The Homeschooling Idea Book
(The Gold Rush)

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Welcome to The Homeschooling Ideas Book - your guide to the best resources, ideas and products available for themed unit studies or strewing.

Gold Rush Edition

This edition covers great resources that you can use to inspire your children when studying the gold rush of California (1848–1855).

This fascinating period in history allows you to cover lots of interesting subjects - from history and geography to science and mining.

This Ideas Book takes a wide view of the subject so you can build a comprehensive unit study that springboards into several topics.

Top Tips

This Ideas Book is meant to give you an insight into the many resources available to you in studying subjects around the Californian Gold Rush.

Where possible I have tried to include an age range for each resource. Please use this as a rough guideline - you know your children better than me! Sometimes a younger child can enjoy an older resource - and some of the picture books are so lovely that even older children (and adults!) will enjoy them.
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Introduction

The Californian Gold Rush was a fascinating period of history. Just studying this timeframe will give your children lots of knowledge. But the gold rush is also an ideal springboard for you to study lots of different subjects and disciplines within your homeschooling. This is a great way to help your children build connections - and REMEMBER what they are learning.

This Homeschooling Idea Book will really help you spread your wings and move through different historical times, different geographic regions, culture, economics - you will even pick up some money management skills! I am hoping that having so many resource ideas at hand will give you the confidence to move into new and uncharted territory.

In terms of core subjects covered, you will find that working through some of the suggested directions will automatically cover (to name a few!) :

- History
- Geography
- Math
- Art
- Geology
- Economics
- American Studies
- English
- Cultural Studies
- Environmental Studies
- Sociology and Law
- Survival skills

There are enough resources in this book to keep your family busy for a long period of time. Use them for a gentle year long study - or an intensive term. We usually start with the main topic (the gold rush) and then veer into new areas as our inclination (and budget!) allows.

The resources are meant to be added slowly and enjoyed. Your child will greet each addition to the subject like an old friend - helping to build connections and expand knowledge. A mixture of living books, games, movies and lapbooks or unit studies will make an enjoyable and comprehensive curriculum that you will all remember.
Gold Rush Resources

The following pages contain lists of resources directly related to the Gold Rush. This means you can really pick and mix your resources to suit your child - remember that a mixture of different learning experiences really brings a subject to life.

We usually start with a main fiction book as an enjoyable introduction to the topic. Then we may look into things in more detail with an appropriate non-fiction book and maybe a lapbook or unit study. Extend out with some craft and art ideas, some hands on activities, and then perhaps a board game - and you have a fun but comprehensive way to study.
Best Fiction Books

• **By the Great Horn Spoon** - Sid Fleishman

• **Gold Fever**: Tales from the California Gold Rush by Rosalyn Schanzer

• **Chang's Paper Pony** by Eleanor Coerr.

• **Treasure in the Stream**: The Story of a Gold Rush Girl by Dorothy Hoobler

• **The Gosh Awful! Gold Rush Mystery** (Real Kids, Real Places) by Carole Marsh

• **The Journal of Wong Ming-Chung**: A Chinese Miner, California, 1852
Book Review

By the Great Horn Spoon! by Sid Fleischman was, for us, an absolutely fabulous homeschooling read - and was the highlight of our Gold Rush Activities. Don’t be put off by the cover of this book. Sid manages to portray the harsh times of the California Gold Rush with gentleness and humor. It is about a boy and his butler (a very Jeeves character) who set off to make a fortune in the Gold Rush - and have lots of adventures en-route!

They begin by stowing away on a steamboat bound for California. A good deal of the beginning of the book is about the journey. For homeschool geography we looked up the route of the steamboat and discussed why they traveled by sea and not by land.

Once they get to California, there are detailed descriptions of what life was like as a gold miner. We enjoyed the history of the tale, and we discussed the economics of the times.

The book ends with a clever twist that we really enjoyed. All in all, we were sorry that we had finished the book. We had really got to like the two main characters, Jack and Praiseworthy, and are sorry there aren't more books of their adventures!

There is also a Guide for Using By the Great Horn Spoon! in the Classroom by Michael Levin.
Display Ideas - Make a bulletin board or table display of your Gold Rush project. Here are some ideas to get you started.

Words

Collect words and phrases that use the word gold. Write them out in large letters on card for your display. Here are some examples:

Worth your weight in gold
Golden boy
Good as Gold
Goldsmith
Gold Finger

Periodic Table

Gold is Au 79 on the periodic table. Make a display of objects (or photos of objects) containing gold.

We bought a couple of (really tiny) gold nuggets from Ebay. We also added a gold ring, and bracelet. Gold Leaf sheets are available in craft shops.

You could add pictures of gold fillings and coins. Gold is also used in cellphones, computers and aerospace and even medicine.

You could expand your gold display to other parts of the periodic table - here is how we did it.
Timelines

Why not make a timeline of the Gold Rush events. You can find a detailed monthly timeline to print here.
Clippers

• Seabird by Holling Clancy Holling (age 8+)
  Four generations of seafarers aboard a whaler, a clipper ship, a steamer and an Airplane.

• The Golden Dragon: By Clipper Ship Around the Horn by John J. Loeper (age 9+)
  The account of a young boy's journey by clipper ship from New York, around Cape Horn, to San Francisco in 1850.

• Clipper Ship (I Can Read Book) by Thomas P. Lewis (age 4+)

• Tall Ships Fun by Leslie Bulion. (age 5+)
  In-book activities include word finds, mazes, crosswords as well as nautical history, music, and poetry.

• On The Day the Tall Ships Sailed by Michael Paraskevas (age 4+)

Clippers sailed all over the world, primarily on the trade routes between the United Kingdom and its colonies in the east, in trans-Atlantic trade, and the New York-to-San Francisco route round Cape Horn during the California Gold Rush.

Clipper ships have an exciting history - from helping the growing demand for a faster delivery of tea from China - until the Suez Canal opened in 1869.

Ideas to take this further

• Boston Tea Party: History--Hands On Guide From Teaching & Learning Company (age 5-10)
• China - see page 41 for resources.
• The history of the Cutty Sark
• The building of the Suez Canal (then move to the Panama Canal and the Erie Canal!)
• Pirates!
A huge number of Chinese immigrants arrived during the Gold Rush. If you are reading Chang’s Paper Pony as part of your Gold Rush studies, then you can lead naturally into more Chinese fun!

**Fiction books:**

- **Liang and the Magic Paintbrush** by Demi (age 4+). Also The Empty Pot.

- **Tikki Tikki Tembo** by Arlene Mosel (age 4+)

- **Dragon’s Gate** (Golden Mountain Chronicles by) Laurence Yep (another Gold Rush story, age 7+)

- **The House of Sixty Fathers** by Meindert De Jong (age 8+)

- **Spring Pearl: The Last Flower** by Laurence Yep (age 9+). See also other books by Laurence including **The Journal of Wong Ming Chung**: A Chinese Miner, California, 1852.

- **Young Fu of the Upper Yangtze** by Elizabeth Foreman Lewis (age 10+)

**More Ideas**

- Try writing some Chinese characters. There are some resources [here](#).

Dover sell coloring books with Chinese designs.

**Movies**

Do check out the parents guides of movies at [IMBD](#) before watching.

**The Inn of the Sixth Happiness**

1958 (universal rating)

**Unit Studies and Lapbooks**

- Hands of a Child do an **Ancient China** lapbook.

- **All Across China** by ChipmunkaPublishing.

- **Expedition China** from Amanda Bennett
Conclusion

I hope you have enjoyed this Gold Rush Ideas Book. Look out for more titles in The Homeschooling Idea Book Series at www.homeschooling-ideas.com

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