

WESTWARD EXPANSION

NAME: _____

SECTION: _____

As we study westward expansion, we will look at four central questions:

1. What forces pushed and pulled people westward?
2. What was the experience of those who went westward? How did this experience change over time?
3. How did westward expansion impact the landscape and the Native Americans that lived there?
4. How did westward expansion impact our nation? How does this time period (1800-1900) continue to impact our nation?

VOCABULARY: Please define each word in the space provided; include part of speech

Manifest Destiny:

Frontier:

Mountain Man:

Rendezvous:

Pioneer:

Prairie Schooner:

Homestead (verb):

Missionary:

Claim (noun):

Annex:

Treaty:

Canal:

Transcontinental:

Continental divide:

Isthmus:

Headwater:

Tributary:

OREGON COUNTRY and THE OREGON TRAIL

Oregon Country was disputed land during the first part of the 19th century. Both the United States and Great Britain claimed this huge expanse of land that included all of present-day Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and British Columbia and parts of Wyoming and Montana. Of course, don't forget that many Native Americans lived there who didn't necessarily recognize either nation's right to this land!

The United States was really eager to spread westward. In fact, many people in the United States believed that the Pacific and the Atlantic Oceans were the "natural" boundaries for the nation, and the American people had a God-given right to spread over the whole continent. This idea was called Manifest Destiny.

After Lewis and Clark's trip, more and more people of European descent started traveling westward. The first wave was made up mostly of mountain men. These men, most of whom were trappers, were one tough breed. They had to be, because they often worked alone for long stretches of time. They were the kind of people who amputated their own limbs, set their own bones, and sewed up their own wounds. One man—Jedediah Smith—is said to have sewed his own scalp back on after a bear tore it off. Furs were popular then, in both the US and Europe. Beaver pelts were used to make hats and people also wore other sorts of furs. Furs were called "hairy banknotes," because they were almost a sort of money; someone could always trade furs for other things. Sometimes trappers would come together at a "rendezvous"—and then there would be some party! Eventually these men over-trapped the beavers; many of them would find employment as guides for the later settlers.

Another kind of person who began to travel into Oregon country during the 1830s was the Methodist missionary. These missionaries wanted to Christianize the Native Americans. One very famous missionary was a man named Dr. Whitman, who settled in the Willamette Valley, south of the Columbia River. He was pretty successful making friends with the Indians that lived there until an outbreak of measles in 1847-8 led to many deaths among the Indians, who blamed the whites for these deaths. This led to an uprising in which a number of whites, including Whitman, were killed.

The third "wave" (although it is a bit hard to call the limited number of missionaries a "wave") to reach Oregon country was made up of the many people who traveled along the Oregon Trail in covered wagons beginning in 1841. This trip of 2,000 miles took 5-6 months. Typically people would start off from Independence, Missouri in their wagons, or "prairie schooners." They faced food and water shortages, disease, difficult river crossings, the Rocky Mountains, and occasional threats from Native Americans. On the trip there were fairly strict divisions of labor. Men hunted, and they drove and tended their animals; women cooked and cared for children. One in ten people traveling along the trail died. Despite these poor conditions, they came by the thousands to homestead and their presence made it almost inevitable that Great Britain would give up its claim on most of Oregon country, which it did in 1846. The treaty that Great Britain and the US signed established the present-day boundary at the 49th parallel.

DESCRIPTION OF A MOUNTAIN MAN

"His dress and appearance are equally singular. His skin, from constant exposure, assumes a hue almost as dark as that of the Aborigine, and his features and physical structure attain a rough and hardy cast. His hair, through inattention, becomes long, coarse, and bushy, and loosely dangles upon his shoulders. His head is surmounted by a low crowned wool-hat, or a rude substitute of his own manufacture. His clothes are of buckskin, gaily fringed at the seams with strings of the same material, cut and made in a fashion peculiar to himself and associates. The deer and buffalo furnish him the required covering for his feet, which he fabricates at the impulse of want. His waist is encircled with a belt of leather, holding encased his butcher-knife and pistols-while from his neck is suspended a bullet-pouch securely fastened to the belt in front, and beneath the right arm hangs a powder-horn transversely from his shoulder, behind which, upon the strap attached to it, are affixed his bullet-mould, ball-screw, wiper, awl, &c. With a gun-stick made of some hard wood, and a good rifle placed in his hands, carrying from thirty to thirty-five balls to the pound, the reader will have before him a correct likeness of a genuine mountaineer, when fully equipped.... The mountaineer is his own manufacturer, tailor, shoemaker, and butcher, and can always feed and cloth himself, and enjoy all the comforts his situation affords." —Rufus Sage, 1841



BEAVER PELTS

Beaver skins, known as “plews” and “hairy banknotes,” were the whole reason the mountain men were in the West. The freshly caught beaver were skinned and put onto hoops made out of willow branches to dry. After they were dried, the pelts were taken off the hoops, folded in half, and put into packs weighing 80 to 100 pounds, to be transported to rendezvous.

Beaver skins were used to make top hats. (You can see a real beaver-skin top hat at the Woodstock Historical Society!) By the mid-1830s, the mountain men had over-trapped

the beaver in the West, just as they had done in the East years before. Around this same time, beaver hats fell out of fashion, which meant that the amount of money that trappers could get for their pelts dropped. By the 1840s, many mountain men were finding new work as guides for settlers moving west.

THE RENDEZVOUS

The purpose of rendezvous was to trade beaver pelts for goods that were needed in the mountains by both the trappers and Native Americans. Blankets, guns, powder and lead, knives, kettles and pots, cloth, food and spices, whiskey and such items were brought west by fur companies to trade. Many items were brought out specifically for trade with the Indians. It was normal for there to be more Native Americans at rendezvous than trappers. Beads, brass rings and bracelets, vermillion, bells, ribbons, and cloth were highly sought after by the Indian women. Prices were highly inflated and became known as “mountain prices.” Markups of over 1000% were common. That was why it was easier to make money as a supplier of fur trappers than as a fur trapper.

Rendezvous was normally held in early July and could last from days to a couple of weeks. It was one of the few times that the mountain men didn't work. They caught up on news, visited friends, drank, held competitions, got into fights, and generally had a good time. People from the east attending rendezvous were shocked by the what they saw. One Easterner described a rendezvous as “a perfect bedlam!”



THE SUMMER RENDEZVOUS.

THE OREGON TRAIL

DIRECTIONS: Catherine Sager Pringle was one of the thousands of people who traveled along the Oregon Trail in the 1840s. She did so as a young girl in 1844. What follows is her recollection of this trip. Please read it and then answer the following questions on a separate piece of paper. Each question should be answered in complete sentences, except question #1, which should be written in list form. As you read, highlight or underline difficulties that these travelers faced (as well as other passages that you find interesting).

1. List TEN troubles that the travelers had along the way.
2. Their trip was difficult, but it wasn't all bad. What were some of the pleasant aspects of the trip?
3. How were the children (Catherine and her brothers and sisters) treated after they were orphaned?
4. What experiences did these travelers have with Native Americans?
5. Try to fill in the missing state names on the map in this reading (see pages 944-5 of your textbook if you're not sure) and then add when each state became a state (see pages 944-5).
6. Using the map in your textbook on page 934 (or some other map), determine where the South Platte River runs. Where were they when they "crossed the South Platte River"? (What present-day state were they in?)

ACROSS THE PLAINS IN 1844

By Catherine Sager Pringle

My father was one of the restless ones who are not content to remain in one place long at a time. Late in the fall of 1838 we emigrated from Ohio to Missouri. Our first halting place was on Green River, but the next year we took a farm in Platte County. He engaged in farming and blacksmithing, and had a wide reputation for ingenuity. Anything they needed, made or mended, sought his shop. In 1843, Dr. Whitman came to Missouri. The healthful climate induced my mother to favor moving to Oregon. Immigration was the theme all winter, and we decided to start for Oregon. Late in 1843 father sold his property and moved near St. Joseph, and in April, 1844, we started across the plains. The first encampments were a great pleasure to us children. We were five girls and two boys, ranging from the girl baby to be born on the way to the oldest boy, hardly old enough to be any help.

STARTING ON THE PLAINS We waited several days at the Missouri River. Many friends came that far to see the emigrants start on their long journey, and there was much sadness at the parting, and a sorrowful company crossed the Missouri that bright spring morning. The motion of the wagon made us all sick, and it was weeks before we got used to the seasick motion. Rain came down and required us to tie down the wagon covers, and so increased our sickness by confining the air we breathed.

Our cattle recrossed in the night and went back to their winter quarters. This caused delay in recovering them and a weary, forced march to rejoin the train. This was divided into companies we were in that commanded by William Shaw. Soon after starting Indians raided our camp one and drove off a number of cattle. They were pursued, but never recovered.

Soon everything went smooth and our train made steady headway. The weather was fine and we enjoyed the journey pleasantly. There were several musical instruments among the emigrants, and these sounded clearly on the evening air when camp was made and merry talk and laughter resounded from almost every camp-fire.

INCIDENTS OF TRAVEL We had one wagon, two steady yoke of old cattle, and several of young and not well-broken ones. Father was no ox driver, and had trouble with these until one day he called on Captain Shaw for assistance. It was furnished by the good captain pelting the refractory steers with stones until they were glad to come to terms.

Reaching the buffalo country, our father would get some one to drive his team and start on the hunt, for he was enthusiastic in his love of such sport. He not only killed the great bison, but often brought home on his shoulder the timid antelope that had fallen at his unerring aim, and that are not often shot by ordinary marksmen. Soon after crossing South Platte the unwieldy oxen ran on a bank and overturned the wagon, greatly injuring our mother. She lay long insensible in the tent put up for the occasion.

August 1st we nooned in a beautiful grove on the north side of the Platte. We had by this time got used to climbing in and out of the wagon when in motion. When performing this feat that afternoon my dress caught on an axle helve and I was thrown under the wagon wheel, which passed over and badly crushed my limb before father could stop the team. He picked me up and saw the extent of the injury when the injured limb hung dangling in the air.



www.historyglobe.com/ot/map2.htm

THE FATHER DYING ON THE PLAINS In a broken voice he exclaimed: "My dear child, your leg is broken all to pieces!" The news soon spread along the train and a halt was called. A

surgeon was found and the limb set; then we pushed on the same night to Laramie, where we arrived soon after dark. This accident confined me to the wagon the remainder of the long journey.

After Laramie we entered the great American desert, which was hard on the teams. Sickness became common. Father and the boys were all sick, and we were dependent for a driver on the Dutch doctor who set my leg. He offered his services and was employed, but though an excellent surgeon, he knew little about driving oxen. Some of them often had to rise from their sick beds to wade streams and get the oxen safely across. One day four buffalo ran between our wagon and the one behind. Though feeble, father seized his gun and gave chase to them. This imprudent act prostrated him again, and it soon became apparent that his days were numbered. He was fully conscious of the fact, but could not be reconciled to the thought of leaving his large and helpless family in such precarious circumstances. The evening before his death we crossed Green River and camped on the bank. Looking where I lay helpless, he said: "Poor child! What will become of you?" Captain Shaw found him weeping bitterly. He said his last hour had come, and his heart was filled with anguish for his family. His wife was ill, the children small, and one likely to be a cripple. They had no relatives near, and a long journey lay before them. In piteous tones he begged the Captain to take charge of them and see them through. This he stoutly promised. Father was buried the next day on the banks of Green River. His coffin was made of two troughs dug out of the body of a tree, but next year emigrants found his bleaching bones, as the Indians had disinterred the remains.

We hired a young man to drive, as mother was afraid to trust the doctor, but the kindhearted German would not leave her, and declared his intention to see her safe in the Willamette. At Fort Bridger the stream was full of fish, and we made nets of wagon sheets to catch them. That evening the new driver told mother he would hunt for game if she would let him use the gun. He took it, and we never saw him again. He made for the train in advance, where he had a sweetheart. We found the gun waiting our arrival at Whitman's. Then we got along as best we could with the doctor's help.

Mother planned to get to Whitman's and winter there, but she was rapidly failing under her sorrows. The nights and mornings were very cold, and she took cold from the exposure unavoidably. With camp fever and a sore mouth, she fought bravely against fate for the sake of her children, but she was taken delirious soon after reaching Fort Bridger, and was bed-fast. Travelling in this condition over a road clouded with dust, she suffered intensely. She talked of her husband, addressing him as though present, beseeching him in piteous tones to relieve her sufferings, until at last she became unconscious. Her babe was cared for by the women of the train. Those kind-hearted women would also come in at night and wash the dust from the mother's face and otherwise make her comfortable. We travelled a rough road the day she died, and she moaned fearfully all the time. At night one of the women came in as usual, but she made no reply to questions, so she thought her asleep, and washed her face, then took her hand and discovered the pulse was nearly gone. She lived but a few moments, and her last words were, "Oh, Henry! If you only knew how we have suffered." The tent was set up, the corpse laid out, and next morning we took the last look at our mother's face. The grave was near the road; willow brush was laid in the bottom and covered the body, the earth filled in -- then the

train moved on.

Her name was cut on a headboard, and that was all that could be done. So in twenty-six days we became orphans. Seven children of us, the oldest fourteen and the youngest a babe. A few days before her death, finding herself in possession of her faculties and fully aware of the coming end, she had taken an affectionate farewell of her children and charged the doctor to take care of us. She made the same request of Captain Shaw. The baby was taken by a woman in the train, and all were literally adopted by the company. No one there but was ready to do us any possible favor. This was especially true of Captain Shaw and his wife. Their kindness will ever be cherished in grateful remembrance by us all. Our parents could not have been more solicitous or careful. When our flour gave out they gave us bread as long as they had any, actually dividing their last loaf. To this day Uncle Billy and Aunt Sally, as we call them, regard us with the affection of parents. Blessings on his hoary head!

At Snake River they lay by to make our wagon into a cart, as our team was wearing out. Into this was loaded what was necessary. Some things were sold and some left on the plains. The last of September we arrived at Grande Ronde, where one of my sister's clothes caught fire, and she would have burned to death only that the German doctor, at the cost of burning his hands, saved her. One night the captain heard a child crying, and found my little sister had got out of the wagon and was perishing in the freezing air, for the nights were very cold. We had been out of flour and living on meat alone, so a few were sent in advance to get supplies from Dr. Whitman and return to us. Having so light a load we could travel faster than the other teams, and went on with Daptain Shaw and the advance. Through the Blue Mountains cattle were giving out and left lying in the road. We made but a few miles a day. We were in the country of "Dr. Whitman's Indians," as they called themselves. They were returning from buffalo hunting and frequented our camps. They were loud in praise of the missionaries and anxious to assist us. Often they would drive up some beast that had been left behind as given out and return it to its owner.

One day when we were making a fire of wet wood Francis thought to help the matter by holding his powder-horn over a small blaze. Of course the powder-horn exploded, and the wonder was he was left alive. He ran to a creek near by and bathed his hands and face, and came back destitute of winkers and eyebrows, and his face was blackened beyond recognition. Such were the incidents and dangerous and humorous features of the journey.

We reached Umatilla October 15th, and lay by while Captain Shaw went on to Whitman's station to see if the doctor would take care of us, if only until he could become located in the Willamette. We purchased of the Indians the first potatoes we had eaten since we started on our long and sad journey...Mrs. Shaw took an affectionate leave of us all, and stood looking after us as long as we were in sight. Speaking of it in later years, she said she never saw a more pitiful sight than that cartful of orphans going to find a home among strangers. We reached the station in the forenoon. For weeks this place had been a subject for our talk by day and formed our dreams at night. We expected to see log houses, occupied by Indians and such people as we had seen about the forts. Instead we saw a large white house surrounded with palisades....

DIRECTIONS: In the space below, please take notes.

I. Where did the people traveling westward come from?

II. How many pioneers traveled along the Oregon Trail? When did people stop using the Oregon Trail to go west—and why?

III. Did the pioneers only travel by wagons (“prairie schooners”)?

IV. Odds and ends: Why were ten tons of bacon was dumped by the side of the trail? What was the job of a “watcher”?

AT THE GOLD MINES

Read the following explanation of “claiming” a mine and working it. It was written by Louise A. Clappe, a New Englander who traveled to California in 1851 with her husband, who was a doctor. She wrote a column for *Pioneer* magazine that was called “Shirley Letters,” and for this she came to be known as “Dame Shirley.”¹

After you have read the excerpt, please answer the questions on a separate piece of paper.

1. During the Gold Rush, how did a man “claim” an area that he wanted to mine?
2. Why, according to the author, did some men work for others, rather than making a claim themselves?
3. Why did mining “companies” form? How did they get their names?
4. Using the description in this reading, draw a “Long Tom.” Be sure to label the various parts.

1851

Feather River Canyon, California

First, let me explain to you the “claiming” system. As there are no State laws upon the subject, each mining community is permitted to make its own. Here, they have decided that no man may “claim” an area of more than forty feet square. This he “stakes off” and puts a notice upon it, to the effect that he “holds” it for mining purposes. If he does not choose to “work it” immediately, he is obligated to renew the notice every ten days; for without this precaution, any other person has a right to “jump it,” that is, to take it away from him.

There are many ways of evading the above law. For instance, an individual can “hold” as many “claims” as he pleases, if he keeps a man at work at each, for this workman represents the original owner. I am told, however, that the laborer, himself, can “jump” the “claim” of the very man who employs him, if he pleases so to do. This is seldom, if ever, done; the person who is willing to be hired, generally prefers to receive the six dollars *per diem*, of which he is *sure* in any case, to running the risk of a “claim” not proving valuable. But there are many ways of really outwitting this [claiming] rule, which give rise to innumerable arbitrations, and nearly every Sunday, there is a “miners’ meeting” connected with this subject.

¹ Excerpt found in *Eyewitness to the American West: From the Aztec Empire to the Digital Frontier in the Words of Those Who Saw It Happen*. David Colbert, editor. New York: Viking, 1998.

...I will try to give you a faint idea of how they "work" [the claims]. Here in the mountains, the labor of excavation is extremely difficult, on account of the immense rocks which form a large portion of the soil.

Of course, no man can "work out" a "claim" alone. For that reason, and also for the same that makes partnerships desirable, they congregate in companies of four or six, generally designating themselves by the place from whence the majority of the members have emigrated; for example, the "Illinois," "Bunker Hill," "Bay State," etc....

In many places the surface soil, or in mining phrase, the "top dirt," "pays" when worked in a "Long Tom." This machine, (I have never been able to discover the derivation of its name,) is a trough, generally about twenty feet in length, and eight inches in depth, formed of wood, with the exception of six feet at one end, called the "riddle," which is made of sheet-iron perforated with holes about the size of a large marble. Underneath this cullender-like portion of the "long-tom," is placed another trough, about ten feet long, the sides six inches perhaps in height, which divided through the middle by a slender slat, is called the "riffle-box."

It takes several persons to manage, properly, a "long tom." Three or four men station themselves with spades, at the head of the machine, while at the foot of it, stands an individual armed "wid de shovel and de hoe." The spadesmen throw in large quantities of the precious dirt, which is washed down to the "riddle" by a stream of water leading into the "long tom" through wooden gutters or "sluices." When the soil reaches the "riddle," it is kept constantly in motion by the man with the hoe.

Of course, by this means, all the dirt and gold escapes through the perforations into the "riffle-box" below, one compartment of which is placed just beyond the "riddle." Most of the dirt washes over the sides of the "riffle-box," but the gold being so astonishingly heavy remains safely at the bottom of it. When the machine gets too full of stones to be worked easily, the man whose business it is to attend to them throws them out with his shovel, looking carefully among them as he does so for any pieces of gold, which may have been too large to pass through the holes of the "riddle." I am sorry to say that he generally loses his labor. At night they "pan out" the gold, which has been collected in the "riffle box" during the day.

Many of the miners decline washing the "top dirt" at all, but try to reach as quickly as possible the "bed-rock," where are found the richest deposits of gold. The river is supposed to have formerly flowed over this "bed-rock," in the "crevices" of which, it left, as it passed away, the largest portions of the so eagerly sought for ore....

This letter was written by a man named John Cooper to his sister and brother-in-law Sally and John Nealy of North Bolton, Vermont. John Cooper was born in Vermont around 1821 and left Vermont for California in 1853 when he was 31 or 32 years old. In his letter, Cooper tells of his journey to California and his early days in a gold mining camp. This letter was found in the manuscript collection of the Vermont Historical Society (Misc. File #541). After you have read the letter, please answer the questions at the end. Some words have been defined for you at the bottom of the page.

Georgetown Eldorado County California
December 12th 1853

Respected Brother & Sister,

I think it is time to fulfill my promise to you before it is quite broken. The only reason that I have not written before is procrastination and it is the thief of time. Therefore I will commence² at the beginning of my travels to this country.

I left Richmond the 9th of June and arrived in New York the 10th. I stayed until the 20th of June. At three o'clock I sailed from Pier No. 2 Hudson River on board the Steamship Prometheus commanded by Captain Churchill of the Nicaragua Steamship Company bound for San Juan del Norte at the mouth of the San Juan River, which place we made in 10 days and 6 hours. I was seasick only the two first days out. The rest of the way my health was good and if there ever was one who enjoyed the serene³ atmosphere and balmy air of the South, it was I. It seemed as if those icy chains that long had bound me were severed⁴ and I was free, and from that day to this my health has been improving.

But to return to my journey—we anchored in the mouth of the San Juan River the 30th of June about 9 o'clock in the evening. The next morning July 1st the Captain ordered the breakfast to be ready at the break of day, and at 6 o'clock we were all on board the river steamer and were fast plunging into the forests of Central America. There another scene awaited us. The forest on either side of the river was one unbroken field of flowers as far as the eye could reach and the air was filled with fragrance from Nature's great perfumery. The scene here presented far surpasses⁵ description for each tree was itself a forest and covered with flowers of almost every hue⁶.

The first day we proceeded about 80 miles and then throwed off steam, made fast to a tree and lay to until morning. That night it was fun to see the cabin

² commence: to start; to begin

³ serene: peaceful

⁴ severed: cut

⁵ surpasses: exceeds; to go beyond

⁶ hue: color

passengers look about to find a place to sleep. For me it was no trouble, I wrapped my blanket about me and layed down on the baggage with my feet out of the window and had a good sleep until morning. At the break of day the steam was up and we were on our journey up the river. We had not gone more than 25 miles before we discovered a boat ahead of us. We soon came along side of her and for the first time we heard these words spoken by the Captain—“The passengers will please pass over on to the other boat for this boat goes no farther.” We soon learned to appreciate these words and to know their meaning. It was then hurly burly,⁷ each one for himself and baggage. A few minutes confusion and off we started. This boat was smaller than the other; therefore the passengers were divided, part of them stayed on the other boat with the heavy baggage until we could go up to Castillo, about 30 miles above.

We arrived there about 10 o'clock in the morning and stayed all day and night. At this place there was once a large and flourishing city now a dense forest where it stood. It was built by the Spaniards and they built a large fortress which has withstood the ravages⁸ of time, whilst silent and alone it tells of their former greatness. Here also they dammed up the San Juan River by throwing in large rocks and formed the Castillo Rapids to prevent boats from passing up or down the river. This route was once the great highway where passed the commerce of Spain from the Pacific Coast to the Atlantic. There are only 12 miles of land between the two Oceans. At this place there are 4 or 5 Yankee boarding houses and a few huts of the natives.

Here we found another steamboat waiting to carry us up to Lake Nicaragua. July 3rd at 8 o'clock in the morning we started from Castillo for the Lake. We had not proceeded more than 25 or 30 miles when we saw a large and splendid looking steamboat a short distance above us. Soon the signal gun was fired and we came alongside. There again those well known words from the Captain—“The passengers will please pass over to the other boat as soon as possible for this boat goes no farther.” We were soon all on board and in an hour or so we arrived at San Carlos, another Spanish town of ancient grandeur⁹ situated at the outlet¹⁰ of Lake Nicaragua, and now it was on the blue waters of this beautiful Lake we sped on our way for Virgin Bay about 100 miles distant. We arrived there just after dark and landed the next morning July the 4th.

When we came on shore we found mules in readiness to carry us and our baggage to San Juan del Sur on the Pacific only 12 miles distant. It was a clear day with breezes blowing from the Pacific which rendered the air cool and delightful. Imagine to yourself 250 persons from Missouri to Maine of both sexes mounted on mules and riding along on a good Macadamized¹¹ road in a strange country

⁷ hurly burly: uproar; milling about as a crowd

⁸ ravages: negative effects

⁹ grandeur: magnificence

¹⁰ outlet: a stream flowing out of a lake or pond

¹¹ Macadamized: constructed by compacting a layer of small stones into a roadbed

with a hundred baggage mules to bring up the rear and you may judge something of how we looked whilst crossing the Isthmus.

At 2 o'clock we had our dinner eaten and were ready to go on board the Cortez, a large ocean Steamship. We waited until about 4 o'clock for the arrival of our baggage. July the 4th at 9 o'clock in the evening all on board the Cortez, commanded by Captain Cropper, we once more weighed anchor & for the last time before reaching San Francisco. That night one of our passengers jumped overboard, as was supposed, in a fit of delirium tremens,¹² for he made an attempt before going to bed and was prevented by the passengers. He placed his money in the hands of the purser¹³ and his passage ticket. The next day an old lady died of the consumption,¹⁴ and was thrown overboard. These were the only deaths on our journey. There was no sickness but sea sickness.

July the 16th we landed at San Francisco 12 o'clock A.M. being eleven & ½ days from San Juan Del Sud and 25 days 21 hours from New York.

Edward and I stayed in the city until Tuesday. Then we started for Union City to see Jerry Beedy. We found him well and doing well. Edward started back for San Francisco the next morning. I stayed there over 5 weeks and worked for my board. The last four days that I stayed there I took cold and had a strike of the chill fever. I washed off with cold water and then started for San Francisco. There I met Edward again. I stayed only two days and then started for Sacramento. There I stayed one week, then started for Georgetown, where I arrived Sunday Sept. 2 Here I found Alfred Bates in about 3 minutes after leaving the stage. He took me down to his cabin where I remained until the 9th of November when we moved into a house of our own.

We have a claim in Hudson Gulch where Jones and Smith worked 2 years ago. Saturday night was the coldest that I have seen. It froze a little in my washdish. I think this country agrees with me first rate for my health has not been so good since I was lame.

We have built us a cabin 18 by 12 and have a good cook stove and utensils for cooking. I am the cook. Our company consists of 4. Their names are H. B. Loggins of St. George, John O'Brien of Richmond, E. R. Jones & John Cooper. Solomon Pierce is here this evening and is well. His cabin is about 8 rods from ours. Alfred E. Bates cabins with him.

I am located about 80 rods from Manu-aluke Hill where there are about 25 tunnels and they are taking out gold by the pound daily. I have enough to eat and that is good. I have not stepped on the ground yet.

Remember me to all the folks. Tell them that I am well and doing well and have not got a dollar that I can use. It is a disease that the Californians call "dead broke". Tell Lucinda that I am well. Write to me as soon as you get this. I have not had a letter from home yet. I hear all the news by Alfred down as late as the 28th of

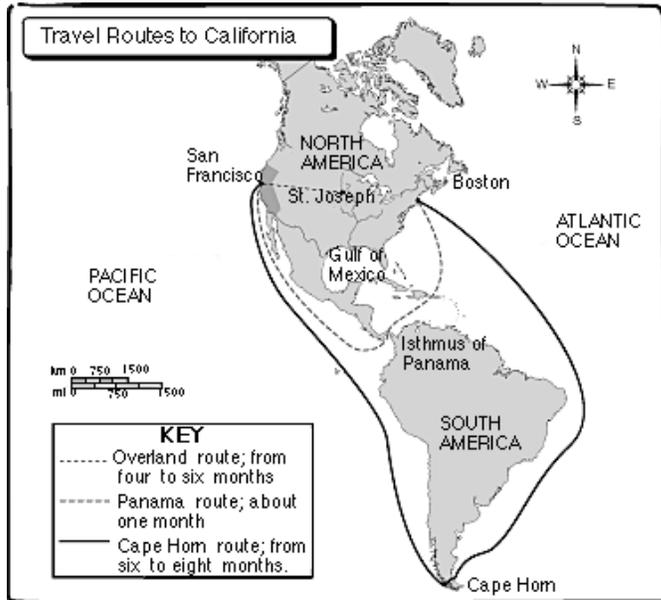
¹² delirium tremens: a violent mental disturbance caused by excessive use of alcohol

¹³ purser: an official on a boat responsible for papers and accounts

¹⁴ consumption: a wasting away of the body, especially from tuberculosis

October. They said A. B. Cooper hadn't received one from me. I have not been homesick yet. Yours in haste for the mail closes in about an hour.

John Cooper
of Georgetown, Eldorado County, Cal.



Copyright © 1999 Houghton Mifflin Company. All Rights Reserved.



Directions: Look at the two maps that have been provided and trace Cooper's trip to California using a pen or highlighter. **Then, on a separate piece of paper, please answer the following questions.**

1. In paragraph form, explain how Cooper got to California. Be sure to include the various kinds of transportation that he used and at least 5 geographic locations on his route.

2. How does this document connect to what we have been studying? Your response should be a "meaty" paragraph in which you use at least one quote from Cooper's letter and some information summarized or paraphrased (but not quoted) from other materials that we have studied.

PROMPT: Write your response as if you have just found John Cooper's letter. Connect the letter to your prior knowledge of US history—specifically about the Gold Rush, which this letter is obviously about. How does Cooper's letter fit into that time period in our history? How does his description of the journey compare/contrast with other information that you have learned? How does his description of mining compare/contrast with Louise Clappe's description?