

Here's California's capital in 1849 as it mushroomed into the gold-rush metropolis.



Sacramento

by Tom Evans

Gilds Its Gold-Rush Days



Rebuilding starts with tearing down slums.



Long neglected, Pony Express depot will be restored.



State office building is a sample of what will replace crumbling structures in blighted area.

SACRAMENTO, a headquarters for miners during the wild and woolly days of the California gold rush, is rebuilding its historic "West End."

West End was where the gold miners collected their grubstakes and celebrated their strikes, where mule pack trains set off with supplies for miners as far away as Idaho, where Pony Express riders ended their weary ride from St. Joseph, Mo., and where Capt. John A. Sutter landed on the banks of the Sacramento river and started the gold fever.

That was more than 100 years ago. Today the West End has become a crumbling, blighted 62-block area of flophouses, honky-tonks, pawnshops, and overcrowded, substandard housing units. Worse than that, the area's decay was slowly spreading into healthy sections of Sacramento.

The city fathers decided to do something about it—something big. They drew up plans for a complete rehabilitation of the area, centering on a 15-block Capitol Mall, a \$10-million project of commercial, residential, and public buildings.

Not all the romance of the gold-rush days will vanish under the wreckers' hammers. The Pony Express office will be left as a reminder of the city's past. Other historic landmarks also will remain.

One of these is the home of E. B. Crocker, pioneer California jurist and a backer of the first transcontinental railroad. Now the Crocker Art Gallery, the building houses one of the West's finest art collections.

More than 400 families, representing 27 nationalities, and many businesses will be displaced, but the city has offered financial help and advice in finding new locations. A number of businessmen already have planned to move back into the revitalized West End.

The work began in 1950 and may take more than a decade to complete, but Sacramento will someday have a new "gold-rush" section of which it can be justly proud!