# Travelogue to Unionville. Traveling the Route of the Immigrants

Traveling across the Nevada desert can be monotonous at best, and dangerously sleep inducing at worst. However, when you take the time to explore the unique history and beauty of the area, you begin to see its special beauty. Therefore, Randy and I thought it might be nice for you all to have a list of sights to watch for to pass the miles. Of course, this is only useful if you have a partner to read it to you! So if you are traveling solo, I guess you will have record it and read to yourself!

If you like history, I have included information about Nevada historical markers you will pass. Most but not all markers are giant blue Nevada shapes. [Historical markers](http://renotahoe.about.com/gi/o.htm?zi=1/XJ&zTi=1&sdn=renotahoe&cdn=citiestowns&tm=32&f=20&su=p284.13.342.ip_p554.23.342.ip_&tt=2&bt=0&bts=0&zu=http%3A//www.nevada-landmarks.com)

[Unionville History](http://backyardtraveler.blogspot.com/2009/07/tales-of-unionville.htmlhttp://backyardtraveler.blogspot.com/2009/07/tales-of-unionville.html) [More Unionville history](http://travelingwithtwain.org/2012/01/10/virginia-city-nv/remembrances-of-death-as-well-as-life-in-unionville)

Here is some great info about the 40 mile desert you will be passing through: <http://visitreno.com/evanoff/may-05.php>

One of the things I love about Nevada is that no matter where I am, I am always surrounded by mountain ranges. With 314 named ranges, Nevada has more than any other state in the union. Although Nevada only has 17 counties, some of them are huge. Our own county of Pershing, named after blackjack Pershing, is larger than Pennsylvania, but only has a population of @ 4000, and ½ of those are in the medium state prison! The state bird is the mountain blue bird, the tree the pinion pine, and the colors silver and blue.

# EASTBOUND

For best gas prices and locations, Use Gas Buddy if you have it on smart phone, but cheapest gas is usually at the truck stops on either end of Fernley and Lovelock. No gas from Fernley until Lovelock. No gas after you exit at Mill City. We recommend you gas up in either Fernley or Lovelock, depending on your tank size. Total mileage from Reno to Unionville Park is @ 155 miles and will take you @ 2.5 hours.

**Basic Directions: I-80 eastbound to exit 149, Mill City/Unionville. Turn right. Follow this road for @ 17 miles. Turn right at Unionville Rd. Go @ 3 miles to Moeha Whitaker Park on the right.**

## Reno to Lovelock-about 1.3 hrs. (@90 miles)

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| Exit/mm | Point of Interest | Comments |
| 22 | Lockwood/  Rainbow Bend | Welcome to [Nevada](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nevada%20%20)! You will be traveling along the [California\_Trail](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/California_Trail) , as well as Old 40, which you can see remnants of along the left side of the west bound highway.  Leaving Reno eastbound you will soon enter “**the canyon**,” a curvy stretch between Reno and Fernley, following the river and railroad. Cell service is spotty here, and in the winter it has worst weather here than anywhere else traveling to Salt Lake.  Notice the community of **Lockwood and Rainbow Bend** on the right down along the Truckee River. They enjoy living on the edge, literally as well as figuratively, as the get flooded out about every 10 years.  You are following along the Truckee River, and the **Truckee route of the California Trail** of the immigrants in reverse. Imagine as you follow along, that your teardrop is a Calistoga wagon, traveling first next to the Humboldt river, then later across the 40 mile desert, along the Truckee, and then up over the Donner Pass and on to Sacramento and Gold Country. You are also following the path of the cross country Union Pacific Railway.  Bordering the canyon on the right is the Virginia mountain range, and on the left the Pah Rahs |
| 23 | Mustang | Off to the right, up against the trees and mountains is the home of the now closed infamous **Mustang Ranch Brothel**. Prostitution is legal in most counties in Nevada except in the counties containing Carson City, Reno and Las Vegas. |
|  | Scenic view | **Historical maker # 63** regarding the Truckee River |
| 28 | Waltham Way and Patrick | Looking right up over the mountains you will see some industrial buildings. This, over the power plant ponds, is the west coast distribution center for Walmart. USA parkway will get you there.  Also off this exit is **the currently operating Mustang Ranch (new owners, new place)**, the only currently operating **brothel** until you get to Winemmucca. As you go past the exit, look over to the right. It is up against the mountains and the trees. At night you can see a bright red “arrow” of lights. This is Story county. |
| 32 | Tracy power plant/USA pkway | One of the major producers of energy for the area is this power plant. Uses natural gas for energy production.  USA Parkway is also the exit to [Telsa](http://tinyurl.com/pbh7llx), the huge battery producing plant currently under construction. |
| 36 | Derby Dam | **Derby Dam** allowed the town of Fernley to grow as irrigation of the family farms homesteaded here. In a ill-conceived modernization, the “meanders” of the Truckee were taken out along this area back in the mid 1900s. This caused two problems. 1) diminished the natural flood plan, moving the flood areas down into Sparks and 2) removed the natural ladders for spawning Cui-ui fish, found only in the Truckee and Pyramid lake. Recently the [Nature Conservancy](http://tinyurl.com/k9w9v9w) has purchased much of the riverside or riparian land and restored the meanders and ox bows, and created a new fish ladder. The protection of the Cui-ui and waters of Pyramid lake have been an on-going fight between the Pyramid Lake Paiute Native Americans, Lake Tahoe, and all those wishing to use Truckee water along the way. |
| 38 | Orchard | Up to the right where it is white, is a diatomaceous earth (DE) deposit. It is mined by **EP Minerals**. DE is made of the exoskeletons of one celled algae called diatoms. It is used in filters, absorbent products like kitty litter, and as a natural pest control. How deep did the sea which used to be here used to be that fossils of algae are found on the top of a 5000 ft mountain or more? |
| 43 | Wadsworth | )'( Want to go to [Burning Man](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burning_Man) ? This is the exit to the Black Rock Desert. It will come again in August. When on site, Burning Man is the 7th largest Nevada city. Maybe Randy (wolffarmer) will regale us with tales of his experience from last year. More at: <http://burningman.org>  If you exit at Wadsworth and go through town, there is a historical maker #68 regarding Wadsworth and its importance to the railroad. There is also an interesting **cultural center for the Pyramid lake Indian reservation**. |
| 46 | Fernley | 1st Fernley exit. Love’s truck stop on the left and Pilot on the right. The massive structure on the left is **Nevada Cement.** Recently Fernley has blossomed as an industrial center. Motels, restaurants, gasoline are all available, and the Veteran's Cemetery draws visitors the year around.  Fernley is where the Truckee river leaves I-80 and terminates in Pyramid Lake, which has no output. Pyramid Lake is owned by the [Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe](http://www.plpt.nsn.us/) of Native Americans. Pyramid Lake is home to the endemic [Cui-ui fish](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cui-ui) . |
| 47 | Motocross track | Over the freeway to the left @ mm 47 is a **popular motocross area.** Many weekends through the year this is filled with RVs and toy haulers while motorcyclists race the track. |
| 48 | Fernley #2 | Walmart, Lowes, Silverado Casino and several fast food joints are located off this exit. If you need to exit here, you can go on past Lowes and enter the freeway without backtracking at Nevada Pacific exit. This is a new exit/entrance and is not on most maps.  On your right you can see large warehouses in the industrial center, including R-max insulation, Amazon (recently closed-now moved to Reno) west coast distribution headquarters and Sherman Williams paint plant. |
| 49-50 | NV Pacific | Leaving Fernley, you are now headed northeast instead of due east |
| 56 | 40 mile desert | You are now traveling the [40 Mile Desert](http://www.nevada-landmarks.com/ch/HM26.htm) with your wagon train. No water for over 40 miles, when you hit the Big Meadows (Lovelock). The mountains on the left are now the Truckee Range and the ones on the left the Hot Springs Range. |
| 65 | Nightingale | Notice the plumes of steam on both sides of the highway? This is [Brady Hot Springs](http://www.onlinenevada.org/articles/bradys-hot-springs). This is a geothermal power plant. The power from the springs is also used for the Gilroy onion and garlic dehydrating plant there. On a good day, you can’t miss it.  You are right in the middle of the forty mile desert on the right and Hot Springs Flat on the left. |
| 69 | Kitty Litter Plant | Rising out of Hot Springs Flat are the **Trinity Range** of mountains on the left, with the Hot Springs Mountains continuing on the right for a while.  Here on right, behind the “Moltan sign” on the trailer is the **Moltan kitty litter and other absorbents manufacturing plant**. They use diatomaceous earth. |
|  |  | As you go over the rise, you will come into the vast **Humboldt Sink.** This alkali desert is the remnants of the great lake Lahontan. If you look carefully at the mountains on the right, you may be able to see the variation in color, which represents the different levels of water as it gradually decreased and disappeared over thousands of years, leaving only lake Pyramid as remnants of this ancient lake.  The Sink is the end of the Humboldt River, that passes out to the right by the mountains, is used for all the irrigation in the Lovelock Valley (called the Nile Valley or Big Meadows), and begins in the Ruby Mountains of East Nevada (Elko).  From here at night you can see the lights of the prison on the other side of Lovelock, still 30 miles away. |
| 72 |  | About here is where the California Trail moves from the left side of the highway to the right side of the highway, and moves further right (east) towards the West Humboldt range of the mountains. Past Hot Springs flat on the left rises the Trinity Mountains. |
| 78 | Jessup |  |
| 83 | Trinity, 95 cut off | Intersection of 95, right to Fallon. **Trinity rest stop** with restrooms on the right. About 2 miles down 95 is where the Truckee route of the CA trail split from the Carson route. The Carson route would go down through Dayton along present day Hwy 50 and the Carson River, through Carson City and around the south side of Lake Tahoe.  Trinity is known to Lovelock locals as **“20 mile hill,”** as it is only 20 miles to home when coming home late from a shopping trip to Reno!  There is a **historical maker #147** at the rest stop regarding early man and Lovelock Cave. |
| 85 | Lovelock Cave | **The California Trail** now moves around to the base of the mountains on the right. In a good water year, the water from the Ruby mountains, via the Humboldt river will flood all the way out here on to the flats.  Looking up to the high mountains, if you pass in the morning, you can see a white half circle**. This is** [Lovelock Cave](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lovelock_Cave)**.** This cave was rediscovered in the early 1900s and a multitude of artifacts were found, including the oldest known duck decoys in the world, dating back to @ 2250 before present were found here. They were created by the local Paiutes when Lake Lahontan was so high it was close to the cave. A copy can be found in the Lovelock Museum and at Debbie and Randy’s house. The actual decoys can be seen in the Nevada Museum and the Smithsonian Natural History Museum, and the Museum of the American Indian in NY. The cave is easily accessible from Lovelock. Lovelock Paiute tribe still has decedents of these indigenous people. The Tule Duck Decoy is the Nevada State Artifact.  According to Paiute history, the caves were the home of a cannibalistic tribe of giant, red-headed Native Americans. While this legend has been largely disproven, it is interesting none the less.  [More](http://www.reviewjournal.com/nevada-150/oldest-duck-decoys-anywhere-found-lovelock-cave) |
| 93 | Toulon | **Toulon** is an abandoned tungsten mill and mine. Remnants of buildings are still visible. The mill was in use until 1932 and began production in 1892. |
|  |  | The irrigated area to the southeast of Lovelock reflects the **former Big Meadows** area of the pioneers. Here was the last water before moving on to the 40 mile desert. Travelers would spend several days refreshing themselves and their animals before the arduous journey in front of them. Remember the 50 miles you just passed in an hour in a car was traveled mostly walking, but in any event in a walking pace. |
| 105 | Lovelock #1 | If you have time there are several things to see in Lovelock.  **-Marzen House Museum.** Includes displays from Lovelock Cave and early mining and agrigultural beginnings. Just off exit 105. |
| 106 | Lovelock 32 | Cheapest gas in Lovelock is at the Golden Gate truck stop at exit 106, also a Port of Subs! |
| 106 | Lovelock #2 | **Center of town.** Cheapest gas is to the right at the Golden Gate Truck Stops. Also the brand new Port of Subs should be open. McDonalds and a Dollar store with some food is also just off this exit to the left.  -**Railroad Depot**. Just after the railroad tracks on the right is the historic Southern Pacfic Railroad depot. It is one of only two SP depots left. It is now tourist information center. Built in 1880.  -**Courthouse**. Turn left off the exit, go through the stop light (when green of course, and there is just one), you will run directly into the courthouse. One of only two operating round courthouses in operation in the US. Open to the public weekdays. This stoplight was the last stoplight to be bypassed with the created of the I-80 in the 1970s.  -[**Lock Your Love**](http://loverslock.com/about-locking-your-love-an-ancient-chinese-custom/)**.** Lovelock has giant chains in the middle of the courthouse park where you can “lock your love” for now and enterity. Locks can be purchased at several locations in town. [Lock purchase locations](http://loverslock.com/where-to-buy-a-lock/).  -**Historical marker #17** is on the left, regarding the origins of Pershing County.  -**Rails West historical** **marker** # **79** on the right at the library. Honoring the CA trail Big Meadows Campsite. For more info on the Rails West makers: <http://emigranttrailswest.org/virtual-tour/california-trail/>  Safeway is the only grocery store and to the left of the Courthouse. |
| 107 |  | This is not an eastbound exit, but if you stop in Lovelock, you can travel through town and enter at the east end of town at entrance 107. |

## Lovelock to Mill City-about 45 min. (@ 45 miles)

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| Exit/mm | Point of Interest | Comments |
| 107 |  | Leaving Lovelock the **Humboldt River** is now on your left. Look for any trees and green, that is the river. |
| 111 | Prison | Wave “hi” to O.J. at **Coal Canyon Correctional** Center on your right. Medium security prison primarily houses sexual deviants and abusers. |
| 112 | Coal Canyon | On the left is another **EP Minerals** plant. Diatomaceous earth used in filters is mined nearby and processed here. |
| 119 | Oreana/Rochester | Old mining towns, see the old equipment on the right and the route up to **Coeur Rochester**, an active silver and gold mine. Our house in Lovelock was moved down from Rochester, after the mining bust, in the 1920's. This is also an alternate route to Unionville (explained later). At one time a small gauge railroad connected Rochester (up the hill) to Oreana (at the exit). |
| 129 | Rye Patch Reservoir | Truck stop with gas on the right. Popular recreation area. Camping by the river and up at the boat dock. Showers! If you have the wings of Bird, take a right 90' and fly over the mountain peak and you will be at Unionville. If you are not Bird, keep driving. Rye Patch dam was built to control water for irrigation down stream. |
| 138 | Humboldt House | **Florida Canyon Gold & Silver Mine** (Japanga) on the right. It is in the process of shutting down and moving to reclamation. Humboldt house historical marker is on the right. It is by the DOT fenced yard by the side of the road. |
| 145 | Imlay | Tiny hamlet of about 100 people. Look to the left and see the two room Imlay school I serve. Take this exit to see [Thunder Mountain](http://www.thundermountainmonument.com/). A bizarre art creation worth checking out if you have time. |

## Mill City to Unionville-about 30 min. (@ 20 miles)

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| Exit/mm | Point of Interest | Comments |
| 149 | Unionville/Mill City | **Set your tripometer to 0**. Turn right on to state route 400/Unionville Road. Full service truck stop on the left across the highway. Continue on to the right. You will be circling back around the backside of the mountain range you just passed on the freeway, then up into the canyon.  East Humbolts in the distance on the left, West Humbolts on the right. Dun Glenn flats to the left. |
| 0 | Starpoint | RV park /trading post just after turn off on the left |
| All |  | **This open range. Watch out for wandering cattle, wild horses or burros**. |
| 9 miles | Star City/Starcreek | Star City was once located up this canyon. **Historical marker #231**. To the left is **Starcreek ranch**. |
| 9.5 | Safe Haven | [**Safe Haven Rescue Zoo**](http://www.safehavenwildlife.com/) is located up to the right. Look for the large expanse of tall chain link. Exotic animals keep illegally or abandoned are kept here until found appropriate homes. Tigers, mountain lions as well as smaller animals are rehabbed here. |
| 10 | Coyote Creek | **Coyote Creek Ranch #1** |
| 13 |  | **Coyote Creek Ranch #2** |
| 16.5 | Unionville | **Historical Marker #145**. Turn right. Gravel road. Travel @ 3 miles up the canyon. [**Unionville**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unionville,_Nevada) turn off to the right. There is a Nevada historical marker. On the left is Buena Vista Valley, to the right is Unionville Canyon. Unionville at it boomiest had about 2000 residents. There are now @ 20 fulltime residents. |
| 19 | @ 2.5 up the road | **Old Pioneer Garden B&B.** On the left. Look for the weatherbeaten sign, barnyard, barn on the rt and farmhouse on the left. This is the “farm house. |
|  |  | The next three buildings on the left are part of the bed and breakfast. They are the Hadley House, the Field House and the Cottage. |
|  | Dixie Ranch | Huge estate on left, built in last several years. Belongs to California family, used as vacation home. They also own the old school house on the right. |
|  | Shepard Estate | Huge Shepard estate, also a vacation home. Fenced by ornate brick and wrought iron. |
| 20.2 | @3.7 up the road | Moeha Whitaker County Park and campground are almost at the end of the road on the right. Historical maker # 232, Unionville Reunion. You are here! |