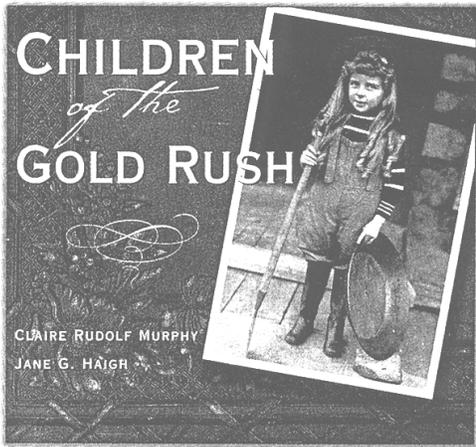


STUDYGUIDE



Children of the Gold Rush

by Claire Rudolf Murphy and Jane G. Haigh

Alaska Northwest Books™, 0-88240-548-9, \$14.95 Softcover

This study guide, for students grades three through eight, offers extended learning activities for the book *Children of the Gold Rush*. Please contact the authors with your comments or questions or for more information and studyguides on their other books: *Gold Rush Dogs* and *Gold Rush Women*. Happy reading!

"This excellent, well-researched book offers a rare peek into a fascinating culture, history, and people, in portraits of eight intrepid children and their families during the Alaska/Yukon gold rushes." —
KIRKUS REVIEWS

SOCIAL STUDIES

YUKON RIVER HIGHWAY

The Yukon River flows approximately 1900 miles from its headwaters in the coastal mountains at the head of the Inside Passage into the Bering Sea (see map in *Children of the Gold Rush*, p.10-11.) Most gold-rushers to the Klondike traveled its the Yukon River to reach Dawson. Some took a ship to St. Michael's and then traveled upriver by steamer. Others took the less expensive route, traveling the Chilkoot (out of Dyea) or White Pass Trail (out of Skagway) and then floated down the Yukon River from Lake Bennett to Dawson. (see mileage chart below and map in book)

YUKON RIVER GUIDE

<u>UPRIVER TRIP</u>	<u>MILES</u>	<u>DOWNRIVER TRIP</u>	<u>MILES</u>
Seattle - St. Michael	3000	Seattle to Juneau	899
St. Michael to Holy Cross	370	Juneau to Dyea or Skagway	96
Holy Cross to Anvik	40	Dyea to Lake Bennett	34
Anvik to Nulato	200	Lake Bennett to Dawson	600
Nulato to Tanana	200		
Tanana to Fort Yukon	400		
Fort Yukon to Circle City	110		
Circle City to Fortymile	240		
Fortymile to Dawson City	52		

A LONG WAY FROM HOME

Many gold rush children traveled 5,000 miles or more to reach the gold camp. Where would a trip of equal distance take you? Look up your hometown in an atlas. Travel in any direction (east, west, north or south) and list the states and countries you would travel through. Be sure and use an atlas that shows a large area.

PUT ON YOUR TRAVELING SHOES

Choose one child from the book. Map out and count up the miles he or she traveled to the gold camp. Use the Yukon River mileage chart and a road atlas to help you. For example:

- *Ethel Anderson*: Bellingham to Seattle, Seattle to Skagway by boat, Skagway to Lake Bennett by railroad and Lake Bennett to Dawson by steamer.
- *Crystal and Monte Snow*: Seattle to Juneau, Juneau to Skagway, Skagway to Dyea, over the Chilkoot Trail, down the Yukon River to Fortymile, Circle City, Dawson, St. Michael, St. Michael to Seattle, and finally back to Juneau.

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LANGUAGE ARTS

MY FAVORITE CHARACTER

Put together a fact sheet on your favorite child in the book.

- list 10 facts about him/her
- list 5 adjectives to describe him/her
- list five things about his/her life that you would have liked to experience
- list five things that would have been hard for you
- list five ways that his/her life is similar to yours
- list five ways that it is different

A KID'S LIFE

Interview one of your grandparents or another older person in your town. Learn about what life was like for them as a kid. Where did they live? What did they eat? What kind of school did they go to? Did they travel or move when they were young? Ask to see photographs or writings they might have done as a child.

A MINE OF THEIR OWN

Find out if anyone in your family tree was involved in gold, silver or copper mining. Did they go to the Alaska/Yukon, California or Colorado gold rushes? How about the silver or copper discoveries in Idaho, Montana, Utah or Wyoming? Maybe they are involved with mining today. Interview the person or another relative who knew about their mining activities. Research on the internet any family members who were prospectors in the northern gold rushes (site listed at end of this guide.)

SHARE YOUR STORY

Write up your findings from either interview above in a story. If possible have the person review the information. Illustrate it with pictures or photographs, if you like, and share it with your class and other students.

DEAR DIARY

Imagine that you are a gold rush kid at any one of the northern gold camps. Write 1-7 days' worth of journal entries that describe your daily life. It could be a real child from the book or a fictional character you make up. Try to imagine his or her experiences, and how he/she reacted to them. Use information about mining, gold camps, food, and activities that you learned about in this book and from other resources.

THE PLAY'S THE THING

Imagine an event from one of the gold rush children's lives. Write it up as a script and perform your play for your class. Examples:

- *On the boat*: Gold-rushers traveling to and from Alaska (Klondy, Robert Farnsworth).
- *At the trading post*: Imagine a prospector negotiating with a trader for his grubstake or buying his supplies (Mayo twins). Refer to the list of supplies below.
- *On stage*: Young people singing and performing for prospectors (Monte and Crystal Snow).
- *At school*: students rocking and panning for gold lunchtime (Ethel Anderson).

FAMILY LIVING

In 1897-1898, the Canadian Mounties required that gold-rushers buy and transport a ton of goods into Dawson so they had enough food to get them through the winter. The trading posts up there did not have nearly enough goods for the influx of people (*see Ton of Goods list*).

THREE SQUARES A DAY

In a small group, plan three meals a day for a week from your ton of goods. Figure that each meal needs to feed a crew of four hungry miners and two children. Add fish, meat or berries if you think you would be able to hunt or gather them.

TON OF GOODS

100 lbs. navy beans
150 lbs. bacon
400 lbs. flour
40 lbs. rolled oats
20 lbs. corn meal
10 lbs. rice
25 lbs. sugar
10 lbs. tea
20 lbs. coffee
10 lbs. baking powder
20 lbs. salt
1 lb. pepper
2 lbs. baking soda
1/2 lb. mustard
1/4 lb. vinegar
2 doz. condensed milk
20 lbs. evaporated potatoes
5 lbs. evaporated onions
6 tins/4 oz. extract beef
75 lbs. evaporated fruits
4 pkgs. yeast cakes
20 lbs. candles
1 pkg. tin matches
6 cakes borax
6 lbs. laundry soap
1/2 lb. ground ginger
25 lbs. hard tack
1 lb. citric acid
2 bottles jamaica ginger

MATH

SHOPPING SPREE AT THE TRADING POST

Imagine that you are heading out of Dawson City, Nome, or Fairbanks to stake a claim. Make a plan to purchase your “outfit” from the trading post (*see Trading Post List*). You will need a shovel, pick and other tools to mine; boots, warm clothing, and food to last the winter. Don’t forget a dog to pull your goods, unless you are going to pay a packer or pack them in yourself. How much will your outfit cost?

PAYING WITH DUST

Goods in the Yukon and Alaska were paid for in gold dust. Very little official paper money or coins were available. The dust was valued at \$16 per ounce. A miner would be very happy with a claim that yielded a “two-bit pan” every twenty minutes. Two bits equaled twenty-five cents. If you didn’t own a claim, you would probably be working as a “shovel stiff,” shoveling dirt into a sluice box. You would be paid in gold dust, at approximately \$15 per day.

1. How much gold dust would a worker receive per day?
2. How many two bit pans would make a good day’s profits?
3. Estimate how many two-bit pans you could find per day. Are you making enough money to pay for your outfit and make a profit, too?
4. Is it worth all the hard work? Explain.

GRUBSTAKE

If you do not have the money to pay for your “outfit,” you will need the trader to “grubstake” you. This means that, in exchange for giving you your “outfit,” the trader will get 50% of all the gold you find.

- How much gold will you need to find to pay back your “grubstaker” and also make a profit? (*see Shopping Spree at the Trading Post activity*)
- How much is gold worth today? (*see web site listing on back*)

LIST OF TRADING POST GOODS

Gold Pan	\$2.50
Flour	\$12 per 100-pound sack
Moose Ham	\$1 per pound
Caribou meat	65 cents per pound
Beans	10 cents per pound
Rice	25 cents per pound
Turnips	15 cents per pound
Coffee	50 cents per pound
Dried fruits	35 cents per pound
Tea	\$1 per pound
Tobacco	\$1-\$1.50 per dozen
Salmon	\$1-1.50 each
Canned fruits	50 cents per can
Canned meats	75 cents per can
Liquor	50 cents per drink
Shovel	\$2.50
Pick	\$5
Coal oil (kerosene)	\$1 per gallon
Overalls	\$1.50
Underwear, per suit	\$5-\$7.50
Shoes	\$5
Rubber boots	\$10-\$15
A good dog	\$100

— From *Alaska and the Klondike Gold Fields*
by A.C. Harris, 1897, p.139

Jane’s Sourdough Recipe - Try it Yourself!

Sourdough is a naturally occurring yeast used to make pancakes and breads. It was used extensively by prospectors, gold miners, and everyone else in the North to improve the taste of items cooked with flour. Sourdough was considered so valuable that a person with experience living in the North was called a “sourdough” while a newcomer was called a “cheechako.”

To make your own sourdough:

1. Mix equal parts of flour and water - 2 cups water and 2 cups flour.
2. Let this mixture sit uncovered in your classroom or on your kitchen counter for two to four days. Naturally occurring yeast in the air will ferment the mixture.
3. To speed up this process, mix the mixture with one tablespoon sugar and one packet yeast and let sit in a warm place overnight.

This mixture is your new “sourdough starter.” Take out one cup of starter, put it in a glass jar or small crock and keep it in your refrigerator.

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To make pancakes:

1. Add to the remainder of your sourdough mixture (not the starter):
 - 1 beaten egg
 - 1 tbs. sugar
 - 1 tbs. vegetable oil
2. In a separate cup, mix cup water and 1 tablespoon baking soda.
3. Next, take 2 cups of your sourdough mixture and put it into a small mixing bowl. Add 2 teaspoons of the baking soda mixture. Stir well until it bubbles.
4. Ladle by spoonfuls into a hot frying pan or onto a griddle and repeat with rest of mix, 2 cups at a time.
5. Serve your pancakes with maple syrup or jam.

To later reuse your refrigerated starter: Remove starter from the refrigerator in the evening. Combine in a large bowl: starter and equal amounts of flour and water. For four hungry eaters, use 5 cups of flour and 5 cups of water. Mix well and leave in a warm place overnight. In the morning, take out one cup to replace your starter. Make pancakes as before, or you can use sourdough to make bread or rolls. Check your favorite bread cookbook for additional sourdough recipes.

CONNECT TO THE INTERNET

1. Check out the authors' web sites: Jane: www.janehaigh.com Claire: www.clairerudolfmurphy.com
2. Log onto the Klondike Gold Rush web site and find other related topics of interest: www.gold-rush.org
3. Look in the gold rush database for relatives who participated in the northern gold rushes: "Ghosts of the Gold Rush" at www.gold-rush.org/filson/index.html
4. Try this incredible site for researching the northern gold rushes: <http://www.eed.state.ak.us/lam/goldrush/stories/home.html>
5. For material from the book *Gold Rush Women* and its associated exhibit "Threads of Gold," visit the University of Alaska Museum site, browse: www.uaf.edu/museum
6. For current information on gold: www.goldinstitute.com/facts.html
7. For information about Alaska Native cultures, check out: [//www.ankn.uaf.edu/ANCR.html](http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/ANCR.html)
8. For more books on Alaska visit: www.alaskanorthwestbooks.com

Please email the authors Claire Rudolf Murphy (mail@clairerudolfmurphy.com) or Jane G. Haigh (jhaigh@ptialaska.net) with your comments or questions about the book or study guide.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Claire Rudolf Murphy and Jane G. Haigh spent several years researching the northern gold rushes. Their first book together, *Gold Rush Women* (Alaska Northwest Books, 1997) featured women's stories. They also uncovered stories of gold rush children and out of that evolved their second book together, *Children of the Gold Rush*, an American Booksellers Pick of the List and winner of the 2000 Willa Cather award for juvenile nonfiction. Their third book is *Gold Rush Dogs*, published in 2001 by Alaska Northwest Books. They have been gratified by the interest in these unheralded women, children, and beloved canine companions.

Claire Rudolf Murphy has written twelve books for children and young adults. Her novels include *To the Summit*, *Free Radical*, *A Child's Alaska*, and *Caribou Girl* are two of her picture books. Jane G. Haigh is an historian who has written several other books including *Alaskan Pioneer Interiors* and *Catch and Release: An Insider's Guide to Alaskan Men*.

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CHILDREN OF THE GOLD RUSH, GOLD RUSH WOMEN, and GOLD RUSH DOGS

by Claire Rudolf Murphy and Jane G. Haigh are available from your favorite bookstore or from Alaska Northwest Books™ (An imprint of Graphic Arts Center Publishing Company)

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