

## Trivia Bee Questions: Highway 49 and the Gold Rush Road

Friends of the Library, 24 March 1018

### Round 1 (10 questions)

1. James Marshall discovered gold at John Sutter's sawmill construction site, on January 24, 1848. The workmen were told to keep quiet about it until the building project was completed, but word leaked out. Who were these workmen?

**Answer: Mormons**

- After finishing the saw mill construction, they mined gold until they had enough, and then set out for Salt Lake City.
2. The discovery of gold in January was finally reported in several newspapers in March and April. It was not generally believed, however, until May when this man displayed a bottle of gold in San Francisco. What was his name?
- Answer: Sam Brannan**
- He waved his bottle of gold shouting: "GOLD! GOLD! Gold from the American River!"
3. Originally, official highway number signs in California featured a grizzly bear. These were replaced in 1959-60 by a simpler design based on the outline of what object?
- Answer: A miner's spade (or shovel)**

4. According to Caltrans, Oakhurst marks the southern terminus of Highway 49. What town marks its northern end?

**Answer: Vinton**

- In Plumas County.
5. Dr. June Carroll, with the Southern Pacific Railway, first proposed painting a white line down the center of roads to delineate lanes of traffic going in opposite directions. Propelled by a state-wide letter-writing campaign, in what year was the center line legally required in CA?
    - a. 1935
    - b. 1924
    - c. 1919
    - d. 1911

**Answer: b. 1924**

- Dr. Carroll proposed this in 1911 but was ignored (because she was a woman?). She finally resorted to painting a line herself and initiating the successful letter-writing campaign.
- Once CA adopted the practice, it rapidly spread nationwide.

6. It is not a coincidence that the series of roads linking Mother Lode towns – associated with the Gold Rush ‘49ers --was given the California State Highway number 49. What year was this number officially bestowed?  
**Answer: 1934**
- Sonora was to be bypassed by Hwy 49, crossing directly over Rawhide Road to Jamestown. The Sonora business community petitioned for the official designation to be rerouted eastward to include the town so it would not miss out on tourism.
7. The California Historical Landmarks program was officially sanctioned with special legislation in 1931 authorizing identification of historic buildings and landmarks. What was the first Historical Landmark registered on Highway 49?  
**Answer: Drytown**
- No 31, registered in 1932. Drytown’s population in the 2010 census was 167 residents.
8. What famous organization was founded in Pioneer Hall in Jackson in 1886?  
**Answer: Native Daughters of the Golden West (or NDGW)**
- Besides venerating the history of CA, in the early 1900s the NDGW worked as an adoption agency, finding homes for over 4,700 orphans.
9. According to the league of California Cities, the smallest incorporated city in California by size happens to be located on historic Highway 49. What is the name of this City?  
**Answer: Amador City**
- It encompasses 0.31 square miles. It is also the smallest in population according to the Department of Finance Demographic Research as of May 1, 2017 with a population of 193.
  - After Amador City and other small communities incorporated, state law was changed to require a minimum population of 500
10. The name Melones was applied to an early Mexican camp, a mining company, a mill town on the Stanislaus River, and the reservoir that now covers that town. The story of the Spanish origins of the name links it to the size and abundance of gold found in the area. What was the gold compared to?  
**Answer: Melon seeds**
- The other explanation for the name’s origin -- a prospector named Melones -- is not favored by historians.

## **Round 2 (8 questions)**

1. The length of Highway 49 has changed over the years: lengthened as sections were added to each end; and shortened as bypasses cut off towns. According to Wikipedia and Caltrans, what is its current length to the nearest mile?
  - a. 295 miles
  - b. 303 miles
  - c. 343 miles
  - d. 355 miles

**Answer: a. 295 miles**

2. Highway 49's southern end begins in the homelands of the Native American Monache tribe; it travels north through Miwok territories, and ends in lands of the Washo. What Native American group – between the Miwok and the Washo -- has its former lands traversed by Highway 49?

**Answer: Nisenan.**

- The modern Nisenan have a tribal Rancheria outside of Nevada City
3. Running north and south, Highway 49 intersects several state and federal highways which cross the crest of the Sierra Nevada. How many of these trans-Sierran highways -- seasonal or year-round -- does Highway 49 intersect?

**Answer: Seven (7)**

- Hwy 120, 108, 4, 88, 50, 80, 70. The tricky one is Hwy 70, which crosses the Sierra and provides the terminus for Hwy 49 on the eastern side.
4. There is only one traffic light in Sierra County and it is on Highway 49. What town is it located in?

**Answer: Sierraville**

- It is a flashing red light
5. The Pelton wheel drastically improved water power to Mother Lode mines and mills. It was invented by Lester Pelton in 1864 in what Highway 49 town.

**Answer: Camptonville**

- Yuba County
6. Hard-rock mining was a dangerous business. According to the United States Mine Rescue Association, the worst mining disaster in California to date occurred at what Highway 49 mine?

**Answer: Argonaut mine**

- Located in Jackson, the mine fire occurred on August 27, 1922, and claimed the lives of 47 miners.

7. At Carson Hill, on the north bank of the Stanislaus River, was found what is identified as the largest piece of native gold ever recovered in California, weighing in at 195 pounds troy. In what year was this gold piece found?

**Answer: 1854**

- The largest true nugget – defined as a water-worn gold mass from alluvial deposits – was recovered from Magalia, Butte County, in 1859 and weighed 54 pounds troy.
8. John Studebaker, the namesake of the Studebaker Automobile, amassed his early grubstake by building wheelbarrows for gold miners. In what Highway 49 town did he establish his business?

**Answer: Placerville or Hangtown (either is acceptable)**

### **Round 3 (6 questions)**

1. Don Pedro Dam, on the Tuolumne River, was constructed in 1923 by the Turlock and Modesto irrigation districts. When it was enlarged in 1970, what Gold Rush town was buried by its waters?

**Answer: Jacksonville**

- It is said that the buildings were not removed, and a main street with two-story buildings could be visited by scuba divers

2. Highway 49 is famous for its historical associations and four State Historic Parks have been established on its route. What is the northernmost of these?

**Answer: Empire Mine**

- The other State Historic Parks, from south to north: Wassama Roundhouse SHP, Railtown 1897 SHP, and Marshall Gold Discovery SHP

3. The song “Highway 49” was recorded by Howlin’ Wolf and later by Eric Clapton. Although NOT about California’s Highway 49, the town it features has the same name as a town on our famous road. What is the name of this town?

**Answer: Jackson**

- In Mississippi. Lyrics: “... I got the blues this morning / Rollin’ into Jackson town / I’ve been looking for my baby / Lord don’t think the girl can’t be found.”

4. A famous Gold Rush actress was born in Ireland, was a dancer in Paris, was mistress of King Ludwig of Bavaria, lived in Grass Valley for two years, and died of syphilis at age 39. What was her stage name?

**Answer: Lola Montez**

- Her given name was Maria Dolores Eliza Rosanna Gilbert

5. New Melones Reservoir covers four Gold-Rush era ferry crossings of the Stanislaus River. Three of them are Parrot’s, Reynold’s; and McClean’s. What is the fourth?

**Answer: Robinson’s Ferry**

- Black Bart’s last hold up took place on the Reynold’s Ferry Road.

6. The California Rotary Stamp design – developed between 1870 and 1890 -- was so efficient at crushing ore that it became the standard of the US and around the world. A single California Stamp battery consists of how many stamps?

**Answer: Five**

- the Mariposa Museum and History center has one of the few working California Stamps in the gold country.
- Batteries of California Stamps were the basis for mills of as many as 200 and 300 stamps.

## Tie-Breaker Questions

### Our favorites

Construction and filling of the New Melones Reservoir in the late 1970s inspired protests from environmentalists. What is the name of the person who chained himself to a rock to stop the rising waters?

**Answer: Mark Dubois**

- After much news coverage, all was resolved peacefully

According to the League of California Cities, what is the name of the oldest incorporated city that is on Highway 49?

**Answer: Sonora**

- Sonora was incorporated in 1852. Second was Placerville in 1854.

Table Mountain in Tuolumne County and the flat-topped ridges around Mokelumne Hill are ancient river channels which typically contain placer gold in their gravels. What geologic period are they associated with?

**Answer: Tertiary**

- The gold was often recovered using hydraulic mining techniques with water blasted out of monitors.

Miners digging a hole straight down into underground workings are constructing a shaft. What is the term for an excavation driving straight into a hill?

**Answer: Adit**

- Not a tunnel. Tunnels come out the other end; i.e., they go completely through a hill or obstacle. ....

### Other Questions

State Route Highway 26 begins near Stockton and ends near Pioneer Station. It crosses Highway 49 at Mokelumne Hill. Prior to 1964, it ended at the intersection of Highway 49 and had what former California State Route Highway number?

**Answer: 8**

Placerville was previously known as Hangtown, but had an even earlier name what was it?

**Answer: Dry Diggins or Old Dry Diggins (either is acceptable)**

Some of the earliest and richest “diggings” were on the Mokelumne River. What was the name of the mining area where modern Highway 49 now crosses the Mokelumne River?

**Answer: Big Bar**

According to (Giovincho's 1980 study of) the 1860 U.S. Census, Chinese made up approximately what proportion of the population of the Southern Mines -- Amador, Calaveras, Tuolumne, and Mariposa Counties?

- a. Less than 5 %
- b. About 10%
- c. About 20%
- d. Nearly 30%

**Answer: c. About 20%**

Highway 49, mostly running along the western foothills of the Sierra Nevada, turns eastward in Sierra County and crosses the Sierra Nevada crest at Yuba Pass. What is the elevation of this pass to the nearest foot?

- a. 6,548 feet
- b. 6,709 feet
- c. 7,021 feet
- d. 7,237 feet

**Answer: b. 6,709 feet**

The 2006 movie "The Christmas Card" tells the story of a soldier serving in Afghanistan who follows up on an anonymous holiday card. It was filmed on location in what Highway 49 town?

**Answer: Nevada City**

- Staring Ed Asner, John Newton, and Alice Evans

According to the league of California Cities, what one county which Highway 49 traverses has NO incorporated cities within its boundary?

**Answer: Mariposa**