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PIONEER DAYS  
"Along The MONO trail" 179  
TEXT & pics  
Det 11  
A. Reed

2010.25.16 O.K.



Picture Captions, MONO TRAIL.

1. Ma and Pa Cox rode into Yosemite from Arastraville, near Sonora,  
in 1905. Adele (Cox) Reed collection
2. Mono Lake and it's Gulls near their nesting grounds in 1938.  
Howard Jones collection
3. A baby Gull just out of shell at Negit Island in 1938.  
Howard Jones collection.
4. Beautiful Mono Lake, home of one of the largest sea Gull rookeries.  
Frasher Photo
5. Traveling El Camino Highway in 1916 by way of Mono Lake to  
Hammonds, now Tioga Lodge, around far point.  
Ben Noxon collection.



No. 16 Mono Trail Oct 11, '79

5 pax



## Pioneer days along the Mono Trail

by Adele Reed

An early passageway began opposite the scenic Mono Craters below Lee Vining. It ran near the historic King Ranch, an important stage stop between Mammoth City and Bodie in 1879, and later named Cain Ranch.

The trail angled up Bloody Canyon by Little Walker and Sardine Lakes to top the Sierra at Mono Pass. Then it led through magnificent pine-forested areas into Yosemite Valley. The trail was used by Mono and other Indians, by early prospectors and settlers and it also knew the traversing of exploration parties like that of Capt. Walker.

It once was a recreation trail for groups of Inyo-Mono ranchers who rode horses into Yosemite for a short vacation between haying work. As noted on a "Trail Map of Yosemite Valley" in a 1905 Yosemite souvenir and guide booklet, the Mono Trail is shown as leading down from the summit into the valley near the Yosemite Falls and Creek. It then joined the Eagle Peak and Big Oak Flat Trail to the west. In 1905 there were three toll-roads leading into Yosemite: the Wawona, the Merced-Santa Fe, and the Big Oak Flat route. There were many four or six-horse stages operating over the rugged roads. On the Wawona the tolls were \$1 per horse over any of the roads from the plains to Wawona and \$1.25 from there to Yosemite. Saddle horse and rider, 50 cents, pack animals 75 cents. The other two routes collected \$1 per person each way.

A "gasoline machine" came to Yosemite in August 1905, the pioneer to make a complete trip. The route was from Fresno via Raymond and Wawona. A large number of bicycles came in during summer, sometimes carrying a 50-lb. camp outfit. Some drove their own rigs in and some walked in using donkeys to carry the gear.

The saddle train owners in the valley kept 100 or more horses and mules to carry the thousand of visitors over the high trails. The historic booklet offers a complete history and beautiful pictures of a fresh, young Yosemite.

With permission from the Sierra Club we use from a letter in the Club Bulletin of Feb., 1930, titled "By Mono Pass into the Yosemite" by Anson Phelps Stokes.

"I have visited the Yosemite three times, 1868, from Merced, 1896, from Raymond and in July, 1897 by Mono Pass. The latter is by far the most enjoyable and interesting route being over high tablelands, amid grand scenery and snow topped mountains all the way, avoiding the dust, heat and other discomforts of the 71-mile drive from Raymond through a country mostly uninteresting.

"We arrived by rail at the Battle Mt., Nev. Station on the Central Pacific Railway where a narrow gauge

railroad runs, in five hours by the Reese River to Austin. With five in our party, we hired a victoria and a wagon, two drivers, horses and saddles from a Mr. Collins, keeper of a livery stable. The wildly beautiful Birch Creek Canyon is ten miles south of Austin, Kingston Mountain, 12,000 feet high, is on south, the scenery is very fine. One can stop over at ranches, but in that glorious climate sleeping on the ground under the stars, is delightful and food cooked at the campfire, delicious.

"Game birds are abundant, sage chickens are as good as young partridges. Trout abound in the Reese River, in the lakes on Mono Pass and in the many streams on our route. We saw bands of wild horses that are numerous in Nevada and we noted Indians along the way, some working on ranches. The women wore colorful dress and shawls. The road passes close by Mono Lake, and object of surpassing interest, a quarternary lake by the side of an obsidian cliff of a volcanic mountain having three distinct craters in full view from the road. One can never forget the scenery about this strange round lake, 12 miles in diameter, with great, rapid trout streams running into it and no visible outlet. The volcanic island with its hot spring, the glistening cliff of black glass, the mountain showing the craters, the lava hills to the westward, the green valley toward the Mono Pass and the great line of snow mountains rising steep on the west and south. Many people would now go over this pass if they knew about the route.

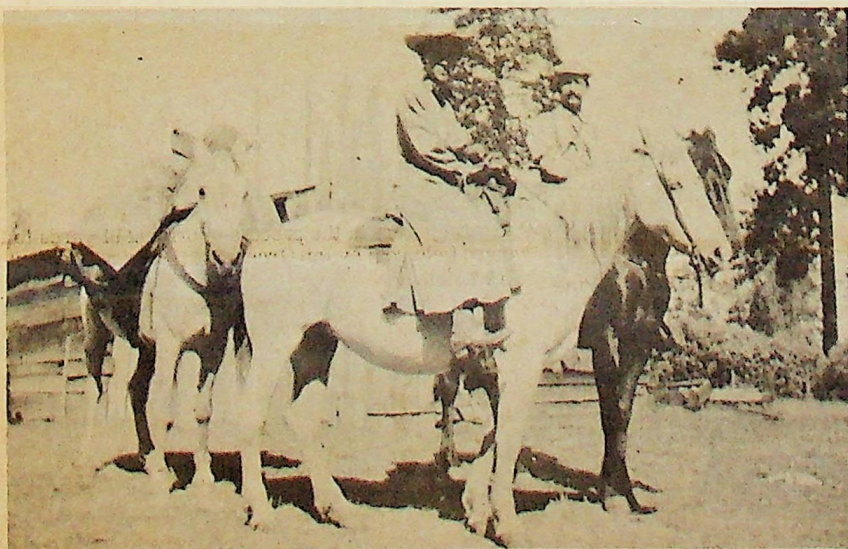
"We rode and drove 295 miles from Austin, Nevada, to the Yosemite and all agreed it was one of the most charming excursions we had ever enjoyed. It would have been about 250 miles if we had not left the road to visit interesting places.

"We left the carriage and the wagon at the foot of Mono Pass and sent the horses back from the Yosemite, as we had ordered our auto around to Raymond to meet us there."

A.P.S.

As noted in MOTOR AGE, July 31, 1913; "The Yosemite National Park will be opened to motorists August 1 and the throwing open of the gates of this wonderland will be the occasion of a big celebration. The fight to have the barriers against the motor car raised, was along one the motorists met reversal after intreating with the Department of the Interior at Washington.

"While the Coulterville road will be the first one that will be opened to motor traffic, it is most likely that if no serious mishaps occur, the Big Oak Flat and Wawona roads will be opened also in a session or two." Special telegram from Washington, D.C.



MA AND PA COX rode into Yosemite from Arastraville, near Sonora, in 1905.

Adele (Cox) Reed Collection



Yosemite.

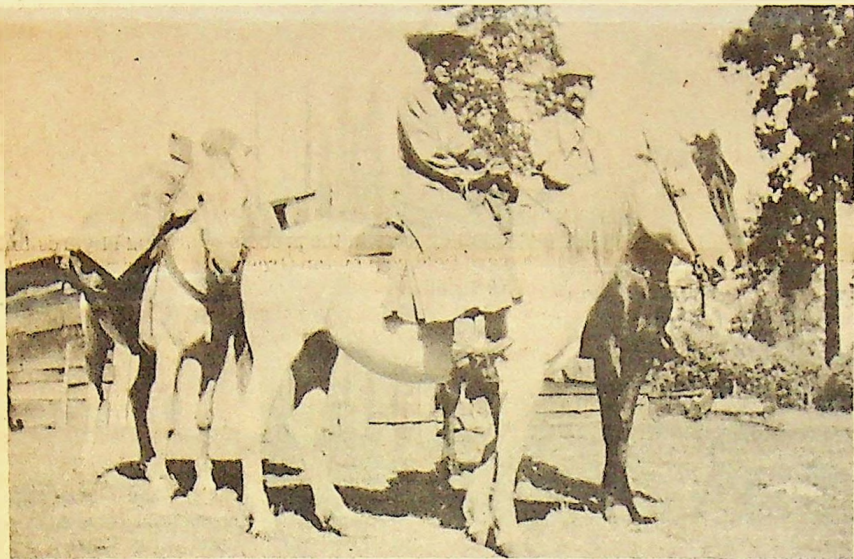
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TRAVELING the El Camino Highway in 1916 by way of Mono Lake to Hammonds, now Tioga Lodge, around the far point.

Ben Noxon Collection

