Lesson: Baltimoreans in the California Gold Rush

Objective
Students will learn economic and social reasons for migrating to California during the gold rush and will use map skills to plot steam routes between Baltimore and San Francisco.

Grade Levels
Grade 8

Maryland State Curriculum Standards
Grade 8
5.B.3.a. Explain the political, economic, and social factors that motivated people to move west.
5.B.4.a. Analyze the consequences of the rapid settlement of California and Oregon.
6.F.1. Interpret information from primary and secondary sources.

Estimated Time
Two one hour sessions

Advanced Preparation
Make copies of documents and worksheets
Make copies of map game
Make overhead of "Reasons to Go and Obstacles and Costs" worksheet
Collect colored pencils

New Terms
"the line": the equator
Cape Horn: the area at the southern tip of South America known for its brutal weather
trades: trade winds : a wind blowing almost constantly in one direction; especially : a wind blowing almost continually toward the equator from the northeast in the region to 30° north of the equator and from the southeast in the region to 30° south of the equator

Historical Background
In December 1848, President James K. Polk announced to Congress that gold had been discovered in California. The discovery, along with the new territorial acquisitions of the Mexican-American War, and American belief in "Manifest Destiny," encouraged migration to the territory of California. While some travelers chose an overland route to the western territories, future settlers from the Eastern seaboard were equally or more likely to take a sea route. Historians suggest several reasons for choosing a sea route: Easterners were familiar with such travel and the resources were readily available; the
December announcement of the discovery of gold meant that an overland route could not be attempted until spring, where a sea route would be open year round; and a sea voyage would allow passengers to take more items with them for use or for sale on arrival. The disadvantage of such a journey, however, was that some settlers found themselves physically unprepared for the harsh environment in California after their long time at sea, and those that stopped in Panama might come down with fevers or other tropical diseases.

According to one estimate, in 1849, 15,597 passengers came to San Francisco by Cape Horn, while 6,489 passengers came by Panama. Settlers either stayed on a single ship, which rounded Cape Horn and stopped for fuel and water in Rio de Janeiro and Callao, Peru, among others, or traveled by steamer to Panama then crossed the isthmus of Panama by canoe, on foot, or by mule and waited for a second steamer (either one that had rounded Cape Horn or that sailed between California and Panama) to take them on the final leg of their journey. Ships' routes often jutted far into the Pacific in order to find favorable winds to take the ship into San Francisco. The journey from New York to San Francisco by Panama took about six weeks, while the journey by Cape Horn took as many as six months.

A variety of opportunities awaited settlers in California. Some joined joint stock companies, which agreed to go into business together and often bought their vessels to take them to San Francisco. There were also opportunities for shipping and banking to support the burgeoning city. In addition, some settlers saw their migration as temporary, and returned to their homes after a season of mining.

Background on the settlers examined in this lesson:
Louis McLane, Jr. was born January 20, 1819, in Wilmington, Delaware. Following the path of his father he joined the navy and was appointed as a midshipman in 1835. McLane served on several different ships and sailed over a widespread area which included the East Indies, the Mediterranean, Florida—where, in cooperation with the Army, he attempted to quell Indian uprisings—the Pacific, and the West coast including California, Mexico, and Central and South America. In 1847 he was Commander of Artillery of the California Battalion under the command of John C. Fremont, and was appointed by Fremont as one of the commissioners to sign the Articles of Capitulation between U.S. and Mexican forces in California. He resigned from the Navy on January 20, 1850 after attaining the rank of Lieutenant.

While in California McLane became intrigued with steamship travel so with the help of his father-in-law, Samuel Hoffman, had two steamships built which plied California waters. In 1855 McLane became an agent for the Wells Fargo Express Company and also for the Pioneer Stage Company, and he eventually became President of Wells Fargo and of the Nevada Bank of San Francisco. Around 1880 McLane returned to Baltimore and was chosen President of the Mercantile Trust Company. He died in 1905.

Less is known about William Hull, who was born in Baltimore, was a Quaker, and immigrated to California in 1849.
Motivation
Divide students into five groups. Explain to the students that they will be learning about two men who traveled to California during the gold rush. To help students envision the conditions of the journey, have them draft a list of items they think they would need to survive on the frontier and in the gold mines. When they have completed the list, have them look at the inventory of items William Hull took with him on his journey. Ask them to compare their list with Hull's. Ask the students to name two or three items that Hull decided to bring that they think are very important and two or three things they think are not very important, and explain their answers.

Procedure
Why Did People Migrate to California?
1. Explain to the students that they will consider the reasons people went to California in 1849 and 1850, the opportunities they found when they got there, and what they had to give up in order to emigrate.

2. Provide students with the worksheet “Reasons to Go and Obstacles and Costs.” Place a blank copy of the “Reasons to Go and Obstacles and Costs” on the overhead projector. Review the focus questions.

3. Explain that they will read sections of letters from a man named Louis McLane, a Baltimorean who traveled by ship from New York to California in 1850, to learn about opportunities and obstacles faced by migrants. Read page 1 together and discuss the opportunities and reasons to go to California included in the letter. Have students record the answer on their worksheet.

4. Keep students in their five groups and provide each group with one of the letters.

5. Have students read the document and fill in the chart with the opportunities and obstacles they find in their letter. Ask students to share their answers with the group and review.

6. Ask the students to look at their lists and consider which of the advantages are economic advantages. Ask: What are the social advantages? What are the economic costs? What are the social costs?
How did Settlers Get There?
1. Ask the students to reexamine the letters from Louis McLane. Ask them where he was when he was writing (see the top right corner of the page). Students should respond: at sea, in Panama, and in San Francisco.

2. Explain that, while we often think about settlers who traveled across the country by land, many people, especially those from port cities on the East coast, like Baltimore, traveled by steamship around the Americas or to Central America, then went overland across Panama and caught another steamship to California (be sure the students realize that there was no Panama Canal at this point, and that those who traveled through Panama did so overland and by canoe through rivers to the other side of the isthmus).

3. Explain that they will now track the route of one such settler from Baltimore.

4. Distribute the diary with transcription and a map of the Americas. Teachers may use existing classroom maps or the following suggested source (will require labeling Baltimore; Callao, Peru; Rio de Janeiro; the Rio de la Plata; the Falkland Islands; and San Francisco, California): http://www.eduplace.com/ss/maps/pdf/americas.pdf. Students may also plot the points on Google Earth. Distribute the worksheet and review directions on the worksheet.

5. Explain that there are clues in the diary to Hull’s route. Tell the students to read the diary and plot the points along the route as they go. Also explain that they should read his journal carefully, because they have additional questions to answer about conditions on his trip on the worksheet. Explain to them that these answers will be important for their final activity.

6. Allow students time to plot the points and complete the worksheet. When students have plotted the route, share with them the background information on the estimates of passengers who chose this route. Ask them what the advantages and disadvantages of a completely overland route, a journey through Panama, or a complete sea route might have been.

Closure/Assessment
Explain to the students that they will now create a board game of the route from Baltimore. Advise the students to create stops on the board game that fit with the experiences of Louis McLane and William Hull. Provide the “Making a Map Game” worksheet to students to guide their work.

Have pairs exchange maps and play each other’s games.

Extension Activities
Analyze the poem in William Hull’s diary, focusing on stanzas 2-3. How does he feel about his experience? Create a poem in any style from the perspective of a settler.
Make an advertisement for travel to California, including the advantages and opportunities there.

Have students consider the amount earned by laborers, mechanics, and clerks and the cost of rent for tents and boarding houses. How long would each have to work in order to make one month's rent?

Have students illustrate the scene that William Hull described when he arrived.
**Bedding**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Matras</td>
<td>1.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 pr Blankets</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Quilted Comfort</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Pillow &amp; cushion</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 pr sheets &amp; 3 Pillow Cases</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Morning wrapper</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Trunk 2nd Size**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Box Cigars</td>
<td>J Wilson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 &quot; do my own</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Pot Pickles</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 &quot; Parserve—????</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 &quot; &quot; Quinces</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 &quot; &quot; Cherries</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Bottle Vinegar, 1 Vial Cholera Preventative</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 vial Liniment &amp; 1 vial Lobelia</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cakes..</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Trunk                                     | 2.00   |
|                                           | 12.50  |
William Hull's Inventory of Trunks  
MS 2135, Maryland Historical Society

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 Red Flannel Shirts</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Striped net Shirt</td>
<td>3.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Check Shirts</td>
<td>1.25 (Sold)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Calico d°</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 pr heavy drawers Twill</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 pr Second hand d°</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 pr Drawer muslin</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Silk handkerchief</td>
<td>3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 linen d° white</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Cotton d° col°</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garden Seeds 1 Bundle</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Red Flannel Shirts</td>
<td>2.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watch</td>
<td>20.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 pair scissors</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Jack Knife</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shaving apparatus</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Box 3 teaspoons 2 pr suspenders 62</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Pocket Looking Glasses</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Portfolio Paper &amp; inkstand</td>
<td>1.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pin Needles Cotton Thread &amp; Buttons</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1100 Percussion caps &amp; powder flask</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trinkets &amp; 3 Gold Breast pins &amp; 1 Gold heart</td>
<td>5.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash in Silver &amp; Belt</td>
<td>22.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Gold Pens 2 Pin Cushions, tweezers &amp; Lancets</td>
<td>4.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Bead Money Purse</td>
<td>3.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 4 Blade Pen Knives, lots Fishing lines &amp; Hooks</td>
<td>2.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 pr Pants Striped 200 pr stockings</td>
<td>4.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 magnifying glass 1 white vest 50</td>
<td>4.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 pair Boots &amp; Hat</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Blk Coat &amp; Pants</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 pea Jacket &amp; Tarpolin Hat</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullets</td>
<td>.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 124.87
William Hull’s Inventory of Trunks  
MS 2135, Maryland Historical Society

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bbl No 1</td>
<td>85.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BU—No 2</td>
<td>28.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine Chest</td>
<td>14.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dives &amp; Contents</td>
<td>15.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box</td>
<td>11.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trunk large</td>
<td>124.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do 2\textsuperscript{nd} size</td>
<td>12.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bedding</td>
<td>13.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gun &amp; Pistol</td>
<td>18.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drag Shovel</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[325.07\]

1/3 share in tools Provisions & tent

\[37.00\]
Read the sections from Louis McLane's letters.
As you read, list as many answers as possible to the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities/Reasons to Go to California</th>
<th>Obstacles and Costs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What reasons did people have to move to California? What opportunities existed there or on the route?</td>
<td>What did people give up to go to California? What obstacles did people face on their journey or on their arrival?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Read the sections from Louis McLane’s letters.
As you read, list as many answers as possible to the following:

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<th>Obstacles and Costs</th>
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<td>What did people give up to go to California? What obstacles did people face on their journey or on their arrival?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gold! Settlers may stay and pan for gold or return home in the off season.</td>
<td>Give up good farms and businesses if settlers decide to stay; not everyone prospers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jobs in shipping, banking &amp; exchange</td>
<td>Bad water and food; rough life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Join family already settled there</td>
<td>Give up family and friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women can run boarding houses, servants can become financially independent</td>
<td>Upper classes can’t find servants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
manny on board have been to California
returned to the U. States, invested their earnings and
are now returning for the same reason, intending to
return again to the U. S. next winter & back to California
in the spring of 1851— they agree that we have the
right kind of boat to go full every trip— should it
prove so, we will have at least 6 returnings by this
though time next year. Romneys don’t anticipate— but
they learned enough to know that so long as
the gold is found in California so long will there
be a regular flow of gold seekers and as
long as they wish it will be the owners of 20 to 30
Corning receive a large return for their investment.
These are 5 ladies pass aboard going out to join their
husbands.
My Dearest Wife

...many on board have been to California, returned to the U. States, invested their earnings and are now returning for the dry season, intending to return again to the U.S. next winter and back to California in the spring of 1851. They agree that we have the right kind of boat to go full every trip—should it prove so we will have at least 3 running by this time next year. However I won’t anticipate though I have learned enough to know that so long as gold is found in California, so long will there be a regular ebb and flow of gold seekers and so long (if they wish it) will the owners of the Erastus Corning receive a large return for their investments. There are 5 lady passengers aboard going out to join their husbands.
Panama, February 28th 1850

Dearest Sophy

...half way we passed the summit level—two western men have pitched a tent there and served dinner...ham, coffee, bread & fried plantains—at $1 a head. They told me they were making money faster than they could dig it in California.

...It was a great relief to get out of Panama. Not then 90° to 94° in the shade, dirty & streets overcrowded with a very rough American emigration....

The emigration requires to be seen to be appreciated for under all their rough hew you constantly find intelligence & good feeling. The great many have left home without any very definite purpose, except that gold is plenty in California & that it can be had by washing sand in a tin basin. These are in high spirits while the road is smooth, but are easily discouraged. Some have turned back from here, some few have left fine farms or business and go to dig during the dry season & return next fall, nothing discourages these...have an abiding confidence in their own ability. We are the only well organized company, with a definite purpose in view. I have met companys formed for digging gold & mutual protection but they all separate—they that came out in the “Empire City” broke up in Gorgona, finding they could move quicker singly. Our people have observed this and only cling the closer together—they have confidence in each other & even if some should on our arrival in California be tempted to leave, those of us who hold together will be so much the stronger & receive a large share.
April 1st, 1857
Steamship "California"
At Sea, Sunday, March 3rd.

My Dearest Sophia,

We have had bad news. The doctor thinks it is the cause of my indisposition as it has affected many others in the same way. I am well today and fortunately am no great worry.

I ask myself, isn't the question whether after all it is worth the struggle of life to pay the price of mental and physical labor one day or for a time? I think it is not, but then again, I look ahead to the future.

Home used to be where Mama was, now it is where you are. Perhaps when you are with me in California, I shall not be so anxious to return to the United States, and yet Sophia, I may regret to leave when transplanting one to tenderly brighten up to the world around life as we must necessarily lead out there and be expected. And I will talk on my return to you in the summer.
My Dearest Sophy

...the water is bad which the Doctor thinks is the cause of my indigestion as it has effected many others in the same way. I feel well today and fortunately am no great water bibber...

...I ask myself very often the question whether after all this world’s ...is worth the time & health & mental & physical labor one lays out for it & sometimes I think it is not but then again I look steady to the future...

...home used to be where Mama was, now it is where you are. Perhaps when you are with me in California I shall not be anxious to return to the United States, and yet Sophy, I may hesitate about transplanting one so tenderly brought up to so rough a life as we must necessarily lead out here and separating you from friends & family—but of this we will talk on my return to you next summer.
July 29, 1850

Mr. F. C. L. Baltimore, May 9th, 1850.

Dear Mr. Lover

The State of California. It is a fact that the streets of San Francisco are at present a feature of the city. It is difficult to believe that so much could be done in so short a time, and yet the cause of all this is evident - the Golden Country. While the excitement it has caused is not likely to last, the accounts thus far indicate that the prospect is bright. The City and Country must grow beyond any ordinary calculation.

At present, the most profitable investments are land speculations and steamboating. The latter, no matter how small or slow, is for themselves in from 50 to 60 days.

There are few other ideas, but gold. Men, women, and children. It is a City of men - of men who hang out the motto, every one for himself.

This City must be a great deal before the Locomotive can arrive. There are no women servants here as a whole. Women are rare. Keep a boarding house, board $20 per week - lodging to boarder, furnished room, 10x8, $50 per month, all payable in advance.

The great mass rent a room at from $30 to $60 per month, a board out or from $17 to 25 per month, and all in the most uncomfortable manner.

I can't describe to you how the men ride I met at times and yet you must not think I am disappointed. To the contrary, I know I shall remember.
Dearest Sophy

...now I feel that I have left my future behind—in fact my heart & what I trust is & will be my happiness—certainly I am a changed man & I hope for the better (by the by you will recollect I always told you that we either become better or worse as we [grow] older) & that we are destined to pass many happy years together. To enable us to do so I must work & hard too for you.

...a more bustling crowd than the streets of San Francisco—one is absent a month or so & on his return finds it difficult to believe so much could be done in so short a time—and yet the cause of all this is evident—the gold mines & while they continue to yield their golden harvest (& from the best accounts they are inexhaustible) this city and county must grow beyond any ordinary calculation.

...at present the two most profitable investments are Banking & exchange and steamboating—the latter no matter how small or slow pay for themselves in from 50 to 60 days.

...men appear to have no other ideas but gold. You miss women & children, it is a city of men & of men who hang out the motto, every one for himself.

...This city must change a great deal before a Lady could reside in it—there are no women servants at all—as a white woman here can keep a boarding house. Board $20 per week & lodging...furnished room 10x8 $50 to $60 per month all payable in advance. ...the great mass rent a room from $30 to $100 per month & board out as from $17 to 25 per month, and all in the most uncomfortable manner.

...I can’t describe to you how home sick I get at times and yet you must not think I am disappointed on the contrary I know I shall succeed.
On this very day, I was informed that a gentleman whom I had previously met in this city, had been found dead in his room. The cause of his death was suicide, as I was told by those who were present. It is a sad event for this city, and it serves as a reminder of the importance of mental health and support for those in distress.

The city is feeling the effects of the recent economic downturn, as many businesses are struggling to survive. The high cost of living here has forced many families to leave, or to reduce their expenses. This has led to a decrease in the population, and a corresponding decrease in the number of businesses and services available. It is a difficult time for all, and we must continue to support one another in order to overcome these challenges.

The mayor has announced plans to increase spending on social services, in an effort to help those who are most in need. This is a positive step, but it will be difficult to implement given the current budget constraints. We must all work together to ensure that those who are struggling are not left behind.

I hope that this message finds you well and that you are able to find solace in these difficult times.
Dearest Sophy

Saturday 23rd

I heard from them that Frank Ward committed suicide the other day—poor fellow. That he should have died such a death—away from home & friends. When I knew him he had a bright & cheerful temperament [&] humor, a great liar you know. Says pecuniary troubles were the cause.

This morning he told me that several gentlemen whose wives had accompanied them out here, had been obliged to return home, on account of the great expense of living. This becoming more moderate, many families will come out this fall or next spring, but the difficult of keeping servants will always exist. They can make an independence in a short time. Thus their heads get turned & they won’t work.
there is very little sickness here and very few doctors & lawyers in office. just imagine if 15 or 20,000 men were to found a city on the Atlantic Seaboard, what is it with all the conveniences of civilization & wealth, and yet there, with no drainage of any description, a mind flab of several acres along the whole front, 60 or 80 houses of the class above, and 100 living an irregular camp life, there are not 50 cases in the mines there is a great deal of sickness.

the benefits of

vegetable food having been taken, this year there is less sickness than last, because men take more care of themselves
San Francisco April 22nd 1850

Dearest Sophy

...there is very little sickness here and very few Doctors & Lawyers suffice. Just imagine if 15 or 20,000 men were to found a city within a year on the Atlantic seaboard what their condition would be. What is it with all the conveniences of civilization & wealth, and yet here, with no drainage of any description, a mud flat of several cares along the whole front, during 6 or 8 hours of the day and 9-10 living an irregular camp life. There are not 50 sick. In the mines there is a great deal of sickness.

...the scarcity of vegetables produces scurvy, this year there is less sickness than last, because men take more care of themselves.
Wednesday, January 25th 1849 we left Baltimore on board of the ship Jane Parker (Captain Gordon) bound for San Francisco California....

...the commencement of our voyage was destined to be marked by a melancholy event for the Pilot had scarce got out of sight before the cry went round, a man overboard.

4

After the delay of a few days from the usual calms we crossed the line and struck the South East Trades...awoke the next morning laying off of the mouth of the Harbour of Rio de Janairo the Capitol of Brazil waiting for the sea breeze to carry us in, at 10 o’clock it sprang up, and at the attempt we entered, and dropt anchor in the Harbour about 2 o’clock the 11th March 1849.

7

...the wind still continued to be quite strong being the S.E. Trades which we had till we neared the River Laplata when we lost it. Soon as we arrived opposite the La Plata we had a pretty severe squall before which we ran under close reefed topsails...

...We now began to see the other side of the picture our sailing heretofore being fine now we would go on deck many mornings to wash when we would have to hold on with one hand and wash with the other our ship was a very dry one but we were often subject to complete ducking.

8

After laying too and beating before head winds for six days we passed the Falkland Islands between them & the mainland (but were unable to see either) on or about the ninth of April, the next day we seen six or eight black fish a species of whale pass us about fifty yards from the Ship.
The next morning the wind was very light and continued so till noon when it left us. While we were laying thus calmly on the ocean when we expected blows and storms many of the passengers remarked that the Cape Horn tales were all humbugs but they soon found they were crying before they were round the Horn (out of the woods) for about four o’clock seen a very ugly looking squall coming from the west the Captain had all hands takeing in sail

and reefing Topsails which was hardly done before it came and with it hale that soon drove all hands to seek shelter we attempted to run south which we done for a while but soon had to lay to. I had often heard the wind blow but never like it blew then. It continued thus for thirty six hours during which we lost some fifty miles leeway. The sea was very high looking like it would engulf us every moment, the ship rolled and tossed trunks, chests...broke loose from the cleets that was put down to keep them in their places, and rolled about the cabin to the great danger of our shins. Our meals we had to hold on to with one hand while we held ourselves with the other. But after a storm there is a calm as the saying is. After this was over we had a fair wind and were heading south west which course we kept till we passed the cape which we done on the 13th or rather we were south of it then our course being south which the Capt. Continued till we were as far as 59°.

This was our farewell storm of Cape Horn the wind was favourable and lasted till we passed the Magellan Straits (near which we were when the storm commenced) where we were to expect more favourable winds. Our expectations were not disappointed the wind was now more favourable and lasted us with some few Headwinds of short duration till we made the Island of Guam Fernandes which we had a pretty good view of as the wind had got round to the head and kept us beating about all day. This was the 11th of May.

May 24th The tall towering Tops of the Andes hove in sight and continued to be seen as we headed along the cost N.E. for Callas which we entered on the 24th....The next day the Wind sprang up and we passed the Island about 2 o’clock and came in full view of the
town and harbour of Callas. The view here was not equal in grandeur to that of the Harbour of Rio but it was beautiful.

Having seen all that was desireable to be seen in Callas I started the next day Saturday for the great city of Lima where I intended to spend the Sunday. Lima is about seven miles from Callas which distance I went in a omnibus that held sixteen Persons.

Friday June 1st Having seen all that the shortness of our visit would allow in this land of Earthquakes and Revolutions of which latter they expected one to break out every night. But a few evenings before we arrived they were very much alarmed in Callas thinking an outbreak had occurred but it turned out to be a party of Robbers who had come in from the mountains, in the fight that took place between them and the soldiers the captain of the latter was shot dead.

...we crossed the line...

Sunday July 1st Still no change in the wind we are in Lattitude 21°40 and Longitude 133°00 the breeze is not so stiff as it has been. Spirits very low.

We cannot get the Longitude, but we suppose we are about 138°00 Longitude our Latitude is 33°15. While rolling about here on old Pacific after an absence of five and a half months from Home, and Friends, in whose recollection I pass many pleasant hours, it has often appeared to me while tossing on the Sea, as a dream, from which I should awake and find myself again in old Baltimore.

FOR FINAL ENTRIES, SEE PRIMARY SOURCE #26a
Primary Source #26a (Document)


What? Portions from a handwritten diary
Who? William S. Hull
When? July 21, 1849
Where? Journey to California by sea
Why? To participate in the Californian gold rush

Description of the Source

This diary relates William Hull’s journey to California, including his sea voyage to California. A supporter of westward expansion, Hull joined the tens of thousands of hopefuls traveling to the Midwest and on to California in search of gold, in the Western "Gold Rush" of the mid-1800s. The gold rush spurred exploration into the Western and Alaskan territories, and promoted the growth of new towns. Interestingly, most of the travelers seeking their fortunes were not poor laborers, but rather middle-class tradesmen and farmers who could afford the time and means to travel westward.

For More Information on Topics Explored by this Source, See


Research Topics

What role did the federal government play in the westward movement?

Compare and contrast the goals of those moving west with the realities of what they encountered.

Investigate the role of women, Chinese Americans, Irish Americans, and African Americans in the movement west.

How did the population boom in California in the late 1850s affect the issue of the spread of slavery?

Investigate the Compromise of 1850.

Apply the theory of supply and demand to San Francisco during the Gold Rush.

How was American history affected politically, economically, and socially by this topic?
July 21st Saturday. This is the coldest morning we have had since Old Cape Horn has been passed the Mercury to day is at 50, although we are so near land.

We have been tacking in and out from Land since twelve o’clock last night, about four o’clock this morning the Capt put about the ship in a hurry, the wind being very strong, the ship made more than the Capt expected and he found himself running into the breakers over which the surf was breaking at a great rate, having got north of the three Rocks that are near the mouth of the Harbour, he mistook the very much like them and especially in the fog and mist, near which he was steering his course.

We have seen several strange-looking Birds flying about, and some Ducks, and several very large Whales this morning.

Having passed the Three Rocks whose heads rise out of the Water to the distance of some 40 or 50 feet above its surface we had a good view of its bleak barren surface Land is now in sight the long looked for California is before us, towards which we are going at the rate of seven miles the Hour, The Land as we approach appears pretty high, but not near as high as the South American Cast, but the hills have not the barren appearance of the latter, as we approached the Golden gate we soon heard the number of Ducks on the Water.

After entering the Golden Gate, it is impossible, to describe the effect on all Hands, we were assembled on deck to witness the far western land of our Country, our new home. Just off the Harbour we were hailed by a Pilot who only asked $10 for the foot to take us in making $150.00 for two hours work he of course declined.

Soon as we got within the harbour we beheld the confirmation of all the Gold stories that had lured us from our Homes, before we got in sight of St. Francisco, Every little Cove had from one to Eight large vessels anchored in it, who appeared to be
totally deserted by their crews, with the exception of one or two who had the American flag flying from their gaffs, the only indication of having any one on board. When we got in some four or five miles the town of St. Francisco was indicated by the immense number of vessels lying at anchor, large and small, mostly the former, before a little Indian village for it is not much more, there being some few frame houses, and a great number of tents, which latter are scattered about for some distance along the coast. It was about 3 O’Clock P.M. when we dropped anchor, and thus terminated our voyage, but not our difficulties and hardships.

Friday July 27th. I will again attempt to pen a little of my experiences traveling, the day after we anchored, Sunday I went ashore to see the great town of San Francisco. I found the inhabitants paying more general observance of the Sabbath than I expected. Store’s were mostly shut up, but the gambling shops are all open, and doing a big business. They were situated in the most public places and as you passed them you could look in and see the different crowds around the tables, several of which would be in each tent, and hear the sound of gold and silver clinking upon the table.

Tents composed the greater part of the town, for which you had to pay exorbitant rents, the principal hotel a large two story frame building devoted to gambling from one end to the other, made as much as fifteen dollars a day by small jobs, clerks get from five to ten dollars a day are found. If you go to purchase any thing they ask to exorbitant prices they

for one hundred and thirty five thousand dollars a year, a small lot on which a tent 15 x 9 feet stands has a ground rent of twenty five dollars a month. Labour commands a high price. Mechanics get from ten to eighteen dollars a day. Labourers one dollar the hour all the time and some make as much as fifteen dollars a day by small jobs, clerks get from five to ten dollars a day are found. If you go to purchase any thing they ask to exorbitant prices they
speak of ounces here, as we do at home of Dollars, but should you try to see anything it is impossible to get anything for it, owing to the market being over stocked with goods of all kinds thrown in to the market by those going to the Mines. It beats all I have even beheld, it is the reality of romance, all the Fairy tales that I have read fall short of the Realities that are passing around me men of all ages, and all countries seem to be here assembled together, the most graphic pen, that ever soiled paper could not portray it truly.

Note: The spelling, capitalization, and punctuation are Hull's.
William Hull left Baltimore in 1849 in search of gold in California, and recorded his location and some of the hardships he experienced along the way.

In his diary he left clues to the route of his journey. As you read his diary, look for the names of cities, islands, rivers, and latitude and longitude to point you to his route!

Use the map provided to plot the locations Hull mentions in his diary, then draw the route.

As you plot William Hull’s route, answer the following:

What happened to one of the passengers early in the trip?

Where does William Hull find the worst weather on the trip?

What dangers does he face in Peru?

How did he feel about leaving home?

How many months did it take to travel by ship from Baltimore to San Francisco?

How much did a tent cost in San Francisco?

Record the wages of:  a mechanic per  
a laborer per  
a clerk per
Making Your Map Game

Mission:
Create a game based on the experiences of settlers journeying to California by steamer.

Guidelines:
- Add at least five stops to your map, using the experiences of California-bound settlers.
- At some point in the game (beginning or end), each player must choose a profession to pursue on arriving in California.
- Make the game fun!

Suggestions:
You may use any game element you would like, including adding event cards (like Community Chest in Monopoly), money to be gained or lost along the way, and any stops that seem appropriate including squalls, refueling stops, spotting of whales, loss of passengers or baggage, etc.