

California Backroads, Mormon Emigrant Trail

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 5TH 8:00 A.M.

This will be a one-day drive over some very beautiful rural back-country roads. There is no specific destination -- the roads themselves are the main attraction, although we will stop for some photos and lunch at a couple of very scenic spots. If you love driving your sports car over relatively tight, twisty, less-traveled roads, this is a great chance to take your car out for some exercise.

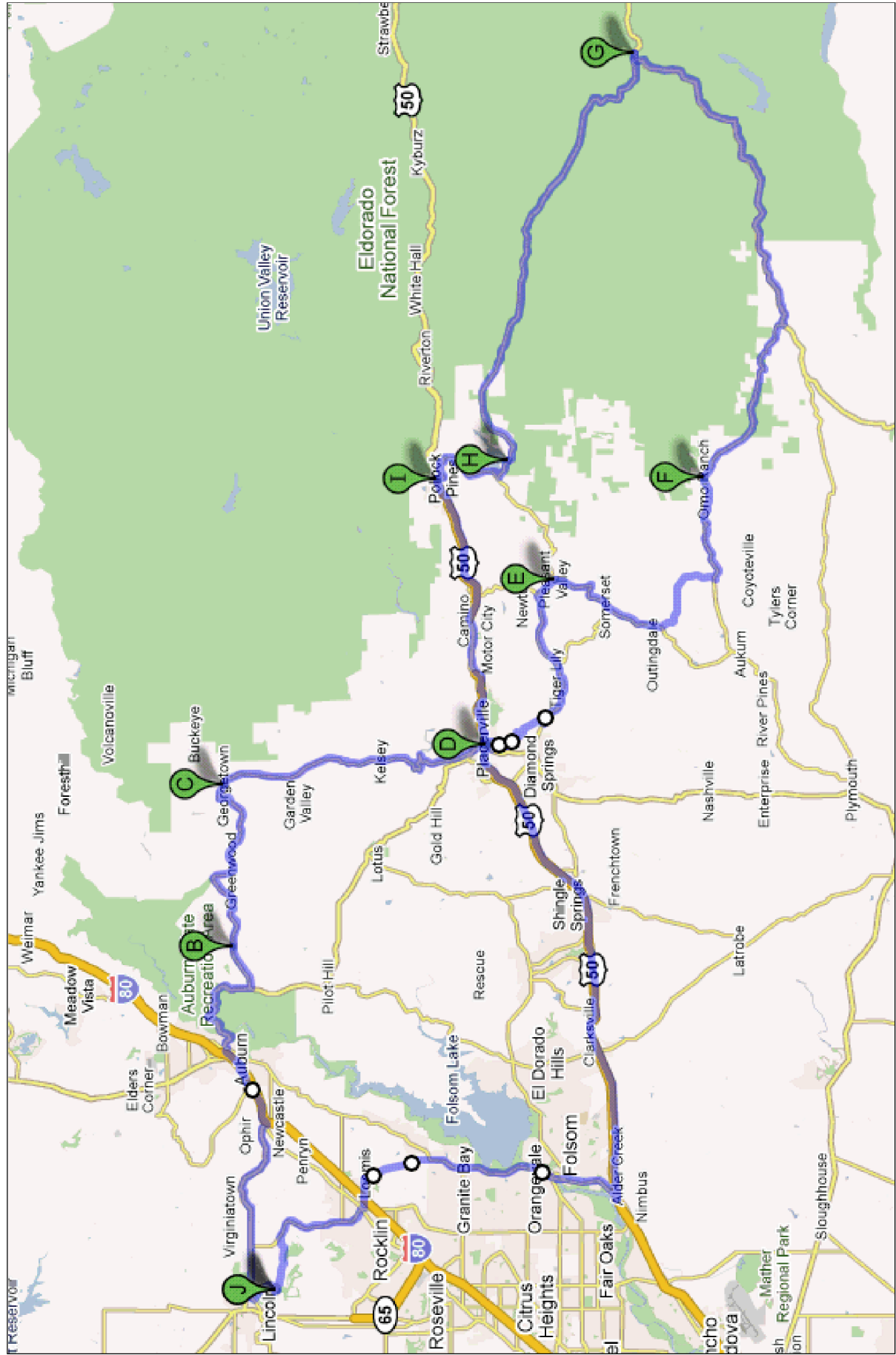
Both covered and uncovered wagons are welcome for this ride into the past. We will be driving into the Sierras on lightly-used roads that in some cases were first cut by a Mormon party in 1848, when they were leaving California. To avoid the dreaded Donner Pass route, they cut what is now the Mormon Emigrant Trail, in their attempt to return to Utah. As you drive these roads, with their tree tunnels and narrow paths, you may get a reminder of what it must have been like. The trails were later used as immigrants raced into California in 1849, and also by the Pony Express. Now it is our turn.

Because some roads are rural, city amenities are scarce. Plan on Park Service rest stops after our coffee break. After about 150 miles of country roads, we will end the drive with a picnic lunch at a very scenic, comfortable picnic grove overlooking Jenkinson Lake near Pollock Pines at the end of "Mormon Emigrant Trail". Everyone is asked to bring a picnic lunch, and your hosts will have the tablecloths, paper products and utensils. An extra folding chair might be useful if you want to sit by the lake.

After lunch, you may want to hike, take photos, relax by the lake, or just head home on Hwy. 50. We will start the trip at OC at 8:00 AM, and finish lunch at about 2:00.

If you are interested in this California backroads drive, please contact Dave Polson at dcpolson@mac.com .

Mormon Emigrant Trail Ride – August 2009



Driving directions to Sun City Lincoln Hills- Orchard Creek Lodge

(916) 434-5177

193 mi – about **5 hours 53 mins**

Via Ophir Rd, Coon Hollow Rd, Coon Hollow Rd, Pleasant Valley Rd, Folsom Auburn Rd, Laird Rd, Laird Rd



Sun City Lincoln Hills- Orchard Creek Lodge
 965 Orchard Creek Ln
 Lincoln, CA 95648
 (916) 434-5177

1. Head **north** on **Orchard Creek Ln** 52 ft
2. Turn **right** toward **Sun City Ln** 0.1 mi
3. Turn **left** at **Sun City Ln** 358 ft
4. Continue on **Sun City Blvd** 1.3 mi
5. Turn **right** at **Ferrari Ranch Rd** 0.4 mi
6. Turn **right** at **CA-193/Lincoln Newcastle Hwy** 9.1 mi
Continue to follow CA-193
7. Turn **right** at **CA-193/Taylor Rd** 0.3 mi
8. Turn **left** at **CA-193/Ophir Rd** 2.6 mi
Continue to follow Ophir Rd
9. Take the ramp onto **CA-193 E/I-80 E** 1.1 mi
Continue to follow I-80 E
10. Take exit **119C** for **Elm Ave** 479 ft
11. Keep **left** at the fork, follow signs for **Auburn** 161 ft
12. Turn **left** at **Elm Ave** 0.2 mi
13. Turn **left** at **CA-193/CA-49/High St** 2.5 mi
Continue to follow CA-193/CA-49
14. Turn **right** to stay on **CA-193/CA-49** 3.6 mi
15. Turn **left** at **CA-193/Georgetown Rd** 2.2 mi

23.6 mi – about 44 mins

CA-193/Georgetown Rd

16. Head **east** on **CA-193/Georgetown Rd** toward **Sweetwater Trail** 10.0 mi
Continue to follow CA-193

10.0 mi – about 20 mins

Georgetown, CA


17. Head **southeast** on **CA-193/Georgetown Rd** toward **South St** 11.3 mi
18. Turn **right** to stay on **CA-193/Georgetown Rd** 3.1 mi
19. Turn **left** at **CA-49/Coloma St** 0.6 mi
20. Turn **right** at **CA-49/Spring St** 0.2 mi

15.3 mi – about 32 mins

CA-49/Spring St

21. Head **south** on **CA-49/Spring St** toward **US-50** 272 ft
22. Turn **left** at **CA-49/Main St** 285 ft
23. Turn **right** at **CA-49** 0.1 mi
24. Turn **right** at **CA-49/Sacramento St** 0.2 mi
25. Turn **right** to stay on **CA-49/Sacramento St** 0.4 mi
Continue to follow CA-49
26. Turn **left** at **Coon Hollow Rd** 1.8 mi
27. Turn **right** at **Big Cut Rd** 1.7 mi
28. Turn **left** at **Pleasant Valley Rd** 8.0 mi

12.3 mi – about 29 mins



E Pleasant Valley, El Dorado, California 


- 29. Head **southwest** on **Mt Aukum Rd** toward **Heavenly Ridge Rd**  5.3 mi
 - 30. Continue on **Mount Aukum Rd** 1.1 mi
 - 31. Turn **left** at **Fairplay Rd** 4.4 mi
 - 32. Turn **left** at **Omo Ranch Rd** 5.4 mi
- 16.2 mi – about 36 mins

F Omo Ranch
California 


- 33. Head **east** on **Omo Ranch Rd** toward **Indian Diggins Rd**  9.4 mi
 - 34. Turn **left** at **CA-88**  17.7 mi
- 27.1 mi – about 39 mins















G CA-88 

- 35. Head **east** on **CA-88** toward **Mormon Emigrant Trail**  16 ft
 - 36. Turn **left** at **Mormon Emigrant Trail**  23.6 mi
This road may be seasonally closed
- 23.6 mi – about 47 mins

H Mormon Emigrant Trail 

- 37. Head **north** on **Mormon Emigrant Trail** toward **Sly Park Rd**  1.0 mi
 - 38. Turn **right** at **Sly Park Rd**  4.4 mi
 - 39. Turn **right** to stay on **Sly Park Rd**  0.3 mi
- 5.7 mi – about 12 mins

I Sly Park Rd 

- 40. Head **north** on **Sly Park Rd**  26 ft
 - 41. Turn **left** onto the ramp to **Sacramento**  0.2 mi
 - 42. Merge onto **US-50 W**  36.8 mi
 - 43. Take exit **23** for **Folsom Blvd**  0.3 mi
 - 44. Turn **left** at **Folsom Blvd**  3.4 mi
 - 45. Continue on **Folsom Auburn Rd**  2.2 mi
 - 46. Continue on **Auburn Folsom Rd**  3.8 mi
 - 47. Turn **left** at **Laird Rd**  3.3 mi
 - 48. Turn **left** at **Brace Rd**  1.4 mi
 - 49. Turn **right** at **Sierra College Blvd**  4.9 mi
 - 50. Turn **left** at **Twelve Bridges Dr**  1.3 mi
 - 51. Turn **right** at **Stoneridge Blvd**  1.1 mi
 - 52. Turn **right** at **Del Webb Blvd**  0.4 mi
 - 53. Turn **left** at **Orchard Creek Ln**  0.1 mi
 - 54. At the traffic circle, take the **2nd** exit and stay on **Orchard Creek Ln** 427 ft
- 59.4 mi – about 1 hour 31 mins

J Sun City Lincoln Hills- Orchard Creek Lodge
965 Orchard Creek Ln
Lincoln, CA 95648
(916) 434-5177

These directions are for planning purposes only. You may find that construction projects, traffic, weather, or other events may cause conditions to differ from the map results, and you should plan your route accordingly. You must obey all signs or notices regarding your route.

Map data ©2009 , Tele Atlas

Traveling the Mormon Emigrant Trail



Traveling the Mormon Emigrant Trail

(September 2001) by Anthony M. Belli

It had been over a year since the men had seen their families. Now with the construction of Sutter's Mill at Coloma complete, it was time for the many Mormon workers to return home to Salt Lake Valley, Utah. On April 9, 1848, a little more than two months after Marshall discovered gold in the mill's tailrace, the workers held a meeting. The question at this meeting however was not gold, but how to move a wagon train over the austere and uncharted Sierra wilderness...

Pleasant Valley

The Mormons sent word that parties interested in forming a wagon train that would travel to the Salt Lake Valley, should meet at a small valley in the foothills, which they named Pleasant Valley. By mid June, a wagon train had been formed which consisted of 45 men, one woman, 17 wagons, several yokes of oxen, and about 300 head of livestock.

Three advance scouts, Henderson Cox, Daniel Browett, and Ezrah H. Allen, set out into the mountains on saddle horses to scout a route for the wagon train. Ten days passed without word from the advance team so ten men were dispatched to search for the missing scouts. Meanwhile, the wagon train moved northeast about ten miles to another valley to await news from the search party. They named this encampment after James C. Sly, a member of their party. Today this place is known as Sly Park.

Another ten days passed and then on July 14th, the search party returned reporting no sign of the missing scouts. They had, however, found passage over the mountains. The Mormons broke camp and began the slow, laborious, ascent over the Sierras, building a road as they went. They camped at and were responsible for naming Log Spring, Leek Spring, and Tragedy Spring.

Tragedy Spring

It was at Tragedy Spring that they discovered the murdered remains of their three advance scouts; buried in a shallow grave. In his diary, Henry W. Bigler, one of the members of the wagon train, noted the following:

"We cut the following inscription in the Balsam Fir that stood near the grave. To the memory of Daniel Browett, Ezrah H. Allen, and Henderson Cox, who were supposed to have been murdered and buried by Indians on the night of June 27, A.D., 1848. We call the place Tragedy Spring."

Hope Valley

After passing through the rugged Sierra Nevada Range, the wagon train camped at Hope Valley, which, according to Bugler's diary, they named because here "they began to have hope" that they were going to make it to Salt Lake. [Hope Valley lies about 20 miles South of Lake Tahoe with intersections of Highway 88 and 89.]

The Mormon Emigrant Trail

The opening of the Mormon Emigrant Trail created the first east-west road for wagons into Northern California. On the California side, of the California/Nevada state line, the first trading post/way station was established. It was called Old Mormon Station and was 107 miles east of Placerville.

[The Mormons followed a trail from Sly Park that approximates the path of the present Mormon Emigrant Trail, which extends from an intersection with Sly Park Road at Jenkinson Lake and runs generally southeast to a junction with California Highway 88 about five miles west of Silver Lake. There is one major deviation, however: The original route led around the north side of Iron Mountain instead of the south side as the road does today...[Richard Hughey](#), *The Carson Emigrant Trail to Tragedy Springs* April 15, 1999.]

For the next 16 years, tens of thousands of immigrants passed over the Mormon Emigrant Trail into the new El Dorado. By 1854, more than 40 way stations were operating between Placerville and Old Mormon Station. Way stations like "David Barber, ranch, trading post, and blacksmith shop, eight and a half miles from old Mormon Station", "Illinois House, groceries and meals at all hours. Elk Horn, hay, and barley station, seven miles from Placerville", and "Stonebreaker house" built adjacent to the emigrant road.

Mormon Emigrant Trail Ride – Background, Trivia, & Other Interesting Data

Sly Park



Sly Park, located 40 miles east of Sutter's Fort and 10 miles east of Pleasant Valley, California, was one of the gathering places for discharged members of the Mormon Battalion. These men were preparing to travel to the Salt Lake Valley to join leader Brigham Young and the pioneers who were arriving there.

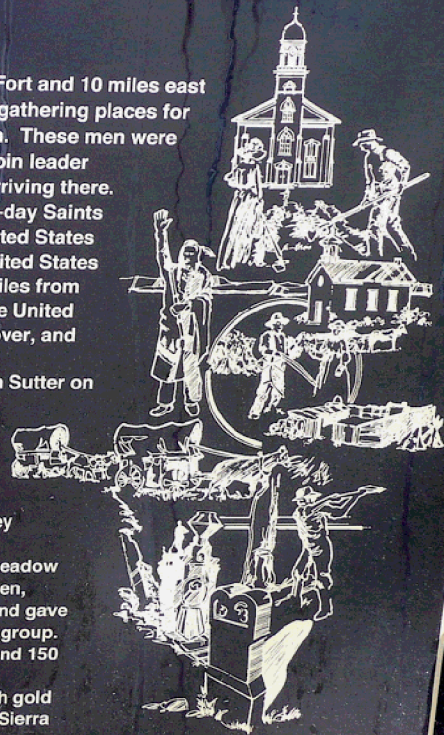
In July 1846, 500 men, all members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), had volunteered in Council Bluffs, Iowa, to serve 1 year in the United States Army under the leadership of General Stephen W. Kearney and to help the United States in the war with Mexico. These men of the Mormon Battalion marched 2,000 miles from Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, to California—the longest infantry march within the United States. They arrived on January 29, 1847. By then, the war with Mexico was over, and they were discharged in Los Angeles on July 16, 1847.

About 100 ex-soldiers traveled north and remained to work for Captain John Sutter on various projects around the Sacramento Valley. Some of them discovered gold at Sutter's Mill in January 1848, which began the western gold rush.

The men, who were anxious to leave California to join their families and friends in the Salt Lake Valley, searched for a suitable site during the summer of 1848 where everyone could meet and plan the trip. They found a spot named Pleasant Valley, about 8 miles southeast of Placerville, where they assembled wagons and made other preparations to travel.

While traveling further east, several of the men found a pleasant mountain meadow with a stream near Pollack Pines that was ideal for grazing cattle. One of the men, James Calvin Sly, carved his name on a tree trunk, which became a landmark and gave the area its name, Sly Park. Sly Park became the final rendezvous point for the group. The party included 43 men, 1 woman, 1 small cannon, 17 wagons, 150 horses, and 150 head of cattle.

These former members of the Mormon Battalion turned their backs on the rich gold fields for their families and their church. They pioneered the first road over the Sierra Range at Carson Pass.

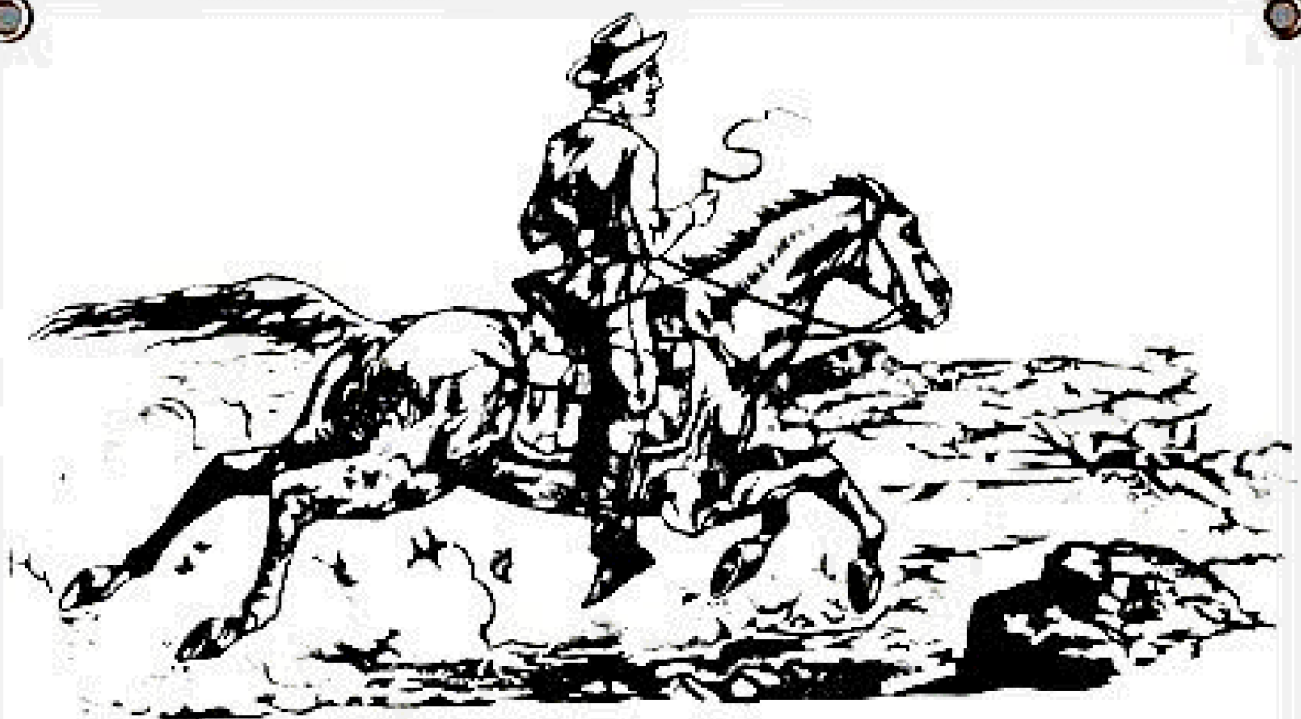


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