

Gym Rat Rantings

by Bob Ring

Starting a Mexican Adventure

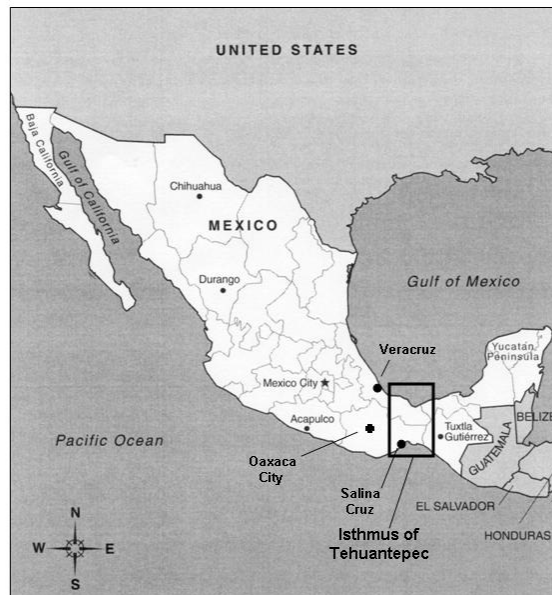
Pat and I are in the state of Oaxaca in southern Mexico. We are embarked on a great adventure to retrace my great-grandfather Eugene Ring's trek across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. (Eugene was returning from the California Gold Rush in 1850; he was abandoned by his Panama-bound ship while he and nine others were ashore foraging for food and water. Five of his fellow travelers died of cholera, before the survivors reached Veracruz a month later and were able to catch a ship to New Orleans.)

We hired a driver-guide to follow virtually the same path and visit the same places that Eugene Ring so eloquently described in his memoir of his Gold Rush experience. (See details on my Web site, <http://www.ringbrothershistory.com>)

On Day 1 of our re-discovery tour we will head southeast from Oaxaca City to Salina Cruz on the Pacific coast, near where Eugene and his company came ashore. Finding the landing site on Day 2 will be a challenge because development of that major shipping port in 1907 to feed a new cross-Isthmus railroad forever altered the seacoast.

I've been re-reading Eugene's memoir – flagging key phrases about his landing in a small boat, e.g., “As we neared the point of land,” “it presented a bold rocky front,” “a few miles down the coast,” “another high promontory,” “set out to climb to the top of a high hill,” “a ranch about two miles inland.” **I think I know where to look.**

On Day 3 of our trip - taking just a few hours - we will drive across the 125-mile-wide Isthmus to the Gulf coast on roads built since my great-grandfather's party had to struggle over mountains and through tropical jungles on horseback, and canoe down a winding river – taking 11 days.



Day 4 will take us northwest along the Gulf coast to Veracruz, closely following on modern roads the trails and rivers that Eugene Ring and his party traversed – taking another 11 days - on horseback and canoe, and finally on a small schooner for the last leg to safety.

We will head back to Oaxaca City on Day 5 so Pat can attend a week-long knitting retreat.