



▲ Chinese miners in California

Gold-mining tools ►



WITNESS HISTORY AUDIO

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 here drove off about 200 Chinamen about two weeks ago but they have come back about as thick as ever (I would not help drive them off as I thought they had no right to drive them).”

—Robert W. Pitkin, 1852

Effects of Territorial Expansion

Objectives

- 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.

Terms and People

Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo	California Gold Rush
Gadsden Purchase	forty-niners
Wilmot Proviso	placer mining
	hydraulic mining

NoteTaking

Reading Skill: Understand Effects Trace the effects of the Mexican-American War.

Event	Effect
Mexican-American War	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo; United States gains territory • •

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?

America Achieves Manifest Destiny

In February 1848, the defeated Mexicans made peace with the Americans. The **Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo** (gwah duh LOO pay ee THAHL goh) forced 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 for decades 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 Mexico. He blamed his negotiator, Nicholas Trist, for settling for too little. But Polk had no choice but to submit the treaty to Congress because northern public opinion would not support a longer war.

Growth of the United States to 1853

Map Skills By 1853, the United States had achieved Manifest Destiny and stretched from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

- 1. Locate:** (a) Oregon, (b) Texas, (c) Mexican Cession, (d) Gadsden Purchase
- 2. Regions** What territory did the United States acquire as the result of war?
- 3. Connect Past and Present** Is your own state on this map? If so, how and when was it acquired by the United States?



In the **Gadsden Purchase** of 1853, the United States obtained from Mexico another 29,640 square miles in southern Arizona and New Mexico. The Americans bought this strip to facilitate a railroad across the continent. Along with the annexation of Texas, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and the Gadsden Purchase increased the area of the United States by about one third. Only the Louisiana Purchase had added more territory. The new lands comprised present-day New Mexico, California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, and half of Colorado.

The Wilmot Proviso Divides Americans Even before the war ended, the prospect of gaining land from Mexico stirred fierce debate in the United States. In 1846, Whig congressman David Wilmot of Pennsylvania had proposed a law, known as the **Wilmot Proviso**, that would ban slavery in any lands won from Mexico. The proposal broke party unity and instead divided Congress largely along sectional lines. Most northern Democrats joined all northern Whigs to support the Wilmot Proviso. Southern Democrats joined southern Whigs in opposition. The Proviso passed in the House of Representatives, but it failed narrowly in the Senate.

The Wilmot Proviso would reappear in every session of Congress for the next 15 years. Repeatedly, it passed in the House only to fail in the Senate. The Proviso brought the slavery issue to the forefront and weakened the two major parties, which had long tried to avoid discussing the issue in Congress. Thus, the lands won from Mexico increased tensions between North and South.

✓ Checkpoint How did the Mexican-American War serve to heighten tensions over slavery?

Vocabulary Builder
comprise—(kuhm PRĪZ) *v.* to include; to make up

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:

Primary Source

"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.

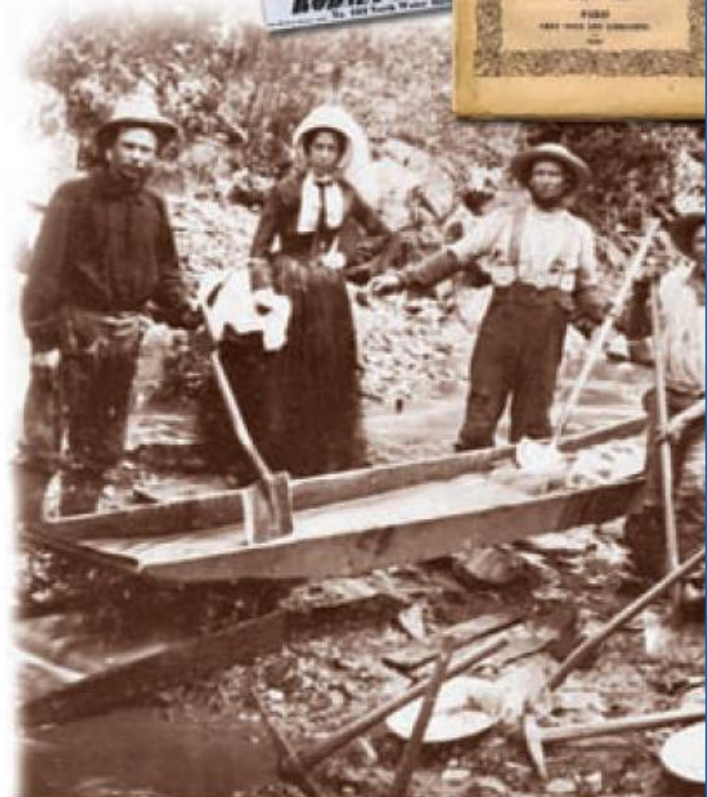
Conditions were hard in the crowded mining camps. Poor sanitation promoted diseases, especially cholera and dysentery, killing hundreds. In addition, life was cheap and law was scarce in the camps. Almost all of the inhabitants were men, who felt frustrated by their failure to find much gold and by their 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.

The Lure of California Gold

The California gold fields attracted thousands of men and a smaller number of women (bottom). The poster (below, left) advertises ship passage to California. *What does the guidebook (below, right) suggest about the appeal of the California Gold Rush?*



Vocabulary Builder

degrade—(dee GRAYD) *v.* to reduce in status or rank

Those with the most money turned to “hard rock mining,” searching in the mountains for veins of quartz that contained gold. Miners extracted gold by digging deep tunnels and shafts braced with posts and beams and drained by pumps. One California newspaper complained that the new type of large-scale mining operation “degrades the sturdy miner into a drudge . . . while [mine owners] reap the great profit of his endeavor.” The democratic age of placer mining was over. With few exceptions, wealthy investors rather than common miners owned the mines and enjoyed the profits.



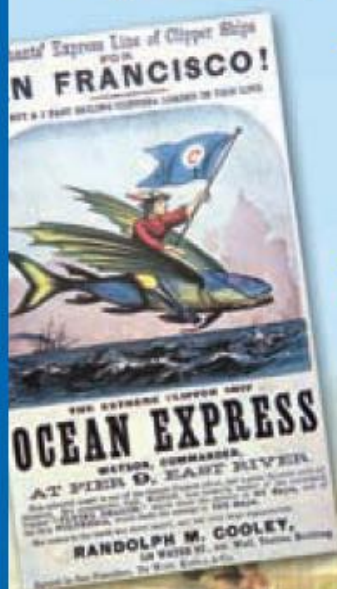
Checkpoint What problems did forty-niners face in the California gold fields?



INFOGRAPHIC

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 1800s.

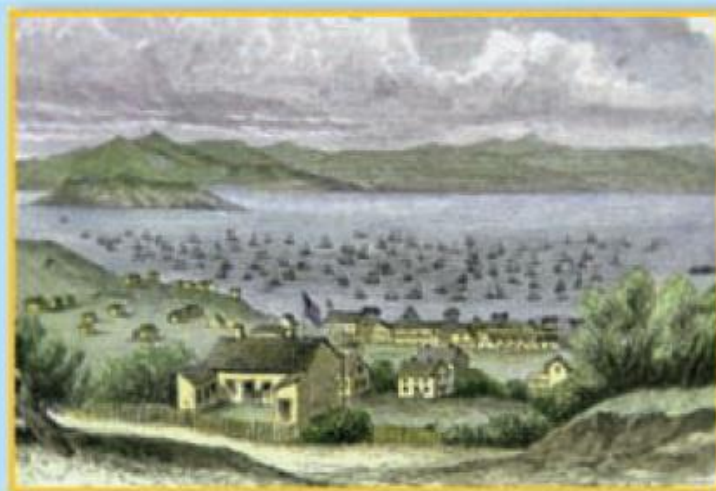


▶ A Fast Trip West

This 1851 advertisement promises a superfast trip from New York around the southern tip of South America to San Francisco—in as little as 97 days!

▼ Street Scene

This painting shows a busy street market in 1850 San Francisco.



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?

History Interactive★

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

Growth of San Francisco

Year	Population
1848	800
1849	25,000
1852	36,000
1860	57,000

SOURCE: CIA World Factbook Online

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 state 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?

HISTORY MAKERS

Mariano Vallejo

(1808–1890)

Mariano Vallejo lived under Spanish, Mexican, and U.S. rule. The son of wealthy landowners, he became a general in the Mexican army. Critical of the Mexican government, Vallejo welcomed the arrival of U.S. settlers. Though he was briefly imprisoned during the Bear Flag revolt, he continued to support the American cause, serving as a delegate to the California constitutional convention and as a state legislator. But like many *Californios*, he lost most of his land to white settlers when the courts refused to recognize his family land grants. Vallejo lived his final years on a small fragment of his once large ranch.



SECTION

3 Assessment

Progress Monitoring Online

For: Self-test with vocabulary practice

Web Code: nca-0907

Comprehension

1. **Terms and People** Write a sentence explaining how each of the following was connected with westward expansion.
 - Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo
 - Gadsden Purchase
 - Wilmot Proviso
 - California Gold Rush
 - forty-niners
 - placer mining
 - hydraulic mining

2. NoteTaking Reading Skill:

Recognize Effects Use your chart to answer the Section Focus Question: What were the effects of the Mexican-American War and the California Gold Rush?

Writing About History

3. **Quick Write: Write an Editorial** Write an editorial on the Wilmot Proviso that might have appeared in an 1846 newspaper. Define the issue and give reasons to support one position.

Critical Thinking

4. **Apply Information** How did the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo settle the chief issues that led to the Mexican-American War?
5. **Draw Conclusions** Who benefited most from the California Gold Rush? Who benefited least?
6. **Evaluate Information** What do you think was the most important long-term result of the Mexican-American War? Explain.