



**Newsletter
June 2026**

Have You Ever Heard of ... Muletown?



Muletown!! Haw, Haw!!

Yes, Muletown. As odd as the name might seem to us today, there were several Muletowns sprinkled across the U.S. and dating back to the 1830's. Home states included Tennessee, Ohio, Missouri, and California, with California having at least two – one near Redding in Shasta County, and a long-gone townsite here in Amador County.

Information on our local Muletown is sketchy at best, consisting of scant newspaper articles, reminiscences by old timers, and explorations of the site and neighboring ghost townsite of

Quincy. It appears that Muletown and Quincy, both Amador County gold rush towns, were basically connected with Quincy being the larger and Muletown lasting longer.



Typical gold rush town and population – may be Upper Rancheria

There are no known photographs or drawings of Muletown or larger Quincy, adding to the mystery. By the early 1860's, all remnants, with the exception of a few filled-in wells and chimney foundations, had been erased. Obscurity seems complete. So, then the question arises, "who cares"? In her guest speaker appearance in January of 2026, Marcie Canale made a short reference to Muletown, igniting my own sense of this historical curiosity.

The camp that became Muletown was generally situated about three miles north of Lone near Mule Creek and Sutter Creek with a ditch brought in from Dry Creek. At first, it was a typical gold rush boom town with miners panning all the nearby creeks and streams hoping for the elusive strike.



A foothill placer mining operation.

By about 1852, most waterways in the area were pretty well panned out. As placer mining waned, the towns of Muletown, Quincy, Irish Hill, and Lone evolved to become supply and transportation hubs.



Mule powered pack train.

Mining centers such as Plymouth, Drytown, Amador City, Sutter Creek, and Jackson relied on these supply centers to deliver everything from mining machinery to flour.



A loaded pack mule.

Muletown got its name from the large herds of mules kept in the vicinity to form pack trains to and from the lone transportation hub.



Pack train being assembled.

From lone, the mule trains kept up a steady supply stream in and out of the Mother Lode. Mules were the pack animals of choice because of their strength enabling them to carry loads much heavier than their cousins – the horse.



Yes, even mules can be overloaded!

Their inherent sure-footedness was also an asset when it came to negotiating mountain trails to some of the more remote camps.



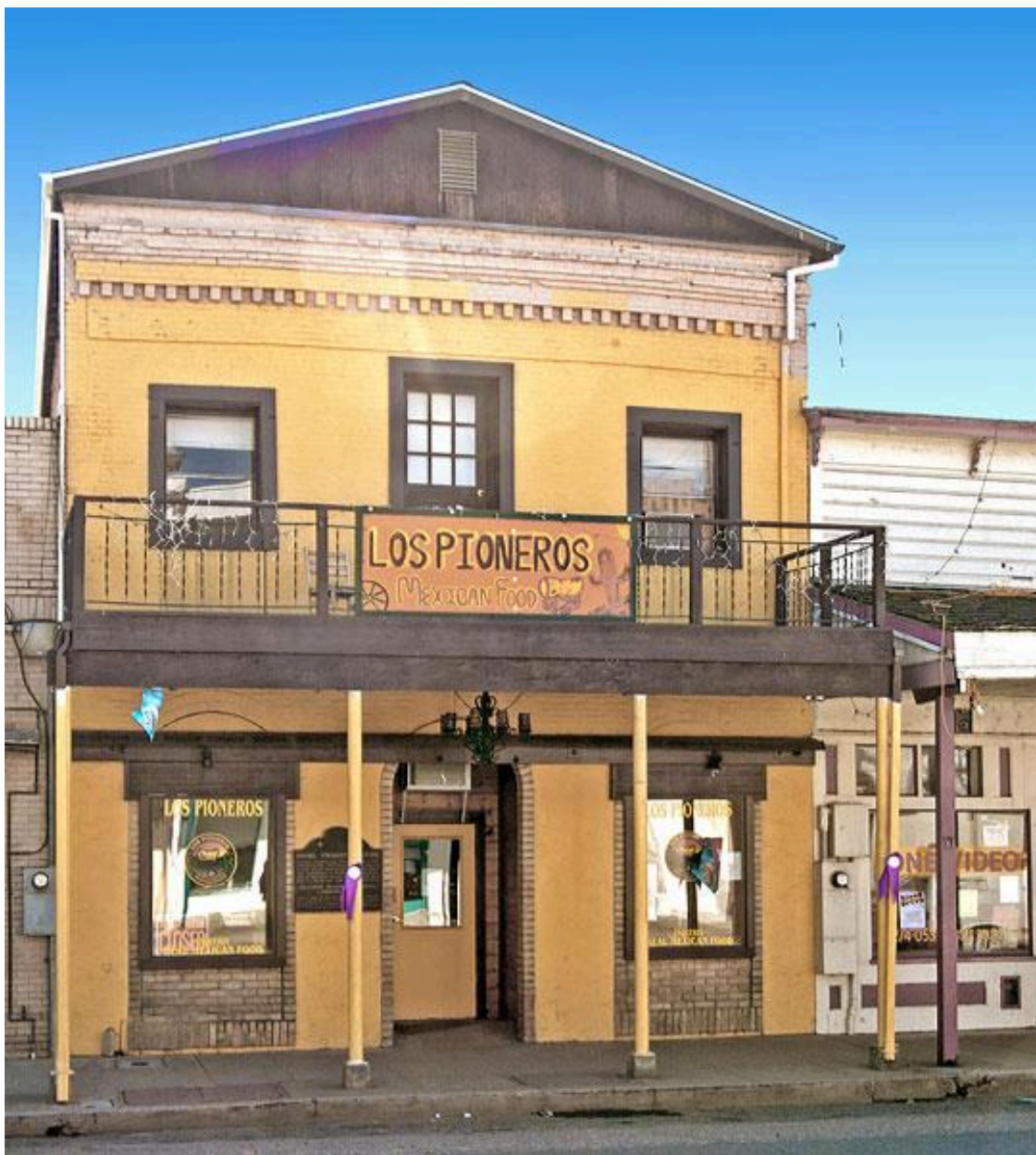
A remote mining camp. Even building materials were packed in.

As roads and transportation improved, mule trains became less important to supply the mines. Muletown's fate was sealed. However, in spite of this downturn, Muletown resurrected itself as an important brick making center, supplying bricks all over the Mother Lode.

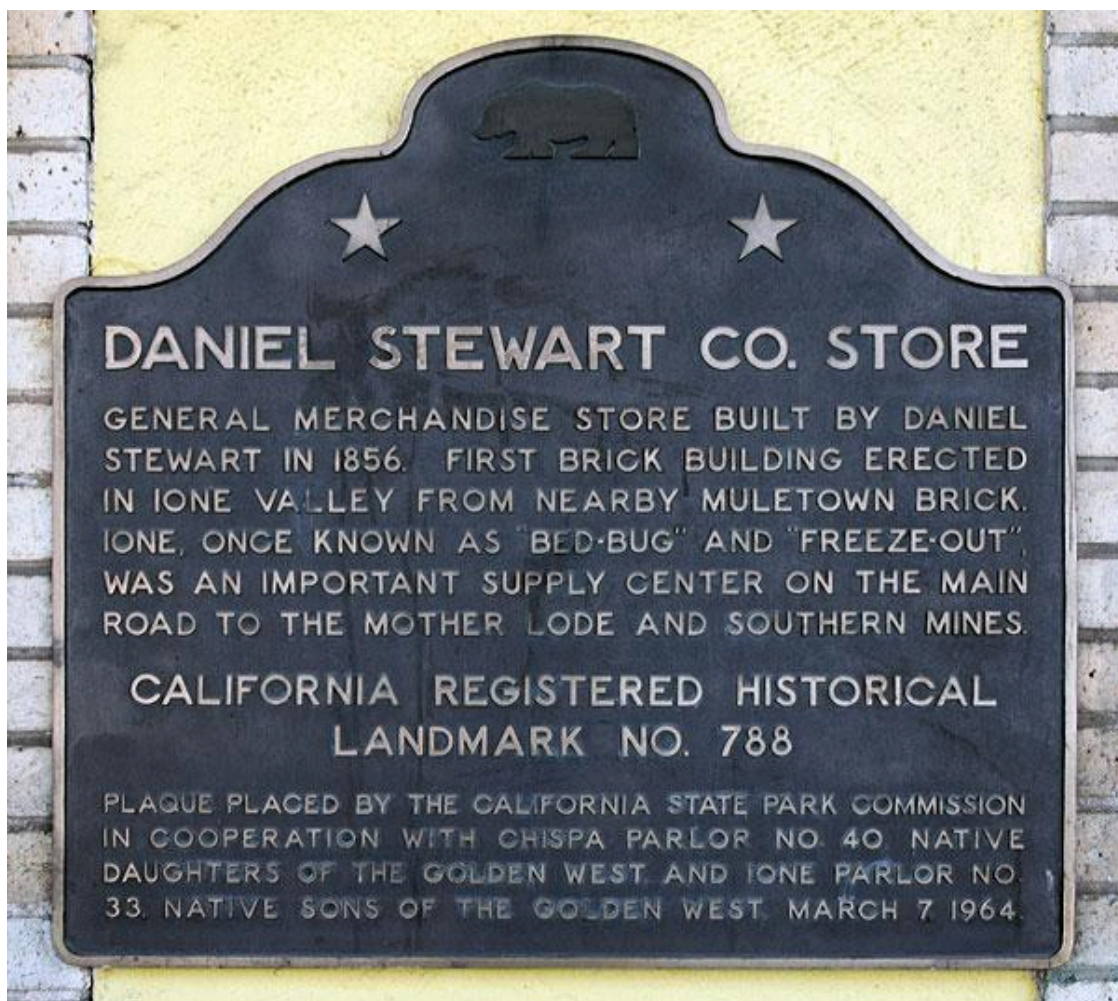


House in Lone likely built with Muletown brick.

Businesses in Lone were big customers. In fact, nearly all the old brick buildings and houses in town are built using Muletown bricks.



Daniel Stewart's store in Lone built with Muletown brick in 1856.



The resurrection proved to be short-lived. A small copper deposit behind the town was discovered and a modest mining effort kept things limping along for a couple more years. If not for the demand for copper fueled by the Civil War, the end would have come sooner. But by 1864 it was over, and the formerly bustling transportation hub simply evaporated. Within a couple more years, nothing was left but a few brick chimneys and foundations. Even those eventually went for patios, garden walls, and bar-b-ques in the area.



The fate of Muletown buildings.

From the 1940's through the 1960's, a few attempts were made to locate the old townsites. Other than a few square nails and related relics, nothing remained. Trees had grown, cattle had grazed, and the erasure became complete.



Today when you look at the empty grassy field and oak dotted hills, it's difficult to imagine the activity of the place.



***How many people once lived here?
What did they do and where did they go?***

Lives lived and ended, families raised, and futures made. But that's the lure of the past, re-imaging what once was.

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