

# Shasta State Historic Park



## Our Mission

The mission of California State Parks is to provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.



California State Parks supports equal access. Prior to arrival, visitors with disabilities who need assistance should contact the park at **(530) 243-8194**. If you need this publication in an alternate format, contact [interp@parks.ca.gov](mailto:interp@parks.ca.gov).

**CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS**  
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**Sacramento, CA 94296-0001**

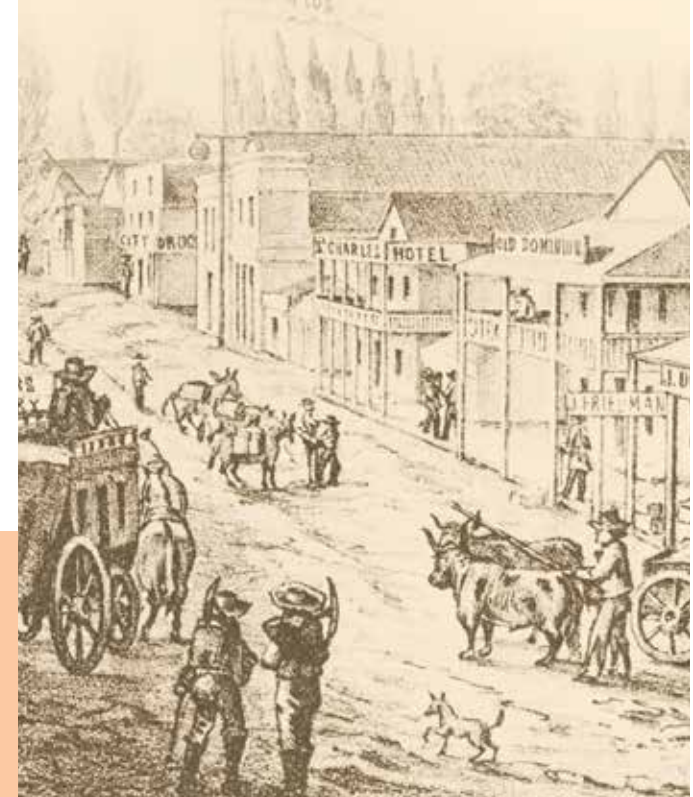
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[www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov)

**Shasta State Historic Park**  
**Highway 299, 6 miles west of Redding**  
**P.O. Box 2430 (Mail)**  
**Shasta, CA 96087 • (530) 243-8194**

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*At the hub of  
wagon travel, in 1849  
this gold mining area  
became Reading Springs,  
the commercial center  
of northern California.  
The town was renamed  
Shasta in 1850.*



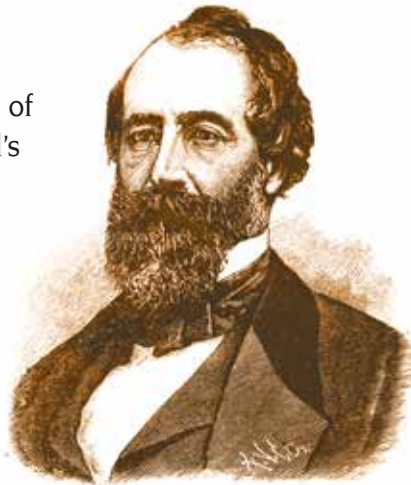
## The “Queen City of the Northern Mines,”

**Shasta State Historic Park** was once the picturesque gold mining town of Shasta. In its heyday, the town was the center of commerce and social activity for northern California. To walk the cemeteries, sites, and ruins is to look back in time at the daily lives of the merchants, families, and miners who once lived and worked here.

Shasta is located in the foothills of the Klamath Range, six miles west of Redding on Highway 299. Summer and fall can be dry and hot, reaching 100 degrees. Though snowfall is not uncommon, winter temperatures generally range from 30 to 50 degrees. Spring is usually cool and rainy.

### SHASTA

In 1848, after a visit to the site of James Marshall's gold discovery at Coloma, Major Pierson B. Reading found gold in nearby Clear Creek. The world caught gold fever as word of the strikes spread. Besides the attraction of gold, the area was rich in natural resources. By 1849 the community of tents and lean-tos was named Reading Springs. At the hub of wagon travel, the area became the commercial center of northern California.



*Pierson B. Reading*

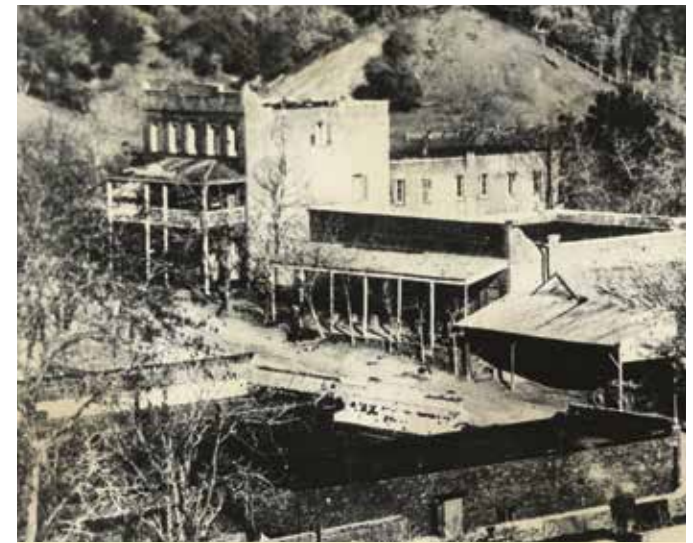
Temporary residences gave way to houses, stores, hotels, barbershops, and saloons. The busy town was renamed Shasta in 1850, and by 1852 more than \$2.5 million in gold had passed through the town.

In December 1852, fire destroyed much of the town. The residents quickly rebuilt, but six months later another fire destroyed all 70 businesses on Main Street. Wary merchants rebuilt with fireproof brick walls and iron shutters. Shasta then had the longest row of brick buildings north of San Francisco.

Gold claims were depleted by the late 1860s. Shasta's gradual decline was hastened when its lucrative stagecoach and freight business moved away. The new Central Pacific Railroad bypassed Shasta, placing its terminal in nearby Redding. Merchants abandoned or relocated their businesses, and in 1888, after three decades at Shasta, the county seat moved to Redding. Shasta's vacant buildings quickly fell into disrepair.

### PRESERVATION AND RESTORATION

Several groups and individuals recognized the significant historical value of the town's “boom to bust” story and decided to preserve the community. The care and concern of the Native Sons of the Golden West, the Shasta Historical Society, and Mae Helene Bacon Boggs



*Town of Shasta, ca. 1880*

sparked a movement in the 1920s to save and restore the remaining buildings. Ms. Boggs had moved from Missouri to Shasta as a child to be cared for by her uncle, Williamson Lyncoya Smith. Considering Shasta her hometown, she led the movement by purchasing land and structures and donating her valuable and extensive art collection. The California State Parks Commission acquired additional properties in 1937, and in 1950 the Courthouse Museum opened.



*Courthouse Museum*





*Interior of Litsch Store*



*Blacksmith shop*



*Historic brick ruins*

### **SHASTA TODAY**

Stroll among the sites of Shasta, and let your imagination reflect on this once-bustling town. Today's ruins were businesses that served the area's townspeople. Walking trails pass by the 1920s and 1930s schoolhouses, the brewery, and spring houses once used as natural refrigerators. Many of the trees planted by Shasta's pioneers continue to bear nuts and fruit. Tour the Pioneer Union Cemetery and the Catholic Cemetery, or enjoy a picnic under the trees. Inside the Pioneer Barn, a restored stagecoach invites your attention, and mining and farm equipment are on display. Grounds and trails are open between sunrise and sunset.

### **THE COURTHOUSE MUSEUM**

The Courthouse, dating from 1855, has been restored to its 1861 appearance. It houses the visitor center and the museum, as well as the gathered works of outstanding California artists. The collection, consisting of 98 paintings by 71 artists from many ethnic backgrounds, was donated by Mae Helene Bacon Boggs in memory of her uncle. Its variety of styles and themes include *A New Year's Festival in San Francisco Chinatown* by Ernest Narjot; Grace Carpenter Hudson's portrait, *Kay Will, Pomo Chief*; a watercolor portrait titled *The Soothsayer* by Wing Kwong Tse; and *Portrait*

*of a Colored Model* by African-American artist Sallie Benfield. The paintings depict California's rich and diverse history from 1850 to 1950.

### **THE LITSCH GENERAL MERCHANDISE STORE**

The restored Litsch Store is in one of Shasta's original buildings. Visitors can see what it was like to shop during the 1880s, when merchandise was displayed and stored behind the counter and customers had to ask the clerk to assist them. The store is open during summer and fall, when staff and volunteers provide guided tours.



## THE BLACKSMITH SHOP

Throughout the year, the blacksmith shop is operated by Redding area blacksmith volunteers. Demonstrations, classes, and workshops are offered to the visiting public, school groups, and during park events.



*Pioneer Barn*

## EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Guided tours include the Courthouse Museum, the Litsch General Merchandise Store, and the cemeteries. Special summer events include the annual “Dinner in the Jail For You and Your 13 Lucky Friends” drawing, and performances at the Shasta Starlight Theater. Full Moon Cemetery Tours take place in October, and the Holiday Open House is held the first Saturday in December. Children’s programs include art, history, and nature. For a complete park event schedule, visit [www.parks.ca.gov/shastashp](http://www.parks.ca.gov/shastashp).

## PLEASE REMEMBER

- Cross the highway only at crosswalks.
- Removing any park features or climbing on ruins or historic displays is prohibited.
- Dogs must be on a leash and with their owners at all times. Clean up after your pets.
- Commercial photography is prohibited without a permit.
- Restrooms are located in the picnic area.

## ACCESSIBLE FEATURES

The courthouse and jail have ramped entries. Historic walkways, narrow doorways, and high thresholds in historic buildings may impede progress. For accessibility updates, visit <http://access.parks.ca.gov>.

## NEARBY STATE PARKS

- William B. Ide Adobe State Historic Park  
Adobe Rd., Red Bluff 96080  
(530) 529-8599
- Weaverville Joss House State Historic Park  
Hwy. 299, Weaverville 96093  
(530) 623-5284
- Castle Crags State Park  
20022 Castle Creek Rd., Castella 96017  
(530) 235-2684

This park is supported in part through a nonprofit organization. For more information contact:  
Town of Shasta Interpretive Association  
P.O. Box 268, Shasta, CA 96087



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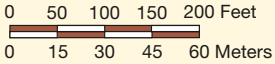


SHASTA STATE  
HISTORIC  
PARK










Catholic Cemetery

Union Cemetery

N



## Legend

-  Paved Road
-  Trail
-  Historic Site
-  Historic Building
-  Park Building
-  Ranger Station
-  Restrooms
-  Picnic Site
-  Accessible Feature