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## HIGHWAY 80-CALIFORNIA DRIVING DIRECTIONS

In East to West order...last updated 02-29-10. Changes in **GOLD** are based upon a new 1921 Bankhead Highway Guidebook!

Though completely bypassed/replaced by I-8 and not as glamorous as it once was, old highway 80 remains in drivable condition throughout most of Southern California. Indeed, the stretch from the top of In-Ko-Pah Gorge through Jacumba (pronounced ha-CUM-ba) on to Pine Valley/Descanso Junction allows one to drive over 40 miles of 1930's-era concrete with several vintage bridges and even the old, wooden guard rails in places. I hope you enjoy...

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**Yuma Area:** IF you came across the Colorado River over the 1956 bridge, continue on Winterhaven Drive to Winterhaven.

-OR-

If you came across the Colorado on that great 1914-15 Ocean to Ocean Highway bridge, take an immediate left once across the bridge onto Quechan Road. This will dip down left next to the rail tracks. Note the St. Thomas Indian School/Mission above you to the right. Quechan will intersect with CAL 24. Hang a left onto 'Picacho'. Picacho will dump you out onto the newer 1956 Winterhaven Drive. Onward to Winterhaven.

- The earlier routings out of Yuma seem to have varied about as often as a new calendar was issued. The earliest (pre-1921) routings seemed to generally head north then NW out of the Yuma area (see a probably suspicious named Yuma Road north of Winterhaven). These uncertain/undefined roads took one further NW than the later Highway 80 routings and ultimately tied into the RR NW of Araz Junction near today's RR checkpoint Dunes (then known as checkpoint Knob). From here, the road angled across the land to the SW to tie into the later routings around the Ogilby exit.
- By the issuance of the 1922 Bankhead (BH) Tourist Guide, the 1921 BH followed what may be today's I-8 routing along the Colorado River embankments towards Araz Junction, then followed the RR further NW to the aforementioned RR checkpoint Dunes (Knob) before heading SW towards the Ogilby exit.
- 1923 Yuma County maps still show this general alignment, but show what was the first stair step routings into what we would know as Winterhaven today. Again, specific roads uncertain.

**Winterhaven Area:** Continue through town on Winterhaven Drive. About 3/4ths of a mile west of Winterhaven, you can follow the alignment of the newer 80 and veer left where Winterhaven Drive dumps you out onto I-8 westbound at the Winterhaven Drive exit;

-OR-

Follow Araz Road west-northwestward (older 80). Be sure to check out the presence of several great examples of early bridgework, particularly a dated 1936 bridge across the All-American Canal. This style of bridge will be seen again...especially further west near Plaster City. Continue until Araz Road also dumps you out onto I-8 westbound at the Algodones/CAL 186 exit (you could follow Araz west for 1/2 mile, but it dead ends just past another vintage bridge). Follow I-8 westward.

- See the above notes how the earliest (pre say 1925) alignments followed the RR further NW to RR checkpoint Dunes (Knob) before heading SW towards Ogilby.

**Felicity:** Just past the California Check Station, take the next exit and the north frontage west past the

'town' of Felicity. Somehow labeled as "Center of the World", Felicity seems to be comprised of a group of small brick buildings and a small pyramid replica. Though maybe not the actual center of the world, these buildings are at least on old 80 as the number of 'C' blocks on the north side of the road attests. Onward to the Ogilby Rd exit where you will be forced to take I-8 west.

- Original 80! At Sidewinder Road, zero odometer. As you come off onto the north frontage, the asphalt of original 80 can be seen heading straight into the Highway patrol building, exiting the other side and can be followed through the Center of the World property. At 1.7 miles, look off to the north and you will see a 'C' block and to the right of that, a 1927 geodesic marker. The old road is north of this marker-about 50 yards north of the pole line. As we head west towards Ogilby Road, the old road slowly gets closer and closer to just 10 yards north of the pole line at Ogilby Road exit.

Ogilby Road Area: Old 80 must have crossed to be subsumed by the I-8 eastbound lanes through here. There is a lonely 'C' block on the south side of the interstate near the Ogilby exit (seen from eastbound I-8 lanes only).

Imperial Dunes Recreation Area: A four-wheelers paradise...the American Sahara! \* A Must See! \* Be sure to take Gray's Well Road west (the portion just west of the rest stop and where the road veers away from I-8 are 30's-era 80). Exit south across the interstate, then west 3.2 miles to see the remains of pre-80: the Plank Road! These sections of wooden planks were once connected together and drug about by horses as the shifting sands required. This precursor to the modern road almost became US 80, but was bypassed with the first asphalt road across the dunes in 1926. Vast amounts of asphalt were poured over man-made small shaped dunes to 'lock' them in place so a road could be built over the top of them. Note the short stretch of old original 80 asphalt directly across from the plank road disappearing under the I-8 embankment. Backtrack to I-8 westbound.

As you get back on the looping exit, look eastward and below you to see a remnant of the 30's era asphalt appearing out of the embankment and curving eastward towards the interstate for approx. 1/2 mile to where it ties in by the Yuma/Winterhaven highway mileage sign. You can see this remnant from I-8 eastbound.

Back at the rest stop, bits of the 1926 asphalt can be seen just west of the old well in the median, and again by the stop sign where you turn west onto Gray's Well Road and just to the north of I-8 westbound as you leave the rest area heading west. In addition, on westbound I-8 west of the rest stop as you climb the large hill, look to the right (northward) and down below in the valleys. I noted at least three sections of this old 1926 asphalt down amongst the dunes. I imagine that these too can come and go with drifting sand. These sections of cut off road appear to tie into our next section of road...

Gordon's Well Road: Take the Gordon's Well Road exit, and continue on the north frontage road west. You could take the road a 1/4 of a mile east, but no reason to. Old 80 crossed the All American Canal at the same place the westbound lanes of I-8 do now and eventually tied into what is now the north frontage road-



The Even Hewes Highway. A 'C' block at Gordon's Well verifies this road (see pic for an example of a typical 'C' block ). Continue west on the north frontage past the Brock Research Road exit. **A LOT of American Canal work in this area in 2008-10 has obliterated many C blocks and geodetic markers between Gordan's Well out past Brock Research Station Road.**

Brock Research Road Exit & West: Continue on the north frontage road westward. Note the many palms in here. There must have been structures here at one time. About one mile west of the exit, keep your eyes on the north side of the road. A 'C' block! In fact, look for the large red/white transmission tower

near here. SE of the tower and on the north side of the road, look for another 'C' block, and a large, unmarked concrete block about three feet high along with several 'pipes' sticking out of the ground. These 'pipes' are actually survey markers! I found three 1934 markers and a 1964 marker all within a 100 foot radius of this large concrete block. If you had any doubts, we're definitely on 80 now! As you continue west, the road surface will deteriorate somewhat, but is easily passable by any average sedan. Note the many 'C' blocks and survey markers all along this stretch and onward into Holtville (all are on the north side of the road).

Continue westward on the north frontage road past the Calexico/CAL 98 exit (once the site of Midway Wells) More 'C' blocks east of this exit, blocks and survey markers approx. one mile west and beyond. About one mile east of the Van Der Linden Road/CAL 115 exit, you will pass over a 1949 bridge-another relic of the old road. As you curve around the Van Der Linden exit area, hang a right onto CAL 115 west on into Holtville.

- 🌐 Note: Old Spanish Trail & Bankhead Highway Note: 1926 maps show the old road as going due west onto Hunt Rd, then north into Holtville via Bonds Corner Road & walnut. West in town on 5th to Holt Ave north to 6th St. west then leaving on Zenos to to CAL 115 south. West on Holton Rd almost all the way into El Centro, but cross the old RR tracks at Cannon Rd. where we follow the newer road again. I'm not sure if this was ever original 80 or not as it was in the process of being bypassed per city and state ordinances dated 1925/26 and is not described in my 1927 Auto Blue Book. Regardless, it was THE main route for years and as such, deserves a worthy mention here.
- 🌐 Author's notes: Road work provided no evidence (culverts/markers/bridges, etc) of the eastern portion of this possible routing, but Holton Rd. had several 1934 markers which I imagine \*may\* have replaced 1927 markers-else why would they be on the north side of the tracks instead of on the south side of the RR where they could have been seen by newer 80? Also, a 1918 canal culvert proves that it was the main road at least that early which makes the western exit very plausible.

Holtville: Looks like a nice town. Note the old, 'requisitioned' Texaco building at the east end of town, and the great Union Foods sign on the left. This sign looks like it hails from the 20's or 30's-a sure sign that the old road hadn't changed its routing in this area. Pretty central park area. Note the old signpost with the mileage markers! Curve around to the south at the west end of town, and head west (did you notice the original, cut-off 90-degree turn west?) on the four-lane Evan-Hewes Highway on into El Centro. Note the abandoned railway/bridge on the north side of the road. The aforementioned drive guides assure me that this has been the route Highway 80 took through the area since at least 1928, but was it always so...see next paragraph!

El Centro Area: The 4-lane road you are on is now conveniently identified as Imperial County 'S80' and will become 'Main' as you enter El Centro proper. Unfortunately, the east end of town seems pretty run down. At the intersection of 4<sup>th</sup> (old highway 99!), take a right-but not before checking out the cool, deco Ford building on the SE corner. On 4<sup>th</sup>, note the huge Union Pacific complex to the right. Surely the city can do something with this area. 4<sup>th</sup> will curve left and become Adams St.-Motel row! Note the Tropicana, Premiere Inn; La Siesta and others in this short stretch. At the intersection of Imperial Ave., old 99 turned right and went north along the Salton Sea, but you highway 80 nuts will want to continue straight (due west). As you head west out of town, be sure to note the narrow and dated 1940 bridge literally just before the intersection with 'Austin'. Continue west.

- 🌐 As might seem obvious, original 80 continued west on Main then turned north onto Imperial to meet

the newer road. This lasted through at least 1930.

Seeley: Westward, just past NAS (Naval Air Station) El Centro, you'll approach sleepy little Seeley. Imperial S80 will curve left to avoid the little town, and per the 1927 Blue Book Guide, has always been 80! I can't help but think that the strip of concrete at the start of this curve had to have been the main routing at one time, but it appears as if the diagonal has been the main road since at least 1917.

*From here on until Pine Valley/Descanso Junction, put in the oldies tape, put the top down, and relax. You are going to enjoy about a 60 miles of some of the finest vintage highway I've come across. Much of this stretch remains virtually unchanged.*

Plaster City/Ocotillo Area: As you approach Plaster City, note the several, narrow concrete bridges. Definitely pre-humvee era roadwork. Also note the rapid transition to open desert, and yet more 'C' blocks along the northern side of the road. Plaster City-need any drywall? This is where it comes from. Continue west. Two miles west of Plaster City just past the curve to the SW and the high tension towers, look to the east side of the road and be sure to stop and explore the old concrete! Remnants of the old Lee Highway, I understand this concrete dates from the teens and thus pre-dates the implementation of the U.S. highway system. This narrow concrete will parallel the newer road and the tracks almost all of the way to Ocotillo. Broken and missing in spots, notice how the old road dipped into the washes-not a single bridge! The rare rains must have created quite the traffic problems as the washes flooded. Also note the 'C' blocks and the rail right-of-way markers. Continue on southward over several old, white bridges built in the style we 1<sup>st</sup> noticed back on Araz Rd. west of Winterhaven. The old concrete will remain on your left (east) until petering out just a short distance east of Coyote Wells (the stone building) where the road curves more westward as it nears I-8.

Ocotillo: Continue west on the frontage road (still called Evan Hewes). If you stop and get out of the car, you'll see that the two large culverts you'll cross over are dated 1932 (dates are visible from I-8 westbound). At one mile is abandoned Miller's Garage and other unidentified remains, but the real big deal is the earlier (circa) 1917-19 alignment diverging from the later 1930's alignment in a perfectly straight bee-line continuing on behind the ruins while the newer asphalt road curves left in front of the ruins and goes another 2/10's of a mile before being cut off by westbound I-8. If you follow the original 1919 concrete west, after ½ mile the road disintegrates into a series of small washes/crevasses. Return to Ocotillo and take I-8 westbound. Zero odometer. *Author's addendum: the area around Miller's garage has been privately purchased with the hopes of future restoration. Please take photos from your vehicles and do not trespass into the structures themselves so the owner will not be forced to fence off this historic area.*

West of Ocotillo, watch the right for the old RR overpass. The early BH would have gone underneath that overpass to eventually wander underneath the I-8 eastbound lanes to your left. Look left up the bottom of the Gorge and one can see the remnants of 1930's 80 which went up the east side of the gorge until it was destroyed by flooding in the 1970's.

In-Ko-Pah Gorge: 'God's playground' is what Leslie & I call the gorge. Huge, fractured granite boulder piles abound, looking like giant marbles and crazy sculptures designed or haphazardly strewn about by

giants. 8 miles: Devil's Canyon. It is possible to pull off right in front of the bridge. To the right and down, you can see what I believe must be a remnant of the old wagon road. Onward to the Mountain Springs exit.

**In-Ko-Pah Gorge Detour:** In-Ko-Pah Gorge is also home to what must have been one of the most dangerous stretches of the road I've come across. From Ocotillo, the early teen's era and 30's era road generally followed the route taken by the I-8 eastbound lanes to the Mountain Springs exit area. **TURN AROUND HERE** and follow I-8 back down the gorge eastbound to Ocotillo. Driving back east from the Mountain Springs exit area, evidence of the dangerous early 1919 roadway (re-paved 1927) is especially apparent. Many cut-off sections are still visible precariously hanging on to cliff sides (always on your left on that stretch). Unfortunately, due to the terrain and the danger of blind Interstate corners, all of the early roadbeds through here are inaccessible-able only to be glimpsed from the Interstate. Also remnants of the old wagon roads-precursors even to the U.S. highway system still exist due to the aridity of the region.

**Mountain Springs exit:** A MUST SEE! Be sure to take it. Both older alignments converged here, diverged for a short distance, and re-converged for the final climb to the Desert Watchtower. After exiting and crossing under the I-8 eastbound lanes, look eastward and note how the teen-era roadbed emerges from the side of the canyon and the 30's era road emerges from under I-8. Looking west, the perfectly preserved 1927 (originally 1919) concrete paving is now on private property, but the later asphalt can be followed for a short distance before also being cut-off by the superslab near where both of these alignments obviously re-joined for the final assault up the gorge. Note how much difference exists between the sharp curves of the early alignment and the much larger sweeping curves of the later asphalt version (complete with raised embankment and vintage wooden posts still intact). Following the 30's era roadbed to where it gets cut-off by I-8, look back eastward and you can see the early concrete alignment marching towards you from well beyond I-8. Return to I-8. Back on I-8 westbound, look to your left and note the roads you were just on far below. Yet in just a short distance, look to your right and you will note several short, cut-off segments and culverts. It is obvious the old highway grades were much steeper than the existing Interstate grade. Near the top of the climb, look up and to the right for the Desert Watchtower and the old grade approaching it to your right.

**Desert Watchtower Area:** As you emerge from the gorge, take the 1<sup>st</sup> exit and head back to the east past several old businesses to enjoy the Desert Watchtower. A landmark for decades, the Watchtower now sits alone-a reminder of the classic tourist traps of days gone by. A fine example of the kitsch and flair of many of these old stops, be sure to swing on in and support the fine folks trying to make a go of it. From the top of the Watchtower (c,mon, it's only \$2.50), you have a nice view of the valley and can observe many cut off segments of the old roads. Mentally trace how they worked their way up and down the gorge in relation to I-8. Heading back on old 80, continue past the old businesses, past the exit you just got off of, and take the Jacumba turn off left under the interstate (80 dead ends about a 1/4 mile ahead-cut off by I-8).

**Jucumba Area:** Heading back west from the Watchtower, go under the interstate (the old road went straight until it dead ends where I-8 bisects it), and follow the signs to Jacumba. This is gorgeous high-desert country, and old 80 winds its way through the heart of it. Junipers, oaks and granite outcroppings abound. Note that there is a dirt road weaving in-out between you and the interstate-Carrizo Creek Road. This was part of the old wagon & stage roads but was never 80. BTW, a 1927 marker just NE of the Carrizo Creek bridge verifies this section as original 80. Just east of Jacumba, I noticed that the three

1932 concrete bridges with wooden rail posts I saw the 1<sup>st</sup> time through in 2000 have been replaced by modern, wider bridges. Another reminder that even out here, the history of the road is disappearing.

Jacumba itself is now a quiet, sleepy little town, but it was not always so. A shell of evidence of this bustling past remains-literally. For example, just west of 'downtown', note the large, crumbling ruins with the many arches and long covered walkways on the right. This was the old spa-fed by natural hot springs in the area. Right across the street, an old fireplace stands like a lonely sentinel-the remains of the Vaughn Hotel which lay abandoned for years and finally burned in '82. Pictures of these old establishments can be seen in the new spa a little back east downtown. Note the old original concrete at the west end of town as it angles right into the old blue gas station. It is visible again from the 1931 bridges as it comes round the corner of a hill. Also note the small cutoff concrete at the west end of the first 1931 bridge!

*Author's note from field work: from Jacumba east to at least El Centro, it appears as if all of the newer 80 roadwork was done in 1932. West of Jacumba to just west of La Posta Road, all bridges and contractor stamps say 1931. From this point to Kitchen Creek, the road was laid down in 1930, from Kitchen Creek west to an unknown point, 1929. 1928 in the Cotton Creek area per the bridge, and 1927 in the Descanso Junction area per the dated culverts.*

Bankhead Springs: Continue on through Bankhead Springs past the old general store or motel between MM 30 & 29.5. Right at MM29, veer to the left for a terrific short stretch of original 1919 Lee Highway concrete (\*\*A MUST SEE\*\*) past the Mistletoe Lodge. Rejoin newer 80 and continue west.

Boulevard: Bypass the "to I-8" directional sign at the intersection of Ribbonwood (Cal 94) and continue on to Boulevard. Veer right at the 'Y' to stay with old 80. Do NOT turn left towards Campo. I made this mistake the 1<sup>st</sup> time through. However, if you're not pressed for time, it is a beautiful stretch with a fantastic high train bridge, a vintage wooden bridge and oak-studded hills. *Factoid: This southern Campo route towards San Diego was the route followed by early routings of the Old Spanish Trail and the early stage road*

Live Oak Springs: Continue on. Note the A-frames of the resort to your right. Past Live Oak Springs, you will be working your way back north towards I-8. As you approach I-8, be sure to watch for the 'Old Hwy 80' left turn (west) just south of I-8 and the Golden Acorn Casino. This turn off can also be reached via the Live Oak Springs exit from I-8. This is a great strip of road along the granite canyon walls. Note the short cut off stretch of original concrete road on the SW corner of this intersection. As you head west on this exquisite stretch, original 80 can be seen across the valley on the south ridge.

-  Original 80 Info: Past Boulevard and just south of Live Oak Springs, watch for Live Oak Springs Road to dip down off the highway. A run NW to meet up with Meridian Ridge Trail, west to Stagecoach Springs to Camino Tres Ave. A small loop south to connect with W. La Posta Circle to veer west and emerge just south of the La Posta Rd. and Highway 80 just SE of the farm there. As the (then) newer road was being built in 1931, the old road was gradually bypassed as the road was changed to emerge at W. La Posta Circle, then Millers Valley Rd before being bypassed altogether.
-  Though never 80, I think it is quite apparent (but unproven) that the earliest roads and probably the Bankhead Highway followed that sandy road due west from La Posta Rd. to where it emerges from the hills due east of the La Posta Diner.

La Posta: La Posta Rd was where the old highway rejoined the new. An offshoot of original 80 can be

glimpsed shooting straight across the field back eastward from a small pullout right at mile marker 16.5 (L). Also note the concrete color change here. It is here where contractor stamps verify 1931 vs. 1930 construction. Indeed, this whole stretch is populated with these contractor stamps, so one can trace the highways construction. At La Posta proper, note how high up I-8 is above you to the right. The small deli/mini-mart was a gas station until '82. Onward past the I-8 Kitchen Creek exit while watching to the south (L) for traces of original 80 in the field below you.

Boulder Oaks Campground: Little factoid-the Pacific Crest hiking trail comes through here. Look for the parking area on the left (south-side). You'll note a small concrete apron. This is where the pumps for an old Chevron station/general store used to be. The state park service took possession of this land somewhere around 97-98 and took out the old station and pumps. Continue out into the valley and past Buckman Springs Rd. (another possible I-8 exit to explore this area). Once past Buckman Springs, old 80 will become county highway 'S-1'. Follow S-1 past the 1932 Cottonwood Creek bridge (a great small old concrete bridge with the original, probably teens-era bridge still underneath!), past the Glenn Cliff fire station and over I-8 at Laguna Summit. Note, the old road used to go on a much straighter line towards Pine Valley, but Laguna Summit was drastically lowered and the whole landscape radically changed for the I-8 construction in here. Once over I-8, take an immediate left for the run through Pine Valley/Descanso Junction.

Pine Valley/Guatay/Descanso Junction area: Pine Valley looks like a nice little town. Large oaks and friendly small stores/deli's. Continue west out of town over the 1931 concrete culvert, then northwest to a couple of terrific examples of early bridge construction/evolution. **\*\*A MUST SEE\*\*** As you cross over the 1929 main bridge, note the earlier 1916 arched bridge below you on the south side! You can access this bridge by a short cut off road segment on the east side of the old bridge (*This is on the property of the neighboring "Horse of the Sun" horse spa, so be sure to ask permission before taking any photos on their land*). On through Guatay. Just west of Guatay, look for a .10 mile bypassed loop of old 80 on the south side through the woods. Just north of Descanso Junction and the junction of CAL 79, the culvert you cross is also dated 1929! Sure fire indicator this was the original road. Continue southward through the sleepy town of Descanso Junction and its shaded streets. Just past Descanso Junction, look to the left for the cut-off curve, and then right for **\*must-see\*** Wildwood Glen Lane.

Wildwood Glenn Lane was a segment of old highway 80 that was intended to be improved in 1951 when it was thought the interstate was coming through that area. Here-in lays a great study in contrast-after crossing the newer 1951 bridge, be sure to take the next left for a little loop back east to cross the 1917 Los Terrenitos bridge which pre-dated the U.S. Highway act by 9 years! Compare the differences 33 years in bridge building technology brings to the road. Continue west as far as you can until blocked by a newly added metal barricade (*addendum #2*). Park the car and explore on foot for a bit. Note the old remaining bits of white paint on the centerline and I-8 considerably below you. Also, just a couple of hundred feet or so from the barricade, note the 1931 contractor markings made in the concrete itself! Backtrack to CAL 79 and take I-8 westbound. As you get back on the interstate, keep glancing back north, and you can catch a glimpse of the newer, never-to-be-an-interstate bridge. Also, watch old 80 (Wildwood Glenn Lane) high above you on the ridge as it winds its way down towards the interstate. Eventually, I-8 plows its way through the old roadbed. Remember this spot, and look for it in the next section.

*Addendum: the Wildwood Glenn portion of the old road was devastated by the horrible fires in the summer of 2003.*

*Addendum #2: As of 09/04, the road is gated off after just .8 of a mile. However, you can hike/bike the remaining roadbed.*

Exit 133-Vista Point Overlook (Eastbound I-8 only): Looking eastward across I-8, you can see how this was a cut off curve, a continuation of the road coming down from the Wildwood Glenn Lane Road you were just exploring. Just past the overlook on I-8 westbound, look to the right (north side) for an inaccessible cut off loop of the old road following the base of the bluffs. It rejoins where you see a gate in the fence. original 80 was very curvy here but has been overlaid by I-8.

Alpine and Willows Roads: Once past this ridgeline and the Vista Point overlook, you are unfortunately beginning to enter the suburbs. Take the next exit, E. Willows Road. You now have a choice.

You can take the north road, E.. Willows Road, west (original 80),

-OR-

continue west on I-8 (actually, the east-bound lanes are newer 80).

If you went on the north side of the interstate, follow E. Willows Road west. E. Willows Road until very recently used to have a much more rural feel to it. Unfortunately, the large Viejas Casino & outlet mall has ruined much of this stretch. For example, the vintage 1933 bridge over Viejas Creek just east of The Willows has been replaced-I'm sure due to the increased traffic the casino/mall has brought. Continue a little bit further westward until you have to join Alpine Road on the south side of the interstate at the Willows Road exit.

-  Original 80: a portion of what is now known as the Viejas Grade Road is bypassed original 80. Follow Viejas Grade Road north for .4 miles and you will see where the original 1919 concrete veers off from the curve right in front of you This tied back into Willows Road but these curves were bypassed with the completion of the aforementioned 1933 bridge.

Alpine Area: Follow Alpine Blvd. through its namesake town. Alpine seems to still be a sleepy little town, with beautiful large eucalyptus trees lining old 80-Main Street. Continue west on Alpine Road to the Dunbar/Viewside Lane exit.

Original 80: Another nice little stretch, Arnold Way, was an earlier incarnation of Highway 80- at least through 1930 per the [1930 Southern California at a Glance](#) publication. It loops south of Alpine Road and then curves back north to rejoin Alpine Road just east of the Viewside Lane I-8 exit. This route is now home to horse properties and large homes-any historic structures are unfortunately gone. The only indication of its age is a small, undated narrow culvert near its southern apex and one small, bypassed **blacktopped curve (which was original concrete until circa 2007)** - now part of someone's driveway (north side). Once again, a great example of how the early roads dipped and curved so much more than their modern offspring. Rejoin Alpine Road. Arnold Way was probably bypassed circa '32 or '33 as was Willows Road.

Glenview & El Cajon Area: Take the Viewside Lane I-8 exit to the north, and pick up the 1<sup>st</sup> left, conveniently called Olde Hwy 80 westward. Note the huge nursery. The area is mostly trailer parks and other non-noteworthy small businesses. Through Flinn Springs, and under I-8 past Flinn Springs Park on the south side. Many mature eucalyptus trees line the stretch and an honorable mention to the Flinn

Springs Country Store. Stock up on some honey/fudge or brownies! Labrador Lane right behind the store is an earlier incarnation that tied in north of the current I-8 routing.

Onward to the I-8 Lake Jennings Park Road exit. Take this to the north side of I-8, and take Business 8 west. Note the rapid transition to modern ho-hum businesses, motels and strip malls. This area is growing rapidly. Note that the bridge (with the gas main) right next to the county park is dated 1932! Onward through Glenview (Aurora Dr. one block east is earlier 80). Road will become E. Main St. at the junction with Broadway (just north of the I-8 underpass and it should also be noted that original 80 ran due west on Broadway, then took a turn due south on 2nd. St. to El Cajon Blvd. thru at least 1930). East Main will turn due west for the run through El Cajon at the junction of Jamacha (pronounced HAM'-a-shaw) Rd. (Cal 54). Follow E. Main through El Cajon. Unfortunately, not much of anything to report. Older motels, liquor stores, and the ubiquitous strip malls populate the area though the area right around the heart of downtown El Cajon is nice with a couple of new cafes and store fronts in the Spanish style. Once past downtown El Cajon, E. Main will become W. Main and after only about a ¼ mile, watch for El Cajon Blvd. veering off to the southwest. Take it all the way to where you are forced to unfortunately exit onto I-8 westbound.

La Mesa Area & El Cajon Blvd.: If you neglect the early 80 options listed below, take I-8 up the hill past Grossmont. Past the large Cal 125 intersection and move to the left for the left side I-8 exit onto El Cajon-"The Boulevard". Exit onto El Cajon, zero odometer at the stoplight just at the end of the exit (Baltimore) and we will follow El Cajon west for 7.3 miles. Watch for the 'Y' with Montezuma Rd. at approx. 1/2 mile. Veer left to stay with El Cajon Blvd. Though not much of vintage architecture remains, note the old streetlights. I'm glad La Mesa has kept these. Also, the abundance of queen palms helps soften the otherwise semi-tired look of the area. Continue past the Cal 15 and I-805 overpasses. Just across the I-805 overpass, there is a neat old electrical station building, and an unusual site to see in such a large town-a large-an old fashioned water tower just a block south off of the road. We're approaching the end of El Cajon Blvd. Just past the Florida St. stoplight, look for the large "The Boulevard" sign over both lanes! Junction with Park Blvd., pause for a moment, 'cuz we have several choices on how to enter San Diego proper...see below:

- The 1922 BH Guide shows a surprising routing into downtown that doesn't seem to match any others I have come across. Why? Unknown, but it went like this:
  - Leaving La Mesa, the 1921 BH went south (probably on 4th) to somehow tie into Palm and Broadway to veer SW to Lemon Grove.
  - From Lemon Grove, Lemon Grove Ave. south until it becomes Imperial Ave.
  - Imperial Ave SW through the Encanto neighborhood,
  - Then west on Imperial to the downtown area with a north on 16th and a west on Broadway to end at 5th St.
- Original 80 Option (1926-circa'29-'30): Before the huge CAL 125 junction, take the Severin Dr. exit. South over I-8 and an immediate right onto Bancroft. Follow Bancroft as it turns south. At Grossmont, a right under CAL 125, then a left onto La mesa and you're back on original 80. Follow La Mesa as swings west, then northwest to rejoin El Cajon. Follow El Cajon Blvd. west to Euclid. South on Euclid to University (the junction of Euclid & University was the end of the old trolley line), then University west to the Balboa Park area...see below.
- 1930: Same as above, except stay with El Cajon all the way to Park.
- 1939: The straighter El Cajon routing bypassed La Mesa Dr. (which at that time was known as El Cajon & Lookout Blvds.).
- Circa Mid-Thirties: Park pushed further south to Market.
- 1943: market extended west to the junction with the Pacific Highway (old Highway 101. [Date courtesy of Steve Varner.](#)

- 1948: Instead of a south at Park, 80 went west across Park from El Cajon to Normal and Washington Streets to take CAL 163 south to 10th & 11th Streets to Market and west to 101. [Date courtesy of Steve Varner.](#)
- 1959: The last version of 80 through the area, the Alvarado Parkway, was completely in place-completely bypassing the downtown area. This routing essentially became I-8.

Balboa Park/San Diego Area: As expected, a couple of notable changes. Once at Park, one can

- Original 80: Continue on University west past Park, then south on 4th St. to Broadway and the Plaza (or 5th if heading northbound). Apparently 4th & 5th have been one-way streets from the very beginning. Horton Plaza at the SW corner of 4th & Broadway was the original terminus of Highway 80. Look for a 1923 pylon marking the official western end of the Old Spanish Trail right in front of the Sam Goody store in the plaza. Per 1925, 1927 Auto Blue Books and 1928 Hobbs Guide.
- Circa 1930 to ?: From El Cajon Blvd., take a left (south) on Park. There are some fine examples of early 20's/30's bungalows and hotels in here. Continue south on Park through Balboa Park. I cannot say enough about the park...the San Diego Zoo, the buildings left from the 1915 Pan-American Expo, the museums...plan on spending a whole day in the area. Even the road itself is serene-a promenade underneath mature eucalyptus trees along a divided median. At two miles, the junction with later 80 and Cal 163. \*NOTE\*: Per a 1930 [So. California at a Glance](#) publication, 80 went south on Park all the way to Broadway, then Broadway west to Horton Plaza and the Zero Mile Marker. Today, Park will dump you out onto the aforementioned CAL163 where you will have to take a left onto Ave C (the historical Park routing is now 1-way northbound). A right (south) on 13th, 13th. south to Broadway the Broadway west to Horton Plaza.
- ? to 1947: Same as above into downtown, but I don't know when the road was extended south to Market, then Market west to the old junction with U.S. 101 (the Pacific Coast Highway)...appears to be in the time period between 1940 and 1948.
- 1947-circa '53-'59: From El Cajon Blvd. & Park, angle left across the intersection to go SW on Normal St., then west on Washington. After only a 1/4 mile, take Cal 163 south (used to be 11th St.). Also a great drive. Recessed into a valley within Balboa Park, it seems as if you are in a natural setting instead of approaching the heart of downtown. Look for the huge, graceful 1915 Laurel St. bridge. Again, if you take this route, take the left exit into the park proper and enjoy the day and the grounds. After two miles, the junction with Park and we emerge into downtown. Cal 163 southbound becomes 10th Ave., 11th Ave ties into CAL 163 northbound. South on 10th to Market. West on Market to the junction with Pacific Highway.
- (Completed by '59), I-8 to I-5. Was then known as the Alvarado Parkway.

I recommend taking both the Park and CAL163 routings-even if it is backtracking.

Point Loma/Cabrillo National Monument & Legislative Route 12: A **\*\* MUST SEE\*\*** in my opinion. Per [Casey Cooper](#), apparently old 80 at one time had it's western terminus (legislatively speaking-he is unclear if it was ever marked) out at Point Loma-the portion of land occupied by Cabrillo National Monument. To take this worthwhile routing (you should-just for the spectacular views if nothing else), take Pacific Highway north from the junction of old 80. BTW, you airplane nuts will want to fill up with gas at the Shell station at the NE corner of Pacific Hwy and Laurel. If the planes are coming in from the east, you might get lucky and have one come screaming in just over your head on final approach! Eventually, Pacific Highway will become an expressway. After merging onto the expressway, veer left immediately in order to take Barnett Ave (a left side exit) at the north end of the airport complex. Take Barnett west to the junction with Rosecrans and CAL 209 (You will follow CAL 209 the rest of the way out to Point Loma). Note the

golden Marine barracks on the left. As you take Rosecrans SW, also note the many cute older bungalows and Mediterranean-styled houses on your right. I love those styles and wish I could have one! Follow Rosecrans SW to the junction with Canon, where CAL 209 turns to the right (NW). Follow this road through the residential neighborhoods until it hits Catalina Blvd. Take Catalina south past the naval installations to the Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery (be sure to stop and pay your respects) and Cabrillo National Monument (spectacular views of the ocean and San Diego)

*Author's addendum 10/16/06: A visit to the CALTRANS District 11 offices in San Diego yielded no evidence this was ever old 80 and the Right of way engineers in the office do not ever recall seeing anything that indicated it was ever marked as such. However, I am leaving it here as it is a continuation of Legislative Route 12 which IS Highway 80 from the Imperial-San Diego County line to the old Highways end at Broadway or Market (depending on year).*

I hope these driving directions spark a little interest to drag you off the I-8 superslab and explore a little of California's highway history. And as I've mentioned on other pages, these directions are the result of my own personal observations and are by no means a definitive or all encompassing description. Additions and/or corrections are welcome. I unfortunately still have to work for a living and do not the time/resources to travel and research like I would wish to. I hope you enjoy the rest of my web, and as always, keep on exploring your world.

Cheers,  
Jeff

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