THE IMPACT OF THE CALIFORNIA GOLD RUSH ON OHIO AND OHIOANS

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INTRODUCTION

H.H. Bancroft, the historian, referring to the discovery of gold at Sutter's sawmill on January 24, 1848, stated: "This little scratch upon the earth to make a backwoods mill-race touched the cerebral nerve that quickened humanity, and sent a thrill throughout the system." Historians have already revealed how the gold excitement altered the development of California, affected the eastern seaboard states, and accentuated national growth. The object of this thesis is to determine the extent to which Ohio's pulse was quickened by the gold fever which permeated American society during the middle of the nineteenth century.

Ohio newspapers of 1849 and 1850 have been consulted for the editorials, articles, letters and advertisements relating to the gold fever in Ohio, the Buckeye migrations to California, and the problems of the Ohio Argonauts after they had reached the land of El Dorado. Although Buckeye migrations to the California gold fields continued following 1850, this work does not extend beyond that date because by 1851 items from the gold regions had lost much of their

1 Hubert Howe Bancroft, History of California, VI, 52.

Mr. Bancroft's sixth volume of the History of California is included in Hubert Howe Bancroft, Works, XXIII.
news value, and the gold mania, which had reached its peak in the Mississippi Valley during the spring of 1849, was by the early fifties gradually losing its force.  

A description of the impact of the California gold rush on Ohio and Ohioans does not necessitate the use of superlatives. Nevertheless, thousands of Ohioans representing nearly all classes of society had reached California in 1849 and 1850 before newspaper editorials coupled with the letters and experiences of Ohio Argonauts had served somewhat to dissuade more Ohioans from trying their luck in the land of El Dorado. The Argonaut's departure from Ohio, his success, or failure in the land of gold, and his return home made at least perceptible impressions on the political, social and economic structures of Ohio.  

The California gold rush was intimately associated with the expansionist movement and the slavery controversy in American history. For that reason, Ohioans could no more be omitted from the story of the California gold rush, than from the history of the Mexican War or the accounts of the culmination of the slavery controversy. Conversely, the California gold rush presents a brief, but exciting and significant page in the history of Ohio.

2Ralph P. Bieber, "California Gold Mania." Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XXXV, 22 (June, 1948); Rodman W. Paul, California Gold, 20-35.
THE IMPACT OF THE CALIFORNIA GOLD RUSH ON OHIO AND OHIOANS

I GOLD! GOLD! GOLD!

Gold! and gold! and nothing but gold!
The same auriferous shrine behold
Wherever the eye can settle! - Hood

On January 24, 1848, James Wilson Marshall discovered flakes of gold in the tailrace of a sawmill he and John Sutter were erecting about fifty miles northeast of 1 Sutter's Fort in Upper California. The discovery came about by accident, the details of which evolve largely around the activities of the man who was placed in charge of constructing what was to become perhaps the most significant sawmill in the entire world.

James Marshall was born in Hunterdon County, New Jersey, but on reaching maturity he had gratified a boyhood ambition to go west by crossing the plains and entering 2 California via Oregon in 1845. In California, Marshall obtained employment at the fort of the hospitable Swiss, John Sutter. Later on, he turned to ranching, but this venture was interrupted by his participation in the Bear Flag Revolt of 1846. After being mustered out of service at the close of the war, he returned to his ranch only to

1 Bieber, loc. cit., 3.
2 Julian Dana, Sutter of California, 196.
find that all of his cattle had disappeared. 3 Disheartened, he once again went back to the Fort in search of employment. Marshall was a wheelwright by trade, but because of his general mechanical aptitude, he was welcomed back by Sutter who rehired his former employee as the Fort's carpenter.

It was at this time that a partnership between Sutter and Marshall was formed whereby the latter was to build a sawmill in the mountains northeast of the Fort, manage it and share with Sutter in the returns from the mill. Like all partnerships, the agreement between the California feudal baron and his carpenter was mutually advantageous. Sutter, because of his many enterprises, was in dire need of lumber. On the other hand, Marshall hoped that after the lumber had been brought down the American River to Sacramento City, he would be able to raft his share down the Sacramento River through the Suisun and San Pablo bays to a ready market at San Francisco.

During the winter of 1847-48 Marshall, with eight

4 John Bidwell, Echoes of the Past about California, 107.
5 Ibid.
6 Ibid.
helpers, five of whom were Mormons, constructed the mill. However, the mill would not run because the wheel had been placed too low. To remedy the situation, Marshall employed a group of Indians to dig a tailrace through the bar below to lead the water away. During the night, water was allowed to flow through the sluice-gate to carry off rock fragments. Every morning, while the Indian workmen were at breakfast, Marshall would examine the race while the water was running through it, so that he could tell the Indians where to deepen the channel. On one of these morning inspections he found a piece of gold in the tailrace. Excited by the discovery, Marshall reported his findings in person to Sutter. Eager to have the sawmill completed, both partners were intent on keeping their revelation a secret, but on February 22, a Mormon workman also discovered gold a half mile below the mill. The news was passed along to other Mormons who sought for and found gold. Travelers came into the district to prospect. Specimens of the precious metal were displayed in San Francisco. By the middle of May, the gold fever had struck all of California whence it spread to the Sandwich Islands, Oregon, Mexico, Salt Lake

7 Bieber, loc. cit., 3.
8 Bidwell, op. cit., 108.
9 Bieber, loc. cit., 4.
City, and by September of 1848 to the Atlantic coast states, and to the Mississippi Valley. As the year ended every section of the nation was participating in the migration, by land and by sea, to the gold mines of California.

Ohioans contributed their share to the discovery of California gold, and to the early phase of the gold mania. For example, three years before Marshall's discovery, an Ohioan helped to set the scene for the migration to California by writing a book in which he presented a vivid, if not altogether accurate, picture of the Far West. In his treatise, the author carefully outlined the best routes to the Pacific coast and to the abundant life which he contended could only be found in California. Another Ohioan wrote the contract between Sutter and Marshall to construct the sawmill which was to yield gold. Moreover, the first official report to the United States Government defining the import and extent of the California gold regions was prepared by a native of the Buckeye State.

A closer examination of the careers of those three

10 Bid., 7-15.
11 Bidwell, op. cit., 92.
12 Dana, op. cit., 141.
notable Ohioans reveals additional evidence attesting to their association with the forces which introduced and developed the California gold rush.

Lansford W. Hastings of Mt. Vernon, Ohio, was probably the first lawyer to enter California. Like Marshall, Hastings had come to California by way of Oregon. He and his party were among the first to find their way to Sutter's Fort in 1843. Exceedingly ambitious, the energetic Ohio lawyer had come to California for the explicit purpose of instigating a revolution against the Mexican authorities, in order to set himself up as president of an independent California republic. In order to effect this scheme it would be necessary for more Americans to settle in California. With the idea of encouraging migrations to the Pacific, Hastings wrote a book depicting California as "an earthly Paradise, a land blessed with eternal verdure and sunshine." This book, published in 1845, did much to bring a large number of people into California the following year. However, just as Hastings was taking the final steps

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14 Bidwell, op. cit., 92.
15 Dana, op. cit., 140.
16 Bidwell, op. cit., 92.
17 Dana, op. cit., 141.
18 Bidwell, op. cit., 92, 93.
to set up his independent republic, the Mexican War began, and the United States Government, instead of Lansford W. Hastings, was to determine the political status of California. Nevertheless, the Americans he persuaded to migrate westward must have possessed a measure of the ingenuity, the ambition, and the imagination of Hastings himself, all qualities essential to unfold the wealth of California which had been overlooked by even such indefatigable miners as the Spanish.

John Bidwell was even more directly and intimately associated with the California gold discovery than was Hastings. Bidwell, a native of New York, had spent eight of his boyhood years in Ashtabula and Darke counties, Ohio. In 1839 he moved from Ohio into the Iowa Territory, and from there to Missouri. Being short of funds on his arrival in Missouri, he accepted a position as a school teacher at Weston about four miles north of Ft. Leavenworth in what became the Kansas Territory. Falling prey to the fabulous accounts about California, Bidwell gave up his

21 *Bidwell, op. cit.*, 2.
teaching career and in 1841 became a member of the first emigrant train to cross the Rockies into California. As was the case of so many of the early emigrants to California, Bidwell became Sutter's employee. In 1844, when a revolt was initiated by Alvarado and Castro against the Mexican governor, Micheltorena, Bidwell and Sutter made the mistake of supporting the governor. When the revolt succeeded both men were imprisoned for a while, but their willingness to cooperate with the victors quickly terminated the period of imprisonment. Two years later Bidwell participated in the Bear Flag Revolt and in the ensuing Mexican War. Following the war, he returned to Sutter's Fort.

At this juncture John Bidwell engaged in a series of events which made him one of the leading figures in the drama that revealed to the world the rich gold deposits of California. First of all, he wrote the contract between Sutter and Marshall for the construction of the sawmill at

23 Ibid., 66.
24 Ibid., 79.
26 Ibid.
27 Ibid.
28 Ibid.
Coloma. Then, he made the first weights and scales to weigh the first gold for Sam Brannan, the Fort's storekeeper. Also, he was the first to carry the news of the discovery of gold to San Francisco, and the first to discover gold on the Feather River. In fact, Bidwell contended that he knew of gold deposits in the Sierra Nevada Mountains as early as 1844. While supervising Sutter's Hock Farm, he was persuaded by a Mexican workman to make an exploratory trip along the Bear River in search of gold. He and the Mexican found black sand and other signs of the precious metal in this area, but being without the necessary equipment to work the sand, the mining venture was delayed. Meanwhile, the revolt against Micheltorena deprived Bidwell from working the findings which would have bestowed upon him the prominence attained by James Marshall in this era of American history.

The native Ohioan who drafted the first official

29Bidwell, op. cit., 107.
30Ibid., 109.
31Ibid.
32Rockwell D. Hunt, John Bidwell, Prince of California Pioneers, 144.
33Ibid., 145.
34Ibid.
report of Marshall's discovery was none other than the American Civil War hero, William T. Sherman. In the spring of 1846 Sherman was a first lieutenant of Company G, Third Artillery, stationed at Fort Moultrie, South Carolina. At the outbreak of the Mexican War in April, 1846, Sherman was transferred to the recruiting service, a duty extremely distasteful to a young officer who was eager to prove his worth under fire. Time and time again, the young recruiter, who was in charge of the Army recruiting office at Pittsburgh and a sub-renvoeux at Zanesville, applied for active service. Late in 1846 his numerous requests were answered, and he was placed in Company F under orders for California. Sherman arrived in California from New York on January 26, 1847, after a tedious voyage of one hundred and ninety-eight days around Cape Horn. Although Sherman's original duty in California was that of quartermaster for his company, a later assignment made him adjutant-general under the military governor of California,

37 Ibid., 10.
38 Ibid.
39 Ibid., 11.
40 Ibid., 18.
Colonel R.B. Mason. In this capacity the young Ohio officer gives the following description of how the news of the gold discovery first reached officials of the United States Army:

I remember one day, in the spring of 1843, that two men, Americans, came into the office and inquired for the Governor. I asked their business, and one answered that they had just come down from Captain Sutter on special business, and they wanted to see Governor Mason in person. I took them into the colonel, and left them together. After some time the colonel came to his door and called to me. I went in, and my attention was directed to a series of papers unfolded on his table, in which lay about half an ounce of placer-gold. Mason said to me, "What is that?" I touched it and examined one or two of the larger pieces, and asked, "Is it gold?" Mason asked me if I had ever seen native gold. I answered that, in 1844, I was in Upper Georgia, and there saw some native gold, but it was much finer than this, and that it was in phials, or in transparent quills; but I said that, if this were gold, it could be easily tested, first, by its malleability, and next by acids. I took a piece in my teeth, and the metallic luster was perfect. I then called to the clerk, Baden, to bring an axe and hatchet from the backyard. When these were brought, I took the largest piece and beat it out flat, and beyond doubt it was metal, and a pure metal.  

The messengers from New Helvetia had also brought with them a written request from Sutter in which he asked for a "preemption" to the land on which the mill was lo-

41 Ibid., 29.
42 Ibid., 40.
cated. The reply, written by Sherman and signed by Mason, stated that California was a Mexican province, and that the laws of the United States could not yet be applied.

As for the specimen of metal, neither Sherman nor Mason attached much importance to it, because gold was known to exist at San Fernando, but was of little value. However, as the reports came in telling of further discoveries, and of the miners making anywhere from fifty dollars to thousands of dollars a day, Sherman was forced to confess that he "could not escape the infection." So it was that he persuaded Colonel Mason to visit the mining areas.

Sherman, Mason, and a small party of soldiers inspected the mining districts in July of 1848. At the conclusion of the tour of inspection, Sherman prepared a report which attested to the fact that great quantities of gold had been found in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. This

43 Ibid., 41.
44 Ibid.
46 Ibid., 46.
47 Ibid.
48 Ibid., 49-54.
official statement, signed by Mason on August 17, 1848, was carried to Washington by Lieutenant Loeser who reached the nation's capital in time to have the report incorporated in a special message by President Polk. "Then," Sherman declared, "began that wonderful development, by land and by sea, of 1849 and 1850."

It might be added that Sherman's interest in the gold regions did not end at this point. In the winter of 1848 he became a partner in a store at Coloma, and in 1849 he invested in Sacramento real estate realizing "a handsome profit." Obviously, the success of both of these enterprises was dependent on the rush to the gold fields. Then, as adjutant-general under Colonel Mason's successor, General Persifer Smith, Sherman assisted in pursuing and capturing army deserters who had fled to the diggings. The punitive expeditions against the deserters were not Sherman's sole concern during the early stages of the gold rush. Before leaving California in December of 1849, he also maintained an active interest in the organization of government relief trains sent out into the mountains by

50 Sherman, op. cit., I, 58.
51 Ibid.
52 Boyd, op. cit., 31, 33.
53 Ibid., 33.
General Smith to alleviate the suffering endured by the overland emigrants as they approached California. The fact that Sherman recognized among the waves of emigrants flowing into Sacramento many of his personal friends no doubt accentuated his enthusiasm toward General Smith's program.

The presence of Hastings, Bidwell, and Sherman in California at the time of Marshall's discovery was followed by the appearance of many other Ohioans who engaged wholeheartedly in the mad race for quick fortunes in the land of El Dorado.

54 Sherman, op. cit., I, 80.
55 Ibid., 81.
II NEWSPAPER EDITORIALS

Teach erring man to spurn the rage of gain;
Teach him, that states of native strength possesst,
Tho' very poor, may still be very blest; - Goldsmith

Ohio newspapers announced the California gold discovery with a considerable measure of surprise and doubt. It was only after the fabulous accounts from the gold fields had been officially confirmed that Ohio newsmen regularly printed California items. Ohio journalists were at first dependent on Atlantic coast newspapers and the New Orleans Picayune for information relating to the mining areas. Later, articles from Missouri and California papers were published. The out-of-state dispatches, which occupied considerable space in Ohio papers, were usually inserted with a minimum of editorial comment. However, as letters from Ohioans in California became available, and as the more unfavorable aspects of the gold mania developed, Ohio editors openly professed skepticism toward the rush to California.

On Sunday morning, September 24, 1848, the Cincinnati Enquirer announced that "the papers are being filled with accounts of the discovery of a gold region in California, that is turning everybody in that country topsy-turvy."

The September 26, 1848 issue of the Cleveland Herald declared that "the discovery of a gold mine in California has caused no little excitement at Monterey." Cist's Weekly

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1 Bieber, loc. cit., 15.
Advertiser of Cincinnati reported on November 1, 1848, that "there seems to be no abatement of the previous news from California, in relation to the discovery of the Gold Mine, one hundred miles long and forty broad. There must be some reality in this discovery, or a greater scheme of swindling is being carried on, than we would believe humanity guilty of...." The Columbus Ohio State Journal refused to join in the glad tidings. In fact, ever since the conclusion of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo which ended the Mexican War on February 2, 1848, the Journal had been extremely critical of California resources. In an editorial dated March 27, 1848, the Journal asserted that "the acquisition of New Mexico and California, including the Camanche [sic] Indians and grizzly bears, has cost the nation one hundred and fifty millions of dollars." The writer reasoned that "the purchase of Louisiana, worth ten times as much, cost exactly one-tenth of this sum." In June, the Journal tartly commented that the California cession contained "natural wealth and products; worthy of Patagonia and the African deserts, and savages sufficient to breed Seminole and Creek wars to employ the whole of our grand army for half a century." The editorial concluded by stating that the gold, silver, pearls and other valuable resources "all

\[\text{Ohio State Journal, June 9, 1843.}\]

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lie south of that odious new boundary...." In the same issue, the Journal clipped a letter from the New York Journal of Commerce in which the writer, who had recently returned from California, prophesied that "the day for making money in California is past...." In October, the Journal joined the Cleveland Herald, its Whig colleague to the north, in printing an article from the New York Sun which denounced the gold fever as "an unmitigated humbug, in which knaves and fools were the partners." The editor of the Delaware (Ohio) Democratic Standard felt certain he had found the true motive for the distribution of disparaging articles about California. In the November 30, 1848 issue of his newspaper he declared:

> During the Presidential campaign, the federal editors, in their efforts to undereate the acquisition of California, were exceedingly earnest in showing that the reports of gold and other valuable minerals was all humbug, and that the gold fever had been cured and the patients convalescent. Upon the pretended authority of a whig paper, which bore upon its face evidences of truth, we published an article of the kind. Later accounts show we were in error, and the letter no doubt a forgery. The gold fever is on the increase, and the success with which the efforts of the gold diggers have been crowned, has turned all California topsy turvy.

3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
5 Cleveland Herald, October 9, 1848; Ohio State Journal, October 11, 1848.
In December, 1848, the Ohio State Journal acquiesced, and printed an article from the Baltimore Sun substantiating the reports about the California gold discovery. Shortly thereafter, Ohio newspapers published President Polk's special message to Congress in which the President explained that the California gold mines were "more extensive and valuable than was anticipated." Also in December, the Cleveland Herald, admitting that the California gold excitement had begun to prevail the country over, inserted extracts from Colonel Mason's report. However, to prevent the mania from striking Clevelanders, the Herald quickly issued "a sober second thought" showing that the gold digger could clear only five dollars a day in the California mines, and that the climate in the gold regions was so atrocious from December to March that even the Indians could not live there.

During 1849 and 1850 reports of migrations to California and letters from Ohioans in the gold fields consumed a considerable amount of space in the Ohio newspapers. These letters and reports tended to increase editorial comment on the gold mania.

6 Ohio State Journal, December 4, 1848.
7 Cincinnati Enquirer, December 6, 1848.
8 Cleveland Herald, December 14-16, 1848.
9 Ibid., December 29, 1848.
In February, 1849, the Cincinnati Gazette avowed that "there is not a village or town scarcely in the United States, of any magnitude, that has not its companies formed and forming, for California," and the Columbus Ohio Statesman declared that "the gold mania rages with full force, and there does not appear to be any probability that the 'yellow metal' will soon be exhausted." The Delaware (Ohio) Democratic Standard of February 1, 1849, contained seventeen items about California gold, but the Standard's editor wondered if the poet wasn't referring to the gold fever when he said, "Teach erring man to spurn the rage of gain." Cist's Weekly Advertiser reported that "the desire to get rich, common to man, and the desire to get rich fast, which tempts so many to that ruin which treads on the heels of such enterprises, or is their final result, is producing an emigration to California...."

Another phase of the verbal campaign directed against the gold rush found Ohio newspapers endeavoring to discredit the glowing accounts from the mining areas. The Democratic Standard asserted that "most of the letters purporting from California, and going the rounds of the newspapers, are stated to have been manufactured by

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10 Cincinnati Gazette, February 5, 1849; Ohio Statesman, February 17, 1849.

11 Cincinnati Cist's Weekly Advertiser, March 16, 1849.
'unscrupulous' writers who are paid a 'penny a line' for their productions. They are men who never were in California." The Cleveland Herald, in like manner, advised that "the reports that reach us over the wires in regard to the California gold operations must be taken with many grains of allowance." In October, 1849, the Herald published "a candid and interesting article" from the Alta California, the object of which was "to rectify many of the exaggerated stories and impressions afloat!" Even the Democratic Ohio Statesman, which had surpassed the Whig papers in publicizing the gold rush, supplemented one of the sensational stories from the California mines with the remark that "we are not often excited by large stories and hence we intend to keep perfectly composed until the next arrival." The Cincinnati Gazette climaxed the 1849 attack on the gold mania by declaring, with reference to California:

That business is already overdone - too many goods for the number of consumers; that gold is only obtained by immense toil and great sacrifice of life - that repeated offers of the services of respectable young men, are made for their board and one dollar per day - that the final result, from present indications, is that there will be a general

12Delaware (Ohio) Democratic Standard, April 5, 1849.
13Cleveland Herald, February 19, 1849.
14Ibid., October 15, 1849.
15Ohio Statesman, February 14, 1849.
"blow up" within a year....

Occasionally, newsmen would poke fun at Ohioans gravely afflicted with the gold fever. For example, on February 3, 1849, the Cleveland Herald reported that a gold placer of "unbounded wealth" had been found in the hills near Loudonville. With tongue in cheek, the editor of the Herald proceeded to tell how several young men, who the writer believed had just received a goldometer, struck a vein of gold near Loudonville. The discovery led to frenzied excitement followed by fisticuffs. A young red-haired man emerged victorious from the conflict. After thinking the situation over, he revived his comrades, made up with them, and the entire group began to dig for gold. By nightfall, the whole company had "amassed sufficient to have rendered it certain that they and all their descendants to the latest generation would be more opulent than Croesus." A few days following, one of the discoverers carried a ten-pound piece of the Loudonville gold to the chemist of the Cleveland Medical College, who on examining the specimen "pronounced the question of its purity too palpable to warrant the expense of analysis!" Several days later, the authors of the Loudonville gold story, making the most of a good joke, announced: "We understand a company of 25 enterprising fellows was organizing this morning for the

16 Cincinnati Gazette, October 24, 1849.

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diggings near Loudonville. They will proceed early in the
spring by way of Silberg's and Lake Abraham."

The following account, published on April 12, 1850,
reveals how the Cincinnati Gazette also had its moments
of mirth at the expense of the gold diggers:

Yesterday and day before, our wharf was
alive with "gold seekers," not such as expect
to get coin by steamboating or its concomi-
tants, but the fellows who are "bound for the
diggings." Gold visions, of course, were the
only kind indulged. A party of these "seekers"
was on the landing in conversation with a few
city wags. Presently one of the "cits" picked
up half an eagle. Then the conversation ran
glibly as to the prospect on the Sacramento,
Gila and Feather rivers - another half eagle
was found. It was suggested that there must
have been money-gold, buried in that spot,
and two or three of the would-be-Californians
catching at the idea, hurried to their berths,
prepared themselves, and, without suspicion
of a hoax, went to digging among the hard
pebbles. Before they were convinced that they
had been slightly "taken in" they had left
their marks very distinctly on the compact
pavement. They thought it a long joke, and
rubbed their backs as if they did not relish
gold seeking. We hope, that they will have
better luck, but we fear many of them though
they may be wiser, will not be much richer
after they have tried their hands to a satis-
faction among the placers of California.

Concern over the gold fever did not prevent Ohio jour-
nalists from engaging in political disputes. In fact, the
influx of gold from California into the United States gave
the Ohio Statesman an opportunity to attack the monetary
policy of the Whig party. In June, 1849, the Statesman

17 Cleveland Herald, February 5, 1849.
called attention to a dispatch estimating that the gold mines of California would yield thirty millions of dollars during that season. The Statesman predicted, "If half this estimate be true, the vocation of our shin-plaster neighbor of the Journal will be gone." On June 7, the Statesman declared: "We had the pleasure of handling a few of the beautiful gold dollars, and we warn the shin-plaster whigs now, that unless they can invent some way to prevent their getting among the people, they will drive out the labor-robbing small trash that infests the country."

In 1850 the Ohio Statesman continued on the offensive. On July 12 of that year the editor of the Statesman said: "We publish important news from the Gold regions. The manufacturers of Bank rags must work hard to make printed pictures fast enough to keep this gold out of circulation. Not gold and silver enough to do the business of the country? Oh! Humbug!" On August 22, the Statesman reported: "Two arrivals are announced from California - one brings a million of gold, and the other a large amount. All this to be hoarded by the Whig Bankers, while they give rags to the people." On September 6, the Statesman announced: "About three millions more is arriving at New York. It, and not bank rags, should buy the farmers' shares."

18 Ohio Statesman, June 1, 1849.
19 Ibid., June 7, 1849.
produce, but the Whig policy is, gold for the 'aristocracy,' and paper pictures for the Common people.'" On September 27, 1850, the Statesman, copying an article in the September 24 issue of the Cleveland Herald, declared that in this article the "most completely old Munkerish anti-progressive paper currency advocate in all Ohio, save the Cincinnati Gazette," had conceded that the influx of California gold "has shaken down long established theories upon money and currency." The Statesman suggested that the Ohio State Journal had better rush one of its "Hard Money-the Issue" pamphlets to Mr. Harris, editor of the Cleveland Herald.

The Cleveland Herald admitted that the distribution of California gold among the people of the nation "naturally reduces the money before in market, and at the same time reduces the rate of interest." Furthermore, the Herald contended that "those who in accordance with old custom base their calculations upon the amount of legal tender in existence before the California discoveries, will surely err." With respect to the charges made by the Toledo Republican and the Ohio Statesman that these remarks constituted an argument for an exclusive metallic currency, the editors of the Herald answered that experience had

\(^{20}\) Cleveland Herald, September 30, 1850.

\(^{21}\) Ibid.
revealed the hard money policy of Ohio Locofocos to be
"an impracticable humbug, meant to catch gulls, and every
business man laughs at it."

As the gold rush continued into its second year, Ohio
editorials once again warned their readers to desist from
the temptation of seeking a quick fortune in California.
The Cleveland True Democrat of January 15, 1850, gave this
bit of advice to Ohioans interested in going to California:
"Better stay at home, and get an honest living by honest
means, than peril your lives and souls in such a rash ad-
venture." On April 17 of the same year, the True Democrat
declared that "every gold mining region has brought with it
the same rush, and the same sad results. California, we
take it, will prove no exception." Undoubtedly the most
violent denunciation of the gold rush ever printed by an
Ohio newspaper was produced by the Cleveland Herald in an
editorial entitled the "Gold Mania." Appearing in the
August 29, 1850 issue of the Herald, this article contained
the following vindictive remarks directed toward the
California fever:

Could all the facts relative to the
California gold mania be collected in one
volume, they would form a mass of horrid
recitals, unparalleled in the history of
any country or age. There would be evi-
dence "stronger than proofs, of Holy Writ"
that gold - "money is the root of all evil."

\(^{22}\text{Ibid.}\)

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What crime has it not stimulated? What misery has it not produced? Men of all classes, ranging from abject poverty to independent wealth, have been impelled, by overheated imaginations and an uncontrollable lust for the shining ore, to forego the peace, comforts and happiness of civilized homes, and plunged recklessly into the tide that sweeps on to almost inevitable destruction.

The peaceful avocations of life have been abandoned; renumerating occupation deserted; ties of affection broken; health destroyed; lives sacrificed; hardships and privations endured -- and all for what? The answer is a sad one -- to gratify that phrenzied lust for sudden gain, the very existence of which is an individual curse -- a public calamity.

The magnitude of this evil is not as yet realized by the mass of our people. They look upon it as a splendid drama, and fail to comprehend its reality. But current events as they arrange themselves into history, are unfolding the true results of this extraordinary excitement. Disappointment, want, crime, disgrace, disease, death are being unfolded, as the legitimate sequents of the uncontrollable [sic] mania.

Finding in the appearance of the returned emigrant additional evidence for disclaiming the gold mania, the Herald observed:

The appearance of the returned emigrants from California, per the Pacific, is certainly not calculated to encourage the emigration to that country of those who regard their bodily comfort and enjoyment. They look like men whose fortitude has been severely tried: who had passed through every degree of physical suffering; and had, in a short space of time, laid up a store of rheumatism, of dysentery, and other tendencies to disease, enough to outlast their piles of gold dust. Their clothes look as if they had known no change since they left their homes to wander to the distant El Dorado. Their long hair and beards, their rusty guns, restocked with rough
wood, their sallow complexion and unconcerned look, indicate that the stern scenes through which they have passed, under the promptings of the full spirit of the thirst for gold.\textsuperscript{23}

In December, 1850, the Cincinnati \textit{Gazette} supplied another unfavorable touch to the gold mania by relating the increasing degree of hardships suffered by each successive train of emigrants heading for California by way of the overland route. The editor of the \textit{Gazette} confided that Ohioans, sitting by cheerful firesides and enjoying the comforts of civilized life, could scarcely appreciate the difficulties faced by the adventurers in search of gold.\textsuperscript{24}

The Ohio newspaper editorials did not put an end to the gold mania among Ohioans. However, one could surmise that more than just a few of the Buckeyes out on the western plains and in the California mining camps may have wished that they had taken the advice given by the New York \textit{Journal of Commerce}, which was printed in both the Whig and Democratic papers of Ohio during the early stages of the gold rush. The \textit{Journal of Commerce} listed the following hints for emigrants to California:

\begin{quote}
REMEMBER - that the earth is not very deep in those parts, and it may be very dangerous to dig too deep.
That many a man who has strictly minded his business, has found as good gold as there is in California.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{23} \textit{Ibid.}, November 7, 1850.

\textsuperscript{24} \textit{Cincinnati Gazette}, December 2, 1850.
That all do not find gold who dig for gold only. That all the gold is not in California - and if all California were gold, it wouldn't be worth as much as Coney Island. That if men will desert their country's flag for gold, it is an evil temptation. That if it can be dug out of the rocks with a jack knife, it is not worth digging for, for any respectable jack knife is worth its weight a hundred times in gold.
That to a hungry man, a good sized potato is worth all the California "carets."
That all the gold in the country, if it cannot purchase happiness, is of no value.
That there are men who, if they owned all California, were it all gold, would not be satisfied with it.
That it is better to dwell with humble lives in content, than wear golden sorrow.
That "Poor and Content" is rich, and rich enough - but riches without content is poor as winter to him who ever fears he shall be poor, although he were as rich as the mines of California.²⁵

²⁵Cleveland Herald, December 22, 1843; Delaware (Ohio) Democratic Standard, February 1, 1849.
III ADVERTISEMENTS

"Gold! Gold! Gold!
But we can't go to dig for gold,
'Till our Carpets and Rugs are sold."

--Advertisement, Cleveland Herald, January 2, 1849.

The advertisements appearing in Ohio newspapers during 1848, 1849 and 1850 deserve special consideration because they vigorously reflect the various aspects of the California gold rush as it affected Ohio and Ohioans. A perusal of these advertisements indicates the books the gold digger may have read as a part of his education for the California venture, the articles of provisions he carried with him to the West, the migrations, the mode of travel to the gold fields, and the interjection of the gold rush enthusiasm into the business and entertainment worlds.

As soon as news of the discovery of gold reached the Middle West, writers, map makers, publishers and book salesmen lost little time in attempting to satisfy the curious by liberally dispensing information pertaining to California and the gold regions.

The Gold Mines of California, edited by G.G. Foster was advertised in the December 26, 1848 issue of the Cleveland Herald, as a book "containing all that is known up to the present time in relation to those 'diggings.'"

Mr. Foster's publication sold for twenty-five cents.
In January, 1849, the Burgess and Wood store of Cincinnati offered several items of interest to the prospective gold seeker including a limited supply of Colton's Map of the United States, Mexico, and California, "showing the Routes of the U. States Mail Steamers to California, and a Plan of the Gold Regions." Burgess and Wood also advertised Lieutenant Emory's report to Congress entitled Notes of a Military Reconnaissance From Ft. Leavenworth in Missouri, to San Diego in California, and a book by Fayette Robinson bearing the title, California and its Gold Regions. Colton's map retailed for thirty cents, Emory's report for two dollars and fifty cents, and Robinson's book sold for fifty cents.

The George H. Derby and Company ushered in 1849 by proudly announcing in Ohio newspapers the forthcoming publication of Colonel Fremont's Travels in Oregon and California "to which will be added recent and reliable information in relation to the Gold Mines of California." Because of the author's popularity and "the great interest felt in relation to 'Gold Regions'", the publishers ex-

1Cincinnati Gazette, January 9, 1849; Ohio Statesman, February 28, 1849.
2Cincinnati Gazette, January 13, 1849.
3Ibid.
4Ibid., January 16, 1849.
pressed confidence that their new edition, containing four hundred sixty pages, would find a ready market.

The I.N. Whiting and Huntington store of Columbus gave notice that facts pertaining to "California and its History, Population, Climate, Soil Productions and Harbors" could be obtained at their place of business in a book taken from Sir George Simpson's overland journey. Along with Simpson's work was an account by John F. Hughes of the revolution in California, and the conquest of the country by the United States. Also, the customer stepping into Whiting and Huntington's in January, 1849, could purchase Colonel Mason's report, "and other documents on the gold region."

Among the other publications advertised in Ohio newspapers during 1849 were Life, Adventures and Travels in California by T.J. Farnham, The Gold Mines of the Gila by Charles W. Webber, Charles Wilk's Western America, The California and Oregon Trail by Francis Parkman, Jr., and Judge Thornton's Oregon and California in 1848.

5Ibid.
6Ohio Statesman, January 9, 1849.
7Ibid.
8Ibid.
9Cincinnati Gazette, March 7, 26, May 5, 1849; Ohio Statesman, March 20, April 20, 1849.
In the spring of 1850 H.W. Derby and Company of Cincinnati had for sale Rev. Walter Colton's new work, Deck and Port, or Incidents of a Cruise to California. The William H. Moore and Company of the same city distributed a pamphlet containing the Diary of a Physician in California written by James L. Tysen, M.D. Another physician's account of the land of gold, which occupied the attention of the Ohio reading public of 1850, was William McCullen's California As I Saw It. E.G. Buffum's Six Months in the Gold Mines was advertised in Cleveland newspapers in June, 1850.

The decline in enthusiasm for migrating to California, which was evident in Ohio by the winter of 1850-51, is exemplified by comparing two book advertisements found in the Cleveland Herald. The March 16, 1850 issue of the Cleveland Herald stated that a book salesman by the name of Pierson had a new book on hand entitled Notes on California and the Placers, "by one who has been there." This work, explained the editors of the Herald, "will no doubt, interest the many looking anxiously to that Quarter." In

10 Cincinnati Gazette, March 26, 1850.
11 Ibid., April 15, 1850.
12 Cleveland Herald, May 11, 1850.
13 Ibid., June 21, 1850.
14 Ibid., March 16, 1850.
November, the Herald ran an advertisement briefly announcing that the price on Bayard Taylor's El Dorado had been reduced to $1.25.

When the prospective gold digger had digested the information on California found in books and newspapers, he could turn to the businessmen who were only too eager to equip him. Advertisements found in the Buckeye newspapers of 1849 and 1850 clearly depict the type and variety of provisions Ohioans purchased to sustain themselves on the way to the land of gold.

The Cincinnati merchants were especially active in the gold rush trade. Philip Pike of the Cincinnati Distillery prepared liquors, "such as Imitative French Brandies, Holland Gin, Rum and wines of all kinds for the California market." Bennett and Cooper, Cincinnati bakers, advertised "California Pilot Bread" which would keep over twelve months. The D.S. James and Company of 21 Sycamore Street, Cincinnati, called to the attention of companies going to the gold diggings their supply of twelve hundred boxes of cheese which "will keep two to four years in the warmest climate and not spoil." Messrs. Burnett and Blair, "au-

15 Ibid., November 2, 1850.
16 Cincinnati Gazette, January 9, 1849.
17 Ibid., January 8, 1849.
18 Ibid., February 26, 1849.
thorized agents for the California Gold Mining Company," informed the public that "'tis essential to those wishing to prosper (and who does not?) - that they take a good wife with them - and in order to induce them to do so, they will manufacture the Cakes, Ice Cream, etc. considerably below any other establishment in this city." The proprietors of the Broadway Mills indicated their willingness to contract for the delivery of corn meal and flour which would "keep sweet for one year in any climate." C.S. Bradbury's mill advertised steam dried flour prepared under "Stafford's Patent." Bradbury's recommended "flour thus prepared, to all going to California, whether by sea or the overland route." F.R. Skinner, another Cincinnati merchant, urged emigrants to call at his store where they could "purchase Tents and Tent Fixtures at low prices." Dodd and Company advised all who were contemplating a trip across the plains to purchase at least one California hat. With reference to the hats, the advertisement stated, "they are just the article for all kinds of weather: pleasant to the head, and protection against rain and sun." California blankets

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19 Ibid., March 13, 1849.
20 Ibid., March 26, 1849.
21 Ibid., April 23, 1849.
22 Ibid., January 8, 1849.
23 Ibid., February 20, 1849.
could be procured at J.D. and C. Jones and Company, and at
the Baker and Coover store. Shires, on Sycamore Street,
gave notice that they were prepared to "furnish parties for
California with Gold Sifters of very superior quality and
construction, together with every variety of Copper, Tin,
Sheet Iron, Hardware and Cutlery." The success of the
Shires' establishment was authenticated in an item appear-
ing under the city and business notices of the Cincinnati
Gazette. The Gazette declared that "the demand for Calif-
ornia Gold Sifters, Cooking Utensils etc., at Shires' 128
Sycamore Street is increasing to an enormous extent." The
John F. Dair and Company fitted out California expeditions
with all of the necessary provisions, and Huntington's, at
123 Main Street, itemized the following essential articles
for making a trip to California:

1 or a pair of Allen's Revolving Pistols;
1 do fine Powder Flask;
1000 Percussion Caps, best quality;
1 good Hunting Knife;
1 do Pocket Compass
1 do Spy Glass;
And last, but not least, one of Huntington's
superior Diamond pointed Gold Pens. All of
which can be had at HUNTINGTON'S.27

24Ibid., March 2, 13, 26, 1849.
25Ibid., February 26, 1849.
26Ibid., March 22, 1849.
27Ibid., March 26, April 28, 1849.
Columbus businessmen likewise advertised for their share in the California trade. For example, Denig and Sons, distributors for Dr. Myers' Sarsaparilla, warned Ohioans leaving for California to "guard well against the change that brings on dread diseases, or you may whiten the 'golden sands' of El Dorado." The preventative for such a catastrophe was, of course, Dr. Myers' Sarsaparilla. B.H. Meakings, general agent for Dr. Bragg's Queen Vegetable Sugar Coated Pills, publicized his product as "the Pioneer's Trusty Friend! - the best Medicine for Fever and Ague, Chill Fever and the various forms of Billious, Remittent and intermittent Fevers, ever known to the world." Mr. Meakings boldly asserted that for the California emigrant Dr. Bragg's pills "will be more valuable than Gold!" Bisbee's Daguerreotype Room advocated that all California emigrants "should have their likenesses taken to leave with their friends," and by April, 1850, Joseph Smith, agent of the Knox Insurance Company, was authorized "to insure the lives of persons going to California by the overland route."

28 Ohio Statesman, January 3, 1849.
29 Ibid.
30 Ibid., February 20, 1849.
31 Ibid.
32 Ibid., March 23, 1849; April 6, 1850.
In Cleveland, T.W. Morse and Company advertised their stores as "the only real California Outfitting Establishment in Cleveland," and offered to the gold seeker "Coats, Pants, Hats, Caps, Gloves, and Real India Rubber Camp Blankets" at factory prices. The Boston Ready Made Clothing Store, located at 82 Superior Street, Cleveland, gave notice to California and Oregon emigrants that only at the Boston Store could they find a full line of goods at Eastern prices.

 Merchants from other states also displayed their willingness to outfit California companies by placing advertisements of their products in Ohio newspapers. B. Lieber, a Philadelphia importer, informed Ohioans he was prepared to supply merchants and others destined for California with a variety of liquors. Edward K. Tryon, also of Philadelphia, advertised two hundred rifles for sale. According to Mr. Tryon these rifles were "strong, well made, and serviceable Guns, exactly the article for the California trade." Livestock dealers from Independence, Missouri, and Madison, Iowa, wishing to sell mules and oxen

33 Cleveland Herald, June 6, 1850.
34 Ibid., April 15, 1850.
35 Ohio Statesman, February 17, 1849.
36 Cincinnati Gazette, February 26, 1849.
to California companies, placed advertisements in Ohio newspapers. Above all, Ohioans destined for the gold fields undoubtedly were quite intrigued with Signor D'Alvear's advertisement of his goldometer and the Gold Seeker's Guide. According to the advertisement, Signor D'Alvear had returned to New York in January, 1849, with one million dollars worth of gold. He attributed his fortune to an instrument of his own making which he called a goldometer. The magnetic influence of this instrument, claimed D'Alvear, led him to an obscure branch of the Sacramento River where he found at least three thousand dollars worth of gold per day. D'Alvear contended that he had sold an imperfect goldometer in California for three thousand dollars, but since arriving in New York the price of his invention had been reduced to three dollars. The Gold Seeker's Guide, comprised of a "variety of philosophical hints drawn from the ancient and modern sciences," retailed for one dollar. D'Alvear's advertisement was supported by a number of testimonials, the following one being of special interest to Ohioans:

Los Angeles, California, Aug. 1848
This may certify that the undersigned is fully convinced that Signor Jose De Alvear was

Ibid., March 9, 26, 1849.
Ibid., January 16, 1849.
the first discoverer of the Gold deposits of California, and that this discovery was made by the aid of a Magnetic instrument called the GOLDOMETER, which I have seen successfully applied to the discovery of veins of Gold ore, in places where no indication of that substance appeared upon the surface of the earth.

W.T. Sherman  
Lieut. 3d Artillery, U.S. Army

D'Alvear's advertisement appeared in Cleveland and Cincinnati newspapers. However, the editor of the St. Clairsville Gazette turtly declared:

Jose d'Alvear of New York has sent us an advertisement about his humbug 'Gol- dometer,' which he wants inserted to the amount of $10. As some visionary might be induced to buy his $3 tool and his $1 book, and thus be taken in, we shall file his humbug away, and ascertain how many editors publish his notice for a little drose, and then see how many are deceived thereby."

Beside denoting equipment sold to the California emigrant, the newspaper advertisements provided evidence of the migrations. In January, 1849, a young businessman doing a "good, safe and profitable" business made known his intentions of leaving Columbus for California. It was his hope that he could sell his Columbus establishment to one purchaser. "A healthy middle aged man, a mechanic by occu-

39 Ibid.
40 Ibid.; Cleveland Herald, January 16, 1849.
41 St. Clairsville Gazette, January 19, 1849.
42 Ohio Statesman, January 15, 1849.
pation," desiring to join one of the Columbus companies for California, offered one half of his profits attained in California to the person who would outfit him for the vent-
43
ture. In April, 1849, the Ohio Statesman carried an adver-
tisement of the organization of a California mining company at Harmar, Washington County, Ohio. This company, with a capital of twenty-five thousand dollars, sold shares of stock for two hundred fifty dollars each, "for building a Ship, loading the same with houses and other articles, and running it to California next winter." A Cleveland mer-
44
cchant admitted that "some may think it's a foolish undertak-
ing to hunt for gold, but," he continued, "what's the use to work 12 hours by day and 4 by night to make a dol-
45
lar, when a person can make 50 dollars in 10 hours by day-
light, and play in the bargain." With this idea in mind, he implored the public to buy his carpets and rugs, so he could join the migration to California. Another Cleveland-
er sought to secure subscriptions amounting to three hun-
derd dollars for financing his way to California. Fifty per cent of the profits he hoped to derive in the gold region would be distributed among his subscribers in

43Ibid., January 30, 1849.
44Ohio Statesman, April 17, 1850.
45Cleveland Herald, January 2, 1849.
46Ibid.
proportion to the amounts of their investments.\textsuperscript{47}

Ohioans desiring transportation to the Pacific coast very likely read with great care newspaper advertisements inserted by transportation companies. A rather enticing advertisement of this type was clipped from the St. Louis Union by the Ohio Statesman. It stated that Turner and Allen of St. Louis were organizing a pioneer passenger train, which would leave for California in the spring of 1849 by the overland route. Passengers on this train were to ride in elliptic spring wagons. The price of passage, including rations, was set at two hundred dollars. In addition to that, each passenger would be allowed one hundred pounds of baggage. Extra baggage would be transported at twenty cents per pound.\textsuperscript{48}

If the Ohioan cared to reach California by sea the shipping company advertisements afforded him that opportunity. J. Howard and Son, of 34 Broadway, New York City, announced the sailing dates of their steamships, The Empire City and the Crescent City, both of which made voyages from New York to Panama. Steerage rates on these two vessels ranged from sixty-five dollars to eighty dollars, while cabin facilities cost from ninety dollars to one hundred

\textsuperscript{47}\textit{Ibid.}, January 3, 1849.

\textsuperscript{48}\textit{Ohio Statesman}, February 17, 1849.
fifty dollars. The sailing date for "the elegant Packet ship" Rowena appeared in the Cincinnati Gazette. Superb accommodations and no detentions in intermediate ports were promised to the passenger taking this ship to San Francisco. Arnold Buffum and Company, a California passenger agency with offices in New York, attempted to draw Ohio patronage by naming U.S. Senator Salmon P. Chase and Secretary of the Treasury Thomas Corwin as references. However, the shipping advertisement which probably created the greatest interest in Ohio was the announcement of the sailing of the "staunch propellor" Earl Cathcart from the Great Lakes to California by way of the St. Lawrence River in the fall of 1850. In order to make repairs and purchase provisions for the voyage, the ship owners placed on sale sixty-four shares of stock at five hundred dollars per share. A share of this stock would entitle the purchaser to "a passage to California, with about two tons of freight and one 64th part of the vessel."

As the gold fever spread throughout Ohio the words "gold" and "California were interjected into advertisements

49 Cincinnati Gazette, July 31, October 23, 1849.
50 Ibid., October 15, 1849.
51 Ohio Statesman, September 3, 1850.
52 Cleveland Herald, May 4, 1850.
to encourage commercial transactions even though the articles advertised would have no association at all with the California trade. For example, when a Columbus tavern keeper wished to sell his place of business he placed the following advertisement in the *Ohio Statesman*: "Hurrah for the Gold Mines of California. Now for a Speculation Just Look at This!!! The Farmers and Mechanics' Tavern is for sale. It is situated on the corner of Scioto and Broad streets." An advertisement appearing in the Cleveland *Herald* announced the "Discovery of Gold! In the old River Bed." Then, it went on to state that "since the discovery of Gold in the bed of the old Sacramento everybody's attention is attracted that way; but having received our stock of new Curtain Materials, we trust they will prove equally attractive." In 1849 a Columbus realtor advertised that the true El Dorado had been discovered, not in California, but in Columbus on Broad and Oak streets where he had "valuable and pleasant" lots for sale. His revelation was prompted by the fact that the Ohio General Assembly had made an appropriation of fifty thousand dollars toward the construction of the new State House in the vicinity of the realtor's lots. A Cleveland advertisement asserted that

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53 *Ohio Statesman*, January 3, 1849.
54 *Cleveland Herald*, March 11, 1850.
55 *Ohio Statesman*, March 30, 1849.
California was not more valuable than one of Johnson's "Premier Daguerreotype miniatures." When the proprietor of a Massillon confectionery advertised his establishment for sale, he promised the purchaser a veritable "California in Massilon [sic]." By 1850 California merchants were capitalizing on the occult power of their surroundings by placing advertisements in Ohio papers.

The California excitement was even reflected in the entertainment advertisements. The drama, California Gold Mines and a Mr. Benton's play, The California Gold Hunters, were presented at Cincinnati's National Theatre in January, 1849. The California Gold Hunters, described as "an admirable burlesque: full of fun and incident," returned to the National for a June engagement. In February, 1849, one of the plays presented at Rockwell's New American Theatre in Cincinnati was entitled Buckeye Gold Hunters; or Dutchey in California. Panoramas on topics evolving around the California gold regions also were frequently advertised.

56 Cleveland Herald, October 10, 1850.
57 Ibid., May 6, 1850.
58 Ibid., September 15, 1850; Cincinnati Gazette, October 21, 1850.
59 Cincinnati Gazette, January 27, 30, 1849.
60 Ibid., January 30, June 5, 1849.
61 Ibid., February 22, 1849.
Seigler's panorama of a voyage from New York to California by way of Cape Horn, "with a splendid Diorama of the Gold Diggings and Washings on the Sacramento" was shown at Cincinnati's College Hall in June, 1850, and at Odeon Hall in Columbus the following month. The editor of the Statesman noted that there was a good audience at the Odeon, and that "the figures are fine and move systematically." On September 10, 1850, Marvin and Wright's Gigantic Mirror of California opened a week's engagement at the Melodeon in Cleveland. The advertisement for this production stated that the eighteen thousand feet of canvas to be exhibited would contain original sketches, taken on the spot by Paul Emmert, of Chagres, Gorgona, Panama Accupulco, San Francisco, Sacramento City, Sutter's Fort and the various mining districts. J.L. Marvin, who had spent a year in California, served as narrator for the panorama. In conjunction with the closing of their Grand Panorama of the California Gold Mines, Messrs. Marvin and Hawley announced to their Cincinnati patrons the "most splendid Prize Exhibition ever given in Cincinnati." At the drawing held on

63 *Ohio Statesman*, July 11, 1850.
64 *Cleveland Herald*, September 7, 1850.
65 *Cincinnati Gazette*, December 13, 1850.
December 14, 1850, "15 prizes procured at a cost of over $200," and including gold watches, rings and pins, were 66 given to members of the audience holding lucky tickets. By the winter of 1850 it is altogether possible that Cincinnatians were more fascinated by the gold prizes than by the pictures of the California gold fields.

66 Ibid.
IV  BUCKEYE MIGRATIONS

O' Susanna! don't you cry for me!
I'm going to California with my wash-bowl on my knee.  
--Foster

The exact number of Ohioans who went to California in search of gold during 1849 and 1850 is not known. The editor of the Ohio Statesman estimated that at least twenty thousand Ohioans thronged to Pacific shores in 1849.

Cist's Weekly Advertiser of March 14, 1849, believed that "the emigration to California from the State of Ohio, will not average less than one hundred and twenty persons from each of the counties, or ten thousand individuals from the entire state." In the light of federal census statistics, both of these estimates appear to be excessive. According to the Seventh Census, which was taken in 1850, there were 5,500 Ohioans in California. This figure represents approximately 5.9% of the total population of California in 1850. Applying this percentage to the total California population of 1852 as derived from a State Census and a State Report, it could be estimated that from 13,000 to 15,000 Ohioans were residing in California by 1852. Once again, though, certain discrepancies must be admitted. Returns from Santa Clara, San Francisco and Contra Costa counties were lost,

1 Ohio Statesman, April 6, 1849.
2 Seventh Census, Statistics of Population, xxxvi.
3 Seventh Census, 1850, Compendium, 394.
and therefore omitted from the Federal Census of 1850 which set California's aggregate population at 92,597. The California State Census of 1852 reported the State's total population to be 255,122, but a State Report compiled in the same year placed it at 224,435. Despite these variations the Federal Census of 1850, and the more accurate Eighth Census, taken in 1860, show that from 1850 through 1860 Ohio was surpassed only by New York and Missouri in contributing citizens to California. Therefore, without subscribing to the folly of a numerical estimate, it is possible to state that Ohio was well represented in the mining areas of California during 1849 and 1850.

Several routes, either by land or by sea, were available to Ohioans wishing to embark for California in 1849 and 1850. The quickest was by way of Panama. Taking a steamer from New York to Panama, the Forty-Niner could cross the Isthmus of Panama, board a Pacific steamer and be in San Francisco thirty-three to thirty-five days following his departure from New York. At least three

4 Seventh Census, Statistics of Population, 966 et seq.
5 Seventh Census, 1850, Compendium, 394.
7 Paul, op. cit., 30.

47
disadvantages attended the traveler who chose this route. In the first place, the cost of the journey would range from two hundred thirty dollars to four hundred ten dollars depending on the type of accommodations requested. Secondly, the passage across the Isthmus of Panama by native canoes and by muleback subjected the Forty-Niner to climatic conditions which encouraged tropical fevers. Finally, on reaching the Pacific side of Panama, the California emigrant often faced delays in securing passage to San Francisco. For less money, the California emigrant could take a ship to the Gulf of Mexico, then cross Mexico to the Pacific Ocean, and continue his journey to San Francisco by water. However, Mexico was plagued with diseases, and infested with bandits. Perhaps the safest route to California was by way of Cape Horn, but the voyage was long and boring. Furthermore, after spending from four to eight months aboard a sailing vessel, the Forty-Niner was very apt to be in poor physical condition by the time he had reached the gold mines. The most arduous way to California

8Ibid., 31; Bancroft, op. cit., VI, 133-136; Cincinnati Gazette, April 17, 1849.

9Paul, op. cit., 32; Robert Glass Cleland, From Wilderness to Empire, The History of California, 1542-1900, 243.

10Paul, op. cit., 32-33.
was the overland route across the western plains. Actually, there were at least four overland routes to California. The southern trail crossed Texas to Santa Fe where the emigrant could proceed to California via the Gila-Colorado junction and the Imperial Valley, and then go on to Los Angeles either through San Gorgonio Pass or Warner's Pass. At Santa Fe, the emigrant might elect to take the Spanish Trail to San Bernardino. The California-Oregon Trail followed the Platte River, crossed the Rocky Mountains at the South Pass and went on to Fort Hall on the Snake River. By way of Salt Lake and the Humboldt and Truckee rivers, the California Trail continued to Sacramento. The Oregon Trail ran from Ft. Hall to the Columbia River from which gold seekers could move southward into California.

Appealing to the pioneer instincts of many Americans, the overland route was the most popular road to California in 1849, and it appeared to grow in favor with the western migrants of 1850. The Cincinnati Gazette of April 5, 1850, pointing to the most notable advantage of the overland route, stated: "There is no doubt that after a man has crossed the Plains, if he has preserved his health, he is more robust, and every way in better condition to go into

\[11\] Cleland, *op. cit.*, 243-244.

\[12\] Bancroft, *op. cit.*, VI, 159; Cincinnati *Gazette*, April 5, 1850.
the diggings and labor, than he would have been had he
gone out by water." With good fortune, the California
emigrant could traverse the plains and ascend the Sierra
Nevadas in a period of ninety days. More often, the over-
land journey required from five to seven months of trav-
el. On other occasions, the emigrant, overcome by dust,
drought and disease, never reached his destination. The
following examples of grave markers found along the over-
land route attest to the fact that among the victims
claimed by the rigors of the plains were Ohioans:

"M. DE MORST
OF COL: OHIO,
DIED SEP. 16TH. 1849,
AGED 50 YEARS,
13
OF CAMP FEVER."

"HENRY H. ROBINSON
DIED AUG: 13. 1849
AGE 26 YEARS.
OF DYSENTARY, ETC.
14
UNION CO. OHIC"

13Paul, op. cit., 34.
14J. Goldsborough Bruff, Gold Rush, I, 182.
15Ibid., 170.
"IN MEMORY OF ABNER NEEDHAM,
OF MORROW, CO., OHIO
DIED SEP. 27. 1849"

The Ohioan of 1849 who desired to go west in search of gold occasionally undertook the venture alone, but more often he would associate himself with a small party of migrants, or a joint stock company heading for the gold fields.

Among the first Ohio companies organized for California were groups from Wellsville, Medina and Cincinnati. The California Club of Cincinnati held its first meeting on December 19, 1843, at the office of W.B. Norman on the east side of Main Street between Fifth and Sixth streets. R.C. Greene presided at the meeting, and L.M. Rogers acted as secretary. Three resolutions were adopted. First, the chairman was to appoint a committee of fifty to draft a constitution for the company. The second resolution created a committee of three to determine the most suitable routes to the gold regions, and the most appropriate time for departure. The final resolution stated that it would be "inexpedient" for a large company to travel together, so


\[17\] *Cleveland Herald*, December 22, 1843; *Cincinnati Enquirer*, December 22, 1843.

51
a maximum of only fifteen more members were to be permitted membership in the company.

As the year 1849 began, an increasing number of California companies and parties were organized. The St. Clairsville (Ohio) Gazette of January 19, 1849, reported that "a few enterprising gentlemen of this place are preparing to go to California. They intend to pay their way by freight, etc., and come back as well off, at least, as when they start, gold or no gold." In January, 1849, a company started from Sandusky for California under the leadership of Mr. John Johnson, who had spent many years of his life in the employ of the Hudson Bay Fur Company. Members of the company besides Johnson were Stephen G. Whipple, Horatio U. Jennings, Luther McGee, William Pettibone, B.B. Barney, Solomon Bardshar, George Ball, T.B. Gardiner and _______ Merrifew. The Cleveland Herald announced the formation of two California companies, one from Conneaut, and the other an East Cleveland company. In addition, the Herald stated that Messrs. Oliver Scovill and Ed. Beardsley of Cleveland left for California by way of New York, and that ten or twelve more Clevelanders were

\(^{18}\)Cincinnati Enquirer, December 22, 1848.

\(^{19}\)Sandusky Mirror in Cleveland Herald, January 8, 1849.
making preparations to leave. From Cincinnati came news that a joint stock company to consist of one hundred members of the Methodist Episcopal Church was being organized for the "diggings." Also, from Cincinnati, it was announced that Mr. Peabody of the Cincinnati Merchants' Exchange, in company with a band of adventurers, was contemplating a trip to California "to seek his fortune in that modern Ophir which lies near the Sierra Nevada."

One of the largest California companies to be organized was under the direction of Lieutenant Colonel Webb of the Sixteenth U.S. Infantry, and was composed of young men from several states. Among the Ohioans in the company was William Henry Harrison, grandson of the former president of the United States. The purpose of the company was to trade, purchase gold dust and employ Indians to mine gold. A large amount of capital for this expedition was subscribed in New York with the provision that the investors, regardless of whether they went to California or not, would share equally in the profits derived from the enterprises. The company was entrusted with government dispatches to California. In turn, the Federal Government agreed to

20 Cleveland Herald, January 27, 31, 1849.
21 Ohio Stateeman, January 30, 1849.
22 Cincinnati Gazette, January 18, 1849.
23 Cleveland Herald, February 19, 1849.
supply Webb and his men with arms, camp equipage and transportation from New Orleans to the Rio Grande River. On February 18, 1849, Lieutenant Colonel Webb's company left Cincinnati aboard the steamer John Quincy Adams for Cairo, Illinois, and New Orleans, Louisiana. From New Orleans the group sailed to the mouth of the Rio Grande, whence they were to proceed by land through Mexico to California. Before they reached their destination, misfortune overtook this company at Clay Davis' Rancho on the Rio Grande. Mr. Audubon, son of the noted ornithologist, was robbed of $12,000 worth of gold by a Mexican, and an epidemic of cholera claimed the lives of eight of the company including young Harrison.

February, 1849, was also an organization month for several of the important Ohio companies. During the second week of February, the Columbus and California Industrial Association completed a constitution composed of a preamble and seventeen articles. This company consisted of thirty men described as "industrious, honest, of the most solid characters, of full vigor of life, and well informed on all subjects." Each member of the company

24 Ibid.
25 Cleveland Herald, February 19, 1849; Cincinnati Gazette, April 16, 1849.
26 Ohio Statesman, February 15, 1849.
invested two hundred twenty-five dollars in this organization which was to remain intact for a period of eighteen months. The constitution for the association frowned on gambling and the use of intoxicating beverages except for medicinal purposes. Members were encouraged to "cease from all unnecessary labor" on the Sabbath, and "to engage in such worship as the judgement shall dictate, and the conscience approve." John Walton was named president of the association. The Columbus and California Industrial Association and another Columbus company being formed at the same time planned on going to California by the South Pass, the Mormon settlements and through the Great Basin.

A California company from St. Clairsville completed its organization in February, 1849, and made preparations for embarking to the gold fields by way of Cape Horn. The organization of this company is especially notable inasmuch as one of its leaders was Wilson Shannon, first Ohio born governor of the State, who was elected Ohio's chief executive in 1838 and 1842. In addition to the former

27 Ibid.
28 Ibid.
29 Ibid.
governor, other members of the company were Daniel Peck, William Shannon, the governor's son, Abner Barton, Joseph W. Mulvany, Daniel Jones, Daniel Mott, Lyman Nutting, George W. Wilson, John C. Johnson, James A. Hutchison, William A. Booker, John Gilliland, John Castle, Sam Gaskill, Clement S. Steel and Messrs. Gerry and Wheeler of Harrison County. Before embarking for California the membership of this company was enlarged to sixty men with a capital of fifteen thousand dollars.

In March, 1849, companies from Akron, Painesville, Cincinnati, Steubenville and Gallipolis left for California. The Akron Mining Company went from Wellsville by steamboat to St. Louis. From St. Louis, they planned to go to Independence, Missouri, and there take the land route by way of Salt Lake to California. Members of this company were J.R. Gilbert, J.L. Gilbert, Lewis P. Buckley, John O. Gerrett, Elijah Kellogg, Russell Abbey, C. Grass-er, Henry S. Long, John Decker, John Rose, G. Carr, Lewis Philtendorf, E. Stinebecker, P. Fisher and George Ayliffe. The Painesville Mining Company was composed of

31St. Clairsville (Ohio) Gazette, February 16, 1849.
32Ohio Statesman, March 3, 1849.
33Cleveland Herald, March 9, 22, 30, 1849; Cincinnati Gazette, March 13, 14, 1849.
34Akron Beacon in Cleveland Herald, March 9, 1849.

Painesville Telegraph in Cleveland Herald, March 30, 1849.

57
George Martin and A. Johnson.

The rising tide of emigrations to California became even more pronounced in April, 1849. On April 2, the Ohio Statesman reported the departure of two Columbus companies for the land of gold. The Franklin California Mining Company, headed by Joseph Hunter, consisted of thirty men, eight new wagons and twenty-six yoke of oxen. It was stated that Mr. Reed of Columbus baked two thousand pounds of sea bread for the group. Besides Captain Hunter, members of the company included John Coulter, lieutenant; J.H. Marple, secretary; F.A. McCormick, treasurer; O.S. Hunter, quartermaster, Chester F. Colton, J. Robey, Joseph Booth, Samuel Price, Alexander Robertson, C.H. Myers, Samuel Myers, John Spayth, J.W. Coulter, A.M. Hunter, V.R. Smith, J. McCartney, N. Demorest, O.S. Walcutt, E. Gaver, R.J. Hunter, A. Cornwall, J.K. Ban, George Woodward, John Uncles, J. Bobo, Matthew Williams, J. Armitage, and O.M. Shaw. The second Columbus company, mentioned earlier in the chapter as the Columbus and California Industrial Association, was supplied with ten wagons and forty mules. The following men were members of this organization: John Walton, president; J.C. Canfield, vice-president; P. Decker, secretary; G.Q. McCollm, treasurer, G. Walton,

36 Cincinnati Gazette, March 13, 1849.

37 Ohio Statesman, April 3, 1849.

58

The Statesman reported on April 3 that Messrs. McDowell and Purdy of Columbus, and two men from Lancaster were "fitting out" an expedition for California.


38 Ibid., February 15, April 2, 3, 1849.
39 Ibid., April 3, 1849.
40 Cincinnati Gazette, April 6, 1849.
and B.F. Hutchison. The Trumbull County Whig Company, "armed to the teeth and fully equipped," listened to a sermon preached by the local minister before departing for California by way of Independence, Missouri. Daniel Jaggar, R. Quigly, Joseph Hall, Josiah Soulie, Sr. and John Reeves belonged to this company. They were later joined at Niles by Messrs. Atwood, Baldwin, Wood, Hake and Packard. On April 10, 1849, J.E. Armstrong, a young Forty-Niner from Hebbardsville, Ohio, recorded in his "Diary of an Overland Trip to California" that "we got aboard the Boat Mon[on]ganele at Pomeroy." The logical presumption is that the "we" refers to members of a company from Athens and Meigs counties who were beginning their long journey to the gold regions. A later entry in the diary stated that as the company approached California, D. Dickson and D.L. Danna were sent ahead to examine the mining districts. Also in April, the Akron Beacon stated that

41Ohio Statesman, April 20, 1849.
42Akron Beacon in Cleveland Herald, April 26, 1849.
43From a manuscript diary in the possession of the Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society. The author is indebted to Mr. John O. Marsh of the Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society for suggesting Armstrong's diary as source material for this thesis.
44Ibid., August 6, 1849.
the steamer Enterprise leaving Zanesville for Independence, Missouri, carried California passengers from Hebron, Newark, Evansburg, Granville, Zanesville, Cambridge and other points in Ohio.

Later in the month, the Bellevue Mining Company of Sandusky County, with four light wagons, two large tents and provisions for nine months, arrived at St. Joseph, Missouri. Members of this company included N.S. Cook, C. Close, S.H. Cook, P.T. Sharp, A.G. Yottey, R. Burleson, R.B. Burleson, S. Dean, J. Findley, C. Smith, A. Raymond, Isaac Banta, H. Holm, H. Conklin, C. Durham, B. Fox, William Sharp, J. Scraford and Peter G. Sharp. A smaller company consisting of J. Hammun of Sandusky County and P.Y. Hough and S.N. Turville of Erie County were camping in the same area. Other Ohio companies reaching Missouri by the end of April, 1849, included organizations from Medina, Lorain, Cuyahoga, Columbiana, Allen, Wyandot, Hamilton, Seneca, Jefferson, Trumbull, Huron, Harrison, Morrow and Gallia counties. Descriptions of the equipment and

45 Akron Beacon in Cleveland Herald, April 25, 1849.
46 St. Louis Republican in Cleveland Herald, April 23, 1849.
47 Ibid.
48 St. Louis Republican in Cleveland Herald, May 2, 9, 1849; Cincinnati Gazette, April 30, 1849; Upper Sandusky Gazette in Ohio Statesman, July 14, 1849.
personnel for several of these companies were given. For instance, the Western Mining Company of Cincinnati was equipped with "seven tents, seven wagons, 26 yoke of oxen, and a mule for each man." The Mutual Mining Association, also from Cincinnati, had "three tents, four wagons, 14 yoke of oxen, and provisions for six months." The Steubenville Company, under military organization, was divided into eleven messes, and had "eleven tents, eighteen wagons, 54 yoke of oxen, and provisions for nine months." At St. Joseph, the Medina County company included George Case, J. Sawyer, D. Fullman, J.G. Briggs, B.B. Briggs, R. Chandler, H. Chandler and P. Chandler. The Lorain County company consisted of E.W. Brooks, A. Forde, L.I. Burrill, J.W. Hall, H. Garfield and S. Bethel. Forty-Niners from Cuyahoga County, encamped at St. Joseph, were G. Chapman, F. Hooper, A. Gurles, A. Allardt, and H. Fuhrup. Members of the Trumbull County company were C.W. Bidwell, W.W.

49 St. Louis Republican in Cincinnati Gazette, April 30, 1849.  
50 Ibid.  
51 Ibid.  
52 St. Louis Republican in Cleveland Herald, May 2, 1849.  
53 Ibid. L.I. Burrill and L.J. Burrell (pages 33, 95) are undoubtedly the same individual.  
54 Ibid.  
62
Hyde, George S. Case and William H. Robbins. The Huron
County company from Monroeville, Ohio, was comprised of
W.C. Cook, William P. Thompson, C.P. Ross, Timothy Baker
and George Goodhue.

It is interesting to note that on April 14, 1849,
there were nine Ohio companies at St. Joseph, Missouri.
The next greatest number of California organizations from
the individual states was five each from Michigan, New
York and Missouri. With these facts in mind, it would be
logical to conclude that Buckeye companies not only made
up a sizable proportion of the total overland emigration
in 1849, but they were also among the first to make the
long journey across the Great Plains to the gold fields of
California.

One of the last Ohio companies to leave for Calif-
orna by the overland route in 1849 was the California
Mining Company of Cleveland. This joint stock company,
departing from Cleveland on May 31, had a capital of
twenty-eight hundred dollars, and included the following
Baker, Thomas Callow, Jr., M. Blockwell, O.A. Munn, Mark
Carr, D.T. Townsend, Simon E. Barrett, Walter Van Dyke

55 Ibid., May 9, 1849.
56 Ibid.
57 Ibid., May 2, 1849.
and A. Rathbone. The Cleveland Herald stated that several of the members of this company were musicians, and that Mr. Van Dyke was a member of the prominent law firm of Adams and Van Dyke. *En route*, Mr. Van Dyke was elected president of the company, O. Munn, secretary, H. Stickney, treasurer, and Mark Carr, captain.

To reach California before the first snowfall of winter, it was necessary for overland emigrants to leave Ohio in the spring of the year. The Forty-Miner who failed to meet the spring deadline still could make the journey by sea at a later date. Forty-seven Ohioans availed themselves of this opportunity when the sailing vessel *Eureka* left Cleveland in September, 1849, *en route* for California. From Cleveland, the *Eureka* traversed Lake Erie, the Welland Canal, Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River to the Atlantic Ocean. Then the ship continued *via* Cape Horn to California. The *Eureka* was owned by W.A. Adair, and her captain was William Monroe. The passenger list for the California voyage included names of Ohioans from Cleveland, Independence, Milan, Ohio City, Elyria, Zanesville, Willoughby, Wooster, Green Creek, Auburn, Braceville, San-

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58 Cleveland Herald, May 31, 1849.
59 Ibid.
60 Ibid., June 29, 1849.
dusky and Painesville. The voyage of the *Eureka* was quite significant because it marked the first time for a ship to sail from the Great Lakes to California, and the second time for a merchant vessel to make a voyage from the Great Lakes to the Atlantic Ocean.

In 1850 the Ohio migrations to California continued. Messrs. Zaphna Lake and his son Edwin, John Tyler, Edwin R. Bishop, N.M. Dibble and John Fairchild, "all robust, active and enterprising men" from Conneaut, left for New York early in January, 1850, to board a ship bound for California. The party was under the direction of Mr. Lake, one of Conneaut's "most Prominent business men." G.W. Elliott and H.G. Ankeny of Millersburg also embarked for the "dig-gings" in January.

In February, 1850, George Dunbar, J.S. Rider, J.S. Clayton and John L. Myers of Canton left New York by steamer for California. On February 5, a party of seven-

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52 *Ibid*.
53 *Conneaut Republican* in *Cleveland Herald*, January 10, 1850.
54 *Ibid*.
55 *Holmes County Farmer* in *Cleveland Herald*, January 15, 1850.
56 *Canton Democrat* in *Cleveland Herald*, February 9, 1850.
ean citizens of Rowsburg passed through Wooster on their way to California. This party included M.R. Rizer, Levi Snyder, Abel Helman, Joseph Shoemaker, Eber Emory, Hugh Hamilton, John R. Kerns, A. Connel, C. Coulter, David Ewing, G.W. Cary, G.R. Buchanan, French Amentrout, Charles Brook, David Brandt, Lewis Armstrong and Thomas Darrough. The first eleven of the Rowsburg emigrants left families, and the last six were single. Also, during February, a Mr. Daggett of Piqua offered to take a company of fifty men to Sacramento, California, by the overland route. The fee for the trip was $100 for each man.

Stark, Wayne and Summit counties made especially heavy contributions to the California migrations during the spring of 1850. It was estimated that at least two hundred sixty residents of Stark County had left for the gold regions from January to April, 1850. In fact, enthusiasm for going to California was so great in Massillon that a project was on foot in that city to build a ship at Marietta which would be sent to the land of gold. At least

67 Wooster Democrat in Cleveland Herald, February 9, 1850.
68 Piqua Enquirer in Ohio Statesman, February 2, 1850.
69 Canton Repository in Cleveland Herald, March 9, 1850; Cleveland Herald, March 16, 1850.
70 Cleveland Herald, March 16, 1850.
one hundred seventy citizens of Wayne County left for California in March, 1850. One cavalcade consisting of one hundred forty emigrants and about thirty wagons was escorted out of Wooster at high noon on March 25, 1850, by "a large body of horsemen, with music playing and cannon firing." The Wayne County party boarded a steamboat at Wellsville which took them to St. Joseph, Missouri, where they began the overland journey to California. The fare for each man from Wellsville to St. Joseph was "$16 per man, $8 per mule or horse, and 10 cents per hundred on all baggage, wagons, guns etc., taken on board." The Akron Beacon made the following comment in describing the departure of one of the Summit County companies for California:

"About forty wagons left on Thursday last making a fine procession. The streets were crowded with the friends of the fearless adventurers, and many hearts ached as parting words were uttered and the train disappeared amid the roar of cannon. Several families were in the company; and Mr. Garrett, the leader, who recently returned from Sacramento, took his whole family, intending to make a permanent home in California."

71 Wooster Democrat in Cleveland Herald, March 16, 30, 1850.
72 Wooster Democrat in Ohio Statesman, April 5, 1850.
73 Wooster Democrat in Cleveland Herald, March 30, 1850.
74 Akron Beacon in Cleveland Herald, March 21, 1850.
Among the Summit County citizens bound for California by sea in March, 1850, were William Sinclair, John C. Stanley, Warren H. Smith, Akron; Marvin Oviatt, William Van Tien, Richfield; Thomas Ayres, Orren Walker, Jefferson Walker, Stephen Ayres and Hiram Ayres, Northampton. These men took the steamship Georgia to Chagres, and the Columbus from Panama to San Francisco.

The long list of Ohioans leaving for California in March, 1850, was enlarged by the departure of mining companies from Cuyahoga, Medina, Richland, Huron, Delaware and Lucas counties. The Delaware Mutual Protection Company under the direction of Messrs. Joseph Storm and D.N. Darlington, left for California on March 26, 1850. Two members of the company of seventy were women. The Lucas County party from Maumee consisted of Messrs. Horace White, Orlando Champion, John Upton and Samuel Rod.

In April, 1850, Judge Benjamin F. Myers, his wife and daughter, A. Nelson Penney, Burgess Helfrey, Edward Lynde, Speake and Samuel H. Bancroft left Newark for Calif-

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75Ibid., March 29, 1850.

76Cleveland Herald, March 12, 13, 1850; Delaware (Ohio) Standard in Ohio Statesman, April 6, 1850.

77Delaware (Ohio) Standard in Ohio Statesman, April 6, 1850.

78Cleveland Herald, March 12, 1850.
ornia under the leadership of Captain Breyfogle of Columbus. They took the overland route to the land of gold. During the same month, arrangements were being made to transport a large number of citizens from Harmar in Washington County to the gold fields. Also, in April, some forty Ohioans, bound for California, were listed as steerage passengers on the steamship Ohio. Accommodations on the Ohio were so discomforting that the steerage passengers held a meeting at which time they resolved that agents in New York and New Orleans had "manifested great indifference to the comfort and safety of the passengers;" that the commander of the Ohio, Lt. J.F. Schenk, had delayed the arrival at Chagres for three days; that emigrants desiring to go to California should not take the Ohio; and that a copy of the resolutions would be presented to the commander and one to each state represented in the steerage. John Bell of Ohio served as a member of the resolutions committee.

By May, 1850, the migration had diminished to occasional departures by small parties. On May 20, 1850, W.A. Thayer of Cleveland, Messrs. N.D. White, Daniel Sanford,

79 Newark (Licking County, Ohio) Gazette in Ohio Statesman, April 6, 1850.

30 Ohio Statesman, April 17, 1850.

31 Ibid., April 15, 1850.

69
Irvine W. Masters, H.N. Bissett, H. Stevens and James S. Calkins of Ohio City, and Charles Gates of Brooklyn, all "enterprising, able bodied mechanics," left for California via the Isthmus. On July 9, 1850, Philip Krager, Edward Ingersoll and John Ingersoll of East Cleveland sailed for California on the America and Nathaniel Doan, also of East Cleveland left for the land of gold on the Philadelphia. On August 9, 1850, the editor of the Cleveland Herald reported that his "young German friend," Gustavus Beck, a skilled amateur violinist, had departed for California. The September 23, 1850 issue of the Herald stated that a party of eight or ten Clevelanders including G.F. Tindall, E.J. Gorham and Burwell were on their way to the gold region by way of the Isthmus of Panama.

The volume of the Ohio migrations to California in 1850 may be illustrated by pointing to the passenger list of the steamer James Millinger. In March, 1850, the James Millinger had on board over five hundred passengers bound for the land of El Dorado. Two hundred nineteen of them came from Ohio. In like manner, the extent to which the gold mania permeated all classes of Ohio society is revealed. Among the Ohio passengers on board the ship

32 Cleveland Herald, May 20, 1850.
33 Ibid., July 11, 1850.
34 Ibid., March 29, 1850.
were sixty-two farmers. However, there were also butchers, coopers, clerks, machinists, laborers, engineers, millwrights, oil makers, tanners, tinners, carpenters, blacksmiths, wagon makers, physicians, cabinet makers, boatmen, joiners, school teachers, colliers, merchants, bakers, sextons, quarrymen, furnacemen, gardeners, boat builders, tailors, moulders, flour packers, brewers, plasterers, masons, lumbermen, comb makers, powder peddlers, harness makers, potters, sawyers, corkers and engravers. At least until the summer of 1850, it is apparent that many Ohioans from practically every rank of society were still being tempted by the precious metal of the Sierra Nevada Mountains.

35 Ibid.
V  LETTERS OF THE OHIO ARGONAUTS

A sicker miner every way
Had not been seen for many a day;
The devil it was to pay,
When I went off to prospect.
--from Put's Original California Songster

The experiences of the adventurers who forsook their Buckeye homesteads in quest for California gold are graphically depicted in the letters the Ohio Argonauts wrote to their relatives and friends. This correspondence may be divided into two categories: the letters pertaining to the California journey, and the communications written after the Ohioans had begun their mining ventures.

Ohioans taking the Panama route to California endured fewer hardships than the migrants who chose the overland routes. Nevertheless, certain problems did arise for the traveler, especially after he had reached Panama. For example, Samuel W. Holladay of Cleveland, writing from Panama on May 3, 1849, stated that all emigration from there had stopped with the exception of the passengers who went from Panama to California on the Equator. The steamer California was six weeks overdue, and anxious travelers were conjecturing whether the cause for delay was lack of coal, desertion of the crew or broken machinery. Describing the plight of the gold seekers detained in Panama, Mr. Holladay stated:

The holders of tickets in the steamers were thought very fortunate, being sure of a

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passage in the first one, which was hourly expected. - Day after day, and week after week passed heavily away without the appearance of sail or steamer either. In the first instance, all were anxious to purchase steamer tickets, and to secure one was the first thing sought, as it seemed the only means of escape from this modern Egypt. The consequence was great excitement in the market, and many state-room tickets changed hands at from six to seven hundred dollars, some at much higher rates, and forward cabin tickets at from four to five hundred dollars. The former cost originally in New York $250, the latter $100. The corners of the streets around the Hotel Americano daily presents quite a business appearance as the dealers assembled there on "Change," to hear and tell the news, to discuss the market for tickets, and to talk ways and means of egress.

At length the coal ship was chartered at an enormous price, and tickets sold to fill her at the rate of $250 for the steerage, and $350 for the cabin. At these prices, she was crowded to the excess of a slave ship, and only got off a week since.¹

Disheartening experiences often followed the migrant after passage from Panama had been secured. J.G. Dow of Akron boarded a vessel in charge of a drunken master. The result was that the ship, which was due in San Francisco in June, 1849, did not arrive until September 28. When the ship landed at El Rosario in Lower California, Dow left it, and walked a distance of about one thousand miles to San

¹Letter from S.W. Holladay, May 3, 1849, in Cleveland Herald, June 5, 1849. The Herald spells Mr. Holladay's name "Holliday," "Halladay" and "Halliday."
Francisco in forty-four days. 2 Henry C. Smith, a Clevelander, boarded a sailing vessel at Panama. The ship leaked so badly that it took one hundred days to reach San Francisco. Completely disgusted with the monotony of the voyage and the diet of "buggy beans" aboard ship, Smith left the vessel at Santa Barbara. He traveled the four hundred miles from Santa Barbara to San Francisco by horseback. On the other hand, there were those who apparently enjoyed their journey to California by way of Panama. A Cincinnatian, writing from Gorgona located about twenty-four miles from Panama City, related that two members of their party had shot a "tiger" and two snakes during their stay in Panama. "So far," he continued, "our journey has been exceedingly interesting. All the hardships we have endured, you would undergo and enjoy." 4 Mr. Holladay, who wrote so disparagingly about the delay in securing passage from Panama to California, finally boarded the Panama, and made the trip from the Isthmus to San Francisco in seventeen days. His voyage aboard the Panama was also bright-

2 Letter from J.G. Dow to Mr. Bradawin, October 28, 1849, in Cleveland Herald, December 26, 1849.

3 Letter from Henry C. Smith to Anson Smith, August 14, 1849, in Cleveland Herald, October 19, 1849.

ened by the presence of Mrs. John C. Fremont, wife of the illustrious explorer, Colonel Weller of the U.S. boundary commission and other notable passengers.

The tremendous challenge of the overland trails to California may be illustrated by citing the experiences of the Columbus company which headed for the gold fields under the leadership of Captain Joseph Hunter. Hunter's company encountered trouble shortly after leaving St. Joseph, Missouri. Late one evening the men awakened to find themselves half-covered with water. Their tent had been pitched on low ground, and a heavy rain during the evening had flooded the entire camp area. As a result, their bedding was so saturated that they had to stand up the rest of the night. On May 18, 1849, additional misfortune appeared in the form of a cattle stampede in which a member of the company was injured and ten yoke of oxen were lost. At this juncture the company was dissolved. The climax of their misfortunes

5 Letter from S.W. Holladay to J.A. Harris, June 16, 1849, in Cleveland Herald, July 30, 1849.


7 Letter from Oliver Walcutt (also spelled Wolcott) to his father, May 23, 1849, in Ohio Statesman, June 15, 1849; letter from Edward S. Gaver to his father, May 25, 1849, in Ohio Statesman, June 15, 1849. J.E. Armstrong, an
was recorded by J.H. Colton in a letter to a Columbus friend. The letter, written on June 1, 1849, ten miles beyond Ft. Kearney, stated: "Capt. Joseph Hunter of Columbus, in whose tent I now am, is lying at the point of death. His disease is pronounced cholera by his physician, Dr. Olds. He was taken sick a few days since, and is now failing fast." Andrew McElvain of Upper Sandusky, in a letter to his wife, informed her that her brother, Captain Hunter, had died of cholera, and that the former members of the company who were with Hunter had decided to return to Ohio. However, on starting the return journey, they were surrounded by five hundred Indians who robbed them of their most valued property.

The Hunter expedition was especially luckless. How-

Athens County Argonaut, made the following entry in his diary on May 22, 1849: "Cold & windy [.]. We passed a company from Columbus Ohio [.]. they had lost 72 head of there [sic] cattle [.]. they had them in a corel [sic] & they...broke out...perfect confusion [.] this was on the Bank of the Blue River [.]."

³Letter from J.H. Colton to Mr. Clark, June 1, 1849, in Ohio Statesman, June 30, 1849.

⁹Letter from Andrew McElvain to his wife (no date), Upper Sandusky Pioneer in Ohio Statesman, July 14, 1849.
ever, letters from other emigrants bespoke of the rigors of the overland journey to California. Dr. A.J. Allardt of Cleveland stated that during his overland trip he encountered "terrible storms, horrible roads, dangerous fords, cold winds, desert sands, and short allowance of provisions for men, and grass for animals." D.C. Horton of Cincinnati wrote that the company to which he belonged made the journey to California in four months, but suffered much from lack of water. Particularly difficult was the task of crossing the desert just before reaching California. Horton declared that "the desert is 65 miles across, without grass or water, except one boiling spring of salt water, which the animals would not drink. It is a sea of land, and we were two days making five miles, having to unload and pack our things upon our backs, and carry them a mile." Horton stated that his group was more fortunate than Levering's company from Cincinnati which lost ninety mules, all their wagons but one, and $18,000 worth of goods, which made it necessary to buy their provisions for the last hundred miles of their trip. Describing the

10 Letter from Dr. A.J. Allardt to Dr. J.C. Reeve, August 21, 1849, in Cleveland Herald, December 24, 1849.

11 Letter from D.C. Horton (no date) in Cincinnati Gazette, November 29, 1849.

12 Ibid.
"great desert" as "a dread to all emigrants," George E. Smith of Hebron declared:

This desert is nothing but sand and earth strongly mixed with alkali - in some places the earth looks as if it was covered with saleratus and very level, with occasionally a bunch of wild sage. If our care was so desperate with mules, what do you suppose would become of ox teams that are much slower? The road through the desert is strewn with dead and starving oxen, mules and horses, but principally oxen..."13

The transcript of the journal of a young Cincinnati, who went to California in 1849, further denotes the hardships endured by those who selected one of the overland routes. About nine hundred miles from the gold regions the Cincinnati packed his saddle mule and joined a small pack train of Georgians and Buckeyes. In his journal the following notations are made about the journey to California:

On the 14th of July we struck the head of the Humboldt River, and traveled down it nine days - had a bad time - grass scarce - dust awful, and hot enough to cook without a fire. Monday night, we reached the "sink," after travelling all day without stopping - found no grass - water wretched. It was almost impossible to get it down, yet I drunk nearly a gallon. I never suffered so before from thirst. - At 9 o'clock in the evening started for Carson River, 40 miles distant - determined to push through the desert before morning - reached there at

13 Letter from George E. Smith to J.P. Smith, August 7, 1849, in Ohio Statesman, October 19, 1849.
nearly dead with thirst and fatigue. I expected my poney would give out, and therefore walked most of the way. - By 9 o'clock I could go no further and mounted him, making the last three miles on a trot. Both of my animals held out well; but out of thirty-one in our party, eight were left in the desert, three of which were recovered by carrying back water to them. One of our men was also left behind, exhausted; the arrival of water, however, revived him. 14

The Sierra Nevada Mountains presented another obstacle to the migrant who had crossed the plains and the desert. The young Cincinnati Argonaut recorded in his journal that his group was in the mountains two miles above the sea "struggling in immense fields of snow; saw an empty wagon upset with 16 mules hitched to it. The road is lined with broken and abandoned wagons. One quarter of the teams on the route will never be so fortunate as to cross these mountains...." 15

Captain Walton's Columbus company, making the trip from Columbus to the dry diggings in one hundred thirty-two days, enjoyed better success than most of the emigrant trains. Nevertheless, C.D. Wood, a member of the company,

14 Transcript of the journal of a young Cincinnatian (no date) in the Cincinnati Gazette, October 20, 1849.
15 Ibid.
16 Letter from C.D. Wood to his wife, August 26, 1849, in Ohio Statesman, November 15, 1849.
had this to say about the trip to the gold regions: "Our journey was long and powerful, and we have to thank God that our [sic] was among the first trains, that crossed the plains during the present season. Even with that advantage, we had it hard enough, for their [sic] was but little grass for our mules." Walton, taking a more optimistic view, admitted that "a man has to encounter hardships, watch all night and walk all day, jump into mud-holes knee deep to pick up mules and push out wagons, and sometimes quarrel with his friends," yet he asserted that if he could make up a party of ten good men he intended to go home by way of the plains.

Reports on the overland journey were not all unfavorable. Samuel Britton of Richfield, Medina County, writing from the Platte River area, stated that "the climate here is pure and healthy. We are not as far at this time as we expected to be, yet there is a greater crowd behind us than before. The feed here is not good yet. We average about 20 miles per day and have had very good luck since leaving Independence." James Dillon, a member of a mutual protec-

17 Ibid.
18 Letter from John Walton to Col. S. Medary, September 19, 1849, in Ohio Statesman, November 17, 1849.
tion train composed of McConnellsville, Zanesville and
Missouri companies, wrote to his father on May 25, 1849,
that the mutual protection party was three hundred miles
west of Independence, and that they were travelling rapid-
ly. Dillon attributed part of the success of the journey
to the "peculiar construction" of their wagons which were
"the admiration of all who see them." Writing in a vein of
thought closely resembling that of the vacationer who has
just returned from a pleasure jaunt, W.J. Sperry of Cinc-
cinnati gave the following account of his trip from St.
Joseph to Sacramento in 1849:

We saw enough of mountain and plain,
of hill, valley, and river, to content a
man not very ambitious of fatigue. The
usual curiosities were visited. I cut my
name upon the chimney rock; drank of soda
spring, beer spring, and steamboat spring.
Visited the mouth of hell at the Red Buttes -
the place where the devil makes all his brick.
Saw the American Falls on Lewis's Fork of the
Columbia, Rock city, and the hot spring valley,
where the water of one spring is boiling hot,
and of its neighbor not twenty yards distant
freezing cold. Crossed the desert between
Humboldt and Salmon Trout rivers in the night,
and saw the celebrated boiling spring in its
center. - Crossed the dividing ridge of the
Sierra Nevada safely, and arrived at the
first Ranch on Saturday the eleventh day of
August. 21

20 Letter from James Dillon to his father, May 25, 1849,
in Ohio Statesman, June 21, 1849.
21 Letter from W.J. Sperry to "my dear Jones," November 1,
1849, in Cist's Weekly Advertiser, January 30, 1850.
On their arrival in California, the Ohio Argonauts wrote extensively about the cities, climate and general appearance of the land of gold. Probably more letters would have been dispatched from the gold regions had it not been for the inconvenience of the California postal facilities in 1849 and 1850. One Ohioan, mining along the Juba River, stated that he had to pay a carrier two dollars to carry a letter to the nearest post office, and another Buckeye gold miner declared that the post office at Sacramento was a "Humbug," and that it was impossible to get a letter once it had reached San Francisco.  

San Francisco, being the principal point of arrival for the emigrants who came to California by sea, was carefully described by several Ohio Argonauts. A.G. Lawrence of Cleveland pictured the city as being about the size of Cleveland. He stated that the buildings were nearly all made of wood, and that the streets, which for mud surpassed any place in the world, were laid out at right angles. Lawrence wrote that he had never been in such a busy place. "What resembles it most," he declared, "is an immense ship

22Letter from W.J. Sperry to "my dear Jones," November 1, 1849, in Gist's Weekly Advertiser; Letter from J.L. Peters to Mrs. Peters, November 26, 1849, in Ohio Statesman, February 23, 1850.
yard; the sound of the axe, saw and hammer, from all quarters of the town, is almost deafening." Another Cleveland, writing about San Francisco, stated:

It looks from the Bay very much like Cleveland does from the Ohio city side. There is a great deal of speculating here in land, some men making their thousands daily. Provisions are cheap. Dry goods sell for almost nothing. Labor is one dollar per hour. Carpenters get $12 to $20 per day. Lumber sells for $350 per M., and firewood $50 per cord. Everything that requires labor comes high. Buildings are springing up like mushrooms. You would be surprised to see the amount of business going on here.24

James G. Dow of Akron wrote the following vivid description of San Francisco:

I am now in the very focus of the round earth which all eyes are turned, and at the sound of which all hearts are made to beat with quicker pulsation, and such a place of business, of fun, of vice, of waste, of disease, and of speculation and gold, I never before held. You cannot conceive, neither can I describe to you, the business and the building going on. New York city in its busiest season is only to be compared to it. Millions on millions of goods from every nation, kindred and tongue, lay piled, strewn, and stowed in every direction. Thousands of houses are being erected, and thousands of tents cover hundreds of acres of ground; and rents, I am fearful you will not believe

24Letter from Henry C. Smith to Anson Smith, August 14, 1849, in Cleveland Herald, October 19, 1849.

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anything if I tell the whole truth in this matter... I set them from actual observation and knowledge, twenty times as high as the best business street and place in New York city. 25

More familiar to the overland emigrant than San Francisco, was Sacramento which was described by J.L. Peters of Columbus in a letter to his wife on November 26, 1849. Peters wrote:

This place has sprung up like magic. It is only six months since it was first settled, and it is thought contains at least 6000 inhabitants. "any of the houses are slight frames covered over, roof and all, with muslin, and without any floor - none plastered - 1 brick, 3 or 4 adobes and some good frames. But oh the terrible amount of gambling. I never saw anywhere such displays of money, not even a bank. Thousands of dollars change hands every night and day, but it is a matter of astonishment at the good order which prevails - very few drunk - little stealing - property left everywhere with impunity, and that of all kinds including provisions, exposed night and day." 26

Ohioans in the land of gold during 1849 and 1850 expressed divergent opinions about the California climate. A Clevelander, writing from the North Fork of the American River in 1850, declared that "the weather all through

25 Letter from James G. Dow to Mr. Bradawin, October 23, 1849, in Cleveland Herald, December 26, 1849.
26 Letter from J.L. Peters to his wife, November 26, 1849, in Ohio Statesman, February 23, 1850.
February, was the most delightful I ever saw, clear and bright; the thermometer much of the time, standing at 64; and the grass, violets and spring-flowers, starting up as they do with us in May." However, an overwhelming majority of Ohioans in California during 1849 and 1850 thought otherwise about the climate of the gold regions. One Ohio Argonaut asserted that, except for the mineral resources, California was a vagabond country, "the earth parched-burned dry for eight, and deluged with rains for the remaining four months of the year." Another Ohioan writing about the so-called "Italian climate" of California, observed that "if cloudless skies, plains parched by heat, and drouth in the day, and chilled by cold sea winds at night, and malarias rising continually, from river-bottoms and sloughs make an Italy, this country is one." A gold seeker from Columbus wrote that "the peculiar seasons of California are objectionable," and that winter in California is like "a gloomy night after a fair day," often

27 Letter from Mr. Holladay, March 21, 1850, in Cleveland Herald, May 11, 1850.

28 Letter from "Mr. M'Nair," December 29, 1849, in Cleveland Herald, February 15, 1850.

presenting "a dark frowning sky, and rains fall at times in torrents." An Ohioan in San Francisco during the winter of 1849-50 contended that the California weather was extremely changeable, and that "it is not safe for anyone to be out after dark, as the air is so damp and penetrating that no clothing, however thick and warm, affords security." Estimating that there were twenty cases of consumption in San Francisco to one in Cleveland, the Ohioan concluded that "if a man gets sick here, he dies and of this there is no mistake." Ohio's former governor, Wilson Shannon, declared that instead of finding an Italian climate in a northern latitude, the newcomer to California would be faced with "every degree of heat of the inhabited globe, down to that of perpetual snow."

The Ohio Argonaut had similar comments to make about the general appearance of the gold country. One Buckeye miner wrote that the country he had seen was so poor that a

30 Letter from Paul Decker to C.S. Decker, January 21, 1850, in Ohio Statesman, March 22, 1850.
32 Ibid.
33 Letter of Governor Shannon, August 12, 1849, in Ohio Statesman, November 10, 1849.
mule could hardly live. A Cincinnatian stated that the appearance of California was "not half as pleasant as writers have described it." "Nothing is raised," he continued, "but grass, and that is burned up by the sun."

Former governor Shannon compared California to the deserts of Arabia, "with here and there, spots of good land, useless; because of eight or nine months, they receive not a drop of moisture."

After reaching the mining regions, the Ohio Argonaut wrote of his luck in finding gold, and the "folks back home" eagerly awaited the letters which would tell them whether he had "made his pile," or "had seen the elephant."

A.W. Richardson of Toledo wrote from San Francisco on October 1, 1849: "I have been one week at the mines, and without any great effort, brought away four pounds Troy, over $300." Henry C. Smith of Cleveland reported the good

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34 Letter from D.C. Horton (no date) in Cincinnati Gazette, November 29, 1849.

35 Transcript of a journal of a young Cincinnatian (no date) in Cincinnati Gazette, October 20, 1849.

36 Letter from Governor Shannon, August 12, 1849, in Ohio Statesman, November 10, 1849.

37 Letter from A.W. Richardson, October 1, 1849, Toledo Blade in Cleveland Herald, January 29, 1849.
fortune of two Cleveland friends at the mines, stating that Mr. House and Mr. Holladay were averaging three ounces each and never less than an ounce per day. Letters received by the Summit Beacon indicated that the Summit County miners were enjoying success in California. The Moores were reported to have sent to their friends four thousand dollars, "a part of the proceeds of a few months labor in the mines," and two other men from Summit County amassed three thousand dollars in three days at Weaver's Diggins.

Lyman J. Burrell of Lorain County, writing to his wife from Feather River on January 17, 1850, revealed that he had averaged one hundred dollars for the past four weeks, and that he had eight hundred dollars worth of gold ready to send home.

A factor that all miners had to consider before computing their net profits for the season was the cost of provisions. Due to the fact that the gold regions were either located in the mountains or down in ravines and gulches, a considerable amount of expense and inconvenience

38 Letter from Henry C. Smith to Anson Smith, August 14, 1849, in Cleveland Herald, October 19, 1849.
39 Summit Beacon in Cleveland Herald, February 1, 1850.
40 Letter from Lyman J. Burrell to Mrs. Burrell, January 17, 1850, in Cleveland Herald, April 4, 1850.
was incurred in bringing supplies to the mines. Then there was the problem of distributing vast quantities of food to a flood of emigrants who poured into a new country which during the early stages of the gold rush lacked adequate transportation and communication facilities. For these reasons the cost of food articles in California cities was high, and at the mines, even greater. In August, 1849, the following prices prevailed at the mines: flour, thirty dollars per barrel; coffee, forty cents per pound; sugar, fifty cents per pound, and fresh beef, fifty cents per pound. At Sutter's Fort, flour was fifteen cents per pound, and other articles in proportion. On November 22, 1849, John Kerr of Columbus included in a letter to his wife the following list of prices at the California trading posts:

Flour, at this time one dollar and a quarter per pound, or two hundred and forty-five per barrel; pickled pork, one dollar per pound, fresh beef 50 cents per pound; butter $2.50 per pound, very strong at that; coffee 50 cents per pound; tea $4.00 per pound; saleratus $2.50 per lb; salt 50 cents per pound; sugar 50 cts per lb; molasses $5 per gal; rice 50 cts per lb;

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41 Letter from L. Alfred Denig to Dr. Denig, August 21, 1849, in Ohio Statesman, October 19, 1849.

42 Letter from a member of a Cincinnati company, August 20, 1849, in Cincinnati Gazette, October 20, 1849.
corn meal the same price of flour, and none to be had at that... 43

An Ohioan who purchased provisions at Sacramento in December, 1849, paid the following prices: "flour, twenty dollars per barrel; hard bread, ten dollars per hundred; meal, twenty dollars; mess pork forty-five dollars; sugar, sixteen cents per pound; coffee, fifteen; rice, ten; beans, eight; molasses $1.50 per gallon; vinegar $1.00." The prices of these provisions doubled three weeks after the Ohioan had made his purchases. Food articles were usually more reasonably priced in port cities, yet in San Francisco during December, 1849, milk was one dollar fifty cents per quart; eggs, fifty cents each; sugar, fifty cents per pound and flour fifty dollars per barrel.

Whether Ohio Argonauts enjoyed good fortune or not, their letters pointed to the fact that gold, if obtained at all, was secured as a result of arduous toil. A Cincinnatian wrote:

43 Letter from John M. Kerr to his wife, November 22, 1849, in Ohio Statesman, February 14, 1850.
44 Letter from Mr. Garfield, December 30, 1849, in Cleveland Herald, April 4, 1850.
45 Ibid.
46 Letter from Henry Smith to J.A. Harris, December 27, 1849, in Cleveland Herald, February 21, 1850.
I have made all my gold by hard labor, labor that makes a man older by years, than the slow index of time would point him out to be. To sleep on the ground at night, to be exposed reeking with sweat of toil, to the damp airs of evening, to shiver in the frost of morning, till the ten o'clock sun peeps over the hill, again to sweat in the hot sun, again to shiver at evening, to eat crude and unpalatable food, to wear half-washed clothes, is rather a hard way of earning $3000 a year....

L. Alfred Denig of Columbus stated that "by labor, and sometimes labor of the very hardest kind," a miner could procure from ten to twenty dollars a day. John Kerr, also of Columbus, wrote that gold mining was comparable to picking and scraping in the "roughest, rocky place" that could possibly be found at Sullivan's stone quarry.

Inasmuch as luck as well as manual labor played a part in securing gold, there were many Ohio Argonauts who, in spite of their sincere efforts, were destined for disappointment. Walter Cain, a member of Walton's Columbus company, wrote to his mother that "there is not much in these great gold stories about getting fortunes, talking

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48 Letter from L. Alfred Denig to Dr. Denig, August 21, 1849, in Ohio Statesman, October 19, 1849.
49 Letter from John M. Kerr to his wife, November 22, 1849, in Ohio Statesman, February 14, 1849.
and getting is two different things."  

50 David Marshall of Cincinnati stated that the total receipts of his party following their first day of labor in the "digings" amounted to two dollars fifty cents. Marshall related that he and his friends enjoyed the same small measure of success for about a week by which time "we had dug a hole in the earth that would have made a respectable cellar for a three story brick house; and the stone we had removed would have paved Main street for a square."  

51 Another party of Ohioans went to the Trinity River in search of gold, but the reports of the rich deposits in that area proved to be false, and all that the Buckeyes found were seventy-five to one hundred sick men unable to work. A week after arriving there everyone of the Ohioans became ill. One member of the company confided that he was so angered by the turn of bad fortune that he "felt like pulling up oak saplings."

52 Former governor Shannon was among the Ohio Argonauts who

50 Letter from Walter Cain to his mother, August 20, 1849, in Ohio Statesman, October 22, 1849.

51 Letter from David P. Marshall, bearing dates from December 25, 1849, through February 1, 1850, in Cincinnati Gazette, March 16, 1850.

52 Letter from S.W. Holladay to his brother, October 22, 1849, in Cleveland Herald, December 13, 1849.
tasted of disappointment in seeking California gold. A series of letters and newspaper reports tell of the misfortunes of Shannon and his company. Capt. Jonas Spect of Circleville wrote on June 13, 1849: "In my last visit to Sacramento, I met Ex-Governor Shannon, with a company of Buckeyes, with his pickaxe and shovel on his shoulders, just departing for the mines. The old Governor is in good health and fine spirits...." In August, 1849, Orlando McKnight, an Ohioan writing from Sacramento, stated that "Gov. Shannon was here last week with a company of 20 men; they are now at work on the Uba river about 70 miles from here." Also in August, Shannon wrote that "the mere business of mining is pleasant, you have regular meals, a good tent to sleep in, and washing out the gold is exciting." However, the February 23, 1850 issue of the Cleveland Herald reported that Shannon's company had found sixteen hundred to two thousand dollars worth of gold at their last location, but on examining the country eighty miles fur-

54 Letter from Orlando McKnight, August 26, 1849, in Ohio Statesman, November 10, 1849.
55 Letter from Governor Shannon, August 12, 1849, in Ohio Statesman, November 10, 1849.
ther, they had found nothing at all "save plenty of wild Indians." Due to their lack of success coupled with a great amount of sickness in the company, they had decided to disband. A letter from Colonel A. Johnson published in the St. Clairsville Gazette stated that the ex-governor had begun a law practice in San Francisco with Colonel Munford of Virginia, and that the new firm was doing a business of eighty thousand to one hundred thousand dollars a year. On June 23, 1850, the ex-governor wrote from San Francisco that he was desirous of leaving California. In a letter to his family, dated August 26, 1850, Shannon stated that as soon as he could wind up his business affairs he would gladly retrace his steps to Ohio.

While writing of their experiences, the Ohio Argonauts often advised relatives and friends about coming to California to search for gold. An exceptional view was expressed by one Buckeye gold digger who informed Ohioans

55 Letter from Colonel A. Johnson (no date), St. Clairsville Gazette in Cleveland Herald, May 25, 1850.
57 Letter from Governor Shannon to editor of St. Clairsville Gazette, June 23, 1850, in Cleveland Herald, September 3, 1850.
58 Letter from Governor Shannon to his family, August 26, 1850, in Cleveland Herald, October 23, 1850.
that there was room and gold for all who cared to come to the land of El Dorado. However, most of the Argonauts attempted to dissuade their friends from venturing to the gold regions. A Mr. Garfield of Lorain County wrote: "If any of my friends think of coming to California I would advise them to stay at home. It is very sickly here and the season for mining is short." D.C. Horton of Cincinnati advised "all who think of coming to stay at home." In a letter to his wife, J.L. Peters of Columbus expressed the following idea: "Tell anyone that asks what my opinion is, to stay at home by all means, unless they just want to see what they endure, and learn by bitter experience to value the blessings of home and its comforts...." William Ralfe of Akron recommended that only wealthy men who understood business, and young, hardy, unmarried men should embark for

59 Letter from Lyman J. Burrell to his wife, January 17, 1850, in Cleveland Herald, April 4, 1850.

60 Letter from Mr. Garfield, December 30, 1849, in Cleveland Herald, April 4, 1850.

61 Letter from D.C. Horton (no date) in Cincinnati Gazette, November 29, 1849.

62 Letter from J.L. Peters to his wife, November 26, 1849, in Ohio Statesman, February 23, 1850.
the land of gold. Dr. A. Allardt of Cleveland wrote:

Should any of my friends suffer with the aching pain of the Gold Fever, prescribe for them the following recipe, and my word, it will prove a radical cure: let them take the overland route, travel 30 miles per day with pork and beans for breakfast and beans and pork for dinner; stand guard a few hours every night, with now and then a fine shower bath from above; let them ford the river and cross the mountains; and should this not prove effectual, let them dig under a burning sun, carry the sand to the water, and then cradle out the small grains of shining metal, and it will not be long before the patient will recover from his fever, and think there is more reality than romance in Gold Digging. 64

Perhaps the most prudent advice to one considering a California venture was offered by S. W. Holladay of Cleveland:

To a man who has a family and a competence, I would say, stay where you are and be content, for "a competence is all that we can enjoy."

But the young man, with energy and enterprise - without fortune, or the means of giving efficiency to his talent, perhaps languishing under the thoughts of the unequal chances which substantial worth and talent bear with wealth and empty aristocratic pretensions - I would most heartily

63. Letter from William Ratle (no date), Summit Beacon in Cleveland Herald, August 15, 1850.
64. Letter from Dr. A. Allardt, March 13, 1850, in Cleveland Herald, May 29, 1850.
recommend to make his residence in California.\textsuperscript{65}

It is altogether possible that Mr. Holladay also approached an accurate analysis of the Argonauts' letters when he wrote:

The letters that have returned to the States have generally been grossly exaggerated, one way or the other, partaking largely of the color of the writer's experience. If successful, it is to him all a bright and lovely picture; if perchance sickness or other circumstances, has rendered his efforts fruitless, depression of spirit ensues, and he broods over his blighted hopes and departed visions, as the hard, but common lot of the Gold Hunter - And in all his statements he is apt to set it forth, when in fact he practically knows but little about it.\textsuperscript{66}

\textsuperscript{65} Letter from Mr. Holladay, March 21, 1850, in Cleveland Herald, May 11, 1850.

\textsuperscript{66} Ibid.
VI CONCLUSION

With prophetic gaze I see
A vast and mighty Empire,
That springs to life from thee;
For the sails of every nation
Shall know thy Golden Gate,
And every language call thee
The proud Eureka State.

--San Francisco Alta California--
For the Steamer Oregon, December 31, 1849.

A retrospective glance at the California gold rush as it affected Ohio and Ohioans reveals that Ohio, in comparison with other states, contributed a disproportionately large number of citizens to the gold seeking migrations to California in 1849 and 1850. The Ohioans who were infected by the gold mania represented nearly all classes of society, and about every age group. However, the vast majority of the Ohio Argonauts were young men who were either mechanics or farmers. Furthermore, there is no evidence to indicate that Ohio's sizable contribution to the gold fields accounted for any appreciable decline in the population of any county, city or village of Ohio.

That the major portion of the Ohio Argonauts failed in their quest for California gold is clearly discerned by their letters. Within this group, there were those who gladly made the return to the more normal pursuits of life. Others, unable to face the disillusionment of lost hopes, became chronic malcontents. For the fortunate few, who succeeded in the land of El Dorado, the gold rush ushered
in a new life of comfort which under normal circum-
stances would not have been possible.

Generally speaking, the gold rush had a good effect
on Ohio business. The fact that each Argonaut took at
least two hundred dollars out of the state on his depar-
ture from Ohio was counterbalanced by the great amount of
personal equipment that Ohio merchants sold to the gold-
seekers. Ohio newspaper advertisements of 1849 and 1850
have already indicated that Buckeye businessmen had stocked
heavily for the California trade. Cleveland and Cincin-
nati, being on the main routes to the frontier, not only
witnessed the infiltration into Ohio of Argonauts from
other states, but undoubtedly did a considerable amount of
business with out-of-state companies during their stop-
overs in Ohio. At least in one line of commercial endeavor
support for this contention is given. Cist's Weekly Adver-
tiser of April 11, 1849, asserted that during the month
of April Cincinnati bakers would prepare one hundred fifty
thousand pounds of hard bread for the overland emigration.
Obviously, this amount of bread was not being produced
entirely for Ohio customers. An additional market for Ohio
businessmen was California. The July 4, 1849 issue of the
Cincinnati Gazette reported that Cincinnati carpenters were
making houses to be sent around Cape Horn to California.
The July 6, 1849 Gazette stated that "E. Hall & Co., at
their manufacture on Congress street, made 20 safes, of
the 'first order,' which are to be sent to California as
'safe deposits' for the gold dust."

From the political standpoint, the California gold
rush provided Ohio Democrats with an opportunity to
criticize the monetary policy of the Whigs. The rabid
interest in California also brought a large measure of
satisfaction to the expansionists within the Democratic
party. However, the California gold mania was not a
major issue in Ohio politics, and in no way did it
influence the outcome of Buckeye elections.

Finally, recognition should be given to the Ohio
Argonauts who remained in the West to participate in the
construction and development of the State of California.
John McDougal, who was born in Ohio and spent his boyhood
in Indiana, came to California in 1849. He served in the
California constitutional convention of 1849, and in the
same year he was elected California's first lieutenant
governor. When Peter H. Burnett resigned as governor in
1851, McDougal moved up to the State's top executive
position. George B. Tingley, an Ohioan who came to Calif-
ornia in 1849, was elected to the lower house of Califor-
nia's first state legislature, and in 1852 he was a Whig

\footnotetext{Bancroft, op. cit., VI, 233, 305, footnote number 4 on
page 645.}
nominee for Congress. Samuel W. Holladay, of Cleveland, offered himself as a candidate for the California legislature in 1849, but his campaign was unsuccessful. The "W. Van Dyke" listed as a member of the legislature of California in 1853 was probably Walter Van Dyke, the Cleveland lawyer, who was president of the California Mining Company of Cleveland. E.S. Gaver of Columbus, a member of the ill-fated Franklin California Company which left Columbus for the gold regions in April, 1849, was elected to the California assembly in 1855. Wilson Flint, a native of Ohio who had owned business concerns in New York and Texas, came to the land of gold in 1849 to capitalize on the increased trade opportunities brought about by the influx of gold miners into California. Flint, who was described as an "ardent and true friend of freedom," served in the California senate in 1855 and 1856.

2Ibid., footnote number 4 on page 310, 671.
3Ibid., footnote number 4 on page 310; Cleveland Herald, January 23, 1850.
4Bancroft, op. cit., VI, footnote 53 on page 675; Cleveland Herald, May 31, 1849.
5Ibid., VI, footnote 17 on page 692; Ohio Statesman, April 3, 1849.
6Ibid., VI, footnote 17 on page 692, footnote 24 on page 693, footnote 25 on page 699.
Whatever their limitations may have been, these men possessed the foresight to perceive that the underlying effect of the gold rush was the creation and growth of a state which would strengthen the realization of America's Manifest Destiny.
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