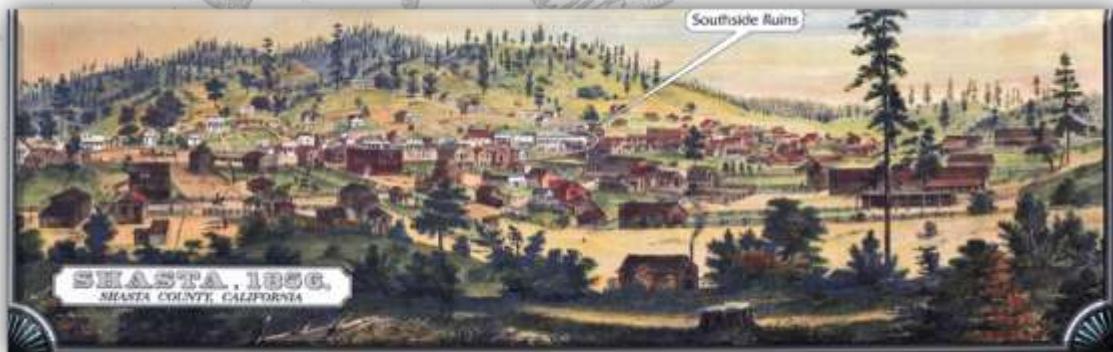


GOLD FEVER SPREADS

SHASTA - Shasta County, CA

by
Gary B. Speck



SHASTA – YESTERDAY & TODAY



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IN 1848 THE WORLD'S NEWS

was dominated by three words - "GOLD IN CALIFORNIA!" As a result, almost anything that could float was turned into a boat, although sometimes with tragic results. Even so, the boats and ships arrived, and thousands poured in from every corner of the world. The Argonauts of '48 and '49 also arrived overland across deserts and mountain: on foot, on muleback, on horseback, or

by wagons. As the scores of thousands of new arrivals spread out from the original discovery site at COLOMA, more gold was found, and each discovery prompted a mini rush to that site. Each discovery seemed to be a "little" richer than where the miners currently worked, so the wandering miners spread out through most of the northern half of the state in search of that ever elusive golden dream.

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SHASTA - 1938



SHASTA - 2014

Major Pierson B. Reading discovered the first gold in the SHASTA area. He had just arrived here after visiting Sutter's Mill and the booming rush there. It was July 1848 and Major Reading noticed similar conditions in the creek here. A little poking and gold was found. Just like what happened at Coloma, word spread rapidly. Just like what happened at COLOMA a tent and shanty town called Reading Springs sprung up and the spot boomed. By 1850, Major Reading's name was dropped and SHASTA CITY quickly boasted several thousand residents - the largest city between Sacramento and the northern state line - a major gold mining city with a mile-long main street filled with saloons, banks, saloons, barber shops, saloons, hotels, saloons, restaurants, saloons, stores and more saloons.

In December 1852, the boom was tested when a major fire ripped through the central part of the city. It quickly rebuilt. In June 1873, another fire wiped out all 70 businesses along the main street. This time when the rebuilding occurred, SHASTA took a cue from towns in the Mother Lode region, by rebuilding out of brick with iron door and window shutters.



Iron shutters over the doors and windows helped protect the buildings against fire and theft.



The boom lasted until the late 1860s. Because of its location just west of the flat northern end of the Central Valley, when the Central Pacific Railroad pushed through towards Oregon in 1872, it passed only six miles to the east. However, as the town was



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already floundering, most of the remaining businesses and transportation companies quickly abandoned SHASTA and moved to the new railroad town of Redding, which continued to suck the life out of Shasta. By 1888 it was a ghost town, especially after the long-time county courthouse followed suit.



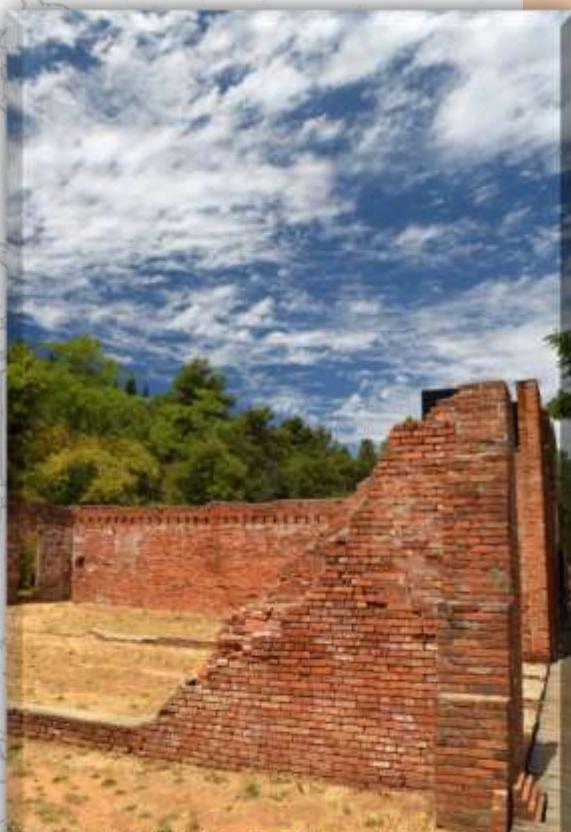
Main St. of Shasta

SHASTA - 1938

However, SHASTA was not forgotten as many of the old mining towns were. A huge push to preserve the town's remains began, and in the 1920s much of what remained had been stabilized and some minor renovation and reconstruction occurred. Much of the land was purchased by the state in the late 1930s, and by 1950 most of historic SHASTA had become a state historic park.



A museum was established in the renovated courthouse, and Shasta's role in state history was firmly affixed. Some of the restored buildings include: the Pioneer Barn, blacksmith shop, Litsch Store and Blumb Bakery. Other buildings of note include the Masonic Building, the former Shasta County Courthouse and two schools.

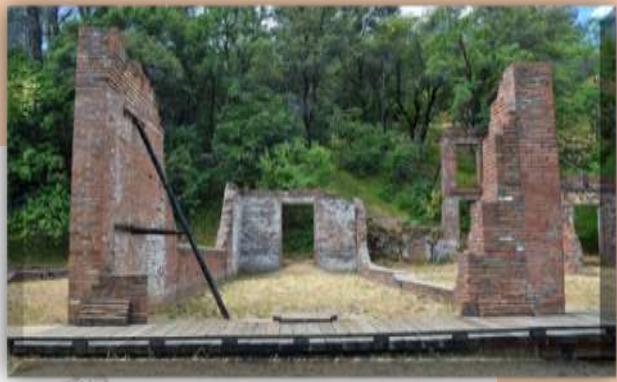


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SHASTA - 1938



SHASTA - 2014

Along the south side of SH 299 is a row of well-marked building ruins, whose location is marked in the photos below.



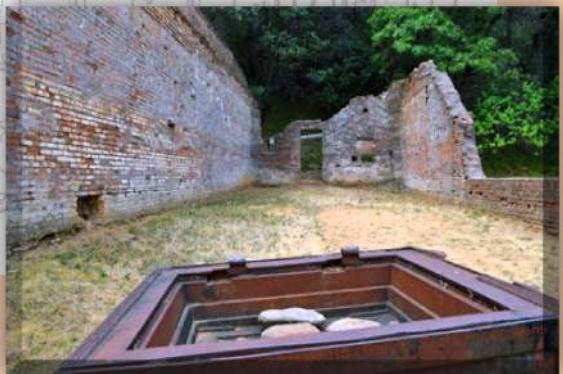
From the west, this wonderful row includes:

- DAINGERFIELD & COMPANY
(year built - 1854)
- HOLLOB & ISAACS (1853)
- JACOBSON & CO. (1853)
- GROTEFEND & CO. (1854)
- T. LEVY & CO./A & S SOLOMON & CO.
(1854)

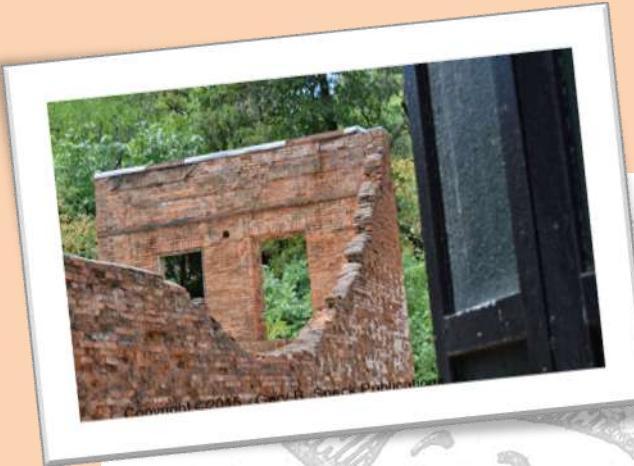
- BULL, BAKER & CO. (1853) (below)



- SHUTLEFF/GOLDSTONE & CO. (1854)
- TOMLINSON & WOOD (1854)
- The WILLS BUILDING (1854)
- The YOUNG BUILDING (1855)
- LEWIN'S JEWELRY STORE (1855)
- U.S. BAKERY (1854) (below)



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- **BLACKSMITH**
Reconstructed, non-original. (Below)



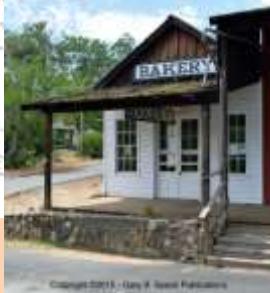
- **BIG gap** (In this large gap between the ruins of the U.S. Bakery and the restored blacksmith shop. Back the base of the hill is an iron-gated hole in the hillside that marks Hoff's Butcher Shop's cold storage "room." This wooden building was built in 1855 and burned in the fire of 1878. (Below))



- **LEO STORE** (1855) (Right - below)
- **LITSCH STORE** (1856) (Left - below)



- **BLUMB BAKERY** (1878)
This wooden bakery was built after the fire of 1878, and operated until 1918. This restoration dates to 1992. (Below)



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Brick buildings, including the Charter Oak Hotel, were used for construction materials in Redding.

If not for the preservation efforts SHASTA would have probably disappeared. Much of the brick from abandoned stores was hauled for use in building up Redding and most of the tin roofs were removed during the 1940s to aid in the War effort. With no roofs, the buildings were left open to the weather and rapid deterioration. However, what remains is lovingly cared for and gives both casual tourists and dedicated ghost towners alike a tiny window into the past.



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PLEASE NOTE: Even though the row of former business ruins along the south side of State Highway 299 have been stabilized, and are safe to explore, abide by all signage and DO NOT touch any part of the remaining structures. Also, because this is a state historic park, no metal detecting is allowed.

For a good map of the town, go to the [State Historic Park website](#).

As always, when you visit, please abide by any **posted signage**, respect the rights of the property owners and always abide by the [Ghost Towner's Code of Ethics](#).

This was our **Ghost Town of the Month** for May 2015.

SITE NAME	ELEV	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	TOWNSHIP/RANGE
Redding (NO GHOST!)	558'	40.5823729 40° 34' 57" N	-122.3936198 122° 23' 37" W	Sec 1, 2, T31N, R5W, MDM (Mt. Diablo Meridian & Base Line) Sec 35, 36, T32N, R5W, MDM
Shasta	1047'	40.5993165 40° 35' 58" N	-122.4919571 122° 29' 31" W	E-Ctr Sec 25, T32N, R6W, MDM

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THIS PAGE

FIRST POSTED: May 02, 2015

LAST UPDATED: June 07, 2015

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