

Summary: New Towns and Cities

Building Towns

During the Gold Rush, so many newcomers came to California that some mining camps became towns. Some small towns before the Gold Rush became cities.

In 1848, Yerba Buena was a village with 200 people. The Gold Rush brought ships with thousands of forty-niners, and by 1849, the population grew to about 25,000. Its name was changed to San Francisco. By 1860, San Francisco was a busy port of 60,000 people. Ships brought mining supplies and products from all over the world. These goods were traded for gold and items made in California.

Mudville, on the San Joaquin River, was a mining camp. Charles Weber bought it and decided to turn it into a business center. People paid him to open shops, hotels, and banks. The town was renamed Stockton after a war hero.

John Sutter built a road from his fort to the Sacramento River. Stores opened as ships arrived with gold seekers, and the port grew. More businesses were added to the town, which became known as Sacramento.

Seeking Success

By the 1850s, the Gold Rush had brought people from all over the world to California. The population was diverse. Some people wanted new opportunities and were willing to work hard.

Mifflin Wistar Gibbs came in search of gold but found work shining shoes. He and another man opened a shoe store in San Francisco. In 1855, Gibbs began publishing California's first African American newspaper. Gibbs later became a lawyer and judge and worked for justice. During the Gold Rush, justice was in short supply.

Many criminals came to California to steal gold, money, and mining claims. New mining towns often did not take the time to set up strong government and fair laws. There were few police. As a result, some people became vigilantes. They took the law into their own hands and often committed crimes, punishing and even killing people without proving they were criminals. They often targeted immigrants, African Americans, and American Indians.



Before You Read

Find and underline each vocabulary word.

capitol *noun*, a building for work of government

justice *noun*, fair treatment of all people under the law

vigilante *noun*, a person who takes the law into his or her own hands



After You Read

REVIEW Why did San Francisco and Stockton grow during the Gold Rush? Underline the sentences that explain the growth of these cities.

REVIEW What were some opportunities and problems for people who came to California? Highlight the sentences that show what types of people came to California and the results.