

Manifest Destiny and “New Frontiers”: A Cultural and Literary Analysis of Twain’s *Roughing It*

5 Days

History/English/American Studies: High School

DESIRED RESULTS

What are the “big ideas” that drive this lesson?

- ❖ Today, our students may argue that the Internet is the new “Wild West,” decimating distances, time and space, to provide man with endless content, communication and commerce. The objective of this unit is to explore how this idea has become such an entrenched part of our American identity. Through this lens of the “American Frontier,” students will analyze how the various implications of Manifest Destiny have inspired human intersections of travel, technology, policy and “social progress” and how various American artists and writers viewed the changes. Students will examine the ideal of Manifest Destiny and how this belief shaped American depictions of the ever changing “West” as seen in paintings, songs, and texts from the era, focusing on Twain’s *Roughing It*. Using close-readings of excerpts from *Roughing It* and a historical analysis of his life and times, students will analyze Twain’s literary style and his commentary on the ideas of travel, technology and the American West.

What are the “essential questions” that students must answer in order to understand the “big ideas?”

- ❖ How has the doctrine of Manifest Destiny shaped the evolution of our American Identity as seen in paintings, songs, and literature?
- ❖ How does Twain depict the American West as he specifically comments on its landscape, people and culture?
- ❖ How does his audience, his purpose, choice of topics and use of a semi-autobiographical memoir style help to shape his tone and voice?

CORE UNDERSTANDINGS

Identify what students will know and/or be able to do.

- ❖ Students will analyze the questions, why travel or go on a journey and how does this experience change us? They will define Manifest Destiny and examine its implications on the American Identity.
- ❖ In small groups, students will examine various artifacts from the 19th century to comprehend life in the American West and to evaluate if these depictions of life lend support to or refute O'Sullivan's assertions.
- ❖ In small groups and as a whole class, students will analyze Twain's writing style, tone, and themes to determine how he depicts the American West during the time of Manifest Destiny.
- ❖ Students will cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
- ❖ Students will be able to determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness or beauty of the text.
- ❖ Students will debate whether or not Twain's book further advances the theory of Manifest Destiny or not, using textual evidence to support their argument.

LIST SUGGESTED ASSESSMENT(S)

Formative assessments:

- ❖ Obtaining and collecting annotations of handouts and excerpts completed by students.
- ❖ Evaluating student performances during whole class and small group discussion and presentations.

Summative assessment:

- ❖ Have students to apply their knowledge of Twain's style and how his ideas connect to Manifest Destiny by reading new excerpts from ch. 56-57 regarding his initial impressions of California. Depending on the class, you can give students this reading the night before the assessment, or this assessment can be broken up over class periods to allow for both in-class reading and writing. Written responses should be scored based on the quality of argumentation and evidence provided as well as their ability to write a well-organized and proofread essay that uses a carefully considered voice and style.

LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND “COMMON CORE” CONNECTIONS

What are the specific activities and sequence of instruction that will be used to engage students in this lesson?

Procedure- Introduction:

- To begin this unit on the American Journey, the teacher should first discuss with students the issue of why man travels: Why do we take journeys and how might different modes of travel impact our experience on the journey? Have students brainstorm about man’s motivations for travel and how this might impact his life and identity. Discussing Twain’s own motivations for travel in *Roughing It* might be a great place to start:

‘I was young and ignorant, and I envied my brother. I coveted his distinction and his financial splendor, but particularly and especially the long, strange journey he was going to make, and the curious new world he was going to explore. He was going to travel! I never had been away from home, and that word "travel" had a seductive charm for me.’

(Chapter 1)

- Additionally, it will be important for the teacher to introduce the 19th century philosophy of Manifest Destiny and to show how rapidly expanding technologies began to change both the landscape and the culture of America. By providing this historical and cultural context, students will better understand how Greely’s assertion to “go west” became such an iconic and enduring American belief, and how Twain himself thought that “roughing it” might be a worthy endeavor.

Activity 1- Why Travel?

- Begin the lesson with students free-writing on the questions: why travel? How might the experience change us? How do you prefer to travel—car, plane, train, on foot, or with your mind—and why? Have students share responses with the whole class and explore the different reasons for travel, focusing on the work versus play idea, which is later seen in Twain’s writings. In fact, previewing the focus on Mark Twain’s travel writings would introduce the unit objectives and acclimate students to the historical discussion of travel in the 19th century.
- Transition this discussion to introduce the idea of Manifest Destiny and how in the mid-1800’s people largely traveled for improved opportunities in lifestyle, commerce, and governmental land acquisition. Explain how the American belief called Manifest Destiny helped to fuel the desire to travel

and explore in the 19th century. Introduce handout #1 on O'Sullivan's writings, which form the basis for this doctrine. Students should first read and annotate the article, circling important words, highlighting where they think he "defines" the issue, and summarizing the following: his audience, purpose, and tone. Applying a think/pair/share model is suggested.

- When discussing the handout as a whole class, students should begin by identifying his major thesis or argument within each piece. Then discuss how his argument evolved. As the conversation develops, capture the key ideas on the board, paying attention specifically to what William Weeks identifies as the three most important attributes that advocates of the philosophy espoused: the virtue associated with such a point a view, the "mission" it defies for the nation, and the inevitability or sense of destiny it demands.
- To end the lesson, have the class anticipate the pros and cons of enacting such a national belief: how might O'Sullivan's ideas impact the nation? Consider the areas of landscape, economy, government, culture, and people and how such a justification for travel and expansion might "change" America.

Activity 2- Go West Young Man!

- Initiation: What are our modern "beliefs" about American regions? Students should brainstorm modern stereotypes and generalizations about the landscape/cultural perceptions/people of the various regions of America: divide up the geographic regions into East, Mid-West, and West. (i.e. "cowboys," surfers, and Hollywood-types live in the west, the mid-west is called the heartland, the east represents New Yorkers, "old money," "preppy," Yankee ingenuity, etc.). In the discussion, remind students that their own "point of origin" might influence their understandings of place. As well, ask students to identify the source of their understandings (personal experience, film, family history, reading, hearsay).
- Next, introduce one man's image of 19th century American as depicted in a painting: project Gast's *American Progress* on the board or pass out a photocopy to students, which appears in Handout #2. Discuss how the artist uses color, light and symbols to depict his understanding of America.

Ask students to connect their analysis of this painting to O'Sullivan's view of Manifest Destiny. Discuss whether or not the tone of this painting sympathizes with O'Sullivan's point of view or differs. Consider what new ideas this piece introduces to further complicate O'Sullivan's argument.

- To develop a deeper understanding of this era, divide student into groups and give each group one artifact from the 19th century, as shown in handout #2. In their small groups, direct students to examine the following: Who created this piece (an easterner or a westerner?) and for what audience? What does this artifact tell you about life in the West? How does it depict the landscape, its people, and/or its culture? What assumptions can we make about what it was like to live in the West in the mid to late 1800's? After small group discussion, have each group share their interpretations of their artifact with the whole class. Invite other groups to offer their commentary after each presentation.
- Closure: Students should examine new insights into their understandings of 19th century Western America and if these facts differ from their modern perceptions of the West. If the class has participated in the pen pal exchange mentioned in the Extending the Lesson section, have students share their understandings of the West as discussed with their western peer. Ask them to reflect on how their understanding of this place and people has evolved.
- Homework: Webquest: Explore the life and times of Mark Twain. Send students to the following website:
http://www.marktwainhouse.org/man/biography_main.php
- Have students write down at least four interesting facts about his life and at least four interesting facts about his work.

Activity 3- Is Mark Twain Roughing It?

- Initiation: What does it mean to "rough it?" Have students discuss this term, especially as it relates to their growing understanding of the American West during the 19th century.
- Next, in small groups, have students share notes on the life of Twain and his works. Have them identify the four most interesting facts about his life

and four most interesting facts about his work. Have groups write their lists on the board. Discuss areas of overlap and major themes as they emerge from the group discussions.

- The teacher should emphasize the following aspects of Twain's life: the conditions of his formative years in Missouri, his motivations for travel to the west, his lifelong interest in travel and innovations, his profession as both a performer and writer, the origins of his "persona" Mark Twain and his use of humor and how these emerged from his time in Nevada working for the *Enterprise* and learning about the genre of "Comstock tales" or tall tales. While small groups might offer the bulk of this information from their research, the teacher should supplement this discussion as needed.
- After this initial discussion of Twain, introduce the travel book, *Roughing It*. Provide for the class details such as when Twain wrote this book, his writing process and structure—weaving together his memories of his trip along with his written correspondences for the *Territorial Enterprise* and other newspapers of the day—, his intended audience, the role of subscription book sales, and how Twain used images to enhance his storytelling. Explain how Twain's book explores the West during the time of the Civil War.
- Before delving into the reading of Twain's excerpts, preview the literary devices that Twain utilizes in his writings and teach any of these devices to your class if they are being discussed for the first time: imagery, humor, tone, colloquial dialect, satire, allusion, hyperbole, connotative language, irony and point of view.
- Hand to each student a copy of chapters one and two. Lead the class through a guided discussion of Twain's writing and style. It might be informative to share with students strategies for non-fiction reading, such as those provided by Melissa Matusevich at <http://delta.cs.vt.edu/edu/fis/nfiction.html>.
- During the discussion of chapter one, students should begin to see Twain's humor, his motivations for travel, his expectations for the journey, and his unique writing style. To conclude the lesson ask students if they think that Twain is really looking to "rough it."

- Homework: Give *Roughing It* excerpt packet, handout #3. Create student reading groups by thematic topic and ask students to annotate closely for the elements discussed in class today.

Activity 4- Landscape, People and Culture in *Roughing It*

- An analysis of Twain's style: a look at his depictions of landscape, people and culture in the West.
- Begin the lesson by soliciting from students passages from the excerpts that made them laugh, that made them confused, or that provoked a strong reaction. After sharing a couple of student reactions to the reading, introduce the organizer (handout #4) that will help them to facilitate their group work and the larger class discussion on his ideas and style.
- Break students up into groups to have them share annotations from the reading. Within small groups, arranged by thematic topic, ask students to share annotations and to determine the following, which they will present to the larger group: what is the main idea of this passage? Which literary elements does Twain use to great effect in this section of the book? How does Twain feel about the West in this section? The teacher should circulate among the groups during their discussion to check for understanding and to help clarify any confusion or misreading.
- In the whole class discussion that follows, allow students to debate interpretations and ideas and to support their assertions using the text.
- Closure: Ask students to reflect on their growing insights into Twain's style and ideas. Have them write down in their notes a brief response to the following: How does Twain feel about the West? Do you feel that his work is a more accurate depiction of the West than the previous works discussed? As a writer, what might his purpose be? Is he romanticizing his depiction, like Whitman, or does he take a more journalistic approach like the diary of Lucy Jane Hall?

- Homework: Finish reading at least two more Twain excerpts

Activity 5- How does Twain View the West?

- Evaluation of Twain's voice: how does the "persona" of Mark Twain view the west?
- To begin the lesson, invite students to explore contemporary reviews of Twain's book as provided by the Mark Twain in his Times website: <http://etext.virginia.edu/railton/roughingit/rirevhp.html>
- Have students skim several reviews, especially from San Francisco Call, Utica, Overland, Hartford, and Boston. Which reviewer most closely resembles your ideas on Twain, and why? Allow students to share their interpretations of Twain's work. Encourage students to reference the text to defend their ideas.
- For the remainder of the lesson, introduce the final activity: How Does Twain View the West? Divide the class into two groups: Those who feel that Twain fully supports the ideas of Manifest Destiny and those who feel that he does not whole heartedly espouse those beliefs. Allow time for students to work in small groups to first build their argument and then engage the whole class in an informal debate. The teacher can act as judge and determine which side presented the most convincing argument with the most relevant support.
- Closure: Discuss assessment readings and provide copies for students to annotate for homework or in-class.

"COMMON CORE" CONNECTIONS

READING-

- ❖ RI.11-12.1. Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

- ❖ RI.11-12.6. Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness or beauty of the text.
- ❖ RI.11-12.7. Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

WRITING-

- ❖ W.11-12.2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

SPEAKING AND LISTENING-

- ❖ SL.11-12.1. Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

LANGUAGE STUDY-

- ❖ L.11-12.5. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings

MATERIALS AND ATTACHMENTS

- ❖ Understanding Manifest Destiny:
- ❖ <http://www.enotes.com/american-history-literature-cc/manifest-destiny>
- ❖ <http://odur.let.rug.nl/~usa/E/manifest/manifxx.htm>
- ❖ <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~hyper/hns/chapter4.html>
- ❖ <http://www.pbs.org/warrior/content/modules/manifest.pdf>
- ❖ Images of Westward Expansion:

- ❖ The frontier: http://www.lrz.de/~amerika-institut/American_Art/Artwork/Frontier/pages/page_14.html
- ❖ <http://www.csub.edu/~gsantos/img0061.html>
- ❖ <http://faculty.txwes.edu/csmeller/Human-Experience/ExpData09/01ModCulMatrix/ModPICs/05Realism/Leutze1816/LeuExp1861WstEmpSt402.htm>
- ❖ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Marion_Russell
- ❖ Manifest Destiny Songs:
- ❖ Sweet Betsy from Pike (parry and stone, 1858)
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sweet_Betsy_from_Pike
- ❖ Twain's *Roughing It* text:
- ❖ <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/railton/roughingit/ripubhp.html>
- ❖ Student Reading Assessment (summative assessment): Attached

SUGGESTED LESSON EXTENSIONS TO ENHANCE STUDENT LEARNING

- ❖ Discuss 20th century non-fictional accounts of travel and technology, as seen in Wolfe's 1979 book *The Right Stuff*, specifically in chapter 3: Yeager. As "king" of the test pilots, Yeager is a lot like Twain: an outsider in a new land. Yeager lacked the formal education and military background of his followers, like Glenn who went on to legitimize the work of these maverick test pilots. Muroc in Yeager's day was a "Wild West" of sorts before regulations, new technologies and political motivation made space exploration a legitimate "business." Even the sense of place—Muroc before it became Edwards Air Force Base—mirrors the harsh landscape of Twain's *Roughing It*. Students may enjoy drawing parallels between the two texts and how these different literary genres and writing styles impact their message and tone.
- ❖ Teach Twain's novel *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* to discuss the reversal of this western travel ideal. The protagonist, Hank Morgan, travels both back in time and eastward to explore the impact of technology on 6th century

Arthurian England. Consider how Twain offers prophetic commentary on America's imperialistic ways. Consider how the novel's structure, characters and themes depict American ideals of conquering, exploring, and industrializing.

- ❖ Pen Pal Exchange: Students from vastly different regions of the country can begin an on-line exchange to discuss how their different landscapes and cultures have impacted their identity. For example, Nevada students might converse with Connecticut students to fully understand how these two vastly different landscapes and cultures influenced the young Mark Twain and their own daily lives and choices.
- ❖ Students can create a Facebook page to discuss their personal "travels" as an outsider in a new place, posting pictures and commentaries, like Twain does, on the landscape, peoples and cultures of this "new" place. Afterwards, students can reflect on how their own prejudices shaped their understandings of this place prior to their arrival, how their "selection" of stories reveals their point of view on this place, and how they might have changed after their "travel" to this place.
- ❖ Students can write a piece of creative non-fiction, like Twain, by acting as "correspondents" and reporting on the following topic: how has your journey on the Internet opened you up to a new world? How has this new world impacted your identity, your understanding of what it means to be an American or your evolving understanding of the complexities of this new world?

The American Journey- Unit Test 100 pts.

Directions: Read and annotate the following two chapters of *Roughing It*, by Mark Twain. As you read, note sections where Twain effectively uses imagery, humor, allusion, hyperbole, connotative language, irony and point of view to convey his tone and feelings about California, both as he describes it in the 1860's when he views it for the first time and his imaginings of what it once was in 1849 during the Gold Rush. Then answer the questions that follow.

CHAPTER LVI.

WE rumbled over the plains and valleys, climbed the Sierras to the clouds, and looked down upon summer-clad California. And I will remark here, in passing, that all scenery in California requires *distance* to give it its highest charm. The mountains are imposing in their sublimity and their majesty of form and altitude, from any point of view -- but one must have distance to soften their ruggedness and enrich their tintings; a Californian forest is best at a little distance, for there is a sad poverty of variety in species, the trees being chiefly of one monotonous family -- redwood, pine, spruce, fir -- and so, at a near view there is a wearisome sameness of attitude in their rigid arms, stretched down ward and outward in one continued and reiterated appeal to all men to "Sh! -- don't say a word! -- you might disturb somebody!" Close at hand, too, there is a reliefless and relentless smell of pitch and turpentine; there is a ceaseless melancholy in their sighing and complaining foliage; one walks over a soundless carpet of beaten yellow bark and dead spines of the foliage till he feels like a wandering spirit bereft of a footfall; he tires of the endless tufts of needles and yearns for substantial, shapely leaves; he looks for moss and grass to loll upon, and finds none, for where there is no bark there is naked clay and dirt, enemies to pensive musing and clean apparel. Often a grassy plain in California, is what it should be, but often, too, it is best contemplated at a distance, because although its grass blades are tall, they stand up vindictively straight and self-sufficient, and are unsociably wide apart, with uncomely spots of barren sand between.

One of the queerest things I know of, is to hear tourists

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from "the States" go into ecstasies over the loveliness of "ever-blooming California." And they always do go into that sort of ecstasies. But perhaps they would modify them if they knew how old Californians, with the memory full upon them of the dust-covered and questionable summer greens of Californian "verdure,"



AN EASTERN LANDSCAPE.

stand astonished, and filled with worshipping admiration, in the presence of the lavish richness, the brilliant green, the infinite freshness, the spend-thrift variety of form and species and foliage that make an Eastern landscape a vision of Paradise itself. The idea of a man falling into raptures over grave and sombre California, when that man has seen New England's meadow-expanses and her maples, oaks and cathedral-windowed elms decked in summer attire, or the opaline splendors of autumn descending upon her forests, comes very near being funny -- would be, in fact, but that it is so pathetic. No land with an unvarying climate can be very beautiful. The tropics are not, for all the sentiment that is wasted on them. They seem beautiful at first, but sameness impairs the charm by and by. *Change* is the handmaiden Nature requires to do her miracles with. The land that has four well-defined seasons, cannot lack beauty, or pall with monotony. Each season brings a world of enjoyment and interest in the watching of its unfolding, its gradual, harmonious development, its culminating graces -- and just as one begins to tire of it, it passes away and a radical change comes, with new witcheries and new glories in its train. And I think

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that to one in sympathy with nature, each season, in its turn, seems the loveliest.

San Francisco, a truly fascinating city to live in, is



A VARIABLE CLIMATE.

stately and handsome at a fair distance, but close at hand one notes that the architecture is mostly old-fashioned, many streets are made up of decaying, smoke-grimed, wooden houses, and the barren sand-hills toward the outskirts obtrude themselves too prominently. Even the kindly climate is sometimes pleasanter when read about than personally experienced, for a lovely, cloudless sky wears out its welcome by and by, and then when the longed for rain does come it *stays*. Even the playful earthquake is better contemplated at a dis --

However there are varying opinions about that.

The climate of San Francisco is mild and singularly equable. The thermometer stands at about seventy degrees the year round. It hardly changes at all. You sleep under one or two light blankets Summer and Winter, and never use a mosquito bar. Nobody ever wears Summer clothing. You wear black broadcloth -- if you have it -- in August and January, just the same. It is no colder, and no warmer, in the one month than the other. You do not

use overcoats and you do not use fans. It is as pleasant a climate as could well be contrived, take it all around, and is doubtless the most unvarying in the whole world. The wind blows there a good deal in the

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summer months, but then you can go over to Oakland, if you choose -- three or four miles away -- it does not blow there. It has only snowed twice in San Francisco in nineteen years, and then it only remained on the ground long enough to astonish the children, and set them to wondering what the feathery stuff was.

During eight months of the year, straight along, the skies are bright and cloudless, and never a drop of rain falls. But when the other four months come along, you will need to go and steal an umbrella. Because you will require it. Not just one day, but one hundred and twenty days in hardly varying succession. When you want to go visiting, or attend church, or the theatre, you never look up at the clouds to see whether it is likely to rain or not -- you look at the almanac. If it is Winter, it will *rain* -- and if it is Summer, it *won't* rain, and you cannot help it. You never need a lightning-rod, because it never thunders and it never lightens. And after you have listened for six or eight weeks, every night, to the dismal monotony of those quiet rains, you will wish in your heart the thunder *would* leap and crash and roar along those drowsy skies once, and make everything alive -- you will wish the prisoned lightnings *would* cleave the dull firmament asunder and light it with a blinding glare for *one* little instant. You would give *anything* to hear the old familiar thunder again and see the lightning strike somebody. And along in the Summer, when you have suffered about four months of lustrous, pitiless sunshine, you are ready to go down on your knees and plead for rain -- hail -- snow-thunder and lightning -- anything to break the monotony -- you will take an earthquake, if you cannot do any better. And the chances are that you'll get it, too.

San Francisco is built on sand hills, but they are prolific sand hills. They yield a generous vegetation. All the rare flowers which people in "the States" rear with such patient care in parlor flower-pots and green-houses, flourish luxuriantly in the open air there all the year round. Calla lilies, all sorts of genaniums, passion flowers, moss roses -- I do not know the names of a tenth part of them. I only know that while

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New Yorkers are burdened with banks and drifts of snow, Californians are burdened with banks and drifts of flowers, if they only keep their hands off and let them grow. And I have heard that they have also that rarest and most curious of all the flowers, the beautiful *Espiritu Santo*, as the Spaniards call it -- or flower of the Holy Spirit -- though I thought it grew only in Central America -- down on the Isthmus. In its cup is the daintiest little fac-simile of a dove, as pure as snow. The Spaniards have a superstitious reverence for it.

The blossom has been conveyed to the States, submerged in ether; and the bulb has been taken thither also, but every attempt to make it bloom after it arrived, has failed.

I have elsewhere spoken of the endless Winter of Mono, California, and but this moment of the eternal Spring of San Francisco. Now if we travel a hundred miles in a straight line, we come to the eternal Summer of Sacramento. One never sees Summer-clothing or mosquitoes in San Francisco -- but they can be found in Sacramento. Not always and unvaryingly, but about one hundred and forty-three months out of twelve years, perhaps. Flowers bloom there, always, the reader can easily believe -- people suffer and sweat, and swear, morning, noon and night, and wear out their stanchest energies fanning themselves. It gets hot there, but if you go down to Fort Yuma you will find it hotter. Fort Yuma is probably the hottest place on earth. The thermometer stays at one hundred and twenty in the shade there all the time -- except when it varies and goes higher. It is a U.S. military post, and its occupants get so used to the terrific heat that they suffer without it. There is a tradition (attributed to John Phenix*) that a very, very wicked soldier died there, once, and of course, went straight to the hottest corner of perdition, -- and the next day he *telegraphed back for his blankets*. There is no doubt about the truth of this statement -- there can be no doubt about it. I have seen the place where that soldier used to board. In Sacramento it is fiery Summer always, and you can gather roses, and eat strawberries and ice-cream, and wear

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white linen clothes, and pant and perspire, at eight or nine o'clock in the morning, and then take the cars, and at noon put on your furs and your skates, and go skimming over frozen Donner Lake, seven thousand feet above the valley, among snow banks fifteen feet deep, and in the shadow of grand mountain peaks that lift their frosty crags ten thousand feet above the level of the sea.



SACRAMENTO.



THREE HOURS AWAY

There is a transition for you! Where will you find another like it in the Western hemisphere? And some of us have swept around snow-walled curves of the Pacific Railroad in that vicinity, six thousand feet above the sea, and looked down as the birds do, upon the deathless Summer of the Sacramento Valley, with its fruitful fields, its feathery foliage, its silver streams, all slumbering in the mellow haze of its enchanted atmosphere, and all infinitely softened and spiritualized by distance -- a dreamy, exquisite glimpse of fairyland, made all the more charming and striking that it was caught through a forbidden gateway of ice and snow, and savage crags and precipices.

* It has been purloined by fifty different scribblers who were too poor to invent a fancy but not ashamed to steal one. -- M. T.

CHAPTER LVII.

It was in this Sacramento Valley, just referred to, that a deal of the most lucrative of the early gold mining was done, and you may still see, in places, its grassy slopes and levels torn and guttered and disfigured by the avaricious spoilers of fifteen and twenty years ago. You may see such disfigurements far and wide over California -- and in some such places, where only meadows and forests are visible -- not a living creature, not a house, no stick or stone or remnant of a ruin, and not a sound, not even a whisper to disturb the Sabbath stillness -- you will find it hard to believe that there stood at one time a fiercely-flourishing little city, of two thousand or three thousand souls, with its newspaper, fire company, brass band, volunteer militia, bank, hotels, noisy Fourth of July processions and speeches, gambling hells crammed with tobacco smoke, profanity, and rough-bearded men of all nations and colors, with tables heaped with gold dust sufficient for the revenues of a German principality -- streets crowded and rife with business -- town lots worth four hundred dollars a front foot -- labor, laughter, music, dancing, swearing, fighting, shooting, stabbing -- a bloody inquest and a man for breakfast every morning -- *everything* that delights and adorns existence -- all the appointments and appurtenances of a thriving and prosperous and promising young city, -- and *now* nothing is left of it all but a lifeless, homeless solitude. The men are gone, the houses have vanished, even the *name* of the place is forgotten. In no other land, in modern times, have towns so

absolutely died and disappeared, as in the old mining regions of California.

It was a driving, vigorous, restless population in those days. It was a *curious* population. It was the *only* population of the kind that the world has ever seen gathered together, and it is not likely that the world will ever see its like again. For observe, it was an assemblage of two hundred thousand *young* men -- not simpering, dainty, kid-gloved weaklings, but stalwart, muscular, dauntless young braves, brimful of push and energy, and royally endowed with every attribute that goes to make up a peerless and magnificent manhood -- the very pick and choice of the world's glorious ones. No women, no children, no gray and stooping veterans, -- none but erect, bright-eyed, quick-moving, strong-handed young giants -- the strangest population, the finest population, the most gallant host that ever trooped down the startled solitudes of an unpeopled land. And where are they now? Scattered to the ends of the earth -- or prematurely aged and decrepit -- or shot or stabbed in street affrays -- or dead of disappointed hopes and broken hearts -- all gone, or nearly all -- victims devoted upon the altar of the golden calf -- the noblest holocaust that ever wafted its sacrificial incense heavenward. It is pitiful to think upon.

It was a splendid population -- for all the slow, sleepy, sluggish-brained sloths staid at home -- you never find that sort of people among pioneers -- you cannot build pioneers out of that sort of material. It was that population that gave to California a name for getting up astounding enterprises and rushing them through with a magnificent dash and daring and a recklessness of cost or consequences, which she bears unto this day -- and when she projects a new surprise, the grave world smiles as usual, and says "Well, that is California all over."

But they were rough in those times! They fairly reveled in gold, whisky, fights, and fandangoes, and were unspeakably happy. The honest miner raked from a hundred to a thousand dollars out of his claim a day, and what with the gambling dens and the other entertainments, he hadn't a

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cent the next morning, if he had any sort of luck. They cooked their own bacon and beans, sewed on their own buttons, washed their own shirts -- blue woollen ones; and if a man wanted a fight on his hands without any annoying delay, all he had to do was to appear in public in a white shirt or a stove-pipe hat, and he would be accommodated. For those people hated aristocrats. They had a particular and malignant animosity toward what they called a "biled shirt."

It was a wild, free, disorderly, grotesque society! *Men* -- only swarming hosts of stalwart *men* -- nothing juvenile, nothing feminine, visible anywhere!



"FETCH HER OUT."

In those days miners would flock in crowds to catch a glimpse of that rare and blessed spectacle, a woman! Old inhabitants tell how, in a certain camp, the news went abroad early in the morning that a woman was come! They had seen a calico dress hanging out of a wagon down at the camping-ground -- sign of emigrants from over the great plains. Everybody went down there, and a shout went up when an

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actual, bona fide dress was discovered fluttering in the wind! The male emigrant was visible. The miners said:

"Fetch her out!"

He said: "It is my wife, gentlemen -- she is sick -- we have been robbed of money, provisions, everything, by the Indians -- we want to rest."

"Fetch her out! We've got to see her!"

"But, gentlemen, the poor thing, she -- "

"FETCH HER OUT!"

He "fetched her out," and they swung their hats and sent up three rousing cheers and a tiger; and they crowded around and gazed at her, and touched her dress, and listened to her voice with the look of men who listened to a *memory* rather than a present reality -- and then they collected twenty-five hundred dollars in gold and gave it to the man, and swung their hats again and gave three more cheers, and went home satisfied.



"WELL, IF IT AIN'T A CHILD!"

Once I dined in San Francisco with the family of a pioneer, and talked with his daughter, a young lady whose first experience in San Francisco was an adventure, though

she herself did not remember it, as she was only two or three years old at the time. Her father said that, after landing from the ship, they were walking up the street, a servant leading the party with the little girl in her arms. And presently

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a huge miner, bearded, belted, spurred, and bristling with deadly weapons -- just down from a long campaign in the mountains, evidently-barred the way, stopped the servant, and stood gazing, with a face all alive with gratification and astonishment. Then he said, reverently:

"Well, if it ain't a child!" And then he snatched a little leather sack out of his pocket and said to the servant:

"There's a hundred and fifty dollars in dust, there, and I'll give it to you to let me kiss the child!"

That anecdote is *true*.

But see how things change. Sitting at that dinner-table, listening to that anecdote, if I had offered double the money for the privilege of kissing the same child, I would have been refused. Seventeen added years have far more than doubled the price.

And while upon this subject I will remark that once in Star City, in the Humboldt Mountains, I took my place in a sort of long, post-office single file of miners, to patiently await my chance to peep through a crack in the cabin and get a sight of the splendid new sensation -- a genuine, live Woman! And at the end of half of an hour my turn came, and I put my eye to the crack, and there she was, with one arm akimbo, and tossing flap-jacks in a frying-pan with the other.



And she was one hundred and sixty-five* years old, and hadn't a tooth in her head.

* Being in calmer mood, now, I voluntarily knock off a hundred from that. -- M.T.

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Test Questions:

Part I: Short Answer (60 pts- 20 pts. each)- Base your response to the short answer questions on chapter 56.

1. Looking at the first paragraph of chapter 56, why does Twain say, “that all scenery in California requires *distance* to give it its highest charm”?
2. Which landscape does Twain prefer, New England or California? Explain why using at least two different literary devices Twain employs to convey his idea.
3. What is most striking to Twain about the Sacramento landscape? Examine two different literary devices that Twain uses in your response.

Grading:

- 10 pts. Quality of response/argumentation
10 pts. Quality of support used to defend response

Part II: Essay- Twain and Manifest Destiny (40 points)

Directions:

Of Manifest Destiny, writer Ernest Lee Tuveson once said
“A vast complex of ideas, policies, and actions is comprehended under the phrase 'Manifest Destiny'. They are not, as we should expect, all compatible, nor do they come from any one source.”

Using chapter 57, our discussions of Manifest Destiny and Twain’s writing style, answer the following question in a carefully considered essay: How does Twain’s writing reflect the complexities of Manifest Destiny as a 19th century belief? Consider how Twain feels about the West, why we went there, and the results of our “journey.” Defend your idea by imagery, humor, allusion, hyperbole, connotative language, irony and point of view referencing at least two of the following literary devices Twain employs:.

Grading:

10 pts - Thesis/Argumentation

20 pts - Use of text to identify and evaluate Twain’s literary devices and how they relate to student’s thesis

10 pts - Clarity of ideas, sound structure, carefully crafted voice and evidence of proofreading

