

Shasta State Historic Park Southside Ruins  
Audio Tour, Interpretive Story  
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**FILE: Shasta and the Southside Ruins**

***Woman's Voice...*** Shasta and the Southside Ruins. Welcome, to Shasta State Historic Park. A unit of the California State Park System, the park was established in 1937 to preserve an important part of California's Gold Rush history. Following the reconstruction of the former courthouse, the park opened to the public in 1950. Since then, California State Parks has continued to acquire land and complete restoration projects. Today, the park preserves over two dozen historic structures and sites including the courthouse, which serves as a museum and visitor center, the Litsch General Store, Leo Building, Blumb Bakery, several cemeteries and the Southside Ruins. The restored stores and reconstructed courthouse will take you back in time to Shasta's glory days, while the cemeteries and Southside Ruins testify to the passage of time that has erased so many Gold Rush towns from the landscape.

Shasta State Historic Park lies along Highway 299, which connects the Central Valley city of Redding to the North Coast town of Eureka. The stretch of Highway 299 that passes through Shasta was originally Main Street in this once bustling town. Today, trucks and cars speed along the route once traveled by stage coaches and wagon trains. If you are walking through the park, please exercise caution. Use designated crosswalks and remove headphones when crossing the street.

When you enter the park, one of the most noticeable features is a row of old, half-ruined, brick buildings lining the south side of the highway. Built of dull red brick, the buildings stretch for about one hundred yards alongside the road. Most have at least one wall still standing, a few still have their fronts. Heavy iron shutters hang in a few doorways. Travelers speeding through the park in their cars could miss the buildings if they blinked. But if you stop, this row of buildings can take you back to the days when Shasta was one of the most important commercial centers in California.

As you approach the buildings, you might ask yourself, what were these? Why were they built? What were they used for? And why were they abandoned? The first question is easy to answer. You are looking at the Southside Ruins, once the main shopping district for the city of Shasta. During California's Gold Rush, Shasta was one of the largest and wealthiest cities in Northern California. Known as the Queen City of the North, Shasta was the primary travel and business center for the region known as "the Northern Mines." While in many ways Shasta was a typical boom-bust California Gold Rush town, its role as the main supplier of the Northern mines created a thriving, cosmopolitan community not often associated with rough and tumble mining towns.

Now, answering the other questions takes a little bit longer. But discovering those answers is worth the time. The story of Shasta and the Southside Ruins is a fascinating tale of riches and poverty, hopes and dreams, and the insurmountable march of time.

We invite you to discover this story. A raised, wooden pedestrian boardwalk has been built in front of the ruins where a wooden sidewalk once stood. The boardwalk takes you past the buildings and provides safe entry into three of them. As you follow the path through the ruins, discover how the story of these buildings reveals the rise and fall of Shasta.

***Man's voice...***To hear a description of what the buildings on Main Street looked like in the 1850s, please go to the file **[Shasta's Main Street](#)**

***Woman's voice...***To hear the story of how Shasta became a Gold Rush town, please go to the file **[Shasta's Early Years](#)**