

Indians and Emigrants

In the early years, most miners were single young men hoping to make their fortunes and return home. By 1852, about one-third of emigrants crossing the plains were women. Overall, thousands of emigrants trampled the plants and overhunted the animals on the plains. They took over waterholes and camping places. Conflict with American Indians began as emigrants used up grass, firewood, and game animals that the Indians needed for survival.

What are examples of the natural resources found on the plains that were useful to both trail travelers and the American Indians who lived there?



In California, mining changed the land.

Identify something in the illustration that shows evidence of mining.

Ready for Your Badge?

1. Fill out your contact information:

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

2. Photograph your completed booklet and email it to:

NTIR_JuniorRanger@nps.gov

Learn more about the trail at: nps.gov/cali

NPS 2020



California National Historic Trail

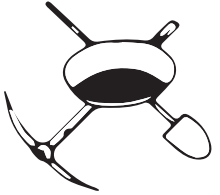
Junior Ranger Program



California Gold!

Gold Rush = rush to newly discovered goldfields in pursuit of riches

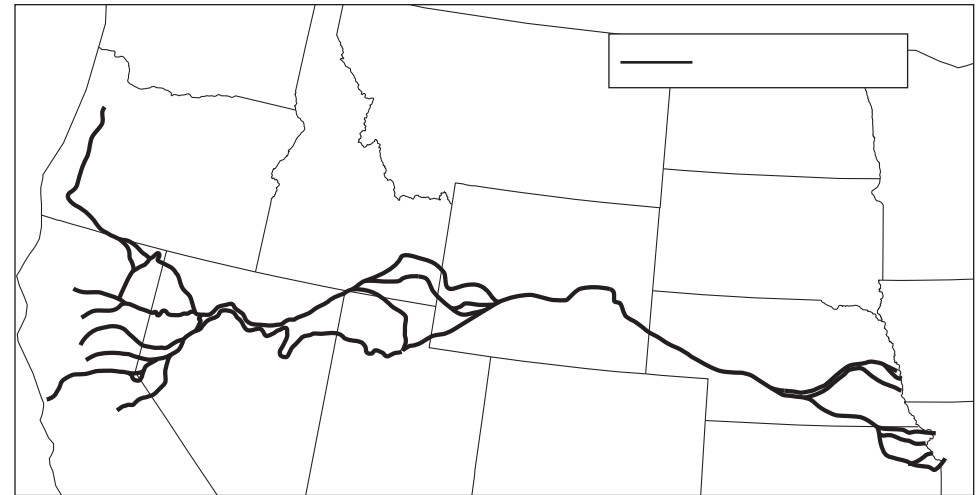
The phrase “gold rush” was first used in 1848. It took gold rushers a long time to reach California and the journey was difficult. Gold mining was very hard work. Muscles and bones ached by the end of the day. Travel took two to five months. Upon arrival, miners scrambled to make a claim or join a mine outfit.



In total, how many Americans followed the California Trail between 1841 and 1869? _____, _____

One day in 1848, gold was discovered in California and people rushed to find their fortunes. It took awhile for prospectors to arrive but by 1849 gold fever had taken over and men rushed west.

The men became known as “49ers” because they took part in the California Gold Rush in: 18 _____



Label the states that you would cross if you traveled the California Trail today. How many would you cross? _____

Single Young Men

In 1848, emigrants to Oregon and California traveled to settle and make a new life. The next year, when news of gold spread far and wide in 1849, most of the emigrants were single young men hoping to make their fortunes in the goldfields and then return home to the East.


Why do you think that most gold seekers were single young men?

An Expensive Activity

Looking for gold is very expensive, even in 1849!

You had to travel to California and buy tools, clothes, and food. You also had to find somewhere to live.

Find a winning row in this gold mining tic-tac-toe! There is more than one that shows the right **tools** for the California gold rush.

helmet 	map 	pick 
shovel 	wheelbarrow 	bulldozer 
gold pan 	bars of gold 	coins 

1. Draw the line on the tic-tac-toe that shows California gold rush tools.
2. Choose one tool and explain how it was used.

3. Think for a moment and consider what is missing in the drawing above. You'd need everything for daily life - to eat, wear, and work.

A 49'er still needs: _____

Getting to California

A young artist named George Holbrook Baker caught the gold fever and headed west to California. He traveled from New York City to New Orleans, took a boat to Vera Cruz, traveled by muleback to Mazatlan, then boarded a steamboat for San Francisco.

Here are his earnings in the mine field over three days:

Day 1 - two dollars

Day 2 - nothing

Day 3 - 40 cents

Baker said that there was hardship and suffering traded for:

"the golden hope of gain...as some return with injured health and empty pockets."

Within two weeks, Baker packed up and left the mine fields!

What does Baker state is the reason people went to the gold fields?

the golden _____ of _____

Do you think that Baker would do the same thing again? _____

Innovation from Clothes to Wagons

Do you wear jeans? Levi Strauss made a lot of money off his new style of durable pants - denim jeans - during the California gold rush. John Studebaker made his fortune making heavy-duty wooden wheelbarrows and wagons used to carry tools, debris, sorted soil, and occasionally gold. Later, he designed cars.

Now that you know about some of the items and adventures people had along the California Trail and the gold rush, identify something that is used today that the 49'er wished was available back then.

