

CONNECTIONS

FORTEACHERS

Welcome to CONNECTIONS, a performance guide brought to you by the Imagination Celebration of Colorado Springs. This CONNECTIONS issue is to help teachers prepare their students to see the musical production of *Gold Rush!*



The pick and shovel symbol marks activities you may want to do with your students.



"For Your Information" comments provide background information for teachers.

Colorado Springs

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GOLD RUSH

A musical drama written by
David Armstrong and
performed by Theatreworks
USA.

CONNECTIONS was
prepared by Melinda Stephan.
Portions of the
Theatreworks Study Guide
were used in preparing these
materials.

Imagination Celebration, Colorado Springs, proudly
presents:

GOLD RUSH!

Performed by Theatreworks USA from New York City.



An Introduction

On January 24, 1848, while building a sawmill for General John Sutter, James Marshall made an amazing discovery. He found gold! Word of the discovery spread rapidly, and thousands of Americans as well as people from other countries, who were hoping to "strike it rich", made their way west to California. Some people did find gold, but many others returned home penniless or did not return home at all. Still others struck out on new adventures following other gold strikes.

Getting to the gold fields was very difficult. The prospectors, who were called Forty-Niners because they traveled in 1849, had to endure disease, delays, and starvation. Some of the people gave up and returned home before ever setting foot in California. Many travelers who came in wagon trains on the "Overland Trail" had packed much more than they could carry on the long trip and had to abandon their belongings along the way.

The people who did make it to the gold fields found that making their fortune was much more difficult than they thought it would be. The gold that was thought to be so abundant was really much less plentiful, and there were tens of thousands of people looking for it! A few people did become rich in the gold fields, but many more made their fortunes by selling the miners the supplies and food they needed to survive.

Before the Play..

About the Musical Drama

✦ Explain to your students that GOLD RUSH is a musical drama. The story will be told in words, music and action. Although the characters are fictional, every event that they experience is based on historical accounts of the Gold Rush era. The playwright, David Armstrong, chose to focus on the experiences unique to American prospectors. Through this exciting musical drama, the spirit of the forty-niners, as well as the roots of American entrepreneurialism, are vividly brought to life.

Before seeing the performance, introduce your students to the characters in the play. What do they think life might have been like back in the 1800's? Ask the students why they think each character would want to go to California to look for gold? As they watch the play, ask them to listen for the answers to these questions.

FYI Gold Rush! Vocabulary

britches - another word for trousers or pants

California - settlers flocked to settle here after gold was Discovered in 1848. California became the 31st state in the U.S. on September 9, 1850.

entrepreneur - a person who organizes and manages a business undertaking

free state - a state in which slavery was against the law

forty-niner - a nickname for a person who went to California to look for gold in 1849

port - the town or harbor where ships anchor

rocker - a wooden device that was rocked back and forth to "wash" dirt at a faster pace than panning; also known as a cradle

staking a claim - during the gold rush, this meant declaring a portion of land as your territory to mine; often accomplished by driving a stake into each corner of your claim

FYI Character List

Jenny - a girl of 14 living in New England

Ezekiel - Jenny's dad

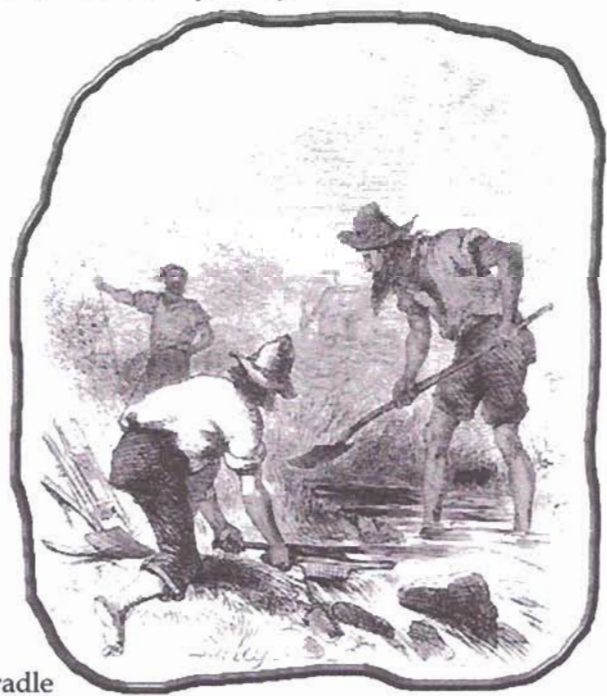
Col. Breckinridge - a Southern landowner

Henry - Col. Breckinridge's 15 yr. old son

Daniel - a slave belonging to Col. Breckinridge. He is Henry's best friend

Jenny's character was based on rare female forty-niners such as Jennie Megquier, who is believed to have been the first woman to cross the isthmus of Panama, and Luzena Stanley Wilson, who sold her first pan of biscuits to hungry miners for \$10.00 and discovered free enterprise.

Daniel's story mirrors the life of former slave Alvin Coffee who worked to save enough money to buy his freedom but, like Daniel, was betrayed by his master.



What's for supper?

Whether prospectors were traveling to the gold fields by sea or over land, or even if they were already at the gold fields, one problem everyone faced was what to eat and drink. Fresh, sweet water was always a problem. Prospectors made switchel, a drink farmers used to quench their thirst during harvest time, to make the dirty, bad tasting water more palatable. Try this recipe with your students.

Ingredients:

2 cups light brown sugar
1 cup cider vinegar
1 cup light molasses
2 or 3 teaspoons ground ginger
1 gallon cold water

Directions:

Combine sugar, vinegar, molasses, ginger and about 2 quarts of the water in a large pitcher or pot. Stir with a wooden spoon until sugar is dissolved. Add the rest of the water. Serve chilled.
Makes 1 gallon.



A Little Music?

No one knows who wrote this folk song, but it was probably written around 1870. Like our play, **GOLD RUSH**, it tells a story through music. Listen closely to the story of Betsy, a girl from Pike County, Missouri, who joins a wagon train headed for the California gold fields. As you sing this song, pay attention to the struggles Betsy and Ike have on their trip. When you watch the play try to remember these adventures. Do Colonel Breckenridge, Henry and Daniel have similar experiences along the way?

Did you ev - er hear tell of Sweet Bet - sy from Pike? Who
crossed the wide prai - ries with her dar - ling, Ike? With two yoke of
ox - en and one spot - ted hog, A tall Shang - hai roost - er, an
old yel - low dog. Sing - ing too - ra - li, too - ra - li, too - ra - li - oy.

v.4 The terrible desert was burning and bare,
And Isaac he shrank from the death lurkin' there,
"Dear old Pike County, I'll come back to you."
Says Betsy, "You'll go by yourself if you do."

CHORUS

v.5 They swam wild rivers and climbed the tall peaks,
And camped on the prairies for weeks upon
weeks,
Starvation and cholera, hard work and slaughter,
They reached Californy, spite of heck and
high water.

CHORUS

v.2 One evening quite early they camped on the Platte.
'Twas near by the road on a green shady flat.
Where Betsy, sore-footed, lay down to repose—
With wonder Ike gazed on that Pike County rose.

CHORUS

v.3 They soon reached the desert where Betsy gave out,
And down in the sand she lay rolling about;
While Ike, half distracted, looked on with surprise,
Saying, "Betsy, get up, you'll get sand in your
eyes."

CHORUS

v.6 The Shanghai ran off, and their cattle all died;
That morning the last piece of bacon was fried;
Poor Ike was discouraged and Betsy got mad,
The dog drooped his tail and looked wondrously
sad.

CHORUS

v.7 They suddenly stopped on a very high hill,
With wonder looked down upon old Placerville;
Ike sighed when he said, and he cast his eyes
down,
"Sweet Betsy, my darling, we've got to Hangtown

CHORUS

By land or by sea?

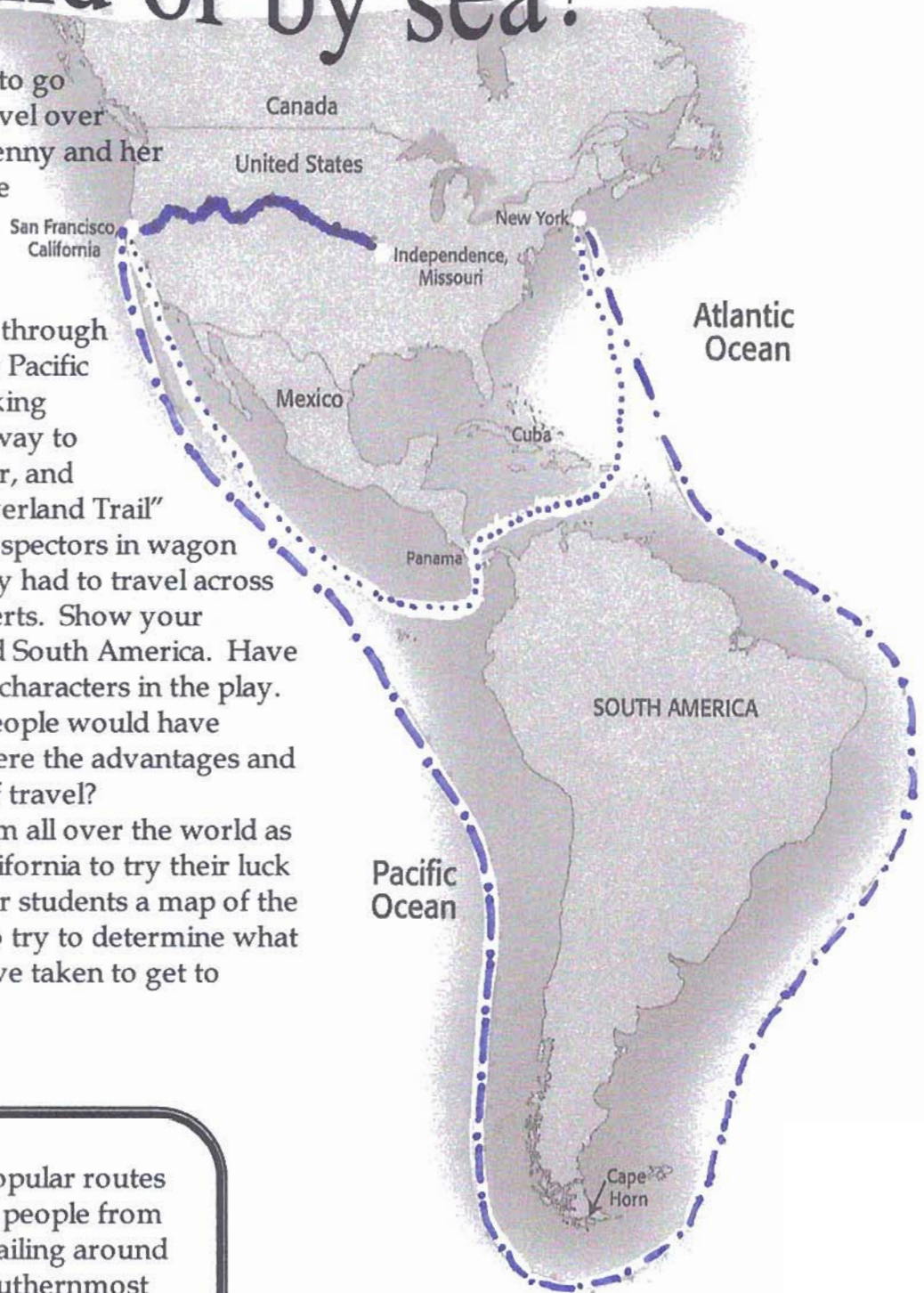


People who wanted to go to California could either travel over land or by sea. In the play, Jenny and her father take the Panama route which was the fastest way to the gold fields. It started out as a voyage to Panama, then you traveled over land through the jungles of Panama to the Pacific ocean, and you ended by taking another ship the rest of the way to California. Henry, his father, and Daniel take the arduous "Overland Trail" route followed by many prospectors in wagon train after wagon train. They had to travel across prairies, mountains and deserts. Show your students a map of North and South America. Have them trace the routes of the characters in the play. Ask them why they think people would have chosen each route? What were the advantages and the dangers of each mode of travel?

Thousands of people from all over the world as well as America came to California to try their luck in the gold fields. Show your students a map of the world. Ask your students to try to determine what other routes people may have taken to get to California.



The three most popular routes to the gold fields for people from the Americas were sailing around Cape Horn at the southernmost tip of South America, sailing to Panama and then by land to the Pacific and up the coast by another ship, or by wagon on the "Overland Trail."



Routes to the Gold Country

- Panama Short Cut
- - - - Around Cape Horn
- _____ "Overland Trail"

Where will we go?



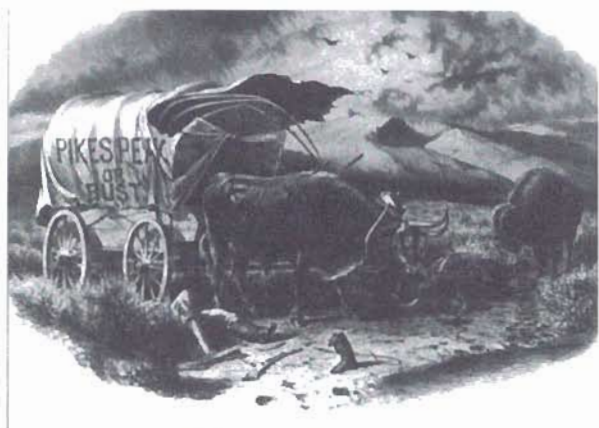
Depending on which route a person chose, here is a list of new places they would have encountered. Ask your students to decide which route they would have tried. Tell them to read the following list and identify three places they would have seen on their trip. They should look up those places in an encyclopedia, atlas, or a resource book on the gold rush. (See the list of resources/references listed on another page of this copy of CONNECTIONS.) Have them either write a journal description about “seeing” some of these places for the first time, or have them locate and identify these places on a map.

American River	Death Valley
Kansas River	San Francisco
Independence, Missouri	Panama
Mississippi River	Rocky Mountains
Overland Trail	*Cape Horn

Ask your students to listen for these places in the play. What is the significance of each place?

*Since the characters in the play don't take this route, Cape Horn will not be mentioned in the play.

Other Discoveries



There were several gold strikes in the United States in the 1800's. About a decade after the California discovery, there was a gold rush in Colorado. Although there was no gold in the Pikes Peak area, “Pikes Peak or Bust” became the prospectors' slogan because the mountain was such a well-known landmark.

Have your students work individually or in groups to research one aspect of the Colorado gold rush.

Topics could include: Who came to Colorado? Why did they come? Did any strike it rich? Where was gold found? How did they get here? What towns “boomed” during the gold rush?

To present the information they gather about Colorado, have the students choose one of these methods to share with the class:

* Choose a famous person from the gold rush and dramatize that person's story by “becoming” that person for your presentation.

* Create a display that shows the important points of your topic using visual aides (such as maps, models, diorama...)

* Write a diary from a prospector's viewpoint. Where did you come from? How did you get here? Did you strike it rich? Where is your mine?

* Make a collage using pictures you find or draw to illustrate your topic.

After the play...



Golden Opportunities

Like Jenny in our play, many people didn't find their fortune in the gold fields but became entrepreneurs and sold the miners goods or services that they needed. For example, Domingo Ghirardelli, a candy maker from Lima, Peru, found he could make much more money selling chocolate and other luxury items to the miners than he ever took out of the ground. The main Ghirardelli Chocolate Company store is still in San Francisco today - in Ghirardelli Square. Another young man named Levi Strauss used some canvas tenting material he had brought with him to California to sew trousers for the miners because they complained that their clothes wore out so easily. The miners liked the durable pants, and came to Mr. Strauss to purchase his wonderful "britches", and that is how Levi's were invented!



Ask your students to think about what type of service or product they might have offered to make their fortune in the gold fields. Have them work with another person or individually to develop an advertisement or poster that promotes their product or service to present to the class.



Golden Opportunities Lost

In the play Daniel tries to buy his freedom, but his owner, Colonel Breckinridge, betrays him. Ask your students: What was Henry's reaction to his father's behavior towards Daniel? Why was it so difficult for Henry to decide what to do? Would you have acted differently? What do you think about the way Daniel was treated? Were all slaves treated that way? What do you think happened to Daniel?

Have the students imagine Daniel's life *after* the curtain closes on the play. Direct the students to write a continuation of the story of Daniel's life as they imagine it might be.



Write to Theatreworks!

After you see the musical drama **GOLD RUSH!**, please have your students share their comments and questions about the play with the Imagination Celebration, and we will send them on to Theatreworks USA. We're sure they would love to see any student artwork about the play as well!

Teacher's Name: _____
Your School: _____
City, State: _____
Date: _____

Theatreworks/USA
New York, New York

Dear Theatreworks,

Hello from Colorado Springs, Colorado! My name is _____, and I wanted to tell you I saw your production of **GOLD RUSH!** at the Pikes Peak Center here in Colorado Springs.

I thought the play was _____

My favorite character in the play was _____

The scene in the play I remembered best was _____

Something else I wanted to ask/say about the show is: _____

I'm so glad the Imagination Celebration brought your group here so we could see **GOLD RUSH!**

Thanks so much!

Sincerely,

GOLD RUSH!

REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

FOR STUDYING THE CALIFORNIA GOLD RUSH:

- Gregory, Kristiana. *Seeds of Hope: The Gold Rush Diary of Susanna Fairchild, California Territory, 1849*. New York: Scholastic Inc. (Dear America Series), 2001. (A diary account of 14 year old Susanna and her life with her father in the gold fields in 1849.)
- Hatch, Lynda. *Pathways of America: The California Gold Rush Trail*. Carthage, Ill.: Good Apple, 1994. (A great teacher resource filled with activities to use in the study of the gold rush.)
- Krensky, Stephen. *Striking it Rich: The Story of the California Gold Rush*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996. (Good for younger readers, grades 3 and up. Filled with good information on the gold rush, illustrations and maps.)
- Schanzer, Rosalyn. *Gold Fever! Tales from the California Gold Rush*. Washington, D. C.: National Geographic Society, 1999. (This is a beautifully illustrated book made up of quotes from people who actually lived through the gold rush - including Jenny Megquier upon whom our Jenny's character is based. Especially good for younger readers, but would be wonderful to use with older students as well.)
- Schroeder, Lisa Golden. *Exploring History Through Simple Recipes: California Gold Rush Cooking*. Mankato, Minnesota: Blue Earth Books, 2001. (This one is filled with historical facts and wonderful pictures as well as fascinating recipes and their origins.)
- Roop, Connie and Peter, editors. *The Diary of David R. Leeper: Rushing for Gold*. New York: Benchmark Books/Marshall Cavendish Corp. (In My Own Words Series), 2001. (Diary of a young prospector who travels the "Overland Trail" to the gold fields and spends 5 years searching for gold.)
- Yep, Laurence. *The Journal of Wong Ming-Chung: A Chinese Miner*. New York: Scholastic Inc. (My Name Is America Series), 2000. (The record of a young boy from China who travels to California to join his uncle in the gold fields.)

FOR STUDYING THE COLORADO GOLD RUSH:

- Baker, Roger. *Clara: an ex-slave in gold rush Colorado*. Central City, Colorado: Black Hawk Publishing, 2003. (Biography of a well-known figure from the Colorado gold rush. There is a stained glass window in the state capitol of "Aunt" Clara Brown. This book is loaded with facts about "Aunt" Clara's life and times. Written for adults.)
- Beard, Carrie Hunt. *Colorado Gold Rush Days: Memories of a Childhood in the Eighties and Nineties*. New York: Exposition Press, 1964. (Autobiography of someone who actually traveled west in a covered wagon and lived during the Colorado gold rush.)
- Brown, Robert L. *The Great Pikes Peak Gold Rush*. Caldwell, Idaho: The Caxton Printers, Limited, 1985.
- Simon, Channon. *Molly Brown: Sharing Her Good Fortune*. New York: Children's Press, 2000. (Filled with many pictures and facts about Molly Brown and the life she led.)
- Voynick, Stephen M. *Colorado Gold: From the Pike's Peak Rush to the Present*. Missoula: Mountain Press Publishing Company, 1992.

MULTIMEDIA MATERIALS:

- The Rush for Gold Treasure Box Program*. This is a wonderful hands-on collection of artifacts that will bring the gold rush to life for students. Kit sells for \$268.00 + \$26.00 shipping, and comes with the artifacts plus teacher's guide and student pages. More information and sample lessons are available on the company's website at: juniperlearning.com