

# The 1840s

Volume 1

A Journey Through Time Special Edition

## The Far West

In the Far West there is a territory called California. Have you heard of it? It stretches along the West Coast of North America and is part of Mexico. Hardly anyone lives there. That is why it is called a frontier. If you do go by ship or overland in a wagon, it can take up to six months traveling from Boston. When you arrive in the town of Los Angeles, all you see is desert. In fact the Mexican government has to give land away to get people to live there.

## Los Angeles Biggest Town

The biggest town in southern California is *El Pueblo de Nuestra Señora la Reina de los Angeles*, but most people call it *Los Angeles* for short. It has a population of 2,000 people. Most people who live there are Gabrielino Indians or Mexicans. They live in adobe houses. Imagine that!—living in a house made out of mud and straw.

## Meet Early Pioneers

If you go to Los Angeles, be sure to visit pioneers William Workman and John Rowland. They came to California in 1841 and received a large land grant called Rancho la Puente. The rancho is almost 49,000 acres. Do you know how big that is?



## All Invited To Fiesta

Yesterday, William Workman announced a rodeo on his rancho. All vaqueros and vaqueras must brand the calves and slaughter the older cattle for their hides and tallow. After the rodeo, Workman plans to have a big fiesta. Everyone is invited. There will be lots of music, dancing, food, and games. At night, Workman will light the Chinese fireworks. No one will want to miss this party.

## Yankee Ship To Arrive

A Yankee trading ship is expected to arrive on the coast this week. All rancheros, who want to barter their hides and tallow, need to meet the ship when it arrives. The ship will be carrying the latest merchandise. Among the products available will be shoes, candles, soap, spices, shawls, chocolate, and Chinese fireworks.



## At War

It seems like Mexico may soon be at war with the United States. The Yankees want all the land between the East and West coasts which includes California. Governor Pio Pico urges all young men to prepare to fight and join the Mexican army. We all wonder how life in California will change if the Yankees win.



## Yankee Ship Arrives!

The *Pilgrim* recently arrived with the latest in merchandise from the United States! Among the goods for sale are:

Steel pens doz at \$1.50  
Candle molds at \$2.00  
Tea at \$2.00  
Shoes at \$2.50  
Cotton shirt at \$2.50  
Macaroni at \$6.00  
Chocolate at \$15.00  
Shawls at \$15.00

## At Stearns Landing

**W** RODEO  
Vaqueros Wanted  
Apply to W. Workman  
Rancho la Puente

**\$1,000! \$1,000!**  
and 1,000 head of cattle offered by Don Pio Pico in a horse race of 300 yards against his *Narco*.

**Blacksmithing of All Types**  
Hardware Ironwork  
Wheels Horseshoeing  
On Wine Street

**☛ GOLD** is rumored to have been found north of Los Angeles in Placerita Cañon. Some people have already gone to investigate.

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# The 1840s Lesson Plan

## Objective:

1. Students will be able to describe life in the Los Angeles region during the 1840s.

**Time:** 30-45 minutes

## Materials:

1. "The 1840s" decade overview.
2. "The 1840s" decade worksheet.

## Directions:

1. Explain to students that they will be studying three important decades that brought about a lot of change to the Los Angeles region, as well as California and the nation. Through the study of these decades students will discover how people's lives have changed over time and how we are still affected by these changes today.

2. To begin the lesson, **review** the definition of "decade" with your students. Mention that each decade in history is often marked by unique events and trends. Have students brainstorm some of the unique events and trends of the current decade (e.g., discoveries, inventions, music, fashion, dance-styles, etc.). Remind students that these changes occur gradually and not automatically on January 1 of a new decade.

3. **Distribute** "The 1840s" decade overview and worksheet.

4. Share the background information to **introduce** the 1840s to the students. Once completed, have students **read** "The 1840s" decade overview individually, in pairs, groups, or as a class. Have students pay particular attention to the vocabulary words, which are in bold.

5. When finished have students **complete** the decade worksheet using the information found in the decade overview sheet.

**Background information:** The Los Angeles region looked very different during the decade of the 1840s than it does today. Can you imagine looking out from your adobe house and seeing nothing but wide-open spaces and cows? People lived without electricity or running water and you didn't have any neighbors that lived close by. During this decade, California was still part of Mexico and the entire county of Los Angeles had approximately 2,000 residents. A few years before, the Mexican government divided up former mission lands into ranchos and gave them out as land grants (land for free) to encourage more settlement. Most people living on a rancho made their living raising cattle for its hide and tallow. To have fun, people often looked forward to a fiesta, where they could, dance, socialize, and play games.

## Additional activities:

1. **Writing exercise:** Ask students to imagine they are a rancho/ranchera, vaquero/vaquera, or pioneer. Have them write a letter to a friend on the East Coast of the United States describing California in the 1840s.
2. **Role-play:** Have students imagine they are a rancho/ranchera, vaquero/vaquera, or pioneer. Have the students interview one another about their rancho, work, or journey to California.
3. **Research:** Have students compare and contrast what is happening in California to what is happening in the United States in the 1840s.

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Ain't We Got Fun Special Edition

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If you go to Los Angeles, be sure to visit pioneers William Workman and John Rowland. They came to California in 1841 and received their land for free from the Mexican government. This large **land grant**, called Rancho La Puente is almost 49,000 acres.



## All Invited To Fiesta

Yesterday, William Workman announced a **rodeo** or round-up on his rancho. All the vaqueros must brand the calves and slaughter the older cattle for their skins or **hides** and fat or **tallow**. After the rodeo, Workman plans to have a big **fiesta**. Everyone is invited. There will be lots of music, dancing, food, and games. At night, Workman will light the fireworks. No one will want to miss this party.

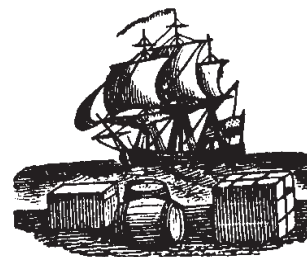
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## Blacksmithing of All Types

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☛ **GOLD** is rumored to have been found north of Los Angeles in Placerita Cañon. Some people have already gone to investigate.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

# The 1840s

The 1840s brought big changes to California. Use the decade overview sheet to find the answers to the following questions.

1. Write the letter of the word on the left with its meaning on the right.

- |               |       |   |
|---------------|-------|---|
| a. Frontier   | _____ | land given by the government for free     |
| b. Adobe      | _____ | a round-up of cattle                      |
| c. Land grant | _____ | the fat from a cow                        |
| d. Rodeo      | _____ | a party                                   |
| e. Hide       | _____ | a building material made of mud and straw |
| f. Tallow     | _____ | an area of open space with few people     |
| g. Fiesta     | _____ | the skin from a cow                       |

2. What two ways could people travel to California in the 1840s?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. California was part of what country in the 1840s? \_\_\_\_\_

4. How many people lived in Los Angeles in the 1840s? \_\_\_\_\_

5. What is the name of the land grant owned by William Workman and John Rowland? \_\_\_\_\_

6. What will happen at the fiesta? \_\_\_\_\_

7. Name three things that will arrive on the Yankee trading ship.

\_\_\_\_\_

8. Name the two countries that went to war in the 1840s.

\_\_\_\_\_

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The 1840s brought big changes to California. Use the decade overview sheet to find the answers to the following questions.

1. Write the letter of the word on the left with it's meaning on the right.

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|---------------|--|
| a. Frontier   | <u>C</u> land given by the government for free     |
| b. Adobe      | <u>D</u> a round-up of cattle                      |
| c. Land grant | <u>F</u> the fat from a cow                        |
| d. Rodeo      | <u>G</u> a party                                   |
| e. Hide       | <u>B</u> a building material made of mud and straw |
| f. Tallow     | <u>A</u> an area of open space with few people     |
| g. Fiesta     | <u>E</u> the skin from a cow                       |

2. What two ways could people travel to California in the 1840s?

By ship and overland

3. California was part of what country in the 1840s? Mexico

4. How many people lived in Los Angeles in the 1840s? 2,000

5. What is the name of the land grant owned by William Workman and John Rowland? Rancho La Puente

6. What will happen at the fiesta? Music, dancing, food, and games

7. Name three things that will arrive on the Yankee trading ship.

Any three of the following: shoes, candles, soap, spices, shawls, chocolate, and fireworks

8. Name the two countries that went to war in the 1840s.

Mexico and the United States

Songs are not only a source of fun and entertainment, they tell stories. Songs from the past can also give us an idea of what it was like to live in another time and place. *Oh, California!* is a song about the past. It tells the story of the experiences and feelings of a person coming to California during the gold rush to find their fortune.

### Oh, California!

The musical score is written in 2/4 time. The lyrics are: "I sailed from Sa - lem Ci - ty with my washbowl on my knee. I'm going to Ca - li - for - ni - a the gold dust for to see. It rained all night the day I left, the wea - ther it was dry. The sun so hot I froze to death, oh brothers don't you cry. Oh Ca - li - fornia, that's the land for me. I'm going to San Fran cis - co with my washbowl on my knee." Chord markings include C, G7, F, and C.

2. I jumped aboard the largest ship and traveled on the sea, and every time I thought of home, I wished it wasn't me! The vessel reared like any horse that had of oats a wealth, I found it wouldn't throw me, so I thought I'd throw myself!

*Chorus*

*Oh, California, that's the land for me,  
I'm bound for San Francisco with my washbowl on my knee.*

3. I thought of all the pleasant times we've had together here, and I thought I ought to cry a bit, but I could not find a tear. The pilot's bread was in my mouth, the gold dust in my eye, and though I'm going far away, dear brother, don't you cry.

*Chorus*

4. I soon shall be in Frisco and there I'll look around, and when I see the golden lumps there, I'll pick them off the ground. I'll scrape the mountains clean, my boys, I'll drain the rivers dry, a pocketful of rocks bring home, so brothers, don't you cry.

*Chorus*

**Background information:** Music is an important link to the past because the lyrics in a popular song often tell a story. The lyrics can inform us about what it was like to live in a certain time or place, or communicate how people felt about a person, place or event. *Oh, California!* is probably one of the most recognized songs of the California gold rush. The song was first written by Stephen Foster in 1847 as *Oh, Susanna!*. While headed for California on a ship, John Nichols changed the words of the song and called it *Oh, California!*. The “forty-niners” of the gold rush enjoyed the rhythm and tune of the song so much that it became one of the most popular songs of America in the 1840s and 1850s.

### Additional activities:

1. **Writing/Performing:** Have students work in groups to write a song that tells the story of an event in California history. Students may write their own melodies or use a favorite tune. Have students perform their song for the class.
2. **Role-play:** While playing *Oh, California!* have students act out the song using props such as a washbowl and gold nuggets.

# Oh, California!

## Lesson Plan

### Objectives:

1. To learn that songs can document history.
2. To relive the experiences and feelings of a gold miner.

**Time:** 20 minutes

### Materials:

1. *Oh, California!* song sheet.
2. Instrumental recording of *Oh, Susanna!*
3. *Oh, California!* activity sheet

### Directions:

1. **Distribute** the “Oh, California!” song sheet.
2. **Review** any information already covered regarding the gold rush, as well as the background information regarding the song.
3. Before singing or listening to the song, have students **read** through the song individually, in pairs, or as a group and define any unfamiliar words or ideas.
4. Once all terms are defined, **discuss** the following: Where is the person in the song coming from? Where is the person in the song going? Why are they coming to California? What is the weather like during the trip? How did they get to California? Was it an easy or difficult trip? Is the person happy to be coming to California? What does the person think will happen once they get to California? Do you think that most gold miners thought that finding gold would be easy?
5. **Play** the song.
6. Now have students **sing** along with the music.
7. Have students complete the *Oh, California!* activity sheet.

Songs are not only a source of fun and entertainment, they tell stories. Songs from the past can also give us an idea of what it was like to live in another time and place. *Oh, California!* is a song about the past. It tells the story of the experiences and feelings of a person coming to California during the gold rush to find their fortune.

## Oh, California!

C G7

I sailed from Sa - lem Ci - ty with my washbowl on my knee. I'm

C G7 C

going to Ca - li - for - ni - a the gold dust for to see. It

G7

rained all night the day I left, the wea - ther it was dry. The

C G7 C F

sun so hot I froze to death, oh brothers don't you cry. Oh Ca - li - fornia,

C G7 C G7 C

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*Chorus*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Oh, California! activity sheet

When you read a book or listen to a story, you often imagine what the setting, characters, and the events that take place look like. The same thing can happen when you read or listen to the words of a song. Complete the following steps to create a picture of what you imagined in your mind when you read and to listened to *Oh! California*.

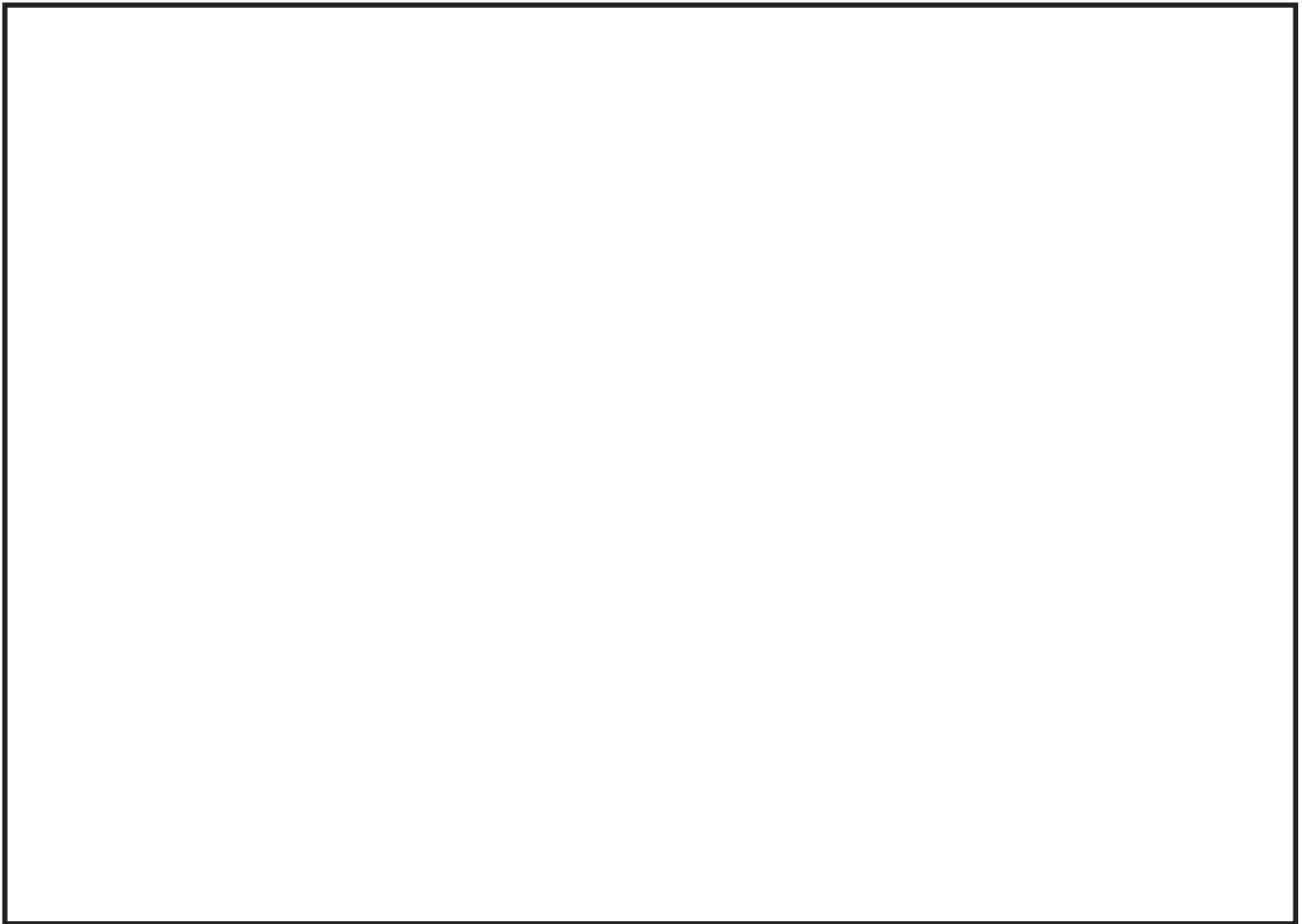
### Directions

Step 1: Choose one sentence from the song that creates a picture in your mind.

Step 2: Write that sentence on the line below.

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Step 3: Draw a picture of what is happening in that sentence in the box below.



Step 4: Explain why you choose that sentence to illustrate on the lines below.

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