WITNESS HISTORY

Seeking a Mountain of Gold

By 1849, poor farmers in China had received word of a “mountain of gold” across the Pacific Ocean. Soon, thousands of Chinese men joined fortune seekers from all over the world in a rush to the gold fields of California. However, the Chinese newcomers often faced a hostile reception. In a letter home to his parents, one young American miner described the unfair treatment of Chinese miners:

“They are coming by thousands all the time. The miners in a great many places will not let them work. The miners hear they drove off about 200 Chinamen about two weeks ago but they have com back about as thick as ever (I would not help drive them off as I thought they had no rite to drive them),”

—Robert W. Pitkin, 1852

America Achieves Manifest Destiny

In February 1848, the defeated Mexicans made peace with the Americans. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo forsook Mexico to give up the northern third of their country and added 1.2 million square miles of territory to the United States.

The United States Gains Territory

In return for leaving Mexico City and paying $15 million, the victors kept New Mexico and California. They also secured the Rio Grande as the southern boundary of Texas.

The treaty disgusted and humiliated Mexicans, who continued to feel bitterness toward the United States. The treaty also dismayed Polk, but for a different reason. After Scott captured Mexico City, the President decided that he wanted to keep more of Texas.

In this way, and he refuses to help them drive off the Chinese workers.

According to Pitkin, how did the American miners treat the Chinese newcomers? (They drove them off to prevent them from working.)

What is Pitkin’s attitude toward his fellow miners? (Sample response: He thinks they are wrong to treat the Chinese workers in this way, and he refuses to help them drive off the Chinese workers.)

Objectives

As you teach this section, keep students focused on the following objectives to help them answer the Section Focus Question and master core content.

- Explain the effects of the Mexican-American War on the United States.
- Trace the causes and effects of the California Gold Rush.
- Describe the political impact of California’s application for statehood.

Prepare to Read

Background Knowledge

Remind students of some northerners’ reactions to Polk’s compromise with the British over the Oregon Territory, and how it indicated a growing national division over slavery. Have students read to find out how territorial expansion further heightened the North-South conflict.

Set a Purpose

Why It Matters

As a result of its quick victory in the Mexican-American War, the United States would finally achieve the expansionists’ goal of Manifest Destiny. Yet, the long-term effects of the war served to highlight growing differences between North and South and set the stage for future conflict.

Section Focus Question: What were the effects of the Mexican-American War and the California Gold Rush?

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Terms and People

Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo
Gadsden Purchase
Wilmot Proviso

American War
Gold Rush
Placer mining
Hydraulic mining

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Vocabulary Builder

Use the information below and the following resource to teach students the high-use words from this section. Teaching Resources, Vocabulary Builder, p. 10.

High-Use Word

Definition and Sample Sentence

Comprise

v. to include; to make up
Eventually, a total of 50 states would comprise the United States.

Degraded

v. to reduce in status or rank
The introduction of machinery into the factory threatens to degrade the skilled worker to a mere drone.
Teach

America Achieves Manifest Destiny

**Instruct**
- **Introduce:** Key Terms Organize the three key terms of this blue heading around a concept web with the center oval labeled “Expansion.”
  - Then, have students add information to the satellite ovals relating each term to U.S. territorial expansion.
- **Teach** Ask Why was Polk disappointed with the outcome of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo? (He wanted to keep more of Mexico.) Have students discuss how railroad needs drove westward expansion.
- **What made the Wilmot Proviso so divisive?** (It made slavery a prominent issue, splitting the two main political parties along North-South lines, or proslavery and anti-slavery lines.)
- **Quick Activity** Have students access Web Code ncp-0906 to use the Geography Interactive map and then answer the map skills questions in the text.

**Independent Practice**
- Have students fill in the Note Taking chart for this section.
- To help clarify the geography of U.S. territorial expansion, have students complete the Outline Map: Mexican Cession and the Gadsden Purchase worksheet. Teaching Resources, p. 17

**Monitor Progress**
As students fill in their charts, circulate to make sure that they have correctly matched effects with events. For a completed version of the chart, see Note Taking Transparencies, B-49.

**Answers**

**Map Skills**
1. Review locations with students.
2. Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, California, Utah, Nevada, and parts of Wyoming and Colorado.
3. Students should accurately explain how and when their state joined the Union.

**Vocabulary Builder**
- compris—(kuhm PRZ) v. to include; To make up

Differentiated Instruction Solutions for All Learners

**Special Needs Students**
To help students understand the effects of the Mexican-American War and the Gadsden Purchase, have them research one state created out of the territory won from Mexico. Then, ask them to use their findings to create a timeline to show at least five major events in the chosen state’s history from the year it was acquired to the present day. For example, students may note the year in which the chosen state joined the Union. Students may annotate their timelines with text, symbols, or pictures and include a title. Have students use their timelines to summarize the state’s history for a partner.

**English Language Learners**

**Less Proficient Readers**
The California Gold Rush

To most Americans, the new lands in the West seemed too distant for rapid settlement. But in early 1848, workers at John Sutter’s sawmill found flecks of gold in the American River east of Sacramento, California.

Forty-Niners Flock to California By summer, news of the gold strike caused a sensation in the eastern United States. In a mass migration known as the California Gold Rush, some 80,000 fortune seekers headed for California in search of easy riches. About half of these forty-niners traveled by land trails. Another half went by ship around South America or via a short land passage at the Isthmus of Panama. The ships landed their human cargo in San Francisco. The golden news also attracted miners from around the Pacific Rim. Many fortune seekers came from South America, especially Peru and Chile. Another 25,000 laborers migrated from China to California during the 1850s. From a mere 14,000 in 1847, California’s population of outside settlers surged to 225,000 in just five years.

Miners Lead a Rough Life Forty-niners flocked to the gold fields with high hopes. One young man described the excitement of departing for California from Indiana: “The diggings had been discovered but a twelve-month before, and the glowing tales of their marvelous richness were on every tongue. Our enthusiasm was wrought up to the highest pitch, while the hardships and perils . . . were scarcely given a passing thought.”

—David Rohrer Leeper, “The Argonauts of ’49”

At first, the miners used cheap metal pans, picks, and shovels to harvest gold flecks from the sand along the banks and bottoms of rivers and streams. This process was known as placer mining. A few miners got rich, but most worked hard for little gain. Because food and clothing were so expensive, shrewd traders made more money selling goods to the miners than the miners made by panning for gold.

Conditions were hard in the crowded mining camps. Poor sanitation promoted diseases, especially cholera and dysentery, killing hundreds. In addition, life was cheap and law was scarce in the camps. Almost all of the inhabitants were men, who felt frustrated by their failure to find much gold and by their lack of family life. Competition and fights became common. One forty-niner noted, “It is surprising how indifferent people become to the sight of violence and bloodshed in this country.”

In search of order, the miners carried out their own rough justice. Without official legal authority, they acted as judges, juries, and executioners.

Methods of Mining Change Placer mining soon gave way to more efficient methods that required more money and equipment. One method was to dam and divert rivers to expose their beds. Another method, hydraulic mining, employed jets of water to erode gravel hills into long lines of sluices to catch the gold. Hydraulic mining damaged the environment by leveling hills and clogging rivers with sediment.

Blue Jeans Denim blue jeans were one of the more spectacular successes of the Gold Rush. In 1853, new U.S. citizen Levi Strauss left his family’s dry goods business in New York City to start his own company in the burgeoning port of San Francisco. To outfit miners and their families, Strauss sold imported dry goods such as clothing, umbrellas, and whole cloth. Strauss prospered, and Levi Strauss & Co. soon became a major business in the city. Then, in 1872, Strauss received a letter from a tailor named Jacob Davis. Davis had devised a unique way to make pants that could survive the toughest treatment and repeated washings. He used durable denim fabric and he reinforced the pieces that were most likely to rip apart with copper rivets. Because he did not have the money to apply for a patent, Davis invited Strauss to pay for and then share the patent, which Strauss did. The riveted “waist overalls,” as they were called, were a huge hit with miners, cowhands, and others who worked at rough jobs. Today, “Levis” are famous around the world as a symbol of American popular culture.
Effects of the Gold Rush

Instruct
- Introduce Remind students that when the forty-niners and other newcomers began to flock to California, many Mexicans, or Californios, and Native Americans already lived there. Ask students to predict the kinds of conflicts that might arise with the arrival of huge numbers of white settlers.
- Teach Ask How did white miners exclude Chinese and Mexican people from the gold fields? (They forced them to pay a heavy tax.) How were Native Americans in California treated? (Thousands were terrorized and killed.) Why do you think Californians wanted statehood so much? (Sample response: They may have believed lawlessness would be reduced if California were a state, and that statehood would help the economy grow.)
- Quick Activity Have students read the HISTORY MAKERS feature about Mariano Vallejo. Ask How was Vallejo’s experience with white settlers typical and yet unique? (He lost much of his land through unjust court decisions, but he also served as a delegate to the California constitutional convention and as a state legislator.)

Independent Practice
Have students write a summary statement for each red heading below the blue heading “Effects of the Gold Rush.”

Monitor Progress
As students work on their summary statements, circulate to make sure that students are not paraphrasing, but summarizing, the information in one statement.

Answers
✓ overcrowding, loneliness, disease, and violence

Thinking Critically
1. Sample response: general stores, saloons, restaurants, and shops owned and operated by tailors, photographers, jewelers, and goldsmiths
2. Possible responses: famine, epidemic, war, natural disaster; a boom in a new industry

Vocabulary Builder
degrade – (dee GRAYD) v. to reduce in status or rank

Checkpoint What problems did forty-niners face in the California gold fields?

San Francisco: GROWTH OF A CITY
For those traveling by ship, San Francisco was the gateway to the California gold fields. It was also a place where miners could come to buy supplies, exchange gold for cash, or relax. Through migration and trade, San Francisco quickly became the major American city on the Pacific coast in the 1860s.

INFOPHIC

Before and After What happened to San Francisco between 1848 (above) and 1850 (below)? One word explains the rapid building boom: GOLD!

Thinking Critically
1. Draw Inferences What kind of businesses do you think sprang up in San Francisco as a result of the Gold Rush?
2. Draw Conclusions What other circumstances might cause rapid changes in a city’s population?

Growth of San Francisco

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1848</td>
<td>800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1849</td>
<td>25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1852</td>
<td>36,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>57,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOURCE: CIA World Factbook Online

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History Interactive
For: To discover more about the growth of San Francisco
Web Code: ncp-0910

Advanced Instruction
Gifted and Talented Students
Ask students to do research to identify one company that was founded in California during the Gold Rush, such as Levi Strauss & Co. or Wells Fargo Bank, and write a report about it. Have students present the history of the company from its inception to the present day in an oral report that includes visuals such as posters and maps. Students should describe the company’s growth, include a description of the products or services it provided originally, and explain how those products or services have evolved in the last 150 years. Students should also include background information about the founders of the company, including their reasons for starting the company and how the company has participated in or affected the community in which it is located.
Effects of the Gold Rush

Newcomers from the eastern United States quickly asserted their dominance over California. To discourage the Chinese, they levied a heavy tax on foreign miners.

Indians and Mexicans Face Discrimination

White miners also terrorized and killed Native Americans by the thousands. Losing their land, many surviving Indians became workers on farms and ranches. Mob violence drove most Mexican Americans away from the gold fields. Those who stayed had to pay the foreign miners’ tax, though Mexicans had been in California long before the new American majority. Californios, or Mexican Californians, also lost most of their land. Contrary to the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the courts ignored land titles created under Mexican law.

California Seeks Statehood

The new Californians wanted quickly to organize a state and enter the union. In October 1849, their leaders held a convention and drew up a constitution. The new constitution excluded African Americans, both slave and free. Most of the new Californians were northerners who did not want to compete with southern slaveholders who could use slave labor to seek gold. Nor did the miners want any free blacks to live in California.

California’s application for statehood stirred discord between North and South. At the time, the Union was comprised of 15 free states and 15 slave states. Admission of a new free state would thus tip the delicate regional balance in the Senate. Over the next decade, debate over the spread of slavery into the lands won from Mexico would grow increasingly bitter. Thus, westward expansion became a major source of the division that ultimately led to the tragic Civil War.

Checkpoint

What impact did the settlement of California have on Mexicans already living there?

Assess and Reteach

Assess Progress

- Have students complete the Section Assessment.
- Administer the Section Quiz.
- Teaching Resources, p. 20
- To further assess student understanding, use Progress Monitoring Transparencies, 57.

Reteach

If students need more instruction, have them read the section summary.

Reading and Note Taking Study Guide

Adapted Reading and Note Taking Study Guide

Spanish Reading and Note Taking Study Guide

Extend

Have students write a short story that takes place during the California Gold Rush. Stories may be in the first person or third person, and characters may be from any walk of life or work at any kind of job, as long as the story is realistic fiction and takes place between 1849 and 1855. After you have read the stories, ask volunteers to share their work with the class.

Answer

- Mexicans faced a great deal of discrimination; Mexican miners were either taxed or forced away from the gold fields, and many people lost their land.
- Native Americans, Mexicans, and Chinese miners benefited least because they faced discrimination and, in the case of Native Americans, were often killed.
- Sample response: the huge territorial gains that brought the United States vast natural resources, such as gold in California and later, oil in Texas.