



## **Gold Rush Program – Teacher Packet** ***Placer County Museums, 2013***

**The Program:** A 1.5 to two hour interactive program targeting fourth grade state curriculum standards 4.4.1, 4.3.3, using museum exhibits and primary resource material from the Placer County Archives.

**Where:** Gold Country Museum  
1273 High Street Auburn CA, 95603

**Fee:** \$5.00 per student (includes gold and vial for student to keep)  
Payment is due two weeks prior to field trip date.

**Capacity:** Approximately 30 students

**Available:** January and February, 9:30-11:00 a.m.

**To schedule a fieldtrip:** Contact Staci Cox, Curator of Education, 530-889-6506

**Suggested:** 1-2 parent chaperones

### **Program Overview:**

Students will be greeted by museum staff and docents and welcomed to the Gold Country Museum. A brief discussion between docents and students will reveal the history of the California Gold Rush. Students will be asked to act as historians and use everything they see, read or hear during their visit at the museum as evidence to support their ideas on **how the Gold Rush changed California.**

Students will be divided into three groups and rotated through three stations. Color coded tags will be provided for each student with a historic Placer County resident's name on it. At the end of the program each student will get a biography to take home on "their character" including information on how they traveled to California, what route they took and what jobs they held. All biographies are true accounts of historic Placer County residents.

Students will rotate through three stations. Activities at each station are 35 minutes in length. After all activities are completed, students will meet back at the staging area and discuss the **effects the Gold Rush had on California.** Students will be asked to use what they saw, heard or read as evidence to back up their ideas.

## Activities:

### **Environmental Change Mural Station**

**Standard 4.3.3: Analyze the effects of the Gold Rush on settlements, daily life, politics, and the physical environment.**

**Standard 4.3.2: Compare how and why people traveled to California and the routes they traveled.**

At this station, students will examine a mural depicting Placer County prior to the Gold Rush. Students will remove sections of the mural and read aloud biographies about Placer County residents who lived during the Gold Rush. All biographies share common themes: how gold lured the person to California, what route they took to get to California, what profession they ended up with and what impact the profession had upon the land. The students ultimately unveil a mural depicting how the Gold Rush affected the physical landscape of California.

**Students will leave this station having seen images of Placer County before and after the Gold Rush. They will also have met historic figures whose professions changed the landscape of California.**

**A map of the world will help students understand where the historic figures came from originally and what route they took to reach California.**

## **Mystery Trunk Station**

**Standard 4.3.3: Analyze the effects of the Gold Rush on settlements, daily life, politics, and the physical environment.**

**Standard 4.3.2: Compare how and why people traveled to California and the routes they traveled.**

At this station, a large map is used to introduce students to the three basic routes that led gold seekers to California during the Gold Rush. The three routes emphasized are: the Overland Trail, the Isthmus of Panama, and Cape Horn. After a discussion about the hardships and benefits of each route, students will be divided into three groups and introduced to a *Mystery Trunk*. Students examine the contents of the trunk and use them to determine which route the owner of the trunk took to get to California. Each group will share aloud which clues helped them determine the route the trunk owner took.

Next, students will work together as a large group to determine who owned a new Mystery Trunk. Each student will receive an object from the trunk and will listen to the clues read by the docent. Together, the students will discover that the owner of the trunk is Claude Chana the man who discovered gold in Auburn! The clues will also tell the story of the environmental devastation caused by **Hydraulic Mining**. As students leave this station they will see an original **Batea**, and a **Hydraulic Monitor**.

**At this station, students will become familiar with basic routes taken to California during the Gold Rush. They will also become familiar with various methods of gold mining and how these methods impacted the environment of California.**

## **Rock Sorting/Gold Panning Station**

**Standard 4.4.1: How to differentiate among igneous, sedimentary, and metamorphic rocks by their properties and methods of formation (the rock cycle).**

As students arrive at the Rock Sorting Station, a docent will introduce students to the concept of the rock cycle and the three basic types of rocks: Sedimentary, Igneous, and Metamorphic. A diagram of the rock cycle is illustrated on an interactive floor mat. The group will use the diagram to talk about the three types of rock, how they are formed and what their characteristics are. They will discuss why miners needed to know basic **geology** in order to find gold.

Next, students will each get a rock biography card to help them identify a rock from the mixed pile of rocks in the center of the mat. They will each place their rock in the proper category on the **rock cycle** floor mat. The docent will discuss the placement of each student's rock and ask which category of rock would likely contain gold.

**Students will tour the hard rock mine and see a stamp mill in action.**

*At this point, students will swap stations with the gold miners. Gold mining and rock sorting are one station divided into two activities. Each activity is about 17 minutes in length.*

## **Gold Panning Station**

The students will learn how to pan for gold in our stream. Docents facilitate a discussion about **erosion** (how gold ends up in rivers and streams), and the importance of knowing the characteristics of gold in order to pan for **Placer Gold**.

After all students find their gold, docents will explain the rapid changes in gold mining methods from **gold pans, rocker boxes & long toms**, to **hydraulic mining**, and **dredging**.

Students leave this station with experience panning for gold and an introduction to the rock cycle.