

Sacramento

Sacramento! That's us! The heart of California...and the heart of Sierra-Diablo! The best of the West! What a city! [*well, I think that's enough exclamations!*]

Located at the confluence of the Sacramento and American rivers, Sacramento is in California's central valley, 90 miles northeast of San Francisco and 383 miles north of Los Angeles. Elevation—17 feet. There are some 393,500 people in this, the capital of California, and nearly 1.5 million in the overall area. Only 4% of the world's surface can boast a Mediterranean climate, and Sacramento is part of it. Our mild climate [*we won't mention those few 110+-degree days during the summer*] is part of the legendary attraction of the Golden State.

Originally settled by the Spanish as part of Mexico's territory, Sacramento became the home of John Sutter in 1839, and he established a permanent settlement called "New Helvetia" there. Sacramento, as a town, was founded in 1848. The news of the discovery of gold in the nearby Sierra foothills in 1849 spread quickly, and the streets of Sacramento filled with gold seekers from around the world. The following year, Sacramento was incorporated as a city.

Through the roaring 1850s, Sacramento continued to grow, but the city was located on a natural flood plain and was subject to almost annual disasters, including a fire that swept through the early city. In 1862, thousands of cubic yards of earth were brought in on wagons, and the city was literally raised above flood levels.

The Gold Rush of 1849 helped make Sacramento headquarters for some of the most influential men in



the Old West. Collis P. Huntington, Charles Crocker, Leland Stanford, and Mark Hopkins (“the Big Four”) met in a hardware store with Theodore Judah and planned the first transcontinental railroad. The transcontinental telegraph also began in Sacramento. In 1854, the city became the capital of California, and in 1860 it became the western end of the famous Pony Express.

There are innumerable other items Sacramento can rightly boast of, of course. For example, of all the cities of the world, Sacramento ranks *second* in the number of trees [*the first is in China*]. It has its own sports complex, and it’s home to the Sacramento Kings and the Sacramento Monarchs basketball teams [*OK, we may have a way to go there...but it’s a start!*]. There’s an annual Sacramento Blues Festival, Jazz Jubilee (where you’ll hear some of the finest jazz anywhere), Pacific Rim Street Fest, and Waterfront Artfest.

There’s the historic Sutter’s Fort that, among other things, is the site for overnight educational field trips for school children from all over the state. There’s the California State University, Sacramento, campus. With the widening of appropriate water channels some 35 years ago, the Port of Sacramento now plays host to shipping from around the world. And, Sacramento can also look back with pride and point to the fact that I spent my later high school and undergraduate years there...where I used to spend my Friday and Saturday nights cruising up and down K Street, the main drag.

Today, that main drag is the center of a huge downtown mall area which leads down to the jewel of Sacramento—Old Sacramento. Right on the river, the area is now one of America’s best examples of historical reconstruction. It is home to the California State Railroad Museum (one of the world’s largest and best of its kind), the Sacramento Discovery Museum (complete with a working 1890s print shop), the Sacramento Waterfront (depicting an 1870 riverside scene complete with sailing vessels and paddlewheelers), the California Military Museum (featuring uniforms, antique firearms and other memorabilia relating to the state’s military history from pre-statehood to the present), the Eagle Theatre (the state’s first—and still presenting shows throughout the year), as well as many other historic sites. Indeed, Old Sacramento, itself, is a National Registered Landmark and a State Historic Park. Its 28 acres contain the greatest concentration of historic buildings in all of California. And, naturally, there are the 20 world-class restaurants [*I may be relying on poetic license here, perhaps just a tiny bit*] and an assortment of some of the greatest tourist traps [*oops, I mean tourist “accommodations”*] you could ever hope to find.....What a town!

You have to live somewhere; why not Sacramento?...just be sure and join Sierra-Diablo!