

The Gold Rush of 1849 and the Consequences - Homework



Give two inferences you can make from this illustration about the Gold Rush in California in 1849.

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Another group to go west were the **'forty-niners'** – gold miners seeking wealth after the discovery of gold in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada. Prior to the discovery of gold, only 5,000 people had used the trail to head west. From 1849 onwards, tens of thousands used the trail in the hope of finding gold. Thousands more came by ship, especially from China. A rebellion and a famine there were push factors in making people leave. The population of California rocketed to nearly 250,000 by 1852.

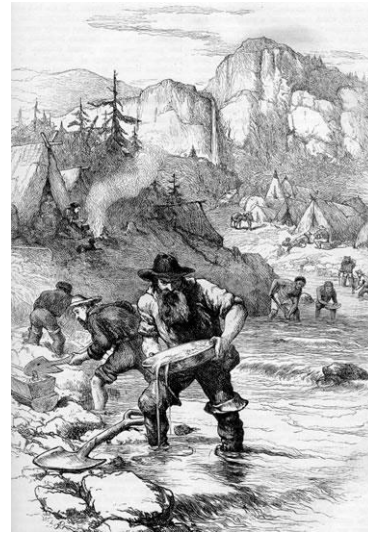


Date	Population
Feb 1849	54
Jan 1850	791
Dec 1850	4,000
Dec 1851	6,500
Dec 1852	25,000

Estimated Chinese
Population figures for
California



Gold Ingots this size and weight was what every prospector wanted to find!



Panning for Gold in the streams of California could yield much smaller sized pieces.



Some people only found small flecks of gold.



Most found nothing at all....

Soon all the surface gold had gone and proper mining companies moved in to mine much deeper below ground to find gold. This meant individuals were very unlikely to 'strike it lucky' after the early 1850s.

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The early mining settlements were just camps, they later developed into towns. They were often full of disappointed miners who had failed to make their fortunes. This would have serious consequences for law and order.

Lawlessness in early towns and settlements

The early camps were usually isolated in the mountains, a long way from the reach of the law

Mining camps were almost all male and violence, fuelled by alcohol and fights over cards and prostitutes was common.

Outlaws and conmen targeted miners who did make money and swindled those who failed to strike it lucky.

Racist crimes increased especially against Californian Indians and Chinese migrants. White Americans often murdered the Californian Indians with no fear of any consequence.

Laws were passed that discriminated against Chinese migrants. They were taxed more and they along, with black Americans and American Indians, were not allowed to be witnesses in court.

Claim jumping- when one man took over another man's claim to land caused big problems as there was no law regulating mining until 1866.

With no effective law enforcement, vigilante committees formed to 'sort out' criminals without using the law.

Gangs formed from returning disappointed miners, especially in San Francisco. Murder, theft and violence was common.

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Other consequences from the Gold Rush

Due to the huge increase in population, California joins the USA and becomes a state in 1855

Profits from the gold from California helps fund the railways (more of that later)

Tensions with the Plains Indians increase as more and more people use the Oregon Trail to reach California and disrupt the Buffalo herds and Indian way of life.

Many people see this rapid increase in the white population of the USA as the justification of the 'Manifest Destiny' idea and it coming true.

The Genocide* of Californian Indians by migrants.
(* The deliberate killing of large numbers of people due to their ethnicity.)

Objective: To understand the consequences of the Gold Rush of 1849

Tasks:

- Complete the inference question.
- Read the power point through carefully
- Take notes on **The Consequences of the 1849 Gold Rush.** (In whatever manner suits you.)
- Answer the following exam question:
- **Explain two consequences of the discovery of gold in California in 1848.** (see next slide for guidance on this type of question)

Q1: Explain TWO consequences of...

This question requires you to focus on the **CONSEQUENCES**, the results of the event or development specified. You are required to identify a consequence, illustrate it with evidence and briefly explain the importance of the consequence. THINK -did things improve or worsen as a result? Try to keep your answer fairly brief however, each consequence is worth just 4 marks.

