

A Rush to the West

Chapter 13, Section 4

The Mormon settlement and the gold rush lead to changes in the West

After the U.S. gained the lands known as the Mexican Cession, **large numbers of Americans began to settle in this vast region.**



The influx of settlers led to an ethnically diverse population, fights over water rights, and a tragic decline in the Native American population.

Even before the end of the Mexican-American War, **the Mormons had begun moving into the part of the Mexican Cession that is present-day Utah.**



The Mormons were members of **the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.**

The church was founded in 1830 by **Joseph Smith**, who said that he had received the *Book of Mormon* through heavenly visions.

Mormons had different customs from most Americans, including **polygamy**, which put them in conflict with their neighbors.

Hostile communities forced the Mormons to move from New York to Ohio, and then to Missouri.



By 1844, the Mormons had moved to Illinois, where Smith was murdered by an angry mob.

In 1847, **Brigham Young**, the new Mormon leader, led some of them on a long, hazardous journey to the **Great Salt Lake in Utah**.



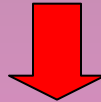
Over the next few years, **about 15,000 Mormons** made the trek to Utah.



In 1848, as a result of the Mexican Cession, Utah became part of the United States, and Congress created the Utah Territory.



The Mormons were once again in conflict with government officials.



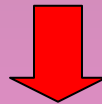
Before Utah became a state in 1896, Mormon leaders had to:

- **stop favoring Mormon-owned businesses.**
- **give control of elections to Congress.**
- **end polygamy.**

In 1848, California was also ceded to the United States. At this time, about 10,000 Californios, or Mexican Californians, were living in the territory.



After the Mexican Cession, easterners began to migrate to California, and the two groups shunned each other.



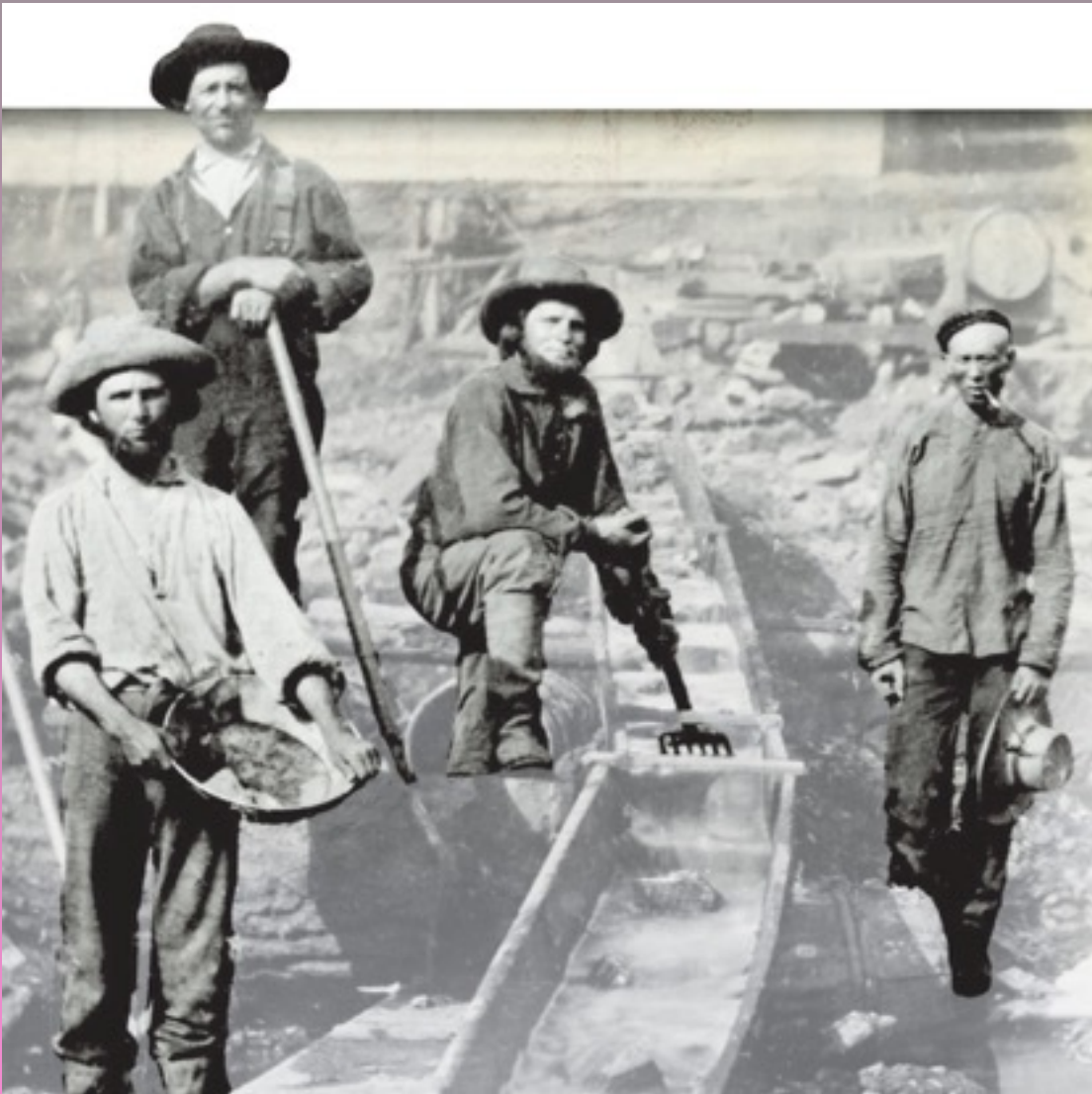
In 1850, when California became a U.S. state, only 15 percent of Californians were Mexican. Many sold their land.

In January 1848, gold was discovered at Sutter's Mill near Sacramento, and the news spread quickly throughout the U.S. and abroad.



By 1849, the California gold rush had begun, and about 80,000 **forty-niners went west in search of gold.**

In just two years, the population of California exploded from 14,000 to 100,000.



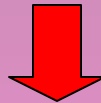
Some prospectors **dug into the land** while others used metal bowls to “pan” for gold in streams—a process called **placer mining**.

Gold in lodes, or underground deposits, was difficult and expensive to reach, **so large companies took over that aspect of mining**.

During the gold rush, miners swarmed onto Native American lands to search for gold.

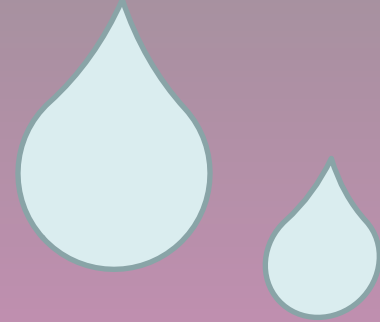


Gangs killed Native Americans and stole their land.



Nearly two-thirds of the Native American population of California—about 100,000 people—died during the gold rush.

Settlers needed water for irrigation and mining, **but much of California is desert.**

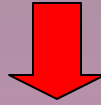


In most gold rush territories, **laws about water rights were ignored.**

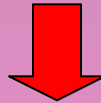


In the gold fields, disputes over water rights were common and sometimes turned violent.

California was not yet a state, so federal law did not apply there.

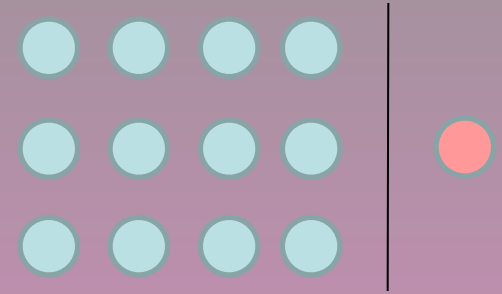


Miners often banded together and created their own rules.



Vigilantes punished people for crimes.

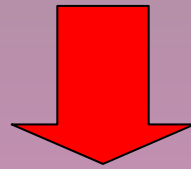
Most forty-niners were young men, and by 1850, the ratio of men to women in California was 12 to 1.



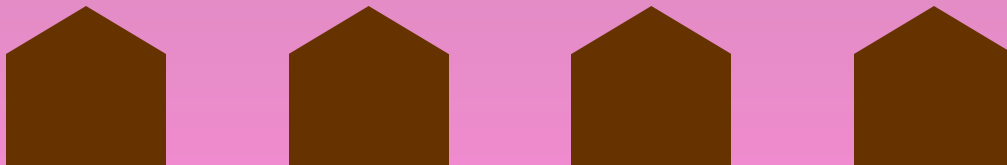
Some women did go to California, where they found profitable work:

- **Some women mined.**
- **Most worked in or ran boardinghouses, hotels, restaurants, laundries, and stores.**

Most mining towns **sprang up overnight** and emptied just as quickly when miners heard news of a gold strike in another place.



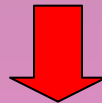
Miners **needed supplies and entertainment**, so most mining towns were made up of a row of businesses and a saloon.



The gold rush also brought enormous ethnic diversity to California.



People came from Europe, Asia, Australia, and South America, and by 1860, the population of California was almost 40 percent foreign-born.



European immigrants often enjoyed more freedom, a more democratic society, and less prejudice than they found in Europe or in the eastern states.

California's Diverse Population

Chinese Immigrants

- After news of the gold rush reached China, about 45,000 Chinese men went to California.
- Because of prejudice, they usually did not get high-paying jobs in the mines.
- The Chinese worked hard building railroads, doing farm labor, cooking, and doing laundry.

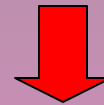
Free African Americans

- Several thousand free African Americans lived in California by 1850.
- They had their own businesses and churches, but they could not vote or serve on juries.
- Slavery did not take root in California.

Although there were gold and silver strikes in many states, few forty-niners struck it rich.



After the gold rush ended, many people **kept searching for gold throughout the West.**



Other miners gave up the drifting life and **settled in the West for good.**

Many people settled in San Francisco, which prospered, unlike other mining towns.

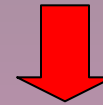


Many immigrants and other newcomers to the city stayed, while others returned after working in the mines.

Growth of San Francisco

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

SOURCE: CIA World Factbook Online



By 1860, San Francisco had a population of 57,000. Ten years later the population was more than 100,000.