



CULTURAL HISTORY MOUNT DIABLO STATE PARK

MOUNTAIN HOUSE HOTEL 1874–1895

The idea for a hotel on California's Mount Diablo was initiated by Joseph S. Hall, an enterprising Yankee who appreciated the value of the mountain as a public attraction. He called the hotel Mountain House and placed it near a spring, about one mile from the top.

On October 30, 1873, Hall convened a meeting to organize the project which also included two new toll roads to reach the resort, one from Pine Canyon in Ygnacio Valley and one from Danville via Green Valley. The companies to create these roads were called The Mount Diablo Summit Road Company and the Green Valley and Mount Diablo Summit Road Company. On May 2, 1874, the roads were opened and began to carry stages and carriages.

The Mountain House, a sixteen room hotel, was built by Joseph Hall near the junction of the two roads. It opened on May 4, 1874. Daily stages ran to the House and visitors came from all over the world to stay overnight and view the magnificent sunsets and dawns from Diablo's peak. From the hotel they walked or rode horseback up the last, steep mile to the summit,

It was often said that no traveler was considered to have seen the west or California if he had not been to Mount Diablo's Mountain House and spent at least one night there, according to historian Mae Fisher Purcell. In its heyday many weddings and christenings took place at the resort. Some visitors came and stayed weeks at a time,

By the 1890's interest waned and patronage of the hotel declined; in 1895 it closed. Ranchers and property owners, who had long objected to the existence of a hotel on Diablo and the stream of visitors it drew, successfully petitioned the board of supervisors to close the roads. In 1901 the hotel was burned down and the ranch foreman, when taxed with the burning, did not deny it.

Hall's dream was a reality for only 20 years, but still the Mountain House lingers as a bright spot in the history of Mount Diablo.

Also see [Scenic Road History](#) article for related information

The above article was written by Beverly Lane with help from Mae Fisher Purcell's *History of Contra Costa County (1940)*, Leonora Galindo Fink in the *Contra Costa Chronicles* for February, 1967, and the Contra Costa History Center. September 5, 1996, and was written for the TRAIL THROUGH TIME PROJECT's second "Trek through Time" event.