appreciated and maintained as a matter of public interest and community pride;
- ◆ Carry out mandated responsibilities and administer programs under federal and state historic preservation laws;
- ◆ Promote a comprehensive preservation planning approach and urge the integration of historic preservation with broader land use planning efforts and decisions;
- ◆ Offer technical assistance and preservation training in order to create a better understanding of the programs OHP administers;
- ◆ Support sustainability and adaptive reuse of historic resources in ways that preserve historic character and provide economic benefits;
- ◆ Maintain the statewide Historical Resources Inventory and make available information about the state's historical and archaeological resources, and
- ◆ Encourage recognition of the vital legacy of cultural, educational, recreational, aesthetic, economic, social, and environmental benefits of historic preservation for the enrichment of present and future generations.

### GET INVOLVED!

Become a heritage tourist in your own community:

**Visit** a historic building or site in your local area. Take some photos and post them on your social media sites. Tell what you learned and liked about the site.

**Learn** the historical and cultural heritage of your community. When was it founded and by who? Were there any California Indian communities on the site before settlers arrived? Attend a cultural festival or other event in your area.

**Seek** out and visit California Historical Landmarks in your county. Nominate a historically/culturally significant place or building in your town for a California Historical Landmark, or the National Register of Historic Places. Visit our website to learn how: <http://ohp.parks.ca.gov/registration>

**Explore** the Main Street area of your town; shop in the stores, dine in the eateries, learn which establishments have been there since the earliest years. Visit a local museum. Support and celebrate the heritage right where you live!

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