

Shasta State Historic Park Southside Ruins
Audio Tour, Interpretive Story
FINAL MASTER SCRIPT August 17, 2010

FILE: Shasta's Golden Years

Woman's Voice... Shasta's Golden Years (1850 to 1857). Non-stop activity resulted from Shasta's growing importance. Imagine the sounds and smells of this busy gold rush era town.

Mostly men, but also women and children filled the street, the sidewalk and the shops. Stagecoaches brought new arrivals daily.

While many spoke English, others spoke German, Italian, Dutch and Chinese.

Freight wagons drawn by teams of horses and mules brought supplies from San Francisco and Sacramento.

At one point, more than two thousand mules worked out of Shasta. Their braying and neighing added to the clamor. The supplies they hauled were sold in town or sent by pack train directly to the increasingly far-flung mines.

A sawmill ran almost non-stop, to meet the growing demand for cut lumber.

By the fall of eighteen fifty, numerous businesses were in place. These included stores owned by Bull Baker and Company, Tomlinson, Callaghan Brothers, and the Isaacs brothers. Most of the shops were located along Main Street and were constructed of wood. This choice of building material would soon prove unfortunate for the young town.

As with many other gold rush towns, fire was a constant threat to Shasta. In December, eighteen fifty-two, the first in a series of devastating fires roared through the town.

Many of the wood buildings were destroyed.

Residents rebuilt, only to have all seventy businesses on Main Street burn six months later in the fire of June eighteen fifty-three. Two fires in six months convinced the residents of Shasta that something had to change. Like many other gold rush towns, Shasta chose to fight fire with brick. Brick buildings, complete with iron shutters and ten inches of soil on the roofs soon lined Main Street.

Despite the loss of inventory and the cost of rebuilding, life in Shasta was profitable enough that construction on the brick buildings began immediately. By the end of eighteen fifty-three, three brick buildings stood on Main Street.

Remnants of these first three buildings – owned and built by Jacobson and Company, Hollub and Isaacs, and Bull, Baker and Company – still stand as part of the Southside Ruins.

Between eighteen fifty-three and eighteen fifty-seven, twenty-five more brick buildings were built along Main Street. By the late eighteen fifties, Shasta was home to the longest row of brick buildings north of San Francisco. These buildings represented the success and wealth of Shasta City.

Man's Voice... To hear a description of the middle three buildings, please go to the file **[Lots 13-15](#)**

Woman's Voice... To hear the story of why Shasta was all but abandoned,
please go to the file **Shasta's Decline**