

Gold Rush Timeline

- 1846 – The Native American population in California was approximately 150,000.
- 1846 – The Mexican-American War began.
- 1847 – The population of San Francisco was approximately 500.
- 1848, January 24 – Gold was discovered at Sutter’s Mill in Coloma, California.
- 1848, February 2 – The Mexican-American War ended. The United States won and annexed California.
- 1848, March – California newspapers began reporting the discovery of gold.
- 1848, May – Populations of cities in California dropped as people left to mine gold.
- 1848, August 19 – New York Herald published a story about the discovery of gold in California.
- 1849 – Approximately 80,000 people, mainly men, from around the world came to California.
- 1850 – Most of the easily accessible gold was gone. Miners moved from panning for gold to more advanced methods of sluice and hydraulic mining.
- 1850 – The California Legislature passed the Foreign Miners’ Tax, which required all foreign miners and Mexicans born in California to pay \$20 a month. There was an exemption for any “free white person.” The tax forced many Chinese and Mexican miners to leave the mines.
- 1850 – California Legislature passed the Indenture Act, which made it legal to capture Native Americans and use them as indentured servants.
- 1852 – The population of San Francisco was approximately 36,000.
- 1870 – Due to disease, dislocation, enslavement, and widespread violence against Native Americans by settlers, the Native American population in California dropped to approximately 30,000.

Directions: For the chart below, visit the website and view the three images and fill in the chart below.

Image	Year	Questions to Answer:	Your Responses
1		What do you notice about the setting?	
2		What do you notice about the setting?	
3		What do you notice about the setting?	
How do these images demonstrate change over time in San Francisco?			

Document A: Ernest de Massey

Ernest de Massey was a French immigrant who sailed to San Francisco in May 1849 after hearing about the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill. After a seven-month voyage, he arrived in San Francisco, where he kept a journal of his experiences.

12/15/49: At noon the boat dropped us not on solid ground, but in the mud and slime which is everywhere. There is no dock, and only one or two landing-places for the ships. The streets, which are very broad, cut the city up into right angles. Close to one hundred houses are being built a month, which are immediately rented. Scores of immigrants live in tents in the neighborhood waiting for more comfortable housing. Few houses are built of brick. The biggest buildings are two-story wooden structures painted in bright colors. Several are even elegant on the outside and luxurious within. But only millionaires are able to afford such luxury.

All the business streets are teeming with activity. In fact they seem as active as any in Paris. Over here, however, the men seem more businesslike and in a greater hurry; loafing is an unknown quantity. During the day every one plows knee-deep in mud through the lower streets which get the heaviest travel for this is where the banks and the important commercial establishments are located. All are focused on getting business and social prestige regardless of their qualifications and trying to make a fortune.

In the midst of this chaos you can hear many languages. Ask a question in English and your reply may be in German; if you speak in French you may perhaps be answered in Spanish, Italian, Russian, Polish or Chinese. This would be amusing if it were not such a handicap. However, those who can speak three languages, English, French and Spanish, can make themselves understood anywhere.

Source: Ernest de Massey, journal entry for December 15, 1849.

1. What was happening in San Francisco when de Massey wrote this journal entry?
2. How does de Massey's account corroborate the images from your view earlier?

Document B: Henry V. Huntley

Sir Henry V. Huntley was a British Naval officer. He lived in San Francisco in 1852 and worked as a representative for a British gold mining company. He wrote a book about his experiences in California. Below is a chart made from an excerpt of the book where he discussed the growth and economy of San Francisco. SAN FRANCISCO has now been a city less than three years, and here is a statistical account of the arrivals of emigrants; tonnage employed; and bullion exported; during three months: March, April, and May.

Arrival of Emigrants from Foreign Ports	Arrivals of Ship (in tonnage)	Bullion Imported and Exported (in dollars)
Males: 18,990	American: 36,272	Import: 10,120,828
Females: 1,398	Foreign: 40,336	Export: 9,533,970.
Children: 535		
Total: 20,923	Total: 76,608	

Source: Henry Huntley, *California Its Gold and Its Inhabitants*. Published in 1856.

1. Why were more men arriving in San Francisco than women?
2. What does the amount of goods being shipped through San Francisco suggest about how the Gold Rush affected the city?
3. How does this document corroborate Document 3 and the images?

“. . . white American miners were resentful of the other national groups represented in the camps. While they usually accepted non-English-speaking Europeans, they had less tolerance for Latin American miners and none at all for Chinese. In 1850, the new California legislature adopted a Foreign Miners License Law, charging all non-U.S. citizens \$20 per month . . . Chinese miners who continued their search for gold found increasingly harsh treatment at the hands of their fellow miners. The legislature adopted a new foreign miners' tax of \$4 per month, and anti-Chinese feeling surfaced in many mining camps.

- Library of Congress, "From Gold Rush to Golden State"

During 1850, the Indians in Mariposa county [California] . . . became very troublesome to the miners and settlers. . . . Through the management of the commissioners, treaties were made, and many of these Indians were transferred to locations reserved for their special occupancy. . . . [The trader John Savage] employed a party of native Indians. . . . He exchanged his goods at enormous profits for the gold obtained from his Indian miners. . . . To strengthen his influence over the principal tribes, Savage had, according to the custom of many mountain men, taken wives from among them . . .

- American soldier Lafayette Houghton Bunnell, "Discovery of the Yosemite, and the Indian war of 1851"

1. Answer A, B, & C:
 - a. Briefly explain the main point of excerpt 1.
 - b. Briefly explain the main point of excerpt 2.
 - c. Evaluate the lasting impact of the California Gold Rush as a positive or negative turning point for American society. Use one detail from the excerpts above to support your position.