

**T**HE FIRST GOLD SEEKERS FOUND THEIR WAY TO THIS AREA BY WAY OF THE BEAR RIVER AND WOLF CREEK. ALONG WITH GOLD, THEY FOUND GRASSY VALLEYS AND ABUNDANT WATER AND TIMBER.

IN JANUARY 1848, JAMES MARSHALL DISCOVERED GOLD AT SUTTER'S MILL ON THE AMERICAN RIVER. SOON THE CALIFORNIA GOLD RUSH WAS IN FULL SWING.

IN 1850, THE DISCOVERY OF GOLD-BEARING QUARTZ IN GRASS VALLEY BEGAN THE ERA OF HARDROCK (UNDERGROUND) MINING IN CALIFORNIA AND ESTABLISHED GRASS VALLEY AS ONE OF THE RICHEST GOLD MINING REGIONS IN THE STATE.

LARGE MINES SUCH AS THE EMPIRE, NORTH STAR, PENNSYLVANIA, IDAHO-MARYLAND AND BRUNSWICK BECAME FAMOUS AROUND THE WORLD. HARDROCK MINING WAS DOMINANT IN GRASS VALLEY UNTIL IT WAS SUSPENDED DURING WW II. IT BEGAN AGAIN IN THE 1950'S, BUT ONLY FOR A SHORT TIME. THE GOVERNMENT'S CEILING ON THE PRICE OF GOLD AND THE MINERS' REFUSAL TO WORK FOR DEPRESSION ERA WAGES MADE MINING UNPROFITABLE AND THE LAST MINES CLOSED.

TODAY, GRASS VALLEY COMBINES THE RICH HERITAGE OF YESTERDAY AND THE BEST OF TODAY, OFFERING VISITORS AND HISTORY BUFFS AN INTERESTING GLIMPSE INTO THE PAST, A VARIETY OF POPULAR RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND SUCH AMENITIES AS FINE LODGING, DINING AND SHOPPING.



For further information on places to visit in Nevada County, contact:

**GRASS VALLEY/NEVADA COUNTY  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

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GRASS VALLEY/NEVADA COUNTY  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

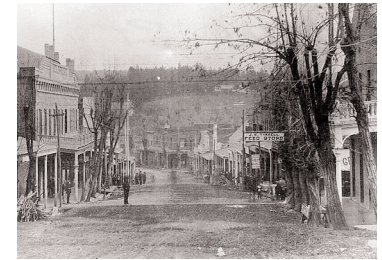


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A WALKING TOUR OF  
**HISTORIC  
GRASS VALLEY**



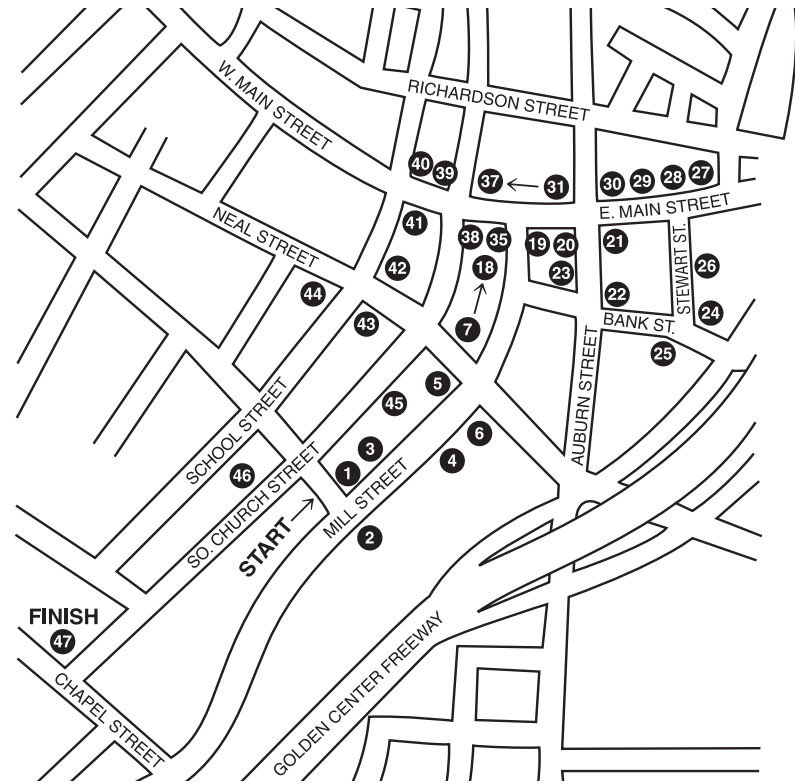
**Published by the  
Grass Valley/Nevada County  
Chamber of Commerce**



ur tour begins at the historic Lola Montez House, home to the Grass Valley/Nevada County Chamber of Commerce. The tour can be enjoyed on foot, by bicycle or car. Walkers and cyclists should be in reasonably good shape and able to climb hills. Many of the buildings are private residences not open to the public. Please do not trespass or disturb the occupants.

1. **LOLA MONTEZ HOUSE**, 248 Mill Street. Local government began under an oak tree on this site in November 1850, when votes were collected in a cigar box and James Walsh was elected Justice of the Peace. A cabin was built here in 1851 and it was purchased in 1853 by international celebrity and performer Lola Montez. She resided here until 1855 when she returned to San Francisco. The present structure is a replica of Lola's original house (which had been extensively remodeled and finally was condemned in 1975). The structure houses the Grass Valley/Nevada County Chamber of Commerce, and a few artifacts from Lola's residency.
2. **THE HODGE STONE HOUSE & BREWERY**, 305 & 309 Mill Street. This structure has stone walls up to two feet thick, reflecting a bit of European architecture. It is a fine example of the mason's art. Built in 1861 by Thomas Hodge, the stone house was once accompanied by a brewery located where the adjacent apartment building now stands.
3. **LOTTA CRABTREE HOUSE**, 238 Mill Street. Lotta Crabtree was born in New York in 1847 and in the early 1850's came to Grass Valley where her parents operated a boardinghouse for gold miners. It was there that young Lotta met the famous Lola Montez who legend tells us taught her to sing and dance. Lotta entertained in mining camps and later graced the American stage until she retired at age forty four. She was the first American entertainer to become a millionaire, earning an estimated \$3 million. The home of her youth has since been remodeled into apartments.
4. **GRASS VALLEY PUBLIC LIBRARY**, 207 Mill Street. The renowned teacher and philosopher Josiah Royce was born at this site in 1855. The library was built in 1916 with funding from the Carnegie Foundation.
5. **WELLS FARGO BANK**, 204 Mill Street. In the 1880's, this was the site of the Centennial Market. By the time of WW I, it was being used as a garage and Studebaker agency. Legend has it that owner A.B. Snyder was excavating for an underground gasoline tank when he came across a ledge of gold quartz. Several tons of quartz gold were removed and Snyder later sold the rights to the "Garage Vein" to the Golden Center Mining Co.
6. **MINER'S HOTEL**, 203 Mill Street. This three-story wooden building was built in 1896 as a hotel for single miners. During the 1940's, it was known as the Valley Hotel.

The accompanying text describes each of the 47 buildings shown on the Grass Valley Walking Tour map.



7. **VAN'S OPERA HOUSE**, 161 Mill Street. Now home to Hedman Furniture, this three-story stucco and stone building was built in 1890 by Pauline Van Hoeter. She sold it in 1894 to Charles Clinch of the Clinch Mercantile Co. For years, it was known as the Grass Valley Auditorium and many dramatic companies and musicians performed on its stage. Later, it became a movie theater known as The Strand.
8. **UNION SQUARE BUILDING**, 151 Mill Street. The Union newspaper was published here for 76 years before it moved to its present plant in the Glenbrook Basin in 1978. The Union was established in 1864 and named thusly because its publisher stood for the preservation of the Union during the Civil War.
9. **BON ALLURE BUILDING**, 139-143 Mill Street. Known for many years as the Thomas Building, this structure stands on a site occupied by the Railroad Hotel in the 1880's. The building was purchased in the 1930's by Arletta Douglas of Grass Valley, longtime proprietor of the Bon Allure clothing store.
10. **NEVADA COUNTY BANK BUILDING**, 131 Mill Street. This is perhaps the most impressive of all downtown buildings. Built in 1917 by the Rector Brothers, who

- operated a Nevada City banking firm, the building was acquired in the 1930's by Bank of America which operated here until 1975. The glass-domed structure was renovated in 1975 and now houses an insurance company.
11. **THE OWL GRILL & SALOON**, 134 Mill Street. The first wooden building on this site dates to the early 1850's but was destroyed by fire. Today's Owl Grill & Saloon is made up of two structures, built in 1857 and 1862. It became a saloon in 1883. The "Owl" is derived from the days when local gold mines ran 24 hours per day.
12. **FOOTHILL MERCANTILE**, 121 Mill Street. This is one of Mill Street's newer facilities, built in 1942 as a storage depot for the J. C. Penney store. It also was the location for Sprouse-Reitz variety store for many years.
13. **BEITZ/HARTUNG BUILDING**, 124 Mill Street. This building has housed a jewelry store for more than a century. Watchmaker and engraver Henry Hartung, the son of German immigrants, began the tradition which was carried on by the Beitz family who operated Beitz Jewelers for forty years.
14. **MILL STREET CLOTHING/DOVETAIL DESIGN**, 150-117 Mill Street. This site was once occupied by the Empire Livery Stable and it was here that

Charles Clinch and W.D. Bourn Jr. formed the Clinch Mercantile Co. This was Grass Valley's J.C. Penney store from 1928 until 1989.

**15. ODD FELLOWS HALL AND GRASS VALLEY HARDWARE**, 112-116 Mill Street. Built in 1855, the hall in this three-building complex was first known as Parker's Hall, named after builder and merchant John Parker. One of the buildings housed Grass Valley Hardware Co. for more than a century, until the company closed in 1989. The Union newspaper began on the second floor of the Grass Valley Hardware building in 1864. The third building served as a bakery, grocery and dry goods outlet. Today, the buildings house various shops.

**16. WILD PLUM BUILDING**, 111-113 Mill Street. An 1891 map shows this as a furniture store. A photo from the 1920's shows it as Gill Miller, Undertaker. Safeway operated here in the 1930's and a Ben Franklin variety store was here in the 1940's and 1950's. Collier's Shoe Store opened here in the mid 1950's and closed in March, 2004.

**17. OLD TOWN CAFE**, 110 Mill Street. This is the original site of the Nevada County Bank which opened in 1900 and moved in 1917 to the bank building at Mill and Bank Streets.

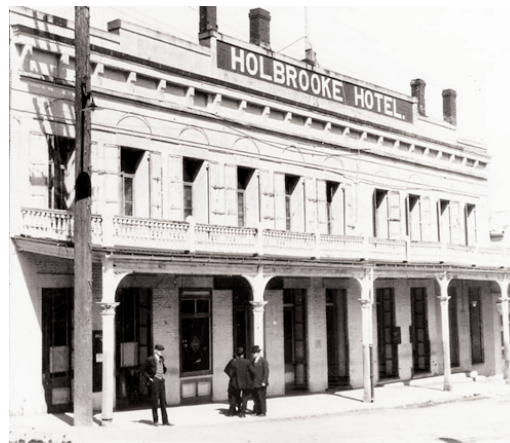
**18. ADAMS EXPRESS AND STAGE CO. BUILDING**, 102 Mill Street. Completed in 1854 at a cost of \$10,000, this was the first brick structure in Grass Valley. The building was used for grocery and clothing sales until the 1870's when it became home to The Union newspaper which later built a plant at 151 Mill Street.

**19. HARDCRABBLE BUILDING**, 107 West Main Street. Built in the late 1850's, this was the home of Harris and Saxon, furniture dealers. William Harris later became partners with John Farrell in a clothing business and the two were instrumental in forming Grass Valley's famous Cornish Choir.

**20. PACIFIC HOTEL**, Corner of South Auburn and West Main Streets. One of Grass Valley's earliest hotels, built in 1850 and destroyed by fire in 1855 and 1860, it was rebuilt each time. The hotel was demolished in 1931 to make way for a Standard Oil Co. gas station. A small brick building stands at the corner today.

**21. WISCONSIN HOTEL**, Corner of South Auburn and East Main Streets. Today a city parking lot, this site housed a hotel twice destroyed by fire and rebuilt. In the 1930's, the Richfield Oil Co. razed the old hotel and installed a gas station. In the 1880's, John Glasson operated a gas plant adjacent to the hotel, supplying the city with light and the Maryland Mine with power. The plant was sold in 1896 to the Nevada County Electrical Power Co.

**22. THE OLD POST OFFICE**, 131 South Auburn Street. Dr. Will Jones erected his residence here in 1874 and sold the site to the U.S. Government in 1913. Construction of the federal building, as it was then known,



The Holbrooke Hotel, circa 1930s

began in 1914. The post office opened in 1916 and operated until 1981 when a new post office was built on Bennett Street. The building now houses professional offices.

**23. SALVATION ARMY CITADEL**, 134 South Auburn Street. The Salvation Army first came to Grass Valley in 1887 as a Temperance Movement swept the nation. A wooden building to house the corps was built in 1887 and the present structure was completed in 1923. The building has been remodeled but the exterior remains as it was in the early 1920's.

**24. THE STEWART HOUSE**, 124 Bank Street. This attractive two-story Victorian was built in the 1880's by Henry John Stewart, a Canadian lumberman who owned a mill on Wolf Creek. The building was extensively restored and remodeled in 1991 and is now a restaurant.

**25. CHINATOWN**, Directly across from The Stewart House. This area, where a new hotel was planned, was once Grass Valley's Chinatown, second only to San Francisco's. More than 1,000 Chinese lived here in the 1870's. There were stores, gardens, opium and gambling parlors and "houses of joy." The area, nearly destroyed by fire in 1877, was razed in 1938.

**26. MAYBELLE FOSTER HOUSE**, 114 Stewart Street. Known as "The Miner's Friend", Maybelle Foster operated a bordello here in the 1920's and 1930's. Before that, the site served as the Cornish Wrestling Ring where for several decades Cornish miners and Cousin Jacks held their annual games.

**27. THE NEVADA ROOMS**, Second floor, 124 East Main Street. A brothel of some importance in the decades when prostitution flourished.

**28. THE GOLDEN GATE ROOMS**, Second floor, 122 East Main Street. Grass Valley's most famous brothel. Operated by the flamboyant Texas Tommy in the 1930's and 1940's.

**29. THE WASHINGTON BREWERY**, 114-116 East Main Street. Built by John Frank and David Binkelmann in 1858, according to E Clampus Vitus; or in 1862, according to other sources. Binkelmann had begun the Grass Valley Brewery in 1856 on North Auburn Street. The brewery was closed by Prohibition and later reopened as the Washington Tavern.

**30. THE EMPIRE ROOMS**, Second floor, 110 East Main Street. Another house of ill repute, operated during the 1930's by Jo May. From 1949 to 1958 the rooms became the Bartenders and Culinary Workers Union Hall.

**31. FOOTHILL FLOWERS**, 102 West Main Street. Located on the site of the original Loutzenheiser Pharmacy, this impressive brick structure was purchased by Marie Johnson in 1966 and is home to Foothill Flowers. The brick structure dates to the 1850's and remained in the Loutzenheiser family until 1928.

**32. WILLIAMS STATIONERY**, 112 West Main Street. Grass Valley's second oldest building was erected in 1854-55 as a mercantile and grocery business. It was known as Jenkins Variety Store for 47 years until 1949 when Floyd and Elton Williams purchased the business. Elton and Helen Williams bought the building and business in 1971.

**33. MONTEZ THEATER**, 116 West Main Street. Named for Lola Montez, this theater operated in 1930's and 1940's. From 1880 to 1900, this location was the site of Watt & Co., a general merchandise and grocery. Today, the building has been remodeled to become the Main Street Mall.

**34. ALPHA HARDWARE**, 204 West Main Street. This is the original 1870's site of Peter Purcell's Fashion Livery Stable and later served for decades as the home of the Alpha Hardware Co. The thick rock walls seen from the Holbrooke Hotel parking lot were built from local mine rock.

**35. BEATTY HOUSE-QUICK BUILDING**, 205-209 West Main Street. Built in late 1850 by Thomas and Zacheus Beatty, this wooden frame boardinghouse was destroyed in the fire of 1855 and rebuilt soon after. In 1882, A.P. Tietje and his brother, Henry, opened a cigar factory here. Former mayor William Parsons joined the firm and produced the Sierra Nevada Cigar.

**36. HOTEL DE FRANCE**, 206 West Main Street. Now home to the Canton Valley Chinese Restaurant, this site dates to 1852 and the opening of the Adams Express and Stage Co. A hotel was built following the 1855 fire and it was later renamed the Golden Gate Hotel. The hotel operated until 1905 when it was converted to a bank branch by Citizens Bank of Nevada City. The building was demolished in 1965 to make way for a Sears store.

**37. THE HOLBROOKE HOTEL**, 212 West Main Street. This is one of Grass Valley's most recognized landmarks. The Golden Gate Saloon was established on this site in 1851 and was rebuilt with stone and brick after the fire of 1855 and became known as the Exchange Hotel.

Daniel P. Holbrooke purchased the building in 1870 and renamed it. Restored to its original splendor, the Holbrooke is owned by local business people.

**38. MAIN STREET RESTAURANT & ANNEX**, 213-215 West Main Street. A book store and telegraph office operated here in the 1850's and it was a pool hall for many years before becoming a restaurant. The annex includes what was known as the Van Hoerter building, built by Joseph and Pauline Van Hoerter. Pauline had worked for John Sutter in Sacramento as a seamstress. In Grass Valley, she operated a soap factory, was involved in various real estate and mining enterprises and built Van's Opera House (at the site of Hedman's Furniture on Mill Street).

**39. TOFANELLI'S RESTAURANT**, 302 West Main Street. This one-story brick structure was built by local attorneys Alfred Dibble and James Byrne. It later became a hardware store, a market and print shop. Gino Tofanelli leased it during the 1940's and did business for two decades as Tofanelli's Market. It became a restaurant in 1977.

**40. FREEMAN'S BAKERY**, 302A West Main Street. Eli Freeman, a baker from Iowa, came to Grass Valley in the 1870's. He and his nephew, William, operated a bakery here for several decades. The shop later housed the Three R's Bookstore for 25 years.

**41. BRET HARTE INN**, 305 West Main Street. The City Hotel stood here in the 1850's but it burned down June 11, 1862 and was rebuilt. In the 1870's, it was known as The Cabinet, operated by the Temby brothers, Cornish wrestlers. The Bret Harte, named for the famous author, was built in 1917 and was a rival to the Holbrooke. Extensively remodeled in the 1980's, it is now a senior citizen retirement home.

**42. THE COLEMAN HOUSE**, 318 Neal Street. The house was built in the mid-1860's by Edward Coleman, owner of the North Star and Idaho mines as well as the Mohawk Lumber Co. He was also treasurer of the Nevada County Narrow Gauge Railroad. In 1982 Mark Murphy established and operated the residence as a bed and breakfast inn and left the exterior unchanged from the original. It is currently a private residence.

**43. GEORGE HILL RESIDENCE**, 319 Neal Street. Hill came to Grass Valley in 1858. He was a miner, farmer and dairyman whose first house was in the Hills Flat area, which is named after him. The Neal Street house is where Caroline Hanson lived when she originated Grass Valley's Donation Day in 1883.

**44. FRANK J. BEATTY RESIDENCE**, 403 Neal Street. This house was built in the 1890's by Charles Clinch and is also known as the Ridge-Tremoureaux house. Beatty came to Grass Valley in 1862, worked in mining, merchandising and banking. He married Alice B. Ridge, daughter of local newspaper editor John Rollin Ridge. Alice's grandmother, Elizabeth Ridge, planted the famed sugar

maple in the front yard in 1876; she brought this west from the battlefields of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

**45. EMMANUEL EPISCOPAL CHURCH**, 245 South Church Street. Built on land donated by the Gold Hill Mining Co. in 1858, this is the oldest Episcopal church in the Northern Mines region.

**46. WILLIAM CAMPBELL RESIDENCE**, 328 South Church Street. One of Grass Valley's earliest settlers, Campbell operated a bakery and grocery. He became one of the wealthiest citizens of the county and was widely traveled. He built a beautiful home on Church Street which later became the Jones Hospital which operated from 1907 into the 1960's. It is now a bed and breakfast inn known as the Swan-Levine house.

**47. ST. JOSEPH'S CULTURAL CENTER**. The building, site of the former Mt. St. Mary's Convent for the Sisters of Mercy, was completed in 1866. As soon as it opened it also served as an orphanage, and later a private school. The building was granted State Historic Landmark Status after it had achieved non-profit status in 1972. Currently the building and the adjacent St. Joseph's Hall serve as a cultural center with the Grass Valley Museum and thirteen artist studios as its centerpiece. St. Patrick's Cemetery across the street is one of the area's oldest, dating to 1853.

## Other Points of Interest

**NORTH STAR POWERHOUSE AND PELTON WHEEL MINING EXHIBIT**. Located at the end of Mill Street, near McCourtney and Allison Ranch Roads, this museum is a designated historic landmark. It houses a large exhibition of mining equipment and artifacts from the 1880's. Included in this display is a Cornish pump, a stamp mill and the world's largest Pelton Wheel (30 feet) built in 1895 by A.D. Foote. The museum is open to the public May 1- October 15; donations are accepted.

**GOLD QUARTZ DISCOVERY MARKER**. Located on Jenkins Street (Via Brighton and Cornwall), this marker commemorates the discovery of gold-bearing quartz. The legend goes back to 1850 when a cow, owned by George McKnight, strayed off across a meadow. In a rush to retrieve his fleeing animal, McKnight stubbed his toe on a protruding rock. Looking closer, he saw gold embedded in the quartz and thus hardrock mining came into existence in this area. This is the location of the Gold Hill Mine that is credited with producing \$4 million in gold from 1850 to 1857.

**LYMAN GILMORE SCHOOL**. The school occupies the site of the first commercial air field in the United States, which opened March 15, 1907. A school wall features a large mural of California's first aviator, Lyman Gilmore, who claimed to have flown before the Wright Brothers. Gilmore, who was known locally for his colorful character, died in 1951 at 74.

**EMPIRE MINE STATE HISTORIC PARK**. This 780-acre state park is located off East Empire Street one and a half miles from the downtown area. The Empire Mine was one of the oldest, largest, and richest mines in California. During 107 years of operation, it produced more than \$960 million in gold (based on 1974 gold market prices). The surface of the mine with its mansion, formal gardens, mining artifacts and trail systems, make the park a renowned historical and recreational showplace. Self-guided and docent tours are available.

## Other Nearby Points of Interest

**NEVADA CITY**. Located four miles to the northeast, the Queen City of the Northern Mines tastefully preserves its colorful gold mining and Victorian era history. Sightseers and photographers are entranced by spring flowers and spectacular fall colors amid the city's beautiful old homes and white church steeples. The entire downtown area, illuminated by gas lamps, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Museums, interesting shops, restaurants, and wineries are among the attractions.

**ROUGH & READY**. Located a few miles west of Grass Valley via Rough & Ready Highway, this tiny village was settled by the Rough & Ready Mining Co. whose leader, Captain Townsend, named it after President Zachary Taylor "Old Rough & Ready." This community once made history by seceding from the Union for a brief period and still holds an annual Secession Day celebration.

**BRIDGEPORT COVERED BRIDGE**. Located on the South Yuba River near Penn Valley, this 229-foot long span was built by David I. Wood in 1862. During the Gold Rush, countless Wells Fargo stagecoaches crossed this bridge enroute to the various northern mines.

**MALAKOFF DIGGINS STATE HISTORIC PARK**. Located a half-hour's drive northeast of Nevada City, the park includes what was once the largest hydraulic gold mine in the world along with the restored mining town of North Bloomfield.

## Grass Valley Parks

**VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK**. Located at Colfax Avenue and Race Street, Memorial Park is situated on a parcel of land presented to the City of Grass Valley in memory of those who served in the war. The park has excellent picnic facilities, playground, softball field, tennis courts and swimming pool.

**CONDON PARK**. Located off Butler Road or Brighton Street, Condon Park includes 180 acres of forestland and playing fields. The property was willed to the city for recreational uses by Miss Lulu Condon, a dynamic citizen of the mining era. The park has a meeting hall, excellent barbecue and picnic facilities, playground, two baseball and softball fields, a disc golf course, skateboard park and a trail system.

