

Reconsideration of the Truckee Trail Route:

Hoke Valley to the Donner Creek Crossing

Appendix: 2

Appendix 2: Diary entries mentioning the rolling nature of the terrain from Hoke Valley to the Little Truckee River.

Edwin Bryant, August 24, 1846. The trail here [Dog Valley] turns to the left again, taking a nearly south course, over a rolling country, heavily timbered with pines, firs, and cedars, with occasional grassy openings. At three o'clock, P. M., we struck a small stream [Little Truckee River], flowing in a southeast course, a tributary of Truckee river. We encamped in a small fertile bottom on this stream.

Note that the Little Truckee River would be unlikely to be flowing southeast where I have placed the crossing. This is particularly true if we consider that diarists rarely correct their compass readings for declination error. This is a good example of the kind of contradictory testimony that needs to be evaluated in light of the entire corpus of evidence.

Edward Harrow, August 20, 1849. ...Our course so far has been south-southwest between the ridges of the mountains. We sometimes ascend, then descend into small valleys which we cross and ascend again on the opposite side. At 11 $\frac{1}{2}$ we came to and crossed a small but swift tributary of Truckies river [Little Truckee River]...

The landscape Harrow is describing is "rolling." Up and down repeatedly. This description matches the route along the Dutch Flat Road, but not along the route proposed by Wiggins. His route has a single very major hill to cross.

James Abell, August 30, 1849. We followed the valley up (South) through a pine forest between two and three miles and after ascending and descending Seviral hills [including Second Summit] we came to another nice valley through which runs grass creek [Little Truckee River]...

Compare this to Harrow. The emphasis is on multiple hills.

John Steele, September 14, 1850. Turning northward from the river [Truckee River at Verdi] our road ascended among large pine and cedar trees to the summit of a high mountain, and descending by a gentle slope, crossed a series of low pine covered ridges, and finally came to a large creek [Little Truckee], where we camped.

Again, the emphasis is on the multiplicity of hills, not one or two large hills.

John McCarty, September 18, 1849 [from Second Summit] [t]he country through which we today passed is undulating and rocky

"Undulating" suggests a series of small rises and dips