

Columbia State Historic Park

Gold Trek 4th Grade Pre-visit Activity Guide



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Columbia State Historic Park
2005



Introduction

Welcome to Columbia State Historic Park's Gold Trek program. This program is designed to impart an understanding of the journey experienced by hopeful miners who traveled to California seeking gold and a new life in 1849. This program will focus on how people traveled to California, what was required to prepare for such a Journey and the decision making process involved that often determined whether an individual or company of miners successfully reached the goldfields.

Students will be required to prepare hardtack and create a journal to record their gold trek experience. They will also learn to function as a team or a "company" to make critical decisions from purchasing supplies to map reading and navigating their route on their own personal trek. This program requires three classroom lessons with activities prior to the gold trek visit.

This program addresses the following **fourth grade content standards**:

History-Social Science Content Standards:

4.3-Students explain the economic, social and political life in California from the establishment of the Bear Flag Republic through the Mexican-American War, the Gold Rush, and the granting of statehood.

4.3.2. Compare how and why people traveled to California and the routes they traveled (e.g, James Beckwourth, John Bidwell, John C. Fremont, Pio Pico)

4.3.3. Analyze the effects of the Gold Rush on settlements, daily life, politics and the physical environment(e.g., using biographies of John Sutter, Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo, Louise Clapp).

4.4- Students explain how California became an agricultural and industrial power tracing the transformation of the California economy and its political and cultural development since the 1850's

4.4.2 Explain how the Gold Rush transformed the economy of California, including types of products produced and consumed, changes in towns, (e.g., Sacramento, San Francisco) and economic conflicts between diverse groups of people.

Lesson Time Line

February, 1st or 2nd week:

Introduce program to students. Present California Gold Rush history using “Rush is On” outline and make the hard tack. Divide class into their companies and have them select a company name.

February, 3rd or 4th week: Present “Mining the miners”.

March, 1st or 2nd week: Present “A World of Writing in 1849” and have students make their Gold Trek journals.

March and April: Gold Trek Auction and Gold Trek Journey at Columbia!

Lesson 1- The Rush is On!

I.- The California Gold Rush

The discovery of gold and the rush of thousands of miners into California, forever changed California’s landscape, economy and culture.

- a. Discovery of Gold on January 24th 1848 by James Marshall at Sutter’s Mill.
- b. Rumors, stories spread, finally James Polk confirmed the discovery after seeing the golden evidence for himself.
- c. Once the findings were confirmed by Polk, the rush to find gold was on. In 1849 over 100,000 men and about 600 women were estimated to have traveled California from all over the world.
- d. Let students know that they will be making a Gold Trek to Columbia State Historic Park and that they will have to make some decisions about how best to prepare for their journey.

II. Routes to the gold fields and potential hazards

It was a long and dangerous journey to the gold fields. Preparation meant survival. So how did the 49er's get to California and what were some of the dangers along the way?

Using World Map point out the three major routes:

- a. Cape Horn- travel by ship for 6-8 months, 18,000 miles. Ship wrecks were common, lack of food and water, seasickness and disease could cause death.
- b. Isthmus of Panama- travel by ship then overland, then by ship again, 6,000 miles. Subject to malaria, poisonous animals, heat, humidity, length of journey 2-3 months.
- c. Overland – Walking with wagons over land for 3-5months, 2,000 miles. You could run out of food and water for oxen and people, be misinformed about trails, had to cross the Sierra Nevadas possibly in bad weather, cross deserts, illness, & drownings at river crossings.

III. Preparing for your journey

You are going to take the overland trail. Many miners joined groups or “companies” of men. Usually the companies would include people with various skills and education such as, carpentry, medicine, navigation, hunting, blacksmithing and wheelwrights. By joining a group, not only were they more likely to finish their journey on the overland trail, but once they got to California they could stake out and work multiple gold mining claims. During the gold rush, an individual was only allowed to own one claim. So, if there were several men in a company the company could own several claims and working together they could hopefully find more gold. The gold would then be divided among all the men in the company.

Think about what kinds of things would you need to bring with you if you were planning a 3 to 5 month trip? What things would you leave behind?

Basic necessities for the journey

- a. Food/water/ cooking utensils
- b. Wagons/oxen/ wagon wheels
- c. Hunting tools
- d. Blacksmithing tools
- e. Clothing/blankets/sewing supplies
- f. Medical supplies/alcohol

- g. Axe/flints
- h. Other 49ers/mining companies
- i. Mining equipment/shovels, picks, pans

Without any way to keep your food cold, what would you take that could last for months?

- a. dried fruit/molasses
- b. alcohol/ coffee
- c. salt pork/ salt beef/ smoked ham
- d. corn meal/flour
- e. lard/vinegar
- f. hard tack/pilot bread

IV. Divide each class into four groups or companies.

a. Each member of the company will have a responsible role. Each company will have a captain, a treasurer, a recorder, a cook, a doctor, a hunter, and a navigator. Each company should adopt a name (hopefully something that relates to the period) such as, Argonauts, Grizzly's, Humbugs, Eureka, Elephants etc.

Once they have formed their companies you can begin making hard tack. (They can do this at their individual desks.)

V. Today you are going to make hard tack for your journey to the gold fields. (Teacher will bake the hard tack and divide into four 1 gallon zip lock bags when finished. This will be returned to the students on the day of the auction).

Hard Tack Recipe

Assemble hard tack activity kit prior to in class activity.

In one brown paper bag for each student include:

1 plastic quart bag filled with:

½ cup of flour

¼ tsp. shortening

2 small pinches of salt.

1 plastic knife,

16" cut wax paper strip

4 toothpicks

1-3oz paper cup(water to be added in classroom)

Making Hardtack with Student

Step 1: Have student open lunch bag and pull out the plastic bag with ingredients in it and the paper cup.

Step 2: Have helper fill each paper cup approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ full with water.

Step 3: Have each student add 2 tablespoons and 1 teaspoon of water from cup to plastic bag, seal and squish and knead until all the ingredients are mixed very well.

Step 4: Open the bag and pull out the dough to knead more in their hands until the dough forms a soft pliable ball.

Step 5: Have students take out the wax paper and flour it with 1 tablespoon of flour.

Step 6: Place dough ball on $\frac{1}{2}$ of the floured side of the wax paper, and fold other half over dough and pat, pound dough to $\frac{1}{4}$ " thick.

Step 7: Have students cut the dough into four quarters and use knife to put their initials in a section of the dough and prick the rest with the toothpick many times.

Step 8: When this is done the students can fold the tip part of the wax paper over the dough and fold up the ends.

Step 9: The teacher and any helpers can pick up the hard tack from the students and carefully place in grocery bag.

Hardtack Baking Instructions

Bake each piece of Hardtack in oven at 375 degrees for $\frac{1}{2}$ hour each side, then at 200 degrees for approximately 8 hours or until all the moisture is removed. Divide hard tack into four equal amounts and place in four one gallon zip lock bags.

Supplies needed for 32 children

6lbs of white flour
1 small can of Crisco
32- 3 oz. paper water cups
1 roll of wax paper (25 yards)
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups of salt
32 1 quart zip lock plastic bags
32 Brown lunch bags

32 plastic knives
1 box round toothpicks
2 bottles of water, approx 16 oz
Need 4 sets of measuring spoons
½ cup measuring cup
¼ measuring teaspoon

Lesson 2- Mining the Miners

I. With over 100,000 men pouring into California's gold fields in 1849, it became immediately obvious to merchants that they could pocket more gold than the miners by selling supplies and food.

a. Miners traveling to California via the overland route that had depleted their food or had to abandon their equipment along the way would need to re-supply once they reached California.

b. Ships were not only bringing miners to San Francisco but were bringing merchandise. Everything sold to miners came from the port of San Francisco.

What was not sold in the city was loaded onto river boats headed to Sacramento. From there, supplies were loaded onto oxcarts and mule-drawn wagons headed for the mines.

c. Merchants such as Sam Brannan could not keep up with the demand for goods such as canvas, blankets, dysentery medicine, and boots, and became very wealthy by charging miners prices that guaranteed him 300 to 400 % profit. At one point Sam Brannan bought \$12,000 worth of blankets, the entire stock in San Francisco to resell at higher prices.

d. Merchants in the mines would set up stores where they would sell or trade flour, dried peas, bacon, coffee, salt, shovels, picks, prospecting pans, saws, hammers and nails, usually at inflated prices.

e. Those goods that were in very short supply could be auctioned to the highest bidder.

d. All goods and services were purchased with gold! Everyone had gold, so gold dust and nuggets served as money. Some individuals cast their own gold slugs stamped with their value of \$5 or \$10 dollars. Also coins from many other countries were accepted and exchanged for goods. Paper money did not exist and in fact was prohibited by California's constitution in 1849.

II. Let the class know that they will be participating in an auction at Columbia using gold eagles. They will be competing to purchase supplies they need for their journey. If time allows you could try a mock auction in class between teams using monopoly money and fun items of your choosing.

Lesson 3- A World of Writing in 1849

I. How do we communicate today?

- a. Telephone/Cell phones
Text messaging
Computer- email
Letters and postcards

- b. Live feeds from Satellites
Video/ TV/News
Pod casts

How do we record our experiences?

- c. photographs
video
Diaries/journals

Communication between people is very fast today, it takes only seconds or minutes vs. months.

II. How do you think people communicated in 1849?

They did not have:

- a. phones/cell phones
video/TV
Satellites
e-mail/text messaging
(The telegraph came to California in 1853 but only between San Francisco and San Jose)

Theme: Writing was the only way people in the 1850's could communicate with their family and friends over long distances and the only way to record their adventure.

- b. Communicated by letters or letter sheet **(show example)**

- b. Letter sheets were the forerunners of picture postcards. They had a drawing on one side, usually a scene from the California gold mines, and a space on the back for a written message. The letter sheet folded into an envelope and could be mailed back to the “states” for 40 cents.

Letters were an important link to home, but delivering mail was very slow, it took 3 to 5 months for a letter to be sent from the east coast to the west coast via one of the three routes already discussed.

- c. Recorded their experiences in journals

So people recorded their experiences in Journals. This was especially important if they were embarking on a Journey. Not only did they record what they saw, but the routes they took, weather conditions, the people they met, whether there was game to hunt, locations of grass for their oxen, and where water was available. Once they arrived at the mines, they described their mining activities, living conditions, what they ate, diseases, activities or festivities in nearby towns as well as local justice.

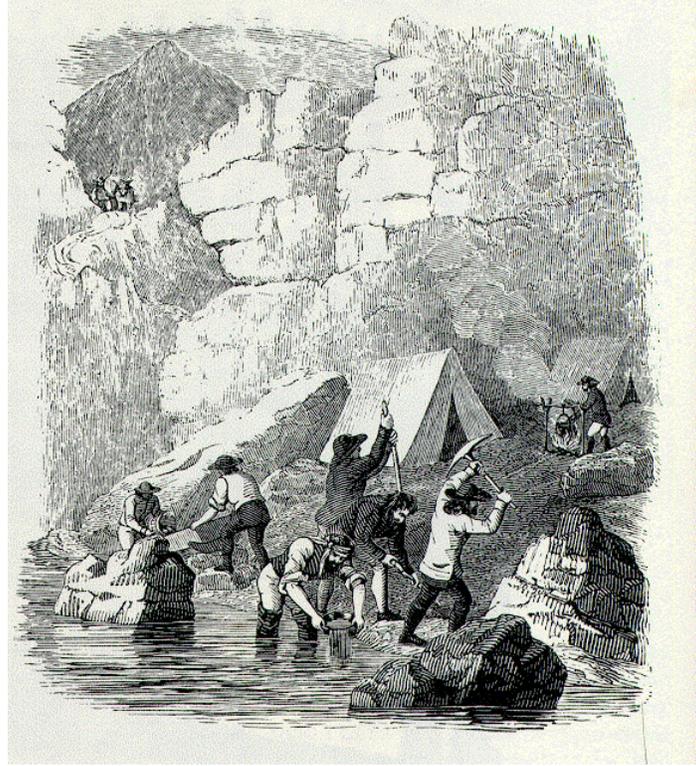
Most miners only planned to stay in California for 2 or 3 years and their journals were a way to record their experience so that they could share it with friends and family once they returned home. Today we can read from journals written by the men and women who traveled to the gold fields of California. These journals tell us quite a bit about what life was like in the early days of the gold rush. (**read an example**)

- d. Newspapers and Broadsides for advertisement

- e. What did they use to write letters with?

India ink and Quill pens, pencils, and would seal letters with hot wax.

III. Have the students take turns reading the following journal entries and quotes:



Traveling to California by Ship:

“In May 1851, I happened to be residing in New York, and was seized with the California fever. My preparations were very soon made, and the a day or two afterwards I found myself on board a small barque about to sail for Chagres with a load of California emigrants. Our vessel was little more than two hundred tons and entirely devoted to passengers... We numbered about sixty passengers, and a nice assortment we were. The majority, of course, were Americans and were from all parts of the Union; the rest were English, French, and German. We had representatives of nearly every trade, besides farmers, engineers, lawyers, doctors, merchants and nondescript “young men.”

Three Years in California by J.D. Borthwick

“A few days before we left Panama, a steamer had arrived from San Francisco with a great many cases of Cholera on board. Numerous deaths had occurred in Panama, and considerable alarm prevailed there in consequence. The Swede was attacked with fever like the rest of us, but he had no force in him, either mental or bodily, to bear up against sickness under such circumstances; and the fear of cholera had taken such possession of him that he insisted upon it that he had cholera and that he would die of it at night. His lamentations were most piteous, but all attempts to reassure him were in vain. He very soon became delirious and died raving before morning.”

Three Years in California by J.D. Borthwick

“The storm lasted two days, during which time we had to subsist on biscuit and salt pork as it was out of the question lighting galley fires. The “Johanna and Oluffa” complained mightily and the Captain was something more than anxious, as he afterwards acknowledged to me. However the little pug-nosed brig contended bravely with the big waves; when she could not get over them she went through them, without much consideration for the live cargo on board, and then we had to handle the pumps. The gale abated at last, and a slight change of wind enabled us to get into the path of the trade wind, on the eighteenth day out. This blows directly for San Francisco and on the twenty first day we had the satisfaction of sighting the mountains of the Californian coast, and in a few hours found ourselves inside the “Golden Gate” the name given to the narrow entrance to the Bay of San Francisco. And it was high time as our supply of water had dwindled down to five pipes, and the last barrels of beef and biscuit had been hoisted from the hold.” (William Perkins traveled the Isthmus route)
Three Years in California, William Perkins Journal of Life in Sonora 1849-1852



Traveling to California on the Overland Route:

“In 1848 gold was discovered in California. Of course I had the newspapers and noted the growth of the excitement throughout the country. In the winter following, teams went by daily on the Military road bound for the modern El dorado and as the spring of 1849 came I began to feel like falling in with the throng. I had grown a little tire of the round of farm life and small profits. And so, in April or May of that year, I placed my family with my brother Henry and with another man, a wagon and three yokes of oxen started for the land of gold.”
Edmund Booth

“That evening the balance of the men came in, bringing buffalo meat on a horse that one man had the precaution to take with him. They had chased the buffalo several miles. They gave me a share of meat. It was the first fresh meat I had seen since leaving civilization.”
Edmund Booth

“Sunday June 27th: Having a poor place to Lay up we concluded to travel to day—started at 3-OC and Took the old road knowing more about it than the cut

off- Traveled 9 miles to the Dry Sandy this stream is usually dry- but we found plenty to day- stopped for dinner without grass- There was nothing but barren sandy sage plains- no grass in this country only on the small streams.”

Cyrus Phillips June 1852

“We took a supply of water for about ten miles only, and thirty of us started across what we found to be a second desert. We found it twenty –eight miles. Our horses lay down several times; some of the men could get no farther , but waited six miles back, till water could be brought... my canteen was empty the first seven miles and never did human being suffer more than myself; but I go through without stopping half dead.”

David Wooster July 1st

“It was a long journey of nearly six months, a pleasant journey, because of the novelty all along the road, until the last 200 miles grew rather tiresome. Before reaching the Loup Fork of the Platte river three men in our company of 60 or so died in three days of cholera.”

Edmund Booth

Living and Mining in California:

“After traveling some miles over this sort of country, we got among the pine trees once more, and very soon came to the brink of the high mountains overhanging Weaver Creek. The descent was so steep that we had the greatest difficulty in getting the cart down without a capsize, having to make short tacks down the face of the hill, and generally steering for a tree to bring up upon in case of accidents. At the point where we reached the Creek was a store, and scattered along the rocky banks of the Creek were a few miners’ tents and cabins. We had expected to have to camp out here, but seeing a small tent unoccupied near the store, we made inquiry of the storekeeper, and finding that it belonged to him and that he had no objection to our using it, we took possession accordingly, and proceeded to light a fire and cook our dinner.

Not knowing how far we might be from a store, we had brought along with us a supply of flour, ham, beans and tea, with which we were quite independent. After prospecting a little, we soon found a spot on the bank of the stream which we judged would yield us pretty fair pay for our labour. We had some difficulty at first in bringing water to the long tom, having to lead our hose a considerable distance up the stream to obtain sufficient elevation; but we soon got everything in working order, and pitched in. The gold which we found here was of the finest kind and required great care in washing. It was in exceedingly small thin scales- so thin, that in washing out in a pan at the end of the day a scale of gold would occasionally float for an instant on the surface of the water. This is the most

valuable kind of gold dust, and is worth one or two dollars an ounce more than the coarse chunky dust.”

Three Years in California by J.D. Borthwick

“There had still been occasional heavy rains, for which our tent was but poor protection, and we awoke sometimes in the morning, finding small pools of water in the folds of our blankets, and everything so soaking wet, inside the tent as well as outside that it was hopeless to attempt to light a fire. On such occasions, raw ham, hard bread, and cold water was all the breakfast we could raise; eking it out however with an extra pipe and relieving our feelings by laying in fiercely with pick and shovel.”

Three Years in California by J.D. Borthwick

“Dear Mary Ann, It is Sunday, and I and my messmate have come into Columbia from “Yankee Hill” to procure some thirty pounds of potatoes and other articles of provisions for the coming week’s consumption. We eat 30lb. of potatoes in a week, 10 cents per lb. or (\$6.00 per bushel!); 5 loaves or rolls of baker’s bread daily at 10cts. per roll; 2 to 3 lb. fresh beef, 16 to 18 cts. per lb., per week and some few other articles. I keep an account of all these expences, and on Saturday night we settle up and each pays his share. The amount varies from five to six dollars per man per week. You see that living here is a little more expensive than at home.”

Edmund Booth

“My Dear Husband, I am glad that you have plenty of water to wash dirty dust. I still hope that you will have a good fortune and that you will return home safely. I must urge you to be careful not to tell anybody that you are going to start for home with so much money with you, for I am afraid that they may be cunning to follow you and kill you on the way and rob your money. I never tell anybody about your money, for I am in danger if I live in my house alone, with so many dollars in the drawers. I should be murdered and robbed.

I am very sorry that an ox devoured your provisions in your house.

If you do not come home, what shall I do with our farm? I have been thinking that I should better let our farm rent free for a year to pay in splitting new rails and repairing the fence. I can not sell our lots in Fairview without signing your name. Mr. Starkweather offered me 30 dollars for three lots not in money, but in trade. I would not like it, for it is too cheap. I know that our lots are worth fifty dollars.

You must be careful not to overwork so hard. I hope that I shall see you soon and you will live with us in our new house comfortably and I shall not part with you again. I hope that God will take care of you while you are on the way home.

Your affectionate wife”



Miscellaneous Quotes by Miners during the Gold Rush

“May a man whose daily life was one long battle faced with fortitude and courage succumbed at the gentle touch of the home letters and wept like a woman.”

“Say to all my friends: stay home. Tell my enemies to come.”

“ In 1851 the gold fever reached the highest point. During that year I took the fever, which for a few months was intermittent in its character, but at the close of the year it became seated, and I had it hard.”

“ We had shovels and picks with us, which we had brought across the plains. But we didn’t just know how to set to work, and ere pretty well down at the mouth, for the California gold diggings of which we had thought so much, didn’t look like a bit as we thought they would. In my imagination I thought I was going to dig gold out by the bucketfull.

“ If it had not been for you and the children to think of I should have certainly given up and died.”

“ This evening I am sad, having spent part of the evening in thinking upon my family at home.”

“Looking down in the canyon we saw three or four pack mules with the packs till on their backs lying at the bottom of the canyon dead. It was sure a gruesome sight to see. As we were looking at them we saw a nice new coffee pot hanging

on some bushes perhaps two hundred feet down. It had caught there as the mules had fallen and we were needing one badly and I determined to try to get it.”

“Sat. 15th I found 22 dollars worth, Sunday 16th I picked up seven dollars. Tuesday 18th I carried dirt on my back five or six hundred yards to the river and washed it and got eleven dollars. I use a wooden tray we use to knead dough in to wash and gather my gold.”



IV. Discuss the quotes and have the students define the following words selected from the quotes they have just read.

Vocabulary List:

Fortitude
Succumbed
Gold Fever
California Fever
Diggings
Barque
Non-descript
Cholera
Lamentations
Piteous
Cut-off
Long Tom
Washing (in reference to gold)
Eking
Chagres
El Dorado
Trek
Letter sheet
Broadside

- V. **Pass out copies of the letter sheets to the students. After looking at the drawings, have the students write a letter to a relative, about life in the California mines on the back of the letter sheet. (This could also be a post-visit activity)**
- VI. **Let the students know that they will be making their own journal for their Gold Trek trip to record their experience and to make important notes as they travel.**

Gold Trek Journal

Supplies Needed: Prepare in advance of activity.

1 ream of 8 1/2x 11 Parchment type paper
30+ pieces of brown oversized poster board cut into 12x 9 1/2 inch pieces
Hole punch
30 + 24 inch pieces of hemp twine

Journal Making Instructions

Step 1: Each student should receive 1 piece of poster board, four sheets of parchment paper, and one piece of twine.

Step 2: Instruct the students to put the parchment paper on top of the poster board and fold everything together in half like a book.

Step 3: Once it looks like a book have the students punch four evenly spaced holes about 1/2 inch from the folded edge using a hole punch.

Step 4: Then have the students take the twine and weave it through the holes on both sides of the journal and tie it off at the end.

Step 5: Once the journal is constructed, have the students fill in the following journal headers:

1st page: Columbia Gold Trek Journal 2006
Mr./Ms. _____ Class
Student Name

2nd page: Name of your company
Names of your company members and their roles.

3rd page: Would I have gone to the goldfields of California in 1849?
Why or Why not?

4th page: List of Supplies our company purchased at the Auction.
Our company spent _____ eagles at the Auction to prepare
for the Gold Trek.

5th page: Signatures from the people we met on our Journey.

6th and 7th pages: Travel notes and Observations

8th page: Now that you have been on Columbia's Gold Trek, do you think
you would have gone to California seeking gold in 1849? Why or Why
not?

Students must bring their journals and a pencil with them on the Gold Trek.

Gold Trek Journey Day

You will need to arrive in Columbia no later than **9:00am** on the day of your Gold Trek. Your group will be met by park staff in the **lower parking lot**. Restroom facilities are located in the parking lot. Once your class arrives in Columbia, you will need to divide your class into the pre-determined four groups or mining companies. Park staff will issue identifying bandanas, gold eagles, beef jerky and dried fruit to each group. Park staff will then host an auction and each of the companies will competitively bid for supplies they decide they need prior to their journey. Once the auction is finished, the companies will be sent off with their map to find the "gold fields". **One parent/or adult supervisor is required to accompany each group of students participating on the Gold Trek journey.** This adult is merely a chaperone, and should be advised by the teacher that they are **NOT** to help the students in anyway with map reading, navigation, or decision making along the way. They are to be **SILENT** observers only!

Along the route the companies will encounter costumed docents at various stations, selling additional supplies or offering services for a fee such as letter writing, or passage across a "river". The students will have to decide as a company whether to purchase additional supplies, maps, or to negotiate with the ferry operator. Their journey to the "gold fields" will be timed by park staff. Once

they arrive, they will observe a gold mining demonstration and park staff will present a wrap up talk about their gold trek experience.

Requirements and Supplies needed for the Gold Trek Journey:

Each student should bring a sack lunch to be collected by the teacher before the trip and handed out after the Gold Trek journey has been completed. The students will have dried fruit and beef jerky to snack on during their trek. **Each company will need to have their supply of hard tack which can be passed out when you arrive at Columbia.**

Please make sure each student has a bottle of water to take with them on the Gold Trek. All students should wear comfortable walking shoes such as tennis shoes and have rain gear. **Students will need to bring their journals and a pencil.**

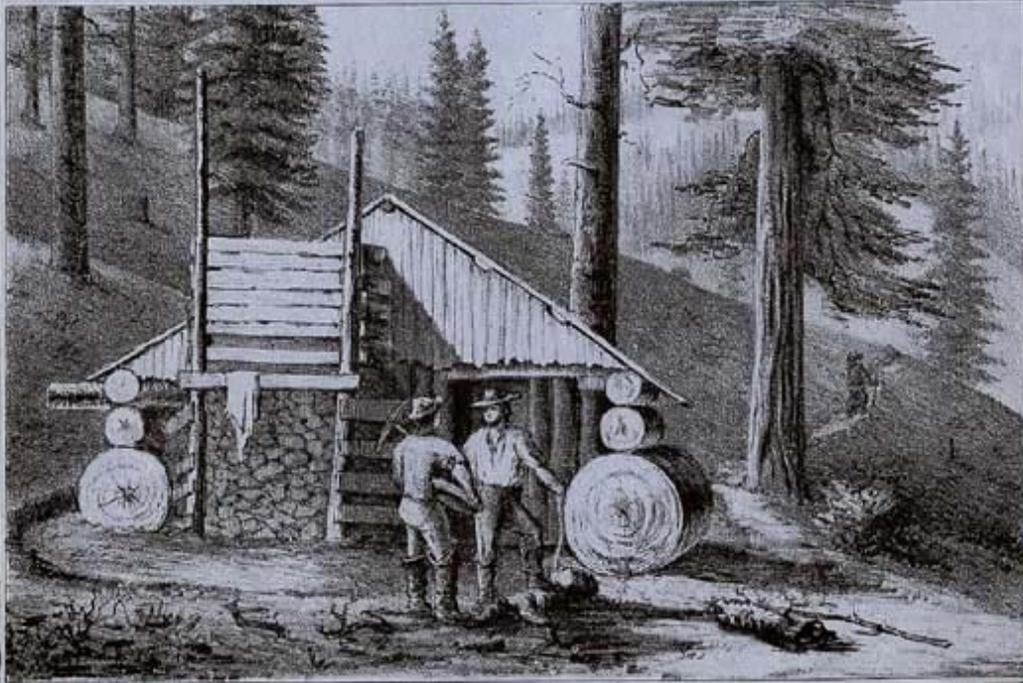
If you have any questions regarding the Gold Trek Program, you may contact Columbia State Historic Park at 209-588-9128.

We look forward to your visit!

Examples of Gold Rush era letter sheets.



SUNDAY MORNING



LOG CABIN

Lith. & Published by BRITTON & REY

San Francisco Cal.

SUNDRY AMUSEMENTS IN THE MINES.



A SUNDAY'S AMUSEMENTS.



A DAILY PLEASURE.



OCCUPATION FOR RAINY DAYS.

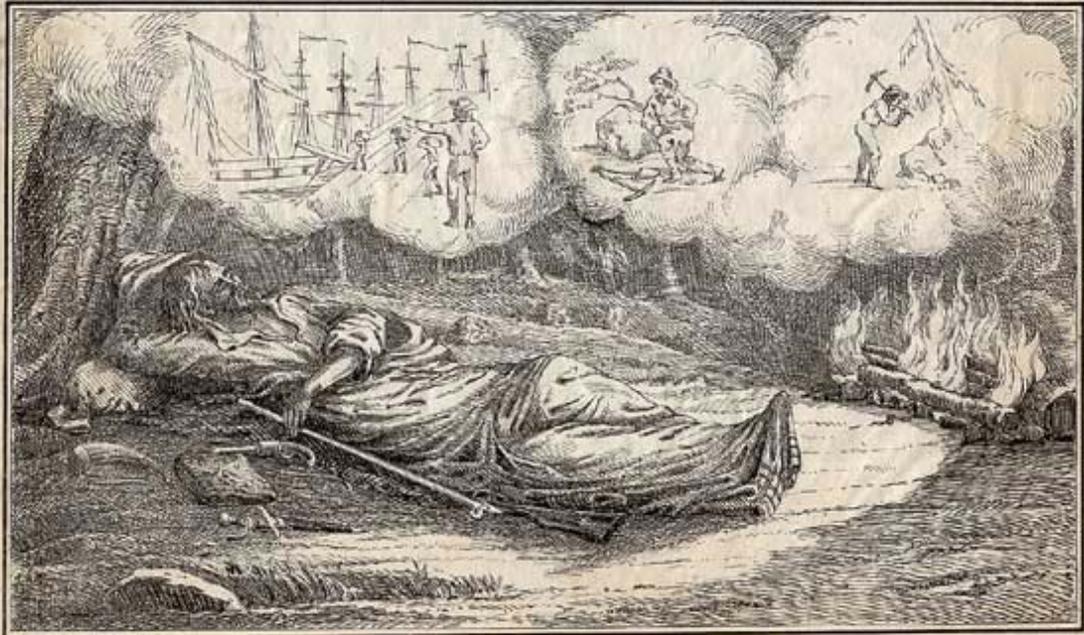


A PLEASANT SURPRISE.

Such a Publisher as Quire's A. C. 1871. Montserrat is Gallipoli No. 1-10000.



MINERS WEIGHING THEIR GOLD.

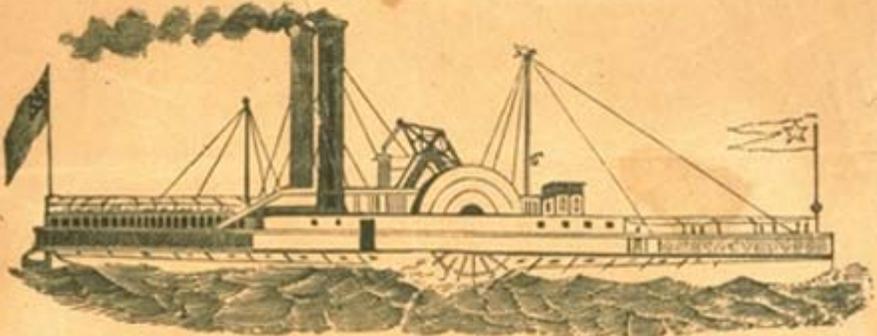


THE DREAM OF A PROSPECTING MINER.

Lith. & Published by Britton & Rey corner Montgomery & California Sts. S. Francisco.

Example of California Broadside

THE STEAMBOAT



LINDA,
CAPT. WILLIAM TATE,
Will leave for
Marysville
YUBA CITY,
ELIZA

and intermediate points, from alongside the *Barque Linda*
Foot of N. Street

on *Thursday* at *8 A.M.*

For freight or passage apply on board *Barque Linda* or, to the Captain on board the steamer.

Sacramento City, *January 16, 1850.*

Sources

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Holliday, J.S., *Rush For Riches Gold Fever and the Making of California*, University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles California, 1999.

Boehm, Dr. Richard G., *California Harcourt Brace Social Studies*, Harcourt Brace & Company , New York, 2000.

Edmund Booth 1810-1905, Excerpts from the Library of Congress' digital history project "California as I saw It" a collection of 190 diaries and first person accounts, <http://memory.loc.gov>