

Adventures on the American Frontier

GOLD RUSH ADVENTURES

Part Four

**Bayard Taylor's Journey
to California through Panama**



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This book features QR codes that link to audio of the book being narrated so that readers can follow along.

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Bayard Taylor watched each day as sailing ships full of Forty-Niners left the New York harbor. Some of them would take the long journey all the way around the tip of South America, then up the South American coast and much of the North American coast until they reached California. It was the farthest route, which was why so many people were choosing to go by land instead. But to Bayard, a newspaper reporter for the *New-York Tribune*, there was a better way to go.





New steamships, and some of the sailing ships, were taking Forty-Niners down to the Isthmus of Panama, that neck of land that holds North and South America together. The Forty-Niners made their way across the isthmus as best they could and then took



another ship north to California from the Pacific side of Panama. The first steamships had been sent to the Pacific Ocean at about the time that James Marshall found gold at Sutter's Mill.

Bayard watched the ships go and wished that he, too, could head for the gold fields. He heard the excited passengers singing their theme song to the tune of "Oh! Susannah" and imagined the adventures that were ahead of them. He even wrote poems about those adventures.

Bayard didn't have gold fever, for he didn't care if he ever became rich, but a longing for adventure was deep in his blood. If only he had the \$420 to pay his way, he would go on the next steamship to puff out of New York Harbor.

Horace Greeley, editor of the *Tribune*, printed Bayard's poems in his paper. One day late in the spring of 1849, he called Bayard into his office. "Taylor," he said, "how would you like to go to California?"

Bayard felt his heart leap. "I'd like it



just fine, Mr. Greeley," he said, trying to keep his voice steady.

"Then pack up your notebooks and get going," said Mr. Greeley. "I'll look for a good set of stories from you about all that happens on the way and what the life of a Forty-Niner is really like. Here, you'll need this." He handed the young reporter an envelope.

"Thank you, sir," said Bayard as he took the envelope, and his grin couldn't have been wider.