

STUDYGUIDE



Gold Rush Women

By Claire Rudolf Murphy and Jane G. Haigh

Alaska Northwest Books™, 0-88240-484-9, \$16.95 Softcover

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

Check out the authors' web sites:

Jane: www.janehaigh.com and Claire: www.clairerudolfmurphy.com

"Gold Rush Women is a beautifully written pictorial book on the Northland's pioneer women -- women who the authors say, 'followed their dreams,' not just of gold but of a life of greater independence and opportunity. It is unlikely there will be a better book on the great Northland gold rushes than this one."
-Rocky Mountain News

SOCIAL STUDIES

Timeline

- Study the gold rush timeline on p.6-7 in the book. Then research American history during this same period and make an expanded timeline, including events such as those listed below. Keep in mind that the late 1800's and early 1900's included many reforms in women's rights and labor laws.
- Make a timeline for one gold rush women's life based on her profile in the book and your expanded timeline. Include world and gold rush events that particularly affected this woman's life. You may wish to include world events that happened during her lifetime.

Important Dates

- 1848 - First women's rights convention
- 1861 - Abolishment of slavery
- 1861-65 Civil War
- 1869 - National Women's Suffrage Association (NWSA) founded by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony.
- 1869 - Territory of Wyoming gave women the right to vote
- 1873 - Depression
- 1890 - The United States Census officially recognized the fact that America's frontier had ended.
- 1890's - Series of depressions
- 1893 - Chicago World's Columbian Exposition
- 1890-1917 - Progressive Era in American politics - reforms for labor, the economy and the poor were enacted.
- 1898 - Spanish-American War
- 1900 - Rise of 3,000 American millionaires from the growth of big business. Meanwhile a small middle class and huge lower class lived in poverty even with jobs. They toiled over 60 hours a week for an average pay of 20 cents per hour.
- 1920 - The U.S. adopted the 19th amendment to the Constitution, granting American women the right to vote.

GEOGRAPHY

Map Activities: "A Long Way to Travel"

The Yukon River

From its headwaters in Canada at the head of the Inside Passage, the Yukon River flows 2000 miles through Canada and Alaska. The chart below of river miles comes from the Chicago Record Book for Gold Seekers, 1897.

<u>Yukon River Mileage Chart</u>	
St. Michael to Holy Cross.....	370
Holy Cross to Anvik.....	80
Anvik to Nulato.....	225
Nulato to Tanana.....	225s
Tanana to Fort Yukon.....	450
Fort Yukon to Circle City.....	80
Circle City to Fortymile.....	240
Fortymile to Dawson City.....	52
Total miles from	
St. Michael to Dawson.....	1722

Now do you understand why so many stampedeers didn't make it their first time up the river, especially if they departed in the fall?

Using the chart above:

- Find out where a trip of equal distance would take you from your hometown. How many states would you travel through?
- If the trip started in a city in Europe, how many countries would you pass through?
- Map the travels of one individual woman from information gathered in her book profile or other reading listed in the back of the book. For example: use a world map to track Nellie Cashman's travels. For a simple project, chart and add up the mileage listed below based on the short biography in our book. For a more complex project, check out Nellie's biography Nellie Cashman and the North American Mining Frontier by Don Chaput (Westernlore Press, 1995.)
- Total the miles she traveled from her home in Ireland and onto the following locations: to Boston, San Francisco, then mining in Nevada; Victoria, B.C., the Cassiar in British Columbia; Tombstone, Arizona; Mexico, Australia, and South Africa. Finally she joined the Klondike Stampede in Dawson, Yukon Territory and later to Wiseman, Alaska. Later she took the train to Seward, Alaska, then traveled to New York, Arizona, back to Wiseman, Alaska and finally down to Victoria, B.C. where she died.

LANGUAGE ARTS

What Might Have Been: Fictional Dialog

Nellie Cashman Meets Fannie Quigley in Nenana, 1921:

(Note: Use glossary below for help with the many unfamiliar mining terms.)

Fannie: Well, if it ain't Nellie Cashman. I heard on the *mukluk telegraph* you were *mushing* on down this way. How are things up North?

Nellie: Well, Fannie, I haven't seen you since Fairbanks was just a rough camp. And here they are building a *railroad*!

Fannie: I heard you've got a block of claims up on the *Koyukuk*.

Nellie: Yes, ma'am. I'm mighty apt to make a million or two! I've got some *bench claims* up on *Fay Pup*. I've got the boys doing my *assessment work*, *sinking a shaft* down two hundred feet looking for the *paystreak*. So, I heard you got married again.

Fannie: Well, Joe isn't too much trouble to keep. Anyhow, he struck it on one of our *hard rock claims*. We've leased the *Little Annie* to Tom Aitken. He's mining *galena ore* this winter, and he's built a *corduroy road* to take it out to the *smelter* at Tacoma.

Nellie: Well, it's a far cry from the *two bit pans* we used to get on the *placer claims* in the *Cassier*. But it ain't quite as good as the \$150 pans Ethel and Clarence Berry got on Eldorado Creek, either.

Glossary

assessment work: annual work which needed to be done to maintain ownership of the claim

bench claim: placer claim on ancient stream bed on a hillside

Cassier: mining district in British Columbia

corduroy road: roadway over swampy ground made with tree trunks

Fay Pup: Fay, the name of a small tributary creek which is also known as a pup

galena ore: rock containing lead and silver

hard rock claim: hillside claim mined for ore

Koyukuk: northern tributary of the Yukon River

Little Annie: the name of a hard rock claim

mukluk telegraph: news passed along with travelers

mushing: traveling with a dog team and sled

paystreak: underground channel with high amounts of gold found by sinking a shaft

placer claim: claim on a creek where loose gold dust and nuggets are found in the gravel

railroad: the Alaska Railroad, being constructed thoroughly Nenana to Fairbanks that year.

sinking a shaft: digging a vertical hole down to bedrock on a placer claim

smelter: large factory where ore is reduced in a furnace to separate out the metals, such as gold, from the rock

two bit pan: gold pan which yields twenty five cents after the gravel is washed

HUNT FOR MORE GOLD: EXTENDED ACTIVITIES

Write Your Own Biography

- Locate someone whose grandmother or great-grandmother was a pioneer in your hometown, county or state. See if you can find enough information about her to write a short biography. Was anyone in her family involved in the California or northern gold rushes?
- Can you find someone in your family tree who was involved in any of the gold rushes in America or Canada? Are there any photos of that person?

Fact sheet

- Put together a fact sheet on one or more women in the book.
 - list 10 facts about her
 - list 5 adjectives to describe her.
 - list all the languages she spoke
 - list the ways she contributed to her community

Imaginary Dialog

- Imagine a conversation between two women from the book (see Fanny and Nellie above.) Use some mining terms, place names and events from their life stories. Choose two women whom you think might have enjoyed each other, even though it might not have been possible that they ever met. For extra credit, perform the dialog for the class.

Journal

- Write one week's worth of journal entries for a gold rush woman. Use a real woman from the book or a fictional one you make up. Try to imagine her experiences, and how she would have reacted to them.

A Ton of Goods

Supplies Graphic from the Seattle Post-Intelligencer - September 13, 1991:

- Assemble a real ton of "goods" with sacks to represent flour, bacon and beans, and other goods which would have been taken along on the trip North. Mark off a mile on your school playground.
 - Haul your goods a mile, in relays, using a wagon or sled. How many trips does it take to move all the goods?
 - Arrange to pay a group of "packers." How many packers would it take? How much would you have to pay them?

Three meals a Day

- Using the list of suggested goods below, plan three meals a day for a week. Add fish, meat or berries if you think you would be able to hunt or gather them.

Chilkoot Trail 1898 Food Supplies

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

CONNECT TO THE INTERNET

- Find the Klondike Gold Rush web site: www.gold-rush.org
- Try the University of Alaska Fairbanks museum's web site at www.uaf.alaska.edu/museum for information about the exhibit "Threads of Gold: Lives of Women in the Northern Gold Rushes", an exhibit based on our book and curated by Jane G. Haigh.
- Try surfing the internet for related topics such as gold rush, Klondike, Alaska, Yukon, mining and gold.
- Another excellent resource for researching the gold rush is:

<http://www.eed.state.ak.us/lam/goldrush/stories/home.html>



ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Claire Rudolf Murphy and **Jane G. Haigh** spent three years researching the northern gold rushes. *Gold Rush Women* (Alaska Northwest Books, 1997) was the first of three to result from their work. *Children of the Gold Rush* followed in 1999 and won the Willa Cather award for best juvenile nonfiction book about the West. *Gold Rush Dogs* was published in the spring of 2001. Log onto to their internet sites (see top) to learn more about these authors and their books.

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