

Tehachapi Pass

TE
McA

TEHACHAPI HERITAGE LEAGUE
BOX 54
TEHACHAPI, CA. 93561

Tehachapi Pass



A history of roads, places, events and people of Mojave, Keene, Caliente and Edison and places between.

Melvin McAllister

Tehachapi Pass

road to travel. From Tehachapi Pass to Bakersfield the road is in fine shape provide one keeps on the regular road into Bakersfield and does not take the cutoff south of that city.

The 1877-1916 Tehachapi Pass Road. Refer to Map 1-3 (Tehachapi to Halter Grade) and Map 1-4 (Halter Grade to Keene). I call it the 1877-1916 road because the first definite proof I find of any Tehachapi Pass roads is on an 1877 map and because the road was replaced in 1916. The 1892 official Kern County Map and the 1912 County map shows much the same road. A 1912 County map is in Kelsey's Restaurant on Tehachapi Blvd in Tehachapi. The Kern County Road Department has a map that shows that at least part of the 1877-1916 road was officially abandoned in 1933. It was about this time that the State of California established the highway through Tehachapi Pass. The abandonment was also just after the disastrous 1932 flood of Tehachapi Creek.

The 1892 map shows the first segment going straight west north of Tehachapi and then curving to Williamsburg. This road north of Tehachapi seems to be an extension of the road from Mojave and this road is probably the present 202 Highway (Valley Blvd). An explanation for the road being north is Tehachapi did not exist prior to 1876 and the same route was still used after Tehachapi was established..

From Williamsburg, the 1877-1916 road goes north. This road would have gone over "the hump", also known as Halter Grade. Halter Grade is the north end of what is now Mariposa Street in the Oak Knolls tract. Mariposa Street, after it goes over the hump goes straight west and almost straight down. It is steep. It is not maintained because of the steepness (water wash outs). The Woodford Tehachapi Road did not exist at the time. From a vantage point of what is now Woodford Tehachapi Road, one can look northeast and see the depression of the old road as it slopes down and goes around a rock pile looking hill.

The present Woodford Tehachapi Road was completed in 1916 and is just west of the 1877-1916 road as it goes north from Old Town (Williamsburg). The specific improvements of the Woodford Tehachapi Road versus the old road were to straighten the road somewhat, to eliminate the steep Halter Grade and to eliminate railroad crossings. The Woodford Tehachapi Road continued north around the hill and then came back west to where the 1877-1916 road went over the Halter Grade hump. Routing the road around the hill created a much less steep road. The road around the hill is shown in the upper left of Map 1-3 (Tehachapi to Halter Grade). My first interest in the Tehachapi Pass roads was due to a death in a car accident on the steep Halter Grade road in 1914.

The 1877-1916 road crosses the Woodford Tehachapi road followed a straight path just south of Marcel Road and then crossed Marcel Road and then crossed the railroad tracks. You can see a cut where probably the 1877-1916 road crossed Marcel Road.

After crossing the railroad tracks, the 1877-1916 road went in a straight line down to near Tehachapi Creek and then went around a hill and past the Tehachapi Loop. Map 1-4 (Halter Grade to Keene) shows the 1877-1916 road as a line depicted with the dots. This road went through the center of what is now the Loop Ranch headquarters and then crossed the tracks. This track crossing is the one used to get to the Loop Ranch. The 1877-1916 road then meshed with what is now the Woodford Tehachapi Road. The road then went north of the railroad tracks until it neared Keene. I have traced most of the road up to near Keene. The section north of the railroad tracks did not seem possible because of the washed out terrain. I later realized the washed out section was a result of the 1932

Tehachapi Pass

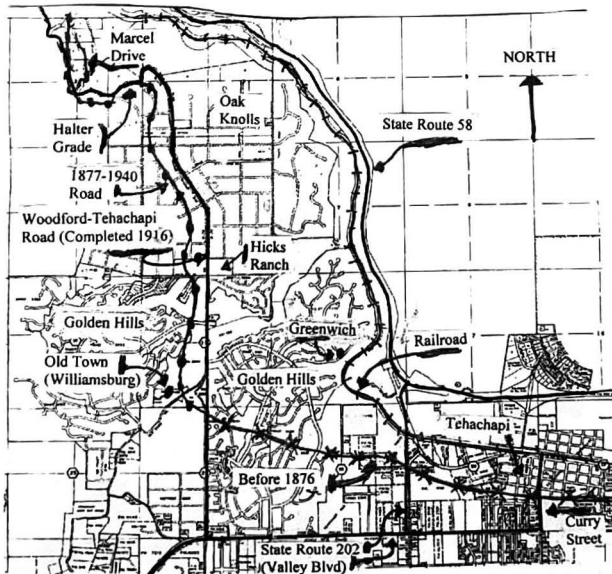
flood. The pre Tehachapi Woodford road was abandoned in 1933. The abandonment was probably spurred on by the 1932 flood damage to the road.

Up to this point, there seems to have a need for much dirt movement to construct the 1877-1916 Road. To construct a road on into Keene and past Keene to the Bealville road, there must have been considerable dirt movement.

The location of many of the roads (in relation to the railroad, Tehachapi Creek, present Route 58 and Woodford Tehachapi Road) are shown on Case files in the Kern County Road Department. These case files are accessible on the Internet.

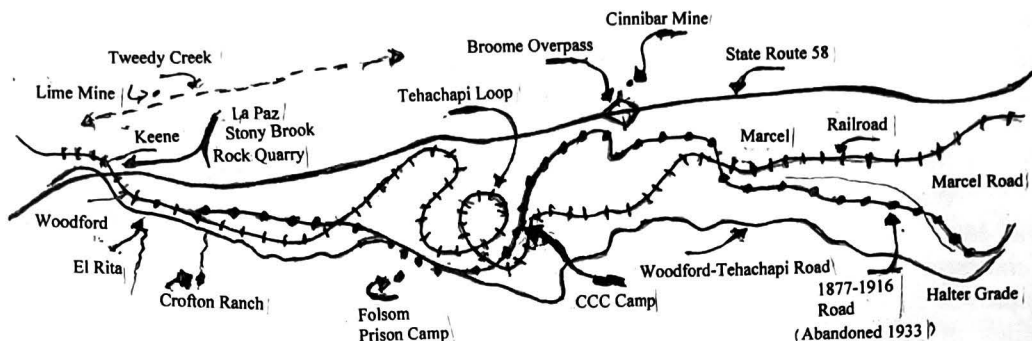
Woodford Tehachapi Area Road. Refer to Map 1-3 (Tehachapi to Halter Grade) and Map 1-4 (Halter Grade to Keene). Woodford Tehachapi Road (The road from Tehachapi to Keene.) was constructed with funds from a Kern County bond issue approved July 18, 1913. The Bond issue was for \$2,500,000. From this bond issue, 28.2 miles of road was constructed from Sand Cut to Tehachapi and 20.8 miles from Tehachapi to Mojave (Sand Cut is just west of Edison and is the first curve in the railroad from Edison to Bena. Sand Cut was simply a designation for the railroad purposes.). The Woodford Tehachapi road was completed in 1916. This road eliminated steep inclines and railroad crossings. It was rather windy (curvy) (and still is), and probably windier than the previous road. This road (from Tehachapi to Keene) is still in use and is well defined on modern road maps. It goes past the Tehachapi Loop and is south of the railroad.

The 1877-1940 Keene to Bealville Cutoff Road. Refer to Map 1-5 (Keene to Hart Flat) and Map 1-6 (Bealville Area Roads). I do not know what the early roads were called that went from Keene to the Bealville road. I will call it the 1877-1940 Keene to Bealville Cutoff road. The first part is shown in Map 1-5 (Keene To Hart Flat Road) that I have labeled the Keene to Hart Flat. I call it the 1877-1940 road because it shows up on the 1877 map and was replaced in 1940. This road goes across the present Route 58 and then across 58 again and follows a route close to the 58 until before the Hart Flat underpass. It again crosses 58 and goes east. This 1877-1940 road is depicted



Map 1-3, Tehachapi to Halter Grade

Tehachapi Pass



Map 1-4, Halter Grade to Keene.

on Map 1-5 as a line with dots on it. The section of road from the underpass to where it does a 90-degree to the left to go to Hart Flat is the only part of this road that still in use. This road was part of the road built with the 1915 Kern County Bond Issue. The Woodford Tehachapi Road from Tehachapi to Keene was built as a new route. The road from Keene to the Bealville road was most certainly the route that existed from the 1850's.

The road now goes through what is now private property. The road is fairly straight until after Clear Creek. There is still a cement slab crossing at Clear Creek (See Picture 1-8 (Clear Creek Bridge)). There was a service station at Clear Creek (see Picture 1-7 (Clear Creek Service Station)). In 1948, Wallace Beery bought the land where the road was. Wallace then gave or sold the land to his nephew, Noah Beery Jr. Noah built a residence around the station. There is a barn below the service station that was used for dances. The Barn is discussed elsewhere. Every time I have seen Clear Creek at this location, it has a good flow of water----even in mid summer.



Picture 1-7, Clear Creek Service Station

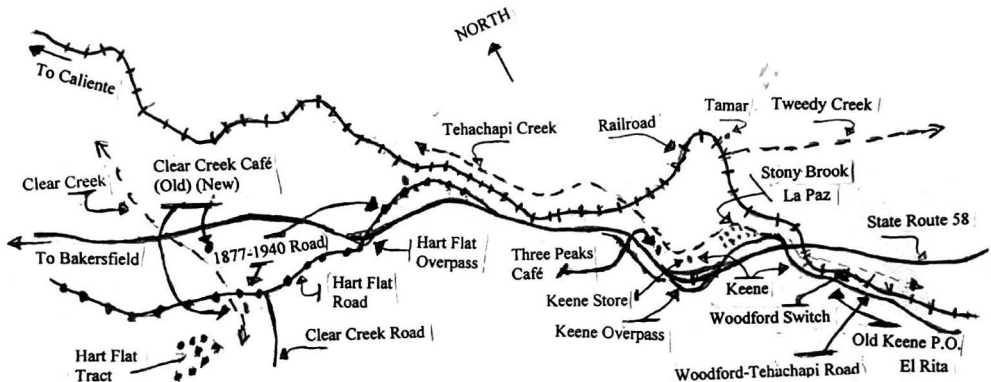


Picture 1-8, Clear Creek Bridge

Tehachapi Pass

A little past the station, the road becomes very windy (curvy) and is narrow. Part of this abandoned road still has asphalt paving. The road is on private land now. The road comes out to Route 58 about 1.5 miles north of the Bealville cutoff road. It is easily seen on the north side of Route 58. The outline of the road just prior to where it comes out to Route 58 can be seen from 58 at a few locations. After the road comes out at what is now Route 58, it generally followed what is now Route 58 until it reaches the start of Bena road. This 1877-1940 road was replaced in 1940 by the two-lane road that is now the four-lane State Route 58.

White Wolf Grade. Refer to Map 1-6 (White Wolf Grade). White Wolf Grade is also known as State Highway 223 goes from what is now State Route 58 to Arvin. This was not always such. There are two White Wolf Grade's. One is the 1877-1916 White Wolf Grade. Prior to at least 1916, White Wolf Grade did not go to Arvin as it does now. Arvin was only starting as a town in 1912 and was not on most maps yet. The 1877-1916 White Wolf Grade went around a large rocky hill to Rockpile. This earlier road was very narrow and precipitous. A Tehachapi News article of 1915 noted that when the road from Sandcut to Tehachapi was finished, the dreaded White Wolf Grade would not need to be taken to get to Bakersfield. One look at the 1877-1916 White Wolf Grade will show why it could be dreaded. Picture 1-6 (White Wolf Grade) shows part of the road. It is



Map 1-5, Keene to Hart Flat Road.

difficult for me to believe that this was the main road to the San Joaquin Valley.

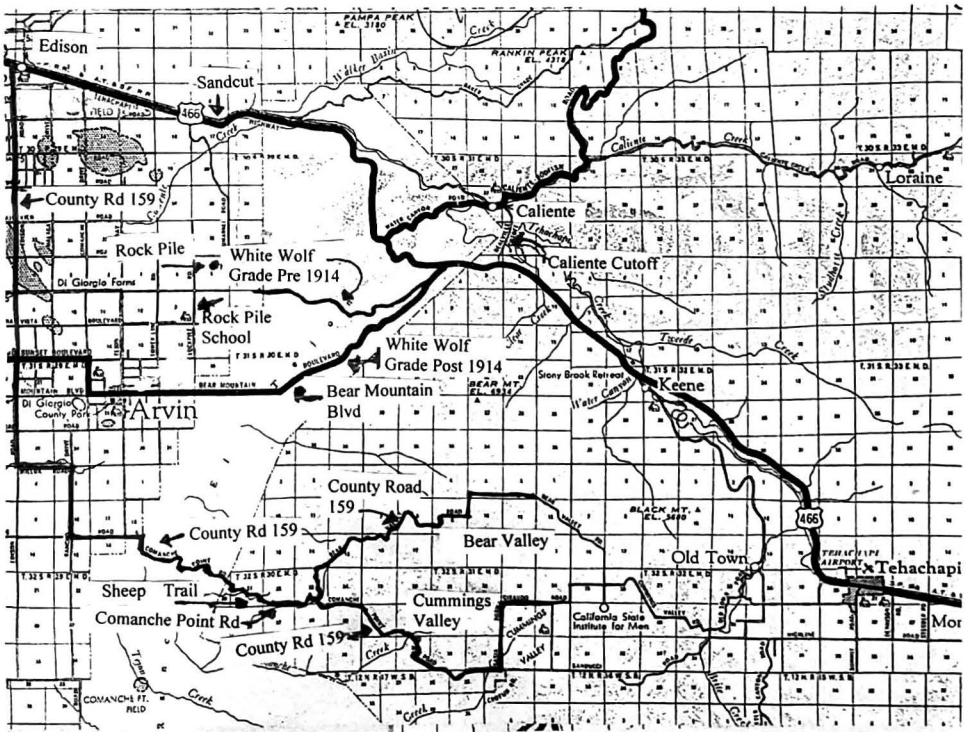
The pre-1877 White Wolf Grade is shown on an 1877 map, an 1892 map and a 1912 map. When the road was first cut in the hill is not known. I believe it was cut several years prior to 1877 and as early as the 1850's. The Kern County department that records the roads does not have any record that the road was made or abandoned. This is an example of a main road that was not owned by any government agency. The road shows as a trail on the Official Kern County 1912 Map. It shows as a trail probably because it was not a Kern County Road. The road goes very near the Rockpile School (Now known as the Di Giorgio School). The name of Rockpile is because nearby there is a large outgrowth of rocks in the flat terrain of the valley. There probably was a community of sort near there (There was no post office ever registered.). The grade to Arvin was made probably some short time after 1916. The first road to Arvin was very windy (curvy). In later years the road was straightened to what it is now.

Tehachapi Pass

Map 1-6 (1877-1916 White Wolf Grade) is based on a 1958 map. The 1877-1916 Road first shows up on the 1877 map. Highway 466 represents roads that were finished in 1916 from Sandcut to Bealville Cutoff, in 1936 from Water Canyon to Bealville Cutoff, in 1940 Bealville Cutoff to Keene and in 1948 (Keene to Tehachapi).

Bealville To Bena Roads. Refer to Map 1-7 (Bealville Area Roads). The history of any early road from the Bealville Cutoff (One old map actually has this name of Bealville Cutoff.) to Bakersfield is somewhat fuzzy. There must have been an early road to Allen's Camp and later Caliente. Allen's Camp was setup as a supply camp for supplies being delivered to the mining districts north of there. The Kern County records show the present Bealville Cutoff road was adopted by the county in 1875. This is an early date for the county to adopt a road in this area. It must have deemed to be an important road.

A 1910 map shows a possible road from Caliente towards Bakersfield going north of the railroad. This may be the county road (County Road G) shown on the county case maps that goes to Bena and was abandoned in 1933. This road went on the north side of Caliente Creek for some length. A road from Caliente to an existing road to Tehachapi was necessary after the railroad was completed to Caliente. The present road from Caliente to State Route 58 seems to be the original early road. This road is somewhat steep for horse drawn vehicles. The may be why the White Wolf Grade was preferred.



Map 1-6, 1877-1916 White Wolf Grade

A little reminder. Early roads were not usually the work of the State or County. This is especially true when they were in isolated areas. This means that State or County

Tehachapi Pass

records do not show the existence of some of these roads. There are probably situations where the County has abandoned roads that were not really County sanctioned roads. Arthur Crites in his Pioneer Days in Kern County book of 1951 notes that in 1870 all main roads were toll roads. Commencing about 1874, the county began to acquire the toll roads and that about 1884, the only toll road left was Baker's Grade (Baker's Grade was a road to Havilah built by Colonel Baker. It is reportedly one of the few profitable toll roads. Most of the road can still be located and it is on private land. See Map 1-10 (Bena Area) which shows where Baker's Grade started up the mountain.). He also noted that the early roads followed along the foothills, in order to avoid the swampy and overflow lands and the sloughs to be found on the floor of the valley.

An Article in the November 1915 Tehachapi Tomahawk newspaper discusses a new road (section 7) that runs from the gate of the Kern County Land Company's Bealville ranch westerly across the Tejon Ranch holdings and connects with the section now under construction from Sivert (Sand-cut) west. "As soon as the section 7 is finished, the **dreaded** White Wolf grade will be eliminated and travel from the Land Co. gate will be over the route of the county highway to East Bakersfield". I interpret this statement to mean the older White Wolf Grade was a main road before 1915. The road still exists (It is on Tejon Ranch Property and inaccessible.) and can easily be seen from the present White Wolf Grade.

This new section road mentioned in the previous paragraph is what I note as the 1916 road and the 1916-1936 road in Map 1-7 (Bealville Area Roads). The 1916-1936 road goes from the Bealville Cutoff road to the 1916 road. Part of this road is now called the Caliente Bodfish Road (It was earlier called the Water Canyon road and is now shown on the signs as Cal-Bodfish Road.). When the State of California took over maintenance of the Bakersfield to Mojave roads in 1933, the State built a new section of road from Cal-Bodfish Road to Bealville Cutoff. This road was completed in 1936. The 1916-1936 road was later abandoned and can easily be seen from State Route 58. It can also be seen from Cal-Bodfish Road. It is difficult to believe that a narrow and windy (curvy) road was once a State Highway.

The 1916 road from Sandcut to the Cal-Bodfish Road was greatly altered after the State of California assumed its maintenance. It was considerably straightened and parts relocated. The road around Sandcut was abandoned and a road through the sand was constructed. The sections of road with an x in Map 1-7 (Bealville Area Roads) shows some of the realignment. The road around Sandcut is shown in Map, 1-10 (Bena Area).

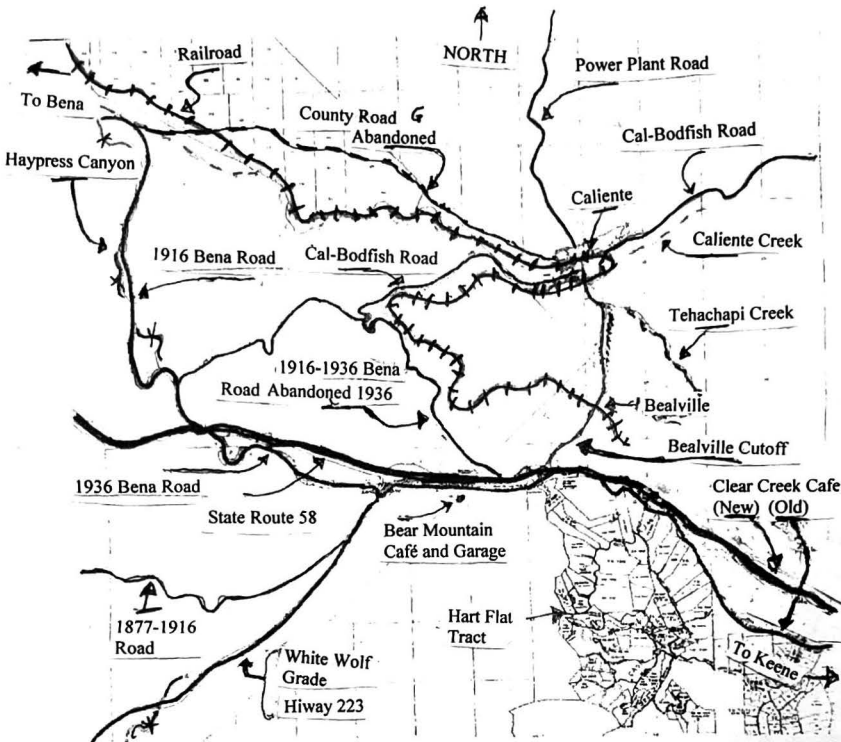
Except for Bena, there is no sign of life (no buildings) from the Arvin Road (Highway 223) until you get to Edison. An exception is the structures that exist at the abandoned Simplot Fertilizer Plant in Bena.

1941 ACSC Map. Map 1-8 (1941 ACSC Map) is interesting. ACSC is the Automobile Club of Southern California. It shows Tollgate Canyon Road. It shows a road going from the Tehachapi Loop to a mill, which was the cinnabar processing plant. The Caliente Cutoff road is still a dirt road. It shows what was Williamsburg as being Old Town. It shows Stony Brook Retreat and Kern County Preventorium and being separate entities. General Beale Road next to Rockpile does not yet exist.

Compare this with the 1933 ACSC Map. It shows how the State Highway Department straightened and altered the Bena Road. Note how the jog around Sandcut

Tehachapi Pass

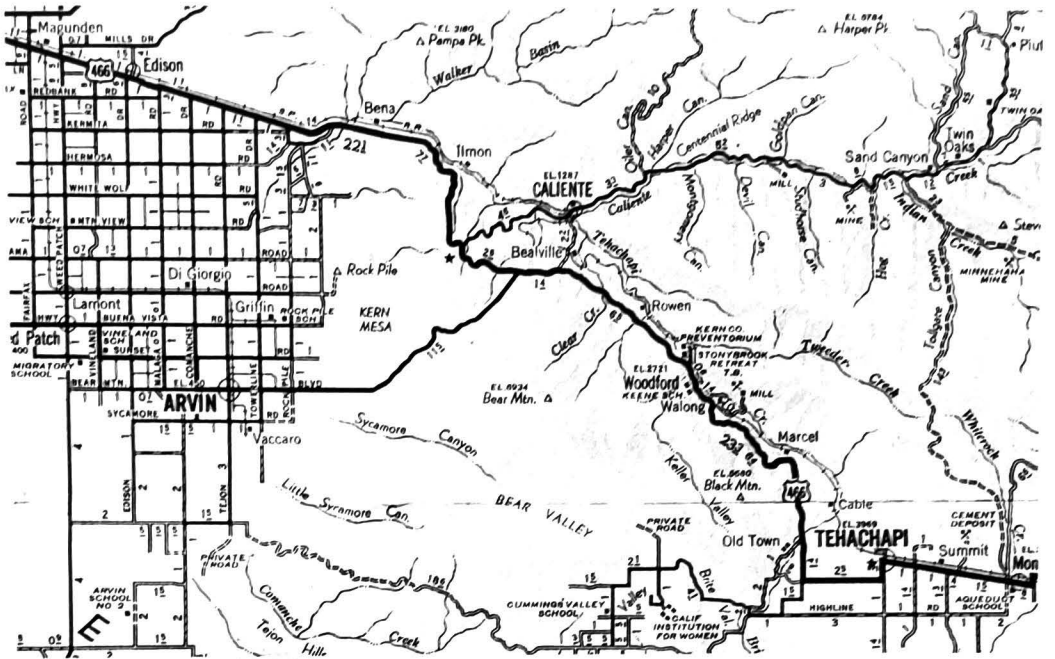
(between Edison and Bena) is eliminated as shown in the 1941 map. Note the road is not as wiggly between Sandcut and the Bealville Cutoff. Much straightening had been done.



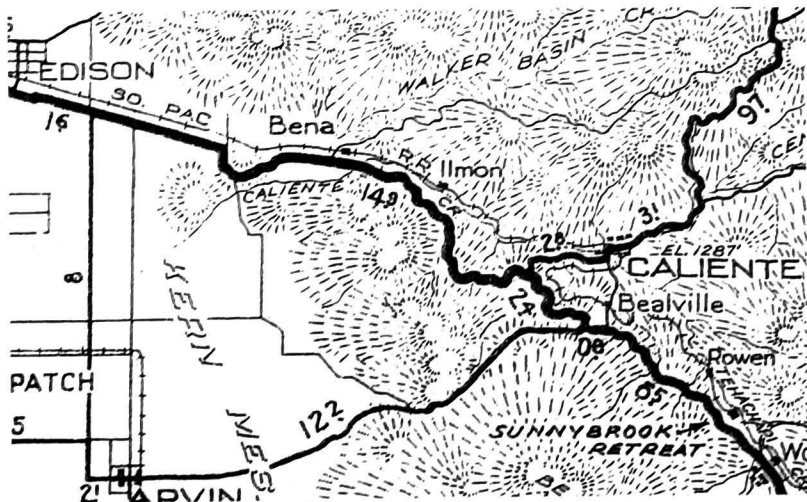
Map 1-7, Bealville Area Roads

Note in the 1933 map, the road between the Bealville Cutoff and the road that meets the junction of the road to Caliente and Bena to Caliente follows the railroad tracks. The new Bena Road, completed in 1936, eliminated this road except for the part that was retained to extend Cal-Bodfish Road to the new Bena Road.

Tehachapi Pass

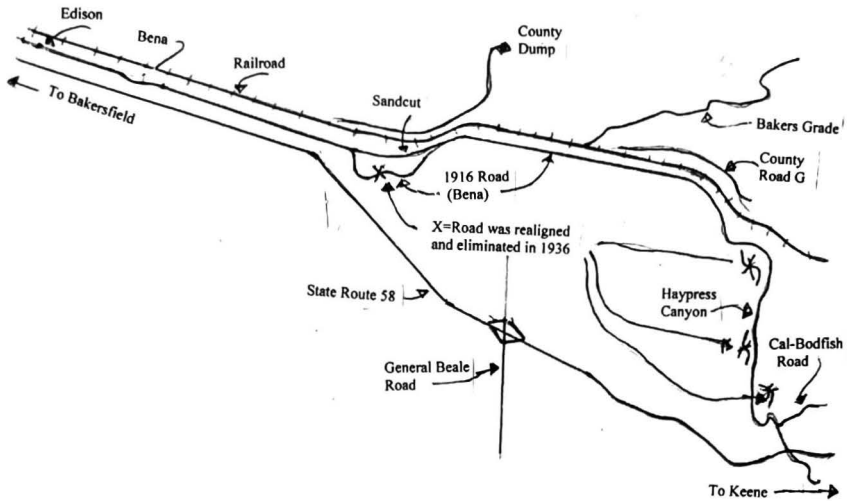


Map 1-8, 1941 ACSC Map.



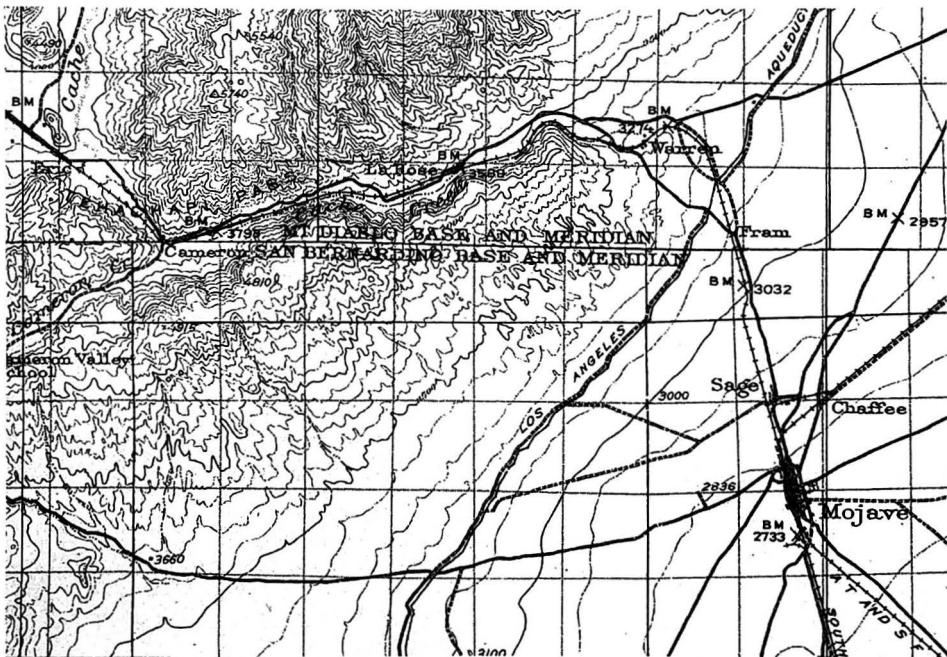
Map 1-9, 1933 ACSC Map

Tehachapi Pass



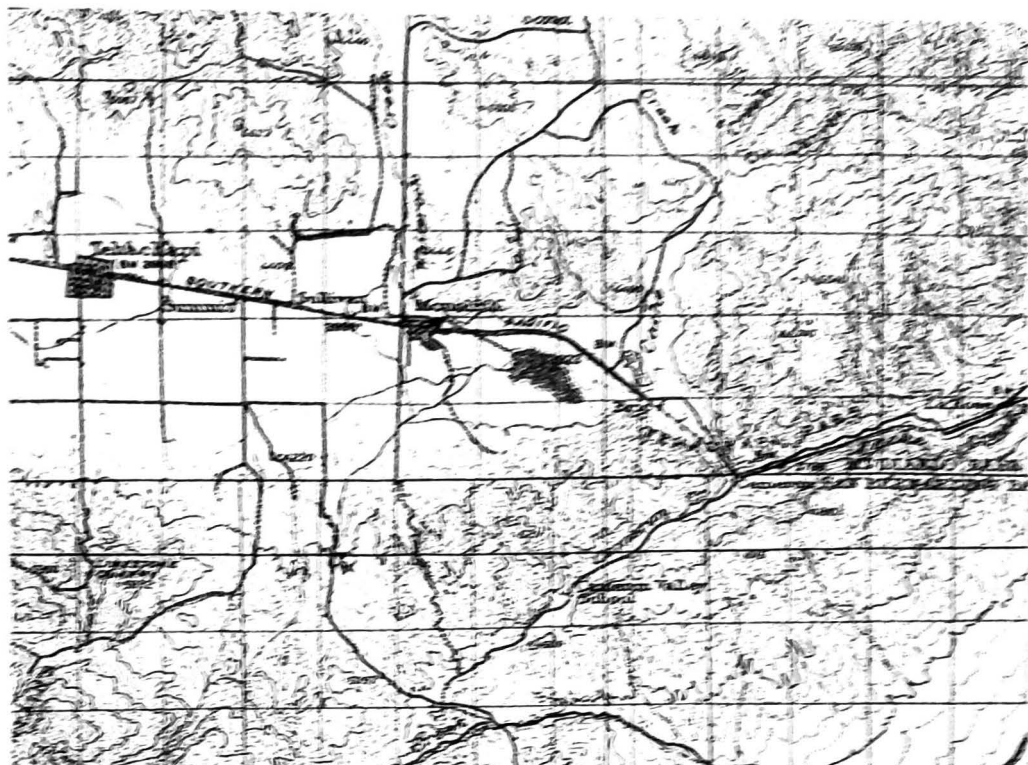
Map 1-10, Bena Area.

More Maps. Two topographical maps of 1914 and 1915 show the roads before the road was completed as a result of the 1913 \$2, 500,000 Kern County bond issue.



Map 1-11, 1914 Mojave to Cameron

The first topographical excerpt Map 1-11 (1914 Mojave to Cameron) shows the road from Mojave to Cameron Station (The railroad station---not the stage stop.). Note how the road crosses the railroad tracks at Fram and the below Warren. The road again crosses the railroad tracks for a while at La Rose.

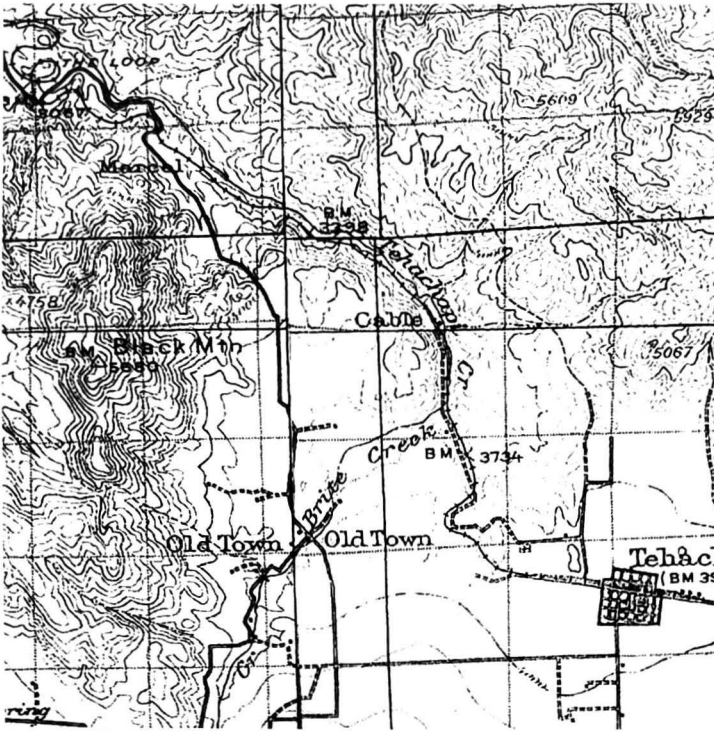


Map 1-12. Cameron to Tehachapi

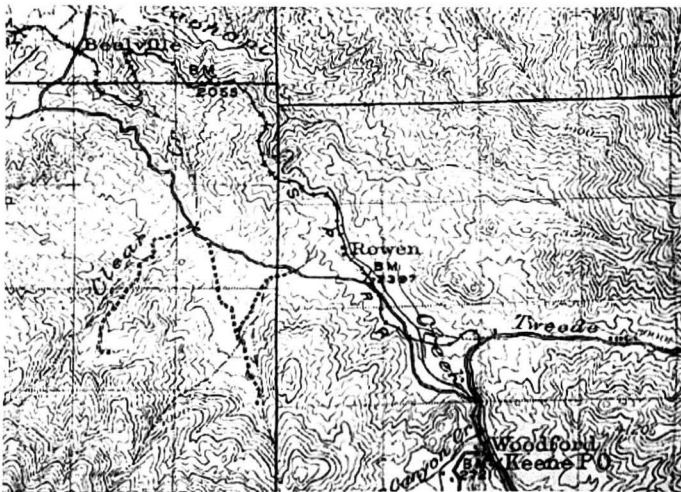
The next topographical excerpt, Map 1-12 (Cameron to Tehachapi) map is from Cameron to Tehachapi. The road much follows the railroad as the land is very level. Of interest is the Cameron Valley School location. Also note the trail from the Cameron Creek to Monolith. (This trail was probably the trail used by the stagecoach companies.) Also note there is a road from the Cameron Creek road going northwest to what is now Highline Road. Also note the Limestone Quarry directly south of Tehachapi.

The next topographical excerpt, Map 1-13 (Tehachapi to Tehachapi Loop) is from the Mojave 1915 Topographical Map and the 1914 Caliente Topographical Map. The two maps (The 1915 Mojave and the 1914 Caliente map.) have been combined at Old Town. This is the reason there is two Old Town's shown. Note that the road from Tehachapi goes south and then west and then north to Old Town. This southern route is probably because of terrain and because the road existed pro to Tehachapi.

Tehachapi Pass

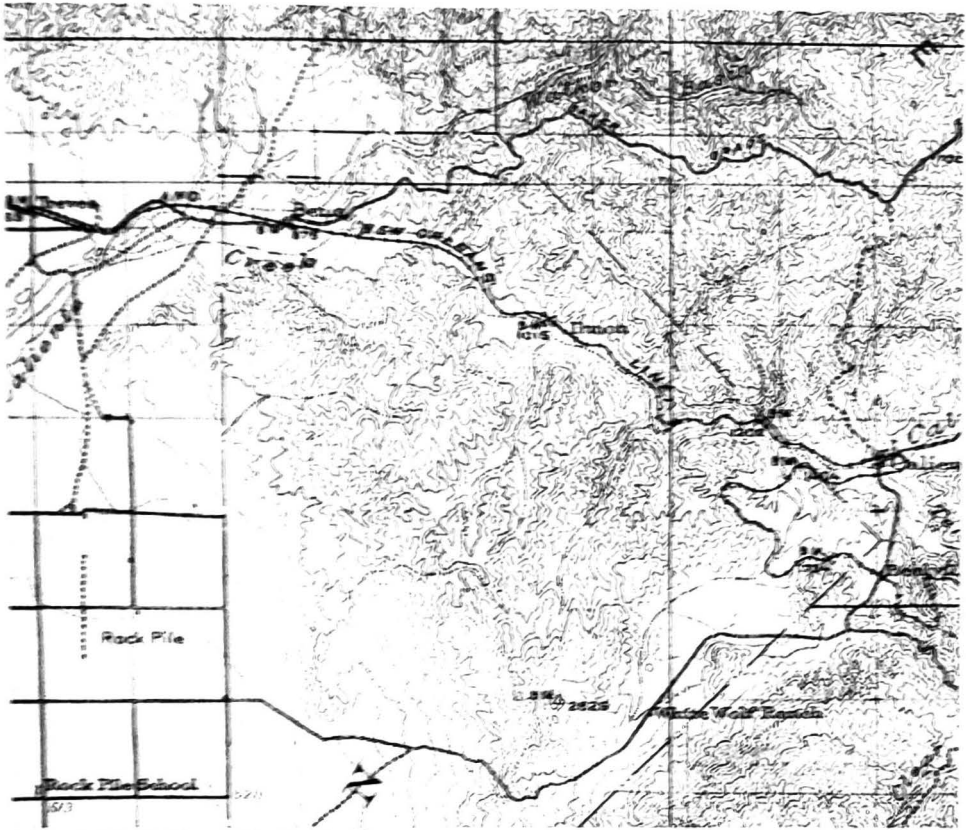


Map 1-13, Tehachapi to Tehachapi Loop.



Map 1-14, Keene to Bealville

The excerpt of the road from Keene to Bealville is shown in Map 1-14 (Keene to Bealville). This shows the 1877-1940 road. Note the very windyness (curviness) of the road in the upper left part of the map.



Map 1-15, Caliente To Rockpile

The excerpt shown in Map 1-15 (Caliente to Rockpile) is interesting in that there is no direct road from Caliente to Bena. The only road to the San Joaquin Valley is the White Wolf Grade going to near Rockpile.

Sheep Trail. There was (and still is—sorta) another route to get to Bakersfield, Map 1-6 (1877-1916 White Wolf Grade). Sheep men herded their sheep over the mountain from Cummings Valley into the San Joaquin Valley. Apparently, it seemed to be a good idea to have a road over the same trail used by the sheep men. This would also give access to the San Joaquin Valley for the Cummings Valley and Bear Valley residents. Local residents built the road. By 1897, a road was completed and the Kern County Supervisor's commissioned it a county road. It was designated County Road 159. What is odd is that Kern County records shows two County Roads 159. One starts in Bear Valley and the other starts in Cummings Valley. Both meet at the west end of each valley. From there, Road 159 goes west over the mountain and then through the San Joaquin Valley to Edison. The part of the road in Cummings Valley and the part over the Mountain is also known as Comanche Point Road.

County Road 159 in Bear Valley has been vacated. Subdivision roads overlaid the county road in the 1970's when Dart Industries subdivided Bear Valley. The road from Cummings Valley to the San Joaquin Valley is still in existence and can be driven over.

Tehachapi Pass

Modern Roads. In 1936, there was a push (more like a clamor) to improve the road from Tehachapi to Bakersfield. The 18 September 1936 Tehachapi News noted Mojave now has a fine straight highway to Tehachapi, but it is still bottled off from Bakersfield. The article noted that the road to Bakersfield was a “death trap”. There were fifty-three accidents on this 18-mile stretch of road since 1929. The accidents were due to the sharp, narrow curves. There are 181 curves sufficient to make 21 complete circles. The accidents resulted in fourteen deaths and sixty-three injuries. There are 381 cars using the road daily. The October 16, 1936 Tehachapi News headlines noted the “Death trap curves are the worst to be found on any state road”. The State Chamber of Commerce, The Southern California Automobile Club, the Kern County Board of Supervisors, and others joined an endorsement for a new road. The Monolith Portland Cement Company had arguments drawn up by an attorney and sent to the Highway Commission. Monolith argued that to compete with the northern California mills, better roads must be constructed. The application showed; “This Company has suffered and is suffering immeasurable damage as the result of that eighteen mile stretch of highway between Tehachapi and Bakersfield”. “Monolith truckers are required to use more than twice the time to drive over that highway that they should use if the road were in good condition. Monolith noted that since July 1920, the company has paid in wages more than six million dollars. From January to August inclusive of this year, 1936, the company paid in wages \$310,215.04. This money was spent in California and probably most of it in Kern County. In addition to wages the company has spent in the last few years, \$214, 616.23 for state and County taxes. For trucking its product, the company has paid from January 1930 to present month (1936) \$1,439,316.08. Of the amount paid by the company for trucking, \$479,722.02 went to pay for gasoline. The arguments continued. The arguments alluded to the isolation of Tehachapi from the rest of the State and County.

Map 1-9 (1933 ACSC Map) shows the curviness of the Tehachapi to Bakersfield Road. The map helps understand the problems discussed above.

Keene Bealville Road. The plea in 1936 for a better road between Tehachapi and Bakersfield may have been heard. As discussed prior, the Keene to Bealville Cutoff road, referred to as the 1877-1940 road previously, was very windy (curvy) and narrow at for most of its length. In 1940, the new road was completed that considerably straightened the route from Keene to the Bealville cutoff road. A 28-foot width replaced the 16-foot width of the former road. The minimum radius of a curve of 1000 feet replaced the curve radius of 50 feet. The maximum grade was reduced from 7.5 per cent to 6 percent. The horizontal sight distance was increased from 50 feet to 600 feet. Travel times to Bakersfield for trucks were reduced by 20 to 40 minutes.

The need for a better road is evidenced by an increase of weekday traffic of 148 percent in the five years before the road was opened. A California Highways article states that during the wild flower season this highway carries a daily flow of traffic reaching nearly 4000 vehicles (contrast this with just 12,000 semi rigs per day in 2004). The new road benefited the cement plant east of Tehachapi. The cement plant delivered cement to San Joaquin by truck.

The 1877-1940 road was officially abandoned in 1947 and probably immediately abandoned in 1940 for use. There appears to have been a connector road that was used

Tehachapi Pass

between the old and new road. This was probably to by-pass the very windy (curvy) part of the old road as the new road was being completed.

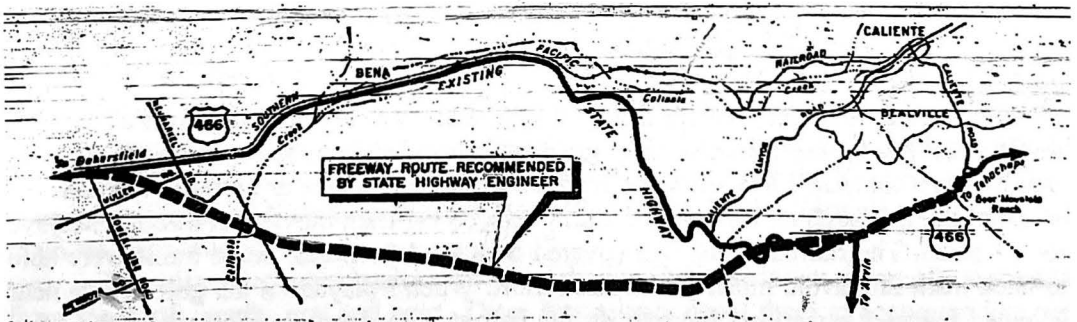
Tehachapi Keene Road. The 10.5 miles from Keene to Tehachapi was completed in 1948. The same section of the Woodford Tehachapi Road completed in 1916 was 13.8 miles long. This section of road was started in 1937 using prison labor (See Folsom Prison in another section of this book.). This was a continuation of work that started at Bear Mountain in which the Keene to Bealville Cutoff road was completed in 1940. Work stopped on the road from Keen to Tehachapi in 1943 when the prison labor camp was closed down. The WWII shortage of material for bridge construction was given as the main reason for closing down the work on the road. The road was completed to near Cable (only a few miles from Tehachapi.) by the end of 1941. Work did not start again until after WWII and the road was completed in 1948.

The Tehachapi City Council appealed the 1943 work stoppage to the County Commissioners. State Highway Commission and the Army. The argument was that a good road was essential to the war effort. It was noted the road was virtually completed and is lying idle on account of rigid Government restriction. The appeal was of no avail.

After World War II, private contractor's completed the road. The peak output excavation was 11,000 cubic yards per day. To accomplish this three 2½ cubic yard shovels, 6 Tournapuls and 6 carryalls and 15 bulldozers were used. About one-third of the excavation was rock that required blasting. The road was constructed to be on the north side of Tehachapi Creek so as to benefit from the Sun for snow melting and dryness.

There was a dedication celebration in Tehachapi October 13, 1948. There were representatives of the State, City and County that joined the citizens of the community in a ribbon cutting ceremony.

Four-Lane Road. Most documents and news articles refer to the four-lane road as the freeway or State Route 58. In fact, the route is not a freeway in places. Also, the designation of State Route 58 did not occur until 1964. Prior to 1964 the road was designated US Highway 466. I have not been able to completely research the construction of the US466/SR58 four-lane road. The four-lane road starting west of Tehachapi to Bear Mountain followed the previous two-lane road route almost exactly. From Bear Mountain to Bakersfield, the four-lane road route was completely new. In 1956, The State Division of Highways began presenting the four-lane road options. Map 1-16 (1957 Proposal) shows the proposed new four-lane road in 1957.



Map 1-16, 1957 Proposal

Tehachapi Pass

In November of 1960, the section between Tower Line Road, (near Edison) and Bear Mountain (near the Arvin cutoff—State highway 223)) was completed. Pending completion of the road on to Bakersfield, traffic was diverted to Tower Line Road and then to near Edison. The road construction through the mountains was to start in January 1960.

It was not until May of 1970 that the four-lane route by-passing Tehachapi was completed. When the improved two-lane road was completed in 1948, there was a large celebration. This two-lane road went through the main thoroughfare of Tehachapi. The town of Tehachapi convinced the State Highway Department to not route the road to by-pass Tehachapi. This was not the case for the four-lane road. It bypassed Tehachapi. The loss of traffic through town and the loss of business trade was not something that was to be celebrated. Part of the problem for getting the four-lane road completed prior to 1970 was the competition of funds for the Kern River road.

Other Roads. There were undoubtedly other roads that are not recorded or recorded correctly. One person in the Oak Knolls tract says a stagecoach road went through his property. I traced the road and it meanders through land in the tract and most likely was a ranch road at one time. The road did connect with a road that was undoubtedly a stagecoach road at one time. Another person in Golden Hills says a stagecoach road went through his property. This person in the Golden Hills area states that when the land was wet in the Taylor Lake area, the stagecoach went a higher up westerly route between Old Town and Halter Grade. This road went through what is now his property. Judy Barras notes that there was a road north of Tehachapi Creek long before the more modern road was created. This road did not last long. The first official road in this area was a State of California built road completed in 1948. The Kern County Surveyors maps of circa 1910 shows the road from Tehachapi going to Keene in a different place than the known other roads. These early maps did not necessarily show the most traveled roads. Some of the most traveled roads were not Kern County owned. A road may have been surveyed that was not really used also.

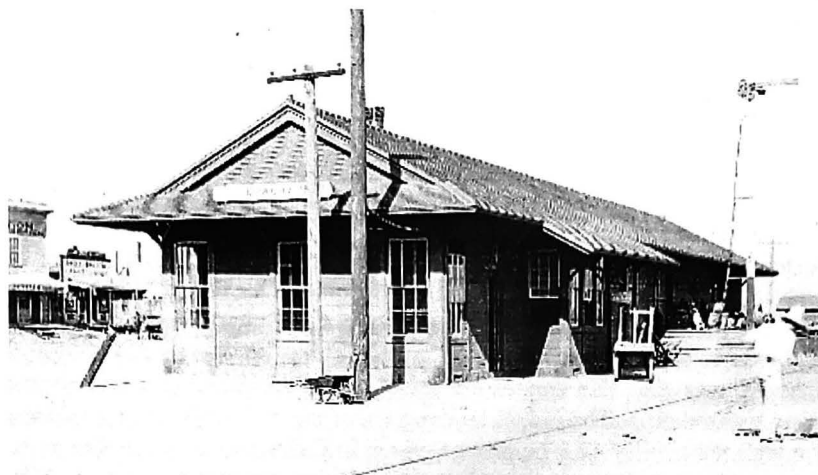
Chapter 2

Mojave to Tehachapi History.

Mojave. If it were not for the residential area of Tehachapi, the town of Mojave would probably be more inhabited. A great number of people that work in the Mojave area live in Tehachapi. The wind and heat are a deterring factor to living in Mojave. As an example, in March of 1983 a sand storm delayed the train movement through Mojave for 13 hours. The railroad track was covered with sand for miles. Some trains were able to back track and avoid much of the discomfort. When I played on the golf course near Mojave, I would sometimes have to hit the ball at a 45 degree angle and let the wind guide the ball to the green. The Ford automobile agency sometimes has sand damage to

Tehachapi Pass

exists now.) was built in 1904. When passenger service was discontinued in 1975, the station building was used as a maintenance building by the railroad. In 2004, a new maintenance station was built on the north side of the tracks. In 2005 the City of Tehachapi has possession of the station is in the process of renovating the old station for use by the City. Picture 3-6 (Tehachapi Depot) is an early picture. The background shows a portion of the business district of "G" Street, now known a Tehachapi Boulevard. The small building in the background is the J. M. Jackley Harness and Shoe Repair. Mr. Jackley was elected to the Town Board of Trustees after the town voted for incorporation in 1909.



Picture 3-6, Tehachapi Depot

Chapter 4

Golden Hills Area History

Williamsburg. The present town of Tehachapi did not exist until 1876 when the railroad was completed. The first town in the area was Williamsburg. J. E. Williams built a house on land he claimed and then built a hotel, which became known as the Mountain House. Soon there were stores, saloons and residences being built around the Mountain House Hotel. There was as well a blacksmith shop, livery stable and feed corral. In January of 1873, The Gazette reported that James. E. Williams was running a weekly express wagon between Tehachapi and Bakersfield carrying mail, express matter, packages etc.

A school was established sometime prior to 1875. Picture 4-1 (Williamsburg School) is an early picture of the school. Picture 4-2 (Williamsburg School 1944) is a 1944 picture of the school. Pete Vukich tore the school down in later years. He piled the lumber nearby. Brite's Creek flooded and washed the boards away.

Somewhat prior to 1872 the Tehachapi Valley began to populate and Williamsburg grew. Williamsburg was sometimes referred to as Tehachapa (note the

Tehachapi Pass

variant spelling). There are no buildings left in what was Williamsburg. The area is now called Old Town. The town was located where the Mourning Cloak Ranch is now. There may have been buildings along Brite's Creek as far west as Mariposa Avenue. The town was about three miles east of the present Tehachapi.

Greenwich. Peter D. Greene came to the area in 1854, left and came again in 1856. In 1875 Mr. Greene started the town of Greenwich in anticipation that the railroad would put a station there. To his chagrin, the station was located about two miles to the east. The buildings of Greenwich and many of Williamsburg were soon moved to the new station. The exact location of where Greenwich was has not been established.

The railroad reached the Tehachapi Valley in 1876. The new station was first called Tehachapi Summit, later shortened to Tehachapi. An interesting bit of information that that the United States Postal addresses for Tehachapi was actually Greenwich until the year 1893.



Picture 4-1, Williamsburg School



Picture 4-2, Williamsburg School 1944.

Owners Prior to Golden Hills Development. To research and provide a complete list of owners would be possible, but very time consuming. A possible owner scenario is as follows. In 1910 there were the following names on the Kern County Map: Cuddeback, Perry, Hicks, Hale, Garver, Shields, Clark, Taylor and Reynolds. Reportedly, the Hicks family gained possession of a large part of the land. There were others such as the Cuddeback's that retained much of the land. Later, Donald T. Hall bought much of the land in the area. Apparently, Donald T. Hall sold the land in May of 1952 to Wrigley of chewing gum fame. The Cuddeback Trust also owned some of the land. The Pacific-Atlantic Properties bought the land from Cuddeback, Hall, Wrigley and others.

Oak Knolls/Golden Hills Development. The forgoing discussion on who owned the property that was to become Golden Hills is a prelude to this Golden Hills development discussion. In March of 1961, it was announced that Pacific-Atlantic Properties Inc., bought the land that was to become what is Golden Hills today. The development was then known as Oak Knolls. 2200 acres of the land bought was from the Wrigley Ranch. Don Carroll, real estate broker, arranged the sale of the land. In June of 1961, Pacific-Atlantic purchased an additional 1800 acres of land adjoining the former Wrigley Ranch.

Judy Barras, in the Long Road to Tehachapi mentions the Murchison's of Texas bought the Golden Hills land. Actually, John and Clint Murchison had a major interest in Pacific-Atlantic Properties. One article does state that the Murchison's owned the land and Pacific-Atlantic operated it.

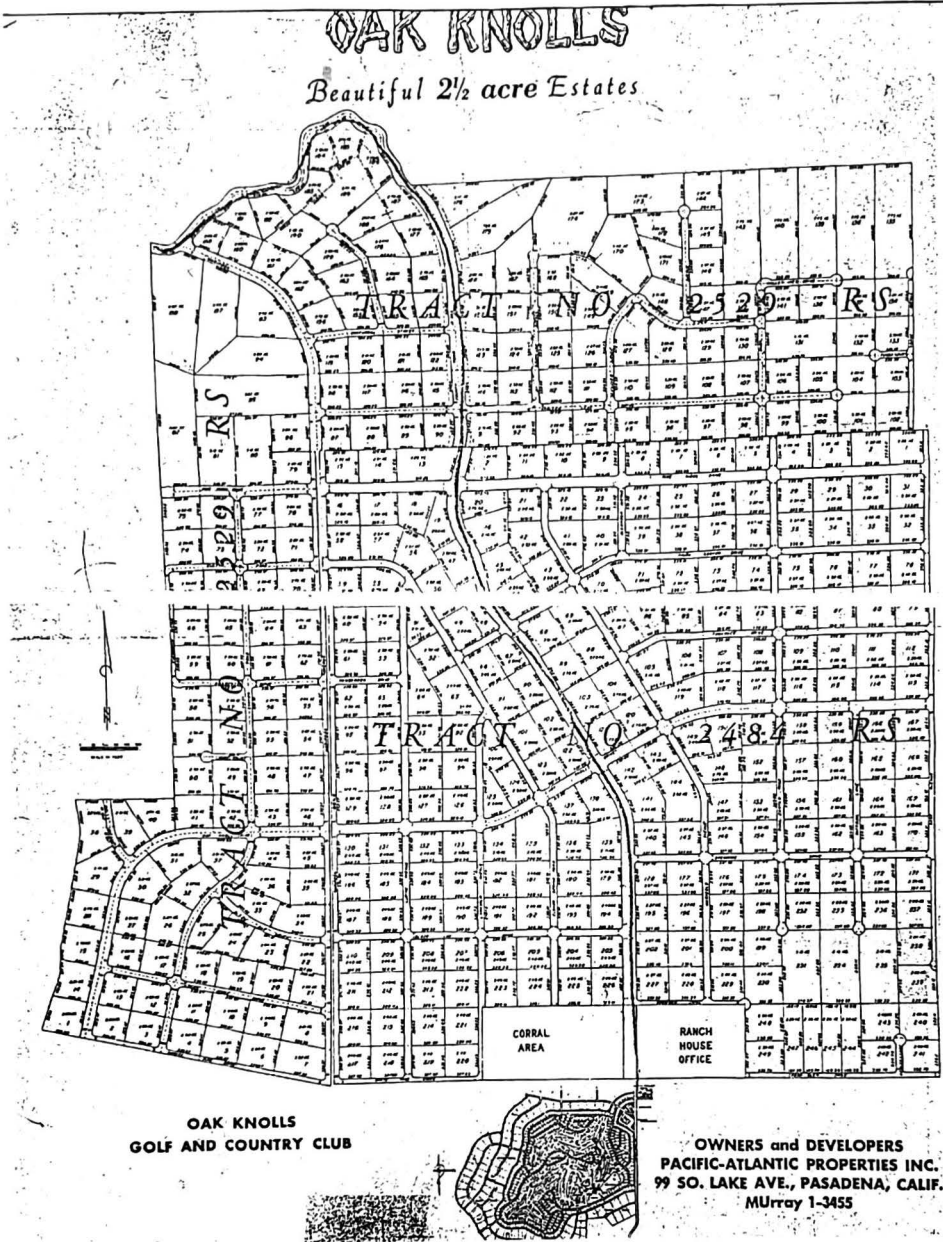
The Oak Knolls development was on the northern end of what is now known as Golden Hills. Map 4-1 (Oak Knolls) shows the development that was started in 1961. The terrain of the area is hilly. The roads were laid out without regard to the slope. Some roads were, and still are, almost unusable because of the terrain. Only one road was paved to county standards (Pinion Canyon) except Woodford Tehachapi Road. Woodford-Tehachapi Road bisects the development and is a paved County road that was once a California State Highway.

There were no utilities provided. Water had to be obtained by drilling a well. Electricity lines had to be brought in on an individual basis. Heating was by propane fuel or other. This is still the case today. A great number of the lots now have houses. Most of the lots are about 2.5 acres. The original sales office for the development was the Hicks ranch house. This is shown on Map 4-1 (Oak Knolls).

In May of 1965, the Ponty-Fenmore organization of Westwood purchased the Oak Knolls 4,200 acres and named it Golden Hills. The general partners of the organization were George Ponty and Maxwell R. Fenmore. The Ponty-Fenmore organization also had other interests in Semi Valley, Santa Barbara and Culver City.

In May of 1966, the Ponty-Fenmore organization announced the development of a planned community. This is what we now know as Golden Hills and is probably the 1800 acres "south of the Wrigley Ranch" mentioned just prior. This is the area south of Oak Knolls. The community was to have shopping centers, industrial sites, 440 acres for parks and recreation, 29 acres for mobile home sites, 264 acres for multiple-family housing and the remainder of the 4200 acres for single-family dwellings. This community was to have

Tehachapi Pass



Map 4-1, Oak Knolls

utilities (electricity, water and telephone lines) and paved county approved roads.

Natural gas lines were later laid to most lots. The drawback was that there was no sewer system. Septic tanks had to be used.

In October of 1968, Boise-Cascade bought out Ponty-Fenmore. Boise-Cascade then finished the development and sold the lots until about 1975. In 1970, there was a class action suit brought against Boise Cascade land developments in Northern California. The result of the suit by State Real Estate laws forced Boise Cascade land developments to cease all of its advertising and promotional activities for land sales and land developments. Salesmen then left Golden Hills.

Appendix

Appendix A. Old Tehachapi Cemetery Burials.

Albert, Martha Hale, d. unknown
Alexander, Simon, d. 1884
Boden, Leonard Reeg, b. Mar 25, d. Mar 25, 1882 Infant son of Mr & Mrs Fred Boden
Campbell, Clarence Benjamin, d. Aug 17, 1890, age 9 months & 3 days, "This first born offering os a Fathers love"
Diers, Albert, d. 1881
Eveleth, Adelia, d. Jul 29, 1881, age 34yr 6mo
Godwin, Child, d. 1863, Child of Tom & Jeanette Goodwin
Godwin, Richard, 1876, child
Godwin, Thomas, no dates, Killed by James Hayes
Grayson, Anna M., d. 1878
Hale, Moses, d. around 1900
Hart, Mary Hale, no dates
Hart, Tommy, b. 1885 42 years, d. 1927
Higgin, Elizabeth Hale, b. 1859, d. 1917
Johnson, Scott Lycurgus, d. Jun 26, 1977 age 27 years, 3 months & 21 days
Keller, Michael T., d. Jul 20, 1867, age 54 year, Native of Bodford Vir
Knapp, Infant, d. May 10, 1880, aged 1 day, daughter of W.H. & Saddle Knapp
North, C., d. 1877, Killed in Gun Fight at Greenwich
Prewitt, Mrs Alex, no dates
Reeg, George, b. 1826, d. Mar 02, 1877, A native of Germany
Reeg, Louis, A Native of Germany, Laid to rest on Monday Aug 27, 1906
Reeg, Son, no dates, Son of George
Thomas, Bud, d. 1873, Killed by a horse in Bear Valley
Wiggins, Albert, d. 1877
Wiggins, Mary J., d. Dec 05, 1889 aged 57yr & 5da, "At Rest", Wife of W.C. Wiggins
Wiggins, Susan, d. 1877
Wiggins, W. C., no dates
Williamson, Willy, b. 1882, d. Jul 1883

Misc:

Shields, , (no first name or dates)

Bibliography

Barras, Judy. Tehachapi: The Formative Years

Barras, Judy. The Long Road to Tehachapi

California Highway Commission First Biennial Report 1918

Clevenger, Loreda, Interview, Edison School Principal

Crites, Arthur S. Pioneer Days in Kern County

Cultural Resource Testing and Evaluation at Hart Flat, Keen Ranch, Kern County, California---Cultural Resource Facility CSUB, Dr. Mark Q. Sutton Director

Hemmer, Helen, Interviews and pictured of the El Rita Resort and Café.

Kern-Antelope Historical Society, Inc. A publication by, Along the Rails From Lancaster to Mojave.