

# Nine for California Unit Study

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## Social Studies

### Family Heirlooms (Quilts and Trunks) -

The flour sack was made into a family keepsake--a quilt full of emotional memories from their 21-day trip or move West.

If you have any family heirlooms or quilts that you'd like to share with your child, now is the time to consider putting them on display. Do you have a cherished family trunk? You might be surprised to learn some new family history if you ask relatives about trunks; we sure did!

### State Study

Your child will encounter numerous states throughout the reading of the story. They include: Missouri, Kansas, California, and New Hampshire. Have your child locate each of the states on a United States map. An older student may want to choose one state to research.

### The California Gold Rush

"There's gold in them there hills!" Gold was found at Sutter's Mill, January 1848. There was more than one Gold Rush in the history of the world, but we are focusing on the famous California Gold Rush because this is where our story takes place.

John Sutter was a rich immigrant from Switzerland. He left Switzerland bankrupt and in debt and came to America with hopes of starting over and succeeding. Sutter and other settlers arrived in Sacramento in the summer of 1839 and created a trading post named "New Helvetia" or "New Switzerland." He obtained some land from the Mexican governor (present day California land) and had big plans of building his own empire or city on these thousands of acres. He built a fort with the help of local natives.

Everyone in town knew or worked for John Sutter. He had thousands of cattle, sheep, and acreage. In 1847 he planted 2000 fruit trees.

Sutter hired a friend, James Marshall to build a sawmill. Marshall chose an area by the South Fork American River, which was thick with Pine trees (the right wood for lumber) and perfect for building a working sawmill. One January morning in 1848, while John was working on the mill in the South Fork of the American River he discovered some bits of gold!

Actually, this is debatable. Some books state that workers' children found bits of gold first. He was so excited to tell his friend and boss of his discovery! They met on a rainy night and pulled out the encyclopedia and scales and tested this mineral

Yes, gold was discovered January 24, 1848. John Sutter was very concerned about his fort and his farming; he was already a rich man and the thoughts going through his head were about others inviting themselves onto his land to claim gold as their own! He and James made an agreement not to tell anyone until crops were planted. How can news like that not spread? And spread it did.

This was the beginning of the California Gold Rush. The US government told Mr. Sutter that the title to his land was invalid so he could not claim this gold as his. People came from all over the world to dig for gold. This is why it's nicknamed the "rush."

This disease of greed or hope was contagious and spread worldwide. People had gold fever! Unfortunate for John Sutter, many lawless land squatters and thieves invaded his land.

People traveled to California by foot, boat, or horse. The actual year of the great Gold Rush was 1849. Men traveled for months out west to give gold digging a try and with big hopes of returning home with riches added to their names. Sadly, of the 90,000 who had this dream few actually did strike it rich. At the end of the gold rush \$50,000,000,000 worth of gold was found. The largest chunk of gold found weighed 195 pounds and worth \$43,534.00. Mr. John Sutter and James Marshall were in the common crowd and never did make their fortunes from the Gold Rush days. The prospectors moved east and the Comstock Lode in Nevada was one of the richest discoveries in gold and silver. North into Montana and south into New Mexico gold was also discovered!

## Timeline

If your family uses a timeline, here are some key dates you may want to include:

1849 - Gold Rush California

1852 - Wells Fargo Founded

1860 - Pony Express

1866 - Wells Fargo owned and operated stage lines.

1869 - Transcontinental Railroad

1906 - San Francisco earthquake

1918 - end of the stage line.

## History of the Water Wheel

Water wheels have been around for thousands of years. A Greek poet mentioned a woman operating a hand mill to grind corn in 4000 BC. During the Augustan Age (11 BC), a Roman engineer named Vituvius wrote about the use of a vertical, more efficient water wheel compared to a horizontal wheel.

Oliver Evans, who lived from 1755-1819 greatly helped the making of the flourmills and the process involved. He influenced and changed the way flour and grain was stored. Did you know flour and grain used to be hoisted through trap doors then carried on people's backs up a set of narrow stairs? The flour was stored on open floors. Common storage was to compress it into a barrel with the bottoms of their muddy boots so they could close the barrels.

## History of the Piggy Bank

Has your child ever wondered where the idea for a piggy bank came from? Nobody actually invented the piggy bank. Pygg is a type of orange clay. Used in the 15<sup>th</sup> century in Old England, potters made all kinds of objects out of pygg, including dishes and jars to keep spare change. By the 18<sup>th</sup> century the word *pygg* sounded the same as the word for *pig*. Someone made a pygg jar in the shape of a pig.

## Emergency Decision Making

Explain to your children that it is important to not panic and to be obedient in a time of emergency. When the buffalo herd approached the stagecoach, Mama gave everyone a handful of red pepper to throw out the window. This was not cruelty because their lives were in danger. During the robbery Mama signaled to Amanda to get the whistle from the flour sack and Amanda blew as hard as she could three times to distract or scare the robbers. Cowboy Charlie and the Shotgun

rider were able to capture the robbers. Amanda was brave and obedient and did not ask questions.

### History of Stagecoaches

Stagecoaches were used throughout history as a means of transportation. Stagecoaches were very important part of our American history of over 100 years. 1785, just two years after the Revolutionary War, The United States Mail used stagecoaches to carry mail. In our story, we see the family at a Missouri post office receiving a letter from Pa.

The mail was delivered by Wells Fargo stagecoach. It was always a big ordeal to see the stage in town! Before the stagecoach routes west, it would take up to a year to travel across the country from coast to coast! The stagecoach cut this time down to just 32 days!

There were special rules for those riding on the stagecoaches. Here is one version of the rules:

When a driver asked a passenger to get out and walk, one was advised to do so, and not grumble about it.

If the team of horses ran away, it was better to sit in the coach because most passengers who jumped were seriously injured.

Smoking and spitting on the leeward side of the coach was discouraged.

Drinking spirits was allowed, but passengers were expected to share.

Swearing was not allowed, and neither was sleeping on your neighbor's shoulder.

Travelers shouldn't point out spots where murders had occurred, especially when "delicate" passengers were aboard.

Greasing one's hair was discouraged because dust would stick to it.

Ask your child how he thinks riding in an automobile would compare to riding in a stagecoach. During the era when stagecoaches were used, there was no pavement, windows, seatbelts, or powerful engines. According to the Omaha

Herald in 1877, "Don't imagine for a moment you are going on a picnic. Expect annoyance, discomfort, and some hardships. If you are disappointed, thank heaven."

### Pawnee Indians

The Pawnee Indians have lived on the Plains along the Platte, Loup, and Republican Rivers for 500 years. Their home was central territory of what is now Kansas and Nebraska. Their crops included corn, beans, pumpkin and squash. They depended heavily on their buffalo hunts and corn production. By the 1830s the Pawnee were established in the Nebraska region and numbered 12,000.

### Famous Stagecoach Drivers and Robbers

#### 1. "Charlie" Parkhurst

If you are reading *Riding Freedom*, you will know who Charlie Parkhurst really was - the first woman voter who drove stagecoaches for her entire life. Charlotte was born in Providence Rhode Island and drove carriages for the gentry.

#### 2. Black Bart

Black Bart was the stagecoach robber name for Charles Earle Bolles.

Charles Bolles was honorably discharged from the Civil war army, educated, and mannerly, known for his politeness. When it came to his side job of robbing stages, he dressed in a long black coat with a flour sack over his head. He would jump out from the tight corners on the routes and demand, "Please throw down the box!" He never robbed or shot at passengers. He never used a horse. He left pieces of his poetry signed with his name as PO8, and he never even had a bullet in his gun!

Sample of Black Bart's poetry:

Let come what may, I'll try it on  
My condition can't be worse  
And if there's money in that box,  
'Tis money in my purse.

Black Bart

The po8

He successfully robbed 27 Wells Fargo coaches over a period of 8 years. A Wells Fargo detective, Hume, estimated that Black Bart had successfully stolen \$18,000 from Wells Fargo & Co. plus \$7-8,000 from the mail bags.

When he wasn't robbing stages, he was a prominent mine owner living the good life in San Francisco.

Finally, a Wells Fargo detective was able to trace a dropped handkerchief with initials on it back to his laundry mat in San Francisco. After 18 days of being caught and identified as the criminal, he served four years in the San Quentin Prison in California. Eventually, Black Bart was let off on good behavior. After being released, he disappeared from public.

This was written by Hume in 1885 in a wanted poster:

He, Black Bart, is a person of great endurance, a thorough mountaineer, and a remarkable walker, and claims that he cannot be excelled in making quick transits over mountains and grades; when reading without glasses, holds paper off at arm's length, is comparatively well educated, a general reader, and is well informed on current tendencies, and since his arrest has, upon several occasions, exhibited genuine wit under most trying circumstances. Has made his headquarters in San Francisco for past eight years, has made but a few close friends, and those of first class respectability is extremely proper and polite in behavior, chaste in language, eschews profanity and has never been known to gamble, other than buying pools on horse races and speculating in mining stocks.

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## Language Arts

### Vocabulary

Heaved -- cast, hurl

Jostled -- to run or knock against so as to jar : push roughly

Shaft -- one of two poles between which a horse is hitched to pull a vehicle

Startled -- to move or jump suddenly

Stagecoach -- a coach pulled by horses that carries passengers and mail and runs on a schedule between established stops

Twitch -- to move or pull with a sudden motion

Lurched -- to roll or tip suddenly

Wrung -- to squeeze or twist especially so as to make dry or to rid of moisture or liquid

Lariat -- a rope with a noose used to catch livestock or to tie up grazing animals; also known as a lasso

### Letter Writing Skills

Pa sent a letter by stagecoach to tell his family to move to California. Ma couldn't pick up her cell phone and call him back, she had to hand write a letter and send it through the United States Mail System, the Post Office.

Practice the old fashioned skill of handwriting a letter to a distant family member. Write about the book you're studying this week and tell them your favorite part of the story.

Review the parts of a letter

There are five main parts to a friendly letter.

#### 1. Heading

The heading gives the date that the letter was written as well as the complete address of the person who is writing the letter.

#### 2. Greeting

The greeting tells to whom the letter is written. The most common greeting is "Dear \_\_\_\_\_".

It is considered impolite to use only the person's name as a greeting.

#### 3. Body

The body is the letter itself.

#### 4. Closing

The closing is a polite way to say goodbye. (Sincerely, Sincerely Yours, etc.)

#### 5. Signature

The signature is the name of the writer.

You also should discuss (or review) how to address an envelope as well as where to put the stamp. Mail it and see if you get a reply back from your relative.

You may also want to discuss letter writing etiquette and that it is polite to reply to sender in a timely manner.

Your student could also recreate Pa's letter to his family using a dipping pen and

calligraphy ink.

### Compound Words

What makes a word a compound word? Two separate words put together as one. Can your student find any compound words in this story?

List of compound words from the story:

stagecoach, shotgun, outlaw, without, goodbye, cowboy, grownups, hummingbird, milkweed

### Literary Devices

Levitin has chosen to include lots of various literary devices to keep her story fresh and fun. Use this opportunity to introduce a specific literary device or to review the ones you've studied in the past.

#### Simile

A figure of speech in which things different in kind or quality are compared by the use of the word like or as.

Examples from the book:

As quick as a wink.

We smelled like wet cats.

My stomach rolled over like the wooden wheels of the coach.

We saw brown and shaggy beasts, like a huge dark stain on the fair prairie grasses.

#### Repetition

A specific word, phrase, or structure is repeated several times, usually in close proximity, to emphasize a particular idea.

Repetition of words in this story creates rhythm and anticipation. Point out the repetitive sentence the author chose to use. "I wished something would happen. And it did."

Does your student like hearing this phrase over and over throughout the story? Why? How would the story be different without it?

#### Alliteration

The repetition of a sound at the beginning of two or more neighboring words (as in



wild and woolly or a babbling brook)

"We slept in the stage jostling and jiggling."

Can your student find the example of alliteration in the above sentence? Are there others throughout the story?

Personification

The representation of a thing or idea as a person

Examples from the story:

"Beans and prunes acting up." Who is usually accused with acting up? Plants or children? The author chose this phrase in order to make the plants seem like children which adds an element of humor.

"and the long long hours moaning by" Can hours moan? Why did the author use this phrase?

Exclamation Points

This story uses a lot of exclamation points. Have your child practice reading some of the sentences emphasizing the words in an exclamatory sort of way.

Example: We heard the pounding of horses and terrible yells: "Yip! Yip! Yeeiow! Indians!" shouted Cowboy Charlie.

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**Art**

Creating Movement and Drawing Motion

The cover of a book can tell a lot about what's inside! Our cover is very busy-- hinting toward a very busy story! Look at the cover of our book. See if your child can give ideas to hint motion or movement. Here is our list of visual effects:

1. Where are the horses? The driver is holding the reigns; but the horses have moved ahead
2. The coach is at an angle going uphill.
3. There are sketches around the wheel to hint toward motion and moving.

4. The title and artist/illustrator is not written in a straight line. Again, we see motion and movement.

Give your child time to recreate a drawing or list more ways the artist shows movement. Throughout the book there are many more examples of motion and movement. Ask your student to find examples.

### Watercolor Wash

Find the page of traveling at nighttime. Since watercolor is transparent, it is easy to achieve the look of night time by using a large brush and applying a grey tone of watercolor over the entire photo

Let your child experiment with night time water color washes. This is good practice to see lots of water is needed to create the transparency for a wash.

### Exaggeration

Study the page of the robbers wearing the masks. Notice how the hand is out of perspective. The artist emphasizes the greed of the robbers by exaggerating his hand.

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## **Applied Math**

### Play Wells Fargo Bank

Most children love to pretend play. You can teach your student different aspects about money as you play Wells Fargo Bank!

Practice teaching your child how to write a check.

Teach your child about loans, bank statements, and credit (what are the benefits and disadvantages of using credit?)

Open a savings account, teach some basics about interest

### Fractions

The wheel on the stagecoach is fractioned off into 12 pieces. Make a paper wagon wheel and use strips of construction paper to lay on top of the wheel to see the different fraction combinations. Let your child explore fractions using more strips of construction paper see if they can make the wheel into 12 fractions like the wheels on the stagecoach.

### Weight

Travelers were only allowed 25 pounds of luggage. What would you pack? Let your student gather up the items he would want to pack and weigh them on a scale. Would he be allowed on the coach? Have him pare his luggage down until he has a mere 25 pounds.

### Measurements

Travelers had only 15 inches of sitting space. Measure 15 inches. How many passengers can fit on your couch?

### One Million

Amanda stated, "At the stagecoach stop about a million people came to greet us. One of them was my pa."

We hear people use the word million often. Most of the time it is used as an exaggeration to make a point. Help your child visualize what exactly a million would look like.

Books to read together by John Schwartz

*How much is a Million?*

*On Beyond A Million , An Amazing Math Journey*

*Millions to Measure*

One Million looks like this -- 1,000,000

There are one million sugar grains in a 2-pound bag of sugar.  
There are one million grains of salt in 1 cup.

How long would it take to count to a million? Well, counting once per second (easy at the start, but tough when you reach the hundred thousand mark), eight hours per day, seven days per week (no weekends off), it would take you **a little over a month** to count to one million!

### Math Facts: Nine Family

There were nine people in the stagecoach: three facing forward, three facing backward, three in middle. Let your child learn or review his nine family facts for addition, subtraction, multiplication, or division.

## Time

The children would recite what they knew to pass the time. Does your student know how long a minute is? Hour? Day? Week?

Practice these facts:

How many minutes in a hour?

How many hours in a day?

How many days in a week?

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## Science

### Gold

The element, gold, is abbreviated on the periodic table as AU. It is a precious, rare, and soft metal found in the earth.

Here are some basic gold facts (from a small book called Start Your Own Gold Rush by Carol Benanti) :

Gold is 19.3 times heavier than water.

Gold is almost indestructible, does not rust, blacken from heat, moldable when melted or flattened when melted. Examples, one square inch of gold can be flattened to the size of a football field! A book with flattened pure gold pages would be 367,000 pages and only be one inch thick!

### The Nervous System

The nervous system is made up of two parts: nerves and the spinal cord/brain. The spinal cord is actually a very thick mass of nerves inside your spine. Your brain is connected to your spinal cord. The nerves have an important job; they are the message carriers to your brain.

Draw an outline of your body. Add your brain and spinal cord (an older child can add the nerves as well). Orally narrate to someone how your nervous system works. The nervous system lets you know when to sneeze and when to hiccup.

### Hiccups

No one knows the exact cause of hiccups; but we do know the process. First a

nerve sends the message up your spinal cord very quickly. This message makes you automatically gulp in air causing your throat to close. The hiccup sound is the noise of the air hitting your closed throat. Sounds very interesting; but simply remember that you are fearfully and wonderfully made. God designed your body to do this for protection! Review Psalms 139 and write it on the bottom of your hiccup illustration.

Go-along book: *Why I Sneeze, Shiver, Hiccup, and Yawn* by Melvin Berger

### Milkweed

Go on a nature walk this week and find some milkweed. Draw Milkweed in your nature journals.

Milkweed is a plant that is poisonous. Glycosides. There are over 100 species that contain various amounts of toxins. Monarch butterflies lay their eggs on the plant so the caterpillars can begin munching away on the leaves so they can inject the poison into their predators.

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## Recipes

Extremely popular in the southern United States, corn pone is an eggless cornbread that is shaped into small 2-3 inch ovals and fried or baked.

### Corn Pone

2 cups white corn meal

1 teaspoon salt

1 1/2 cups *cold* water (or enough to make a soft mixture that can be spooned like pancake batter)

4 tablespoons vegetable oil

Preheat oven to 475°F (245°C). Mix corn meal, salt and water. Heat oil in a 9-inch round iron skillet in the hot oven until hot. Carefully spread mixture evenly in hot skillet and spoon some of the fat that comes to the edges up on top of the batter. Bake for about 15 minutes or until golden brown. Broil for the last 2 to 3 minutes to make it extra golden brown and crispy around the edges. Makes 8 servings.

If you want something with a little more flavor:

### Tennessee Corn Pone Serving Size : 6

2 cups pinto beans -- seasoned, cooked

1 cup cornmeal

1 teaspoon baking soda

1/2 teaspoon salt

2 tablespoons butter

2 cups buttermilk

1 egg -- slightly beaten

Heat beans until quite hot and pour into a lightly greased 8x8-inch baking dish. Preheat oven to 450.

Mix the cornmeal, baking soda, and salt in a large bowl. Melt the butter and combine with buttermilk and egg.

Stir the wet and dry ingredients together until smooth, and pour them over the hot beans. Bake on the top rack of your oven until bread is a rich golden color and the sides of the corn bread pull away from the sides of the pan-about 30 minutes.

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### Just for Fun

Whistle Together!

Play with Lincoln Logs and build a Wild West Town!

To pass time the children played Cat's Cradle. Learn and play string games (see library list for book suggestions).

Eat Some Licorice!

Teach your children the song, "Frere Jacques," this week.

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