

From the author

Despite the fact that the Calaveras River was historically a seasonal stream, it has played an important role in the development of Calaveras and San Joaquin Counties. The story of the Calaveras River's history is as a resource for the Native Peoples of Central California, exploitation by Eastern settlers, first for gold and then for agriculture, and finally, irrigation and flood control chiefly by residents of the City of Stockton. In that regard, the Calaveras River is no different from the majority of other natural waterways in the State of California which have been engineered by humans through time to serve the needs of a developing economy. Indeed, despite the attention given to the profound impact of gold on this region's settlement and development, it has rightly been said that "[t]he mineral of chief importance in San Joaquin County is water..." The Calaveras River, despite its seasonality, has played a significant role in providing an invaluable resource for the development of Central California for more than 155 years.

This, then, is the story of the use of the Calaveras River which has caused drought as well as flooding, economic affluence as well as disaster, opportunity as well as denial.