



SELF-GUIDED TRAIL  
 -  
*Bridgeport Historic Ranch*  
 -  
 South Yuba River State Park



In the 1850s and 1860s, Bridgeport was a transportation center for supplies moving from the San Francisco bay area to the California gold fields and the Nevada silver fields. Up to 100 wagons per day used the Virginia Turnpike and crossed the covered bridge during this period.

Maps, natural history exhibit, historic photographs and mementos are available in the Visitor Center.

South Yuba River State Park  
 17660 Pleasant Valley Rd, Penn Valley, CA 95946 Tel: 530-432-2546

On Pleasant Valley Rd, 8 miles north of Hwy 20

Visit [southubariverstatepark.org](http://southubariverstatepark.org) for information, events and activities

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Guide produced by  
 South Yuba River Park Assn.  
 P.O. Box 1658  
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[southubariverstatepark.org](http://southubariverstatepark.org)

## Points of Interest

**1. Visitor Center.** This building was completed in 1956 as a home by Mr. and Mrs. E. Harrison the ranch owners at the time. It was remodeled in 1996 as the Visitor Center for the State Park.

**2 & 3. Site of Thompson and Cole Houses.** The grassy lawn with central large rock is the site of the original home of William Thompson (1849) and subsequently home for Charles Cole who married Mrs. Thompson after her husband's death in 1853. Following its destruction by fire, Cole built a new house on the site in 1862. Note the acorn grinding hole in the adjacent rock, made and used by the Maidu people who populated this area for many years prior to the Gold Rush.

**4. Stone Walls.** The stone walls on either side of the road were built by ranchers aided by Chinese laborers to contain livestock and mark the toll road leading to Wood's bridge.

**5. Cemetery.** The Kneebone cemetery is owned and maintained by descendants of the family, although it lies within Park boundaries. Members of the Thompson, Cole, and Kneebone families are buried here.

**6. Kentucky Creek.** Gold was still being taken by placer mining in profitable amounts at the mouth of the creek as late as 1951.

**7. Gas Station and Store.** Built by Alfred Kneebone in 1927 as part of the services of his resort. Gas, at 12 cents per gallon, and fresh fruits and vegetables from his farm were available.

**8. Meat Dressing Room & Ice Box.** Meat-producing animals raised on the ranch were hung and dressed here using running water in the trough on far side. Meat was stored in the box built into the earth behind and preserved by ice cut in winter.

**9. Greenhouse Foundation.** A glass greenhouse was built here in 1956 by the then owners of the ranch, Mr. and Mrs. Harrison, to grow orchids.

**10. Barn.** See brochure available at entrance to Viewing Corridor for guided tour and history.

**11. Watering Trough.** This trough was built by Alfred Kneebone for his horses and those of passing wagons. A sign painted on the side, no longer visible, advertised his resort (Kneebone Beach, below, and later, the Shell Station).

**12. Mulberry Trees.** Mulberry trees were planted by Mrs. Cole in hopes of raising silk worms which thrive on the leaves and thus profit from the popularity of silk fabrics in the 19th century. Her venture was unsuccessful.

**13. Cow Barn and House Foundations.** The barn housed milk cows and, later, smaller livestock. A small house adjacent to the barn may have been a granary in earlier days.

**14. Bridge.** This National & State registered Historic Landmark bridge was built in 1862 by David I. Wood and the Virginia Turnpike Co. It was a vital link in the transportation of supplies from Marysville to the silver mines at Virginia City, Nevada. The length of the bridge from opening to opening today is 229 ft, making it the longest single-span covered bridge in the U.S. The construction method combines the

Howe Truss with the Burr Arch. The 27,000 shingles (each 5 to 6 inches wide by 36 inches long) are made from sugar pine, and the truss, arch and flooring are from Douglas fir.

**15. Family Beach.** This is a popular sand beach and shallow-water swimming hole with wheel chair access.

**16. Shaker.** This device was used by placer miners to separate large amounts of big rocks from smaller gold-bearing rocks.

### **Other Points of Interest in the Area:**

**Point Defiance.** The confluence of the Middle and South Yuba Rivers (one mile downstream) marks the upper end of Englebright Reservoir. The dam at its lower end was built to contain the flow of tailings from hydraulic mines upstream which were flooding farms in the Marysville valley below. David Wood is believed to have had a home at Point Defiance at one time.

**Kneebone Beach.** In 1927 Alfred Kneebone opened a resort and built bath houses, a dance floor and cabins adjacent to this popular "swimming hole." For \$1, families could spend the day and on weekends enjoy music, food and dancing. A cave was dug into the hillside and stocked with ice to keep "pop" and ice cream cold for sale to the swimmers.

### **R. Restroom**