

TRUNCATED SAMPLE SCRIPT

This is just the first few pages of the full script, which runs to 24 pages--about 25-30 minutes in performance.

If you wish to secure performance royalties to the play and the pre-recorded folk music cues, contact Sales@RuyaSonic.com

Eureka! *Havoc!*

Gold Rush Days of '49

A radio-play by

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PRODUCTION SCRIPT
August 29, 2000
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CAST

GRAMPS	Old Man narrator
EDDY	Gramps as a young man
SARO JANE	Miner's wife (via letter)
MINER #6	Miner
PANNER #1	Panner
MINER #2	Miner
TOM	Engineering miner
MINER #3	Miner
PANNER #3	Panner
MINER #4	Miner
HARRY	Angry miner
PANNER #4	Mexican miner
MINER #5	Miner
JAKE	Miner
GRANDKID #2	Gramps' grandchild
OLD TIMER	Older Panner
EXPRESSMAN	Mail delivery man
MONTE GIRL	Card dealer
GRANDKID #3	Gramps' grandchild
GEORGE	Miner's brother (via letter)
MINER #7	Miner
REVELER #2	Gunman
CALIFORNIO JUAN	Miner
PATRON #1	Saloon patron
REVELER #1	Gunman
THORNDIKE	Miner (husband of Saro Jane)
SLIM	Doomed miner
MINER #9	Miner
GRANDKID #1	Gramps' grandchild
MINER #1	Miner
RICH MINER	Successful miner
MINER #8	Miner
PANNER #2	Panner
PATRON #2	Cheated saloon patron
ANNOUNCER	The announcer
MERCHANT	Shop keeper

Six sound effects artists are also required.

NOTE: Asterisks beside cue numbers indicate where the cast/crew must listen to allow a sound or music cue to "clear" before proceeding. A large hand-lettered "Q" will make this stand out better in production.

Visit Tony Palermo's Radio Drama Resources web site: www.RuyaSonic.com

1. MUSIC: [MUS-1] INTRO THEME--UP AND UNDER. DUCK FOR VOICES.

2* ANNOUNCER: Welcome to the radio series that takes you back through the history of the 31st state. In this week's episode, "Eureka! Havoc!" we follow the story of Edward Alonzo Harper, who came to California in the great "Gold Rush" of the late-1840's. (PAUSE) Now, a grandpa--we join old Eddy Harper in his rocking chair, surrounded by his 17 grandchildren. You can hear that rocking chair now...

3. MUSIC: INTRO--FADES.

SCENE ONE: EXT. GRAMPS' FRONT PORCH - DAY
(GRAMPS, GRANDKIDS #1, #2, #3)

4. SOUND: ROCKING CHAIR. WALLA--EXCITED KIDS.

5* GRANDKID #1: Gramps! Tell us one of your stories.

6. GRANDKID #2: Yeah! How about where you fought that whole Indian tribe?

7. GRANDKID #3: No! Tell us about getting caught by pirates!

8. GRANDKID #1: No. Tell us something real, Gramps. Tell us how you met Grandma Rosina.

9. SOUND: WALLA--ARGUING "INDIANS!" "PIRATES!" "GRANDMA!"

- 1* GRAMPS: Settle down. Settle down, you whipper-snappers. So, you want to know how an old coot like me got hitched to somebody as feisty and fine as your Grandma Rosina, here, eh?
2. SOUND: WALLA--CLAMORING "YEAH!" "NO!"
"PIRATES!"
3. GRAMPS: Now, shush! Let's see... How I met Grandma... Well... it was about when I struck gold--back in the days of '49--the Gold Rush days of eighteen-forty-nine...
4. MUSIC: [MUS-2] FLASHBACK CUE/OLD TIMEY--UNDER. FADE AS NEEDED.
- 5* GRAMPS: Y'see, gold had been discovered the year before--not too far from here. I'd read about it in the newspapers back in Ohio and set out for the gold fields of "Californy." I took the overland route across "the great American desert." Oh, it was a perilous journey... but that's another story...

SCENE TWO: EXT. RIVERBANK - DAY
(GRAMPS, EDDY, PANNER #1, #2, #3, #4, OLD TIMER)

- 6* SOUND: RIVER. SHOVELING. WALLA--MINERS GRUNT.
- 7* GRAMPS: Anyway, in August 1849, I was just 17 years old, and here I was "in the diggings"--on the south fork of the American River--prospecting for gold. It t'weren't too hard. Y'see, I was what you call... a "natural"...

1. SOUND: SLOSHING.
- 2* PANNER #1: You id-git! That ain't no way to pan!
3. EDDY: (SHIVERING) It's n-not? But all you g-g-got to do is get some dirt here and sift it in this f-freezing r-river water.
4. PANNER #2: You ain't gonna find no "color" that a-ways. Take your frying pan and scoop up some of the pebbles over here, behind this boulder.
5. SOUND: SHOVEL. POUR. SLOSH.
6. EDDY: All right... (PAUSE) But... there ain't no gold nuggets!
7. PANNER #3: Nuggets? (CALLS OUT) Hey, fellas! This greenhorn didn't find no gold nuggets!
8. SOUND: WALLA--MOCKING - "NO NUGGETS?"
LAUGHTER.
- 9* PANNER #1: Well then, you haven't "seen the elephant" yet, have you, boy?
10. EDDY: Elephant? Don't smoke me, mister. I'm no Johnny-come-lately. I've been here two whole weeks!
11. PANNER #2: Then you must know the big nuggets is all gone.
12. PANNER #3: Yep. Last year they was just snatching up gold off the ground. But the easy pickins is over.

1. PANNER #1: If you want that "color", you gotta be looking for gold dust, sonny. Gold dust!
2. SOUND: MAN YELLS "LOOKY THERE!" WALLA--
COMMOTION.
- 3* PANNER #4: (DISTANT) Ai-yi-yi! Oro! Oro! Gold! Grande!
4. PANNER #2: That don't sound like somebody found only dust. One of them Sonoran fellas downstream must have found a nugget! C'mon, Willie. Let's try that sand bar over yonder.
5. SOUND: FOOTSTEPS IN GRAVEL. RATTLING GEAR.
6. EDDY: Hey! If that "Sonoran" found gold, so can I.
7. OLD TIMER: Hold your ground, greenhorn. Keep working this bar. All them jaspers is gonna swarm around that Sonoran's claim and soon there won't be enough for anybody.
8. EDDY: How do you know, old timer? I just want to go home with a pocketful of rocks-- gold rocks.
9. OLD TIMER: Don't we all? But you'll never get rich working like this. Hand panning is too slow and there's more men coming to Californy every day.

THE SCRIPT HAS BEEN TRUNCATED AT THIS POINT.

Several scenes later...

1* GRAMPS: We all worked hard... and every so often, somebody would strike a big claim--eight thousand, fifteen thousand dollars worth--all in a few days or weeks. But most of us just kept at it--fifteen or fifty dollars a day--or none. And come nightfall, we'd sit around the campfire and eat and talk, write letters...and mostly think about home... and home cooking...

SCENE THREE: EXT. CAMPFIRE - NIGHT
(MINERS #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, EXPRESSMAN, THORNDIKE,
SARO JANE, GEORGE, GRAMPS)

2. SOUND: CRACKLING FIRE. CICADAS. OWLS. TIN PLATES.

3* MINER #1: It won't be much longer, but when I find my pile of gold, I ain't never gonna eat another plate of beans. Not me!

4. MINER #2: Beans and bread and bacon--every day--twice a day. Y'know, my Mary Lou, back in the States, could whip up a powerful feast in nothin' flat.

5. THORNDIKE: Chicken and dumplings, sweet potato-
pone...

6. MINER #3: Hah! I shipped in via Cape Horn and down by Argentina, they had some mighty tasty little fried cakes there.
"Empanadas" they call them.

1. MINER #4: Now, cut out that talk! I don't want to hear nothing about no Argentina. Or Chile!
2. MINER #5: Yeah. Them Chileans came up on the very same boats and now they're getting our gold... There's a whole camp of them just down the...
3. EXPRESSMAN: (DISTANT) Adams and Company Express!
4. MINER #1: The expressman! He's coming this way!
5. MINER #2: Mail? This late in the day?
6. MINER #3: Why not? He's charging a dollar a letter to deliver it here from San Francisco.
7. MINER #4: Who cares? A letter from home is a little piece of heaven! Maybe there's one for me.
8. SOUND: HOOFBEATS APPROACH, STOP. WALLA--
CLAMORING.
- 9* EXPRESSMAN: Whoa! I got letters for the following possible inhabitants of Shinbone Creek:
(READING) Josephus Blake! Allen Hacker Jr. Peppy Garribeau--
10. THORNDIKE: Peppy Garribeau? From New Orleans? Why, he died last month. That "Keskydee" couldn't stand it.
11. MINER #5: Yeah, Peppy came down with the chills. Too much wading knee deep in freezing water. If it wears out shoes and pants, it can sure wear out a little Frenchman.

1. MINER #1: Here, let me see his letter, mister.
Hold on and I'll write a quick reply...
to his widow.
2. EXPRESSMAN: Sure. I got more letters here. Daniel
Brady! ...Uh... Samuel Thorndike!
3. THORNDIKE: I'm Thorndike. Hand that letter over.
It's been four months since I heard
from my Saro Jane. And I just wrote one
to send back home. Let's see here...
4. SOUND: LETTER OPENING.
5. MUSIC: [MUS-4] SHENANDOAH--UP AND UNDER. FADE AS
NEEDED.
- 6* THORNDIKE: Dear Samuel... It has been nine
months...
7. SARO JANE: [REVERB] (TAKING OVER) ...since you left
home. Little Eliza has grown nearly
half in this time, and she has long ago
forgotten that she has or ever had a
father...
- 8* GEORGE: [REVERB] Dear Brother William... The
newspapers here in Boston say that you
are now in a land fatal to morals. Tell
me, is it so? Please hold fast to those
high principles of justice, honor, and
righteousness that we have been taught
from childhood. If you can't make quite
so much money by a strict adherence to
justice, let the gold go...

- 1* MINER #1: [REVERB] Dear Mother... I love this California life. My first day's mining was an ounce, the second was \$35, and the third was \$92! But such days are not common. The merchants, when told that men find from \$16 to \$100 a day, figure miners can easily pay \$1 for a pound of potatoes--the same pound you pay half a penny for--back home in Georgia...
- 2* MINER #3: [REVERB] Dear Cousin Julius, On the South Fork, there were two cases of theft. One of the men was flogged 100 lashes and the other, 150. The latter died from the flogging. With such a strict miner's law, theft is a rare occurrence out here...
- 3* MINER #4: [REVERB] My Dearest Betsy, Probably nine out of ten of the miners in our camp are calculating someday to return to the States. Some will stay for years, adding gold to gold--their greedy souls will hardly be satisfied. Some will be content with a smaller amount and will hasten home. Some, without care or thought, gamble and lose their gold as fast as they obtain it...

THE SCRIPT HAS BEEN TRUNCATED AT THIS POINT.**Several scenes later...**

SCENE FOUR: EXT. RIVERBED - DAY
(JAKE, TOM, EDDY, SLIM)

5* SOUND: RIVER. SHOVELING. HAMMERING. WALLA--
GRUNTING.

6. JAKE: Are you sure this is gonna work, Tom?

1. SOUND: ROCK DROPPED--CONTINUE UNDER, TO
PUNCTUATE.

2 TOM: It's got to work, Jake. The little flakes we used to find--(GRUNTS) Uhh.

3. EDDY: The placer gold? (GRUNTS) Uhh.

4. TOM: Yeah. The flakes settle in the pools and along the shore, but the big gold lumps lodge in the rocks and cracks of the riverbed. (GRUNTS) Uhh.

5. JAKE: So we build this dam across the river and divert the water 'round it.
(GRUNTS) Uhh.

6. EDDY: We have to dig down to the bedrock and work that gold out. That's a stupendous idea, Tom.

7. TOM: I think so, Eddy. But it takes a whole company of us to build a dam. And we have to finish it now--before the rains come and swell the river.

8. SLIM: I hope this dam can hold. (GRUNTS) Uhh. But how do we know there's any gold under this part of the river?
9. TOM: Well, all that gold dust came from somewhere. (GRUNTS) Uhh. Slim! Set that boulder over here. But be careful...
10. SOUND: ROCK CRASHES. MAN WAILS "YEOW!"
11. JAKE: He said, "Be careful!" Are you OK, Slim?
12. SLIM: (IN PAIN) G-get the doggone thing off my toes!
1. SOUND: ROCK DRAGGED IN GRAVEL. MAN WAILS "YEOW!"
- 2* EDDY: Oooh! It looks smashed pretty bad. Your whole foot's all bloody! Here, can you move it?
3. SLIM: (SCREAMS) Yaah! (PAUSE) I guess not!
4. TOM: We better get you to a doctor, Slim.
5. JAKE: I think there's one down at Boone's bar, but he'll probably just cut your toes off.
6. EDDY: Maybe we should take Slim to Sacramento. There'll be plenty of doctors there, but they'll cost.
7. TOM: Yeah. We'll have to "bring down the dust" to pay for it. Well, c'mon.
8. MUSIC: [MUS-6] TO SACRAMENTO--UP AND UNDER. FADE AS NEEDED.

SCENE FIVE: EXT. SACRAMENTO STREET - DAY

(GRAMPS, MERCHANT, JAKE, RICH MINER, MONTE GIRL, TOM,
MINER #6)

- 9* GRAMPS: Four of us loaded Slim into a boat and paddled downstream to the fast growing town of Sacramento. We passed a long line of ships stretching along the river for nearly a mile. They were being used as storehouses.
10. SOUND: WALLA--BUSTLING PEOPLE. HAMMERING. SAWING.
- 1* GRAMPS: Sacramento was covered with boxes and barrels, wagons, lumber, and machinery--all headed for the mountains. The streets were half a leg deep in mud, garbage, dead animals and that worst of nuisances--due to the entire absence of... outhouses. (PAUSE) We got Slim to a doctor and then strolled about for a spell. There were people everywhere...
2. MERCHANT: (HAWKING) Hail, miners! Re-supply here! Bargain prices for red shirts, boots, hats. I've got pans, picks, shovels and the very latest in scientific prospecting de-vices!
3. EDDY: Hey! Them boots look pretty sturdy. How much?
4. MERCHANT: Just 20 pinches of gold dust, sonny.
5. JAKE: Twenty pinches!? Why, that's a week's diggings!

6. RICH MINER: Maybe for you, mister, but not me! I'll take them boots, storekeeper. I had me a good strike.
7. MERCHANT: Very well. Step into my tent for all your earthly needs.
8. TOM: It's a crime to charge \$20 for a pair of boots or \$200 for a barrel of flour!
9. MINER #6: Well, they got what you want! You gotta pay!
10. JAKE: Yeah, but you just wait until I strike it rich. Then money won't matter.

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SEVERAL SCENES LATER...

SCENE SIX: INT. SALOON - MINUTES LATER
(PATRON #1, #2, GRAMPS)

- 8* SOUND: WALLA--BAR ROOM BUSTLE. GLASSES CLINK.
- 9* PATRON #1: (PAUSE) Sing it, mister! That's my story!
10. PATRON #2: (ANGRY) Hey! You cheated me! You faro-playing polecat! Gimme back my gold, you...
1. SOUND: PUNCHES. WALLA--FIGHTING, WOMEN SCREAM.
2. GRAMPS: Well, them saloons was pretty rough. Especially when there was a lot of whisky and desperation to go around. All that gold--even the notion of all that gold--went to people's heads.

SCENE SEVEN - EXT. MINING CAMP - NIGHT
(GRAMPS, HARRY, EDDY, MINERS #6, #7, #8, #9
CALIFORNIO JUAN)

3. MUSIC: [MUS-8] FORTY-NINER'S LAMENT--UNDER. FADE AS
NEEDED.

4* GRAMPS: Well, Slim caught the gangrene and we buried him two weeks later. We finished our dam before the rainy season and were working the riverbed with long "sluice" boxes, but there weren't too much gold being produced--surely not the riches we had imagined. When people get their hopes up and then have 'em dashed--they get kind of crazy. I guess that must have contributed to the sour feeling at our camp. (PAUSE) A feeling that led to disaster...

5. SOUND: FOOTSTEPS RUN UP. WALLA--ROUSED UP.

6* HARRY: (DISTANT) That tears it! Them Chileans must have done it!

7. MINER #6: Hold on there, Harry. Now, what is it? Done what? The Chileans done what?

8. HARRY: They robbed my sluice box. Took the gold!

1. SOUND: WALLA--ROUSING--"WHAT?" "CHILEANS?"
"ROBBED?" CONTINUE UNDER AND RESPOND TO
DIALOGUE.

2. EDDY: Took the gold? How?

3. HARRY: It's gone, Eddy! I was going to collect this week's findings from the sluice and now... it's empty!

4. CALIFORNIO JUAN: But, señor Harry. How do you know the Chileans did it? Their camp is a half mile away.
5. MINER #7: Well, Juan, it's our company's gold. None of us would steal it. We'd be cheating ourselves.
6. MINER #8: Yeah, but none of us really own this land. It's public property. We're all just trespassers here. No fees, no taxes...
7. MINER #9: (ANGRY) Hogwash! California ain't gotten statehood yet. We aren't even a territory. Miner's law rules this land!
8. HARRY: And miner's law says stealing will be punished!
9. MINER #7: Well, this is American land and them foreigners is up here taking out American gold! Them Frenchmen, Indians, Sonorans--all them foreigners--don't have no right to our gold!
10. MINER #8: What about Juan, here?
11. CALIFORNIO JUAN: Wait. I am a Californio! My family has lived here for generations!
1. MINER #9: Yeah, he ain't a foreigner. Not like them Chileans. I seen them fellas laughing at our lack of success with the dam. Laughing!
2. HARRY: (ANGRY) And now they've taken to stealin' our gold! I say we go over to their camp and run 'em off!

3. SOUND: WALLA--ANGRY AGREEMENT - "LET'S GO!"
"WE'LL TEACH 'EM!" "YEAH..."

4* MUSIC: [MUS-9] THE MOB--UP AND UNDER--FADE AS NEEDED.

5* GRAMPS: Well, children, I'm sorry to say, I was among that mob. I just got caught up in the anger of the moment. Some of our men had been members of the "Hounds"--a notorious gang that had been exiled from San Francisco, but that didn't excuse the rest of us none.

SCENE EIGHT: EXT. - CHILEAN CAMP - MINUTES LATER
(GRAMPS)

6* SOUND: WALLA--ANGRY MOB. CRASHES. GUNSHOTS.
FIRE.-CONTINUE UNDER.

7* GRAMPS: Drunk and ornery, we ransacked the Chilean camp, set fire to their tents, and beat them hombres savagely. We'll never know for sure if the Chileans stole any of our gold--on account of none of them survived the attack. It was a disgraceful episode and unfortunately, one of many in those days...

SCENE NINE: EXT. RIVERBED - SEVERAL DAYS LATER
(GRAMPS, MINERS #6, #7, #8, #9, TOM, EDDY)

1. MUSIC: [MUS-10] SAD SUCCESS--UP AND UNDER. FADE AS
NEEDED.
- 2* GRAMPS: I stayed with that company for a while longer and we did have some luck mining the riverbed. It seems there was plenty of gold to be found--it was just harder to extract. In a few weeks, we'd found \$6000 worth. We were all set to be millionaires, but disaster struck. Some would call it divine retribution, but others just called it--
3. MINER #7: (SHOUTING) Rain! It's starting to rain!
4. SOUND: WIND. THUNDER. WALLA--CLAMOR - "RAIN?"
"RAIN!"
- 5* TOM: No! It can't rain! It's too early!
Eddy!
6. EDDY: (DISTANT) Yeah, Tom?
7. TOM: Run over there and start collecting the gold from the sluice boxes! Hurry, boy!
8. MINER #9: Oh, come on, now. This storm won't last. Our dam will surely hold.
9. MINER #8: Yeah, the big rains ain't due for a couple of weeks. That's plenty of time to get more gold.

1. TOM: No! If it's drizzling here, it's pouring in the mountains upstream! Grab the gold and make for higher ground. The river's already rising!
2. SOUND: WALLA--MEN PANICKING. SMALL CRASHES. RUMBLE--CONTINUE UNDER.
- 3* MINER #9: Hey! What's that sound? That... rumble?
4. SOUND: RUMBLE BUILDS. CRASHES. DISTANT SCREAMS.
- 5* EDDY: (DISTANT) Sounds like it's coming from upstream--at Stewart's Run. They're shoutin'!
6. TOM: Don't slow down, boy! Fill your bucket with the gold! C'mon, fellas!
7. SOUND: ROCKS SET IN BUCKET. RUMBLE BUILDS.
- 8* MINER #6: (DISTANT) Look out! Flood tide coming!
9. SOUND: RUMBLE BUILDS. CRASHING--CONTINUE UNDER.
10. TOM: Merciful heavens! It's a wall of water!
11. EDDY: (DISTANT) Heading right this way!
12. TOM: Run, boy! Run! Forget the gold! Run!
13. MUSIC: [MUS-11] THE FLOOD--UP AND UNDER. FADE AS NEEDED.
14. SOUND: RUMBLE. CRASHING. WALLA--MEN SWEEP AWAY.

1* GRAMPS: The water came roaring through and tore apart our little dam like it was nothing. The river flowed back into it's old bed and swept away all our boxes and tents, mules and everything-- including some of the gold we'd worked so hard for. The rains came early that year. Many companies lost their claims--and hundreds of men lost their lives. (PAUSE) We'd have to wait until next year to try more river-mining. A lot did, but I wasn't one of them.

2. SOUND: ALL SOUND EFFECTS STOP.

3. MUSIC: [MUS-12] STRUGGLING--UP AND UNDER. FADE AS NEEDED.

THE SCRIPT HAS BEEN TRUNCATED AT THIS POINT.

Several scenes later...

SCENE TEN: EXT. DRY DIGGINGS - DAY
(EDDY, GRAMPS)

1. SOUND: SHOVELING.

2* EDDY: (GRUNTS) Uhh.

3. SOUND: PICK STRIKES ROCK--STOPS.

4. EDDY: What's this? Something... solid.

5. SOUND: PICK STRIKES ROCK--SEVERAL TIMES.

6. EDDY: Could it be? Gold? Gold? At last?

7. SOUND: GRAVEL CLEARED AWAY.

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Several scenes later...

SCENE ELEVEN: EXT. SAN FRANCISCO WHARF - DAY
(GRAMPS, REVELER #1, #2)

- 1* GRAMPS: So I vamoosed off to the now bustling city of San Francisco. The harbor was filled with 400 ships--all abandoned by their crews, who'd jumped ship to search for gold. It was a city of men who slept six and ten to a room. There were grandiose gambling halls, the business of whom was to mine the miners--taking their hard earned gold. I arrived September 9th, 1850--to the sound of gunfire in the streets...
2. SOUND: WALLA--CELEBRATING CROWDS. HOOFBEATS. GUNSHOTS.
- 3* REVELER #1: Hurrah! Statehood for California! We've finally joined the Union!
4. REVELER #2: Yeah! As a free state! Here's to California, the 31st state! (HOWLS) Ya-hoooooo!

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Radio Skills School

Microphone Technique:

- 1) Sensitive and dead areas. Don't touch!
- 2) Proximity effect. (Boomy if too close.)
- 3) Proper distance for radio acting.
- 4) Dynamics and distance. (Back off to yell.)
- 5) Off mic use for distant sounds. Asides.
- 6) Popping "P"s and S-S-S-Sibilance.
- 7) Mic safety. (hitting, blowing, dropping)
- 8) Assume every mic is always ON.
- 9) Quiet script page turning.

Radio Acting:

- 1) Quiet in the studio.
- 2) Don't cough, laugh, or talk during production.
- 3) Watch the director. Wait for your cue. (Q)
- 4) Speed equals excitement. Don't bore audience.
- 5) Jump in if there's dead air.
- 6) Wait for director's signal at end of show.

Radio Direction "Sign Language"

- 1) "Wait." Open hand.
- 2) "5-4-3---" Finger count down.
- 3) "You're on." Pointing finger.
- 4) "Wrap it up." Finger draws circles.
- 5) "Stretch it out." Pulling taffy.
- 6) "Louder." Pull ear.
- 7) "Quieter." Finger to lip (Shhhh-style)
- 8) "Cut." Finger slits throat.
- 9) "Come in" or "Back off" microphone.

Writer/Director's notes

This radio-play depicts California history through the lives of ordinary people. "*Eureka! Havoc! Gold Rush Days of '49*" recreates one man's adventures in the gold fields of 1849-1850. Our hero pans for gold, meets other fortune hunters, tours the crowded camps and booming cities, and gets caught up in gold fever--with all its enterprise, greed, and hardships. This historical fiction is a dramatic and rollicking western that features an authentic folk music score chock full of banjo, mandolin, guitar, autoharp, dulcimer, harmonica and more.

The program was created for the California Sesquicentennial in 2000. It was tied to the standard California elementary school curriculum, but this is NOT just a California story, it's about America. The script won an award from the National Audio Theater Festival in 2005.

Rather than relate the overly familiar--and underly-dramatic--tale of the discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill, I approached the subject in the way filmmaker Ken Burns did his "Civil War" series--I told the story through the eyes of an everyman character. I even used the motif of letters to describe the gold rush experience, thereby providing a sense of the entire period without having to dramatize a dozen more situations.

Here, the forty-niners must learn to "work" a river, deal with greed and loss and reprehensible mayhem--as well as a chastening defeat of their dreams--only to find a different kind of "gold" in the freedom California represented. The myth of which is still functioning to this day, from Silicon Valley to Hollywood to Filipinotown.

Because of the itinerant nature of the Gold Rush, there's one main character and many "drifters." And like the gold fields, there are few explicitly female characters. However, since this is radio, girls can play such gender-neutral characters as "Miner #1" or "Slim" with no difficulty. To parcel out the roles more democratically for classroom use, I split off the old man narrating the tale from his younger self who participates in the dramatic scenes.

Doubling or tripling roles will provide a small group of actors with plenty of dialogue to keep them fully employed. The sound effects team will also be busy with the various backgrounds, the riot and the flood.

CASTING EVALUATION:

The indented names indicate where actors can easily double a role, and not risk playing a scene with themselves as other characters.

_____	GRAMPS	Old Man narrator
_____	EDDY	Gramps as a young man
_____	SARO JANE	Miner's wife (via letter)
_____	- MINER #6	Miner
_____	- PANNER #1	Panner
_____	MINER #1	Miner
_____	- RICH MINER	Successful miner
_____	+ MINER #9	Miner
_____	-- GRANDKID #1	Gramps' grandchild
_____	-- PANNER #2	Panner
_____	-- PATRON #2	Cheated saloon patron
_____	MINER #2	Miner
_____	- TOM	Engineering miner
_____	MINER #3	Miner
_____	- PANNER #3	Panner
_____	+ CALIFORNIO JUAN	Miner
_____	-- PATRON #1	Saloon patron
_____	-- REVELER #1	Gunman
_____	MINER #4	Miner
_____	- HARRY	Angry miner
_____	- PANNER #4	Mexican miner
_____	MINER #5	Miner
_____	- JAKE	Miner
_____	- GRANDKID #2	Gramps' grandchild
_____	OLD TIMER	Older Panner
_____	-- EXPRESSMAN	Mail delivery man
_____	+ ANNOUNCER	The announcer
_____	-- MERCHANT	Shop keeper
_____	MONTE GIRL	Card dealer
_____	- GRANDKID #3	Gramps' grandchild
_____	+ THORNDIKE	Miner (husband of Saro Jane)
_____	-- SLIM	Doomed miner
_____	-- MINER #8	Miner
_____	GEORGE	Miner's brother (via letter)
_____	- MINER #7	Miner
_____	- REVELER #2	Gunman

CASTING EVALUATION:

=====
 Audition ratings: A through F

Actor Name	Bold	Emotion	Accents	Who	X

CASTING MONOLOGUES

Everyone participating in our radio workshop is asked to read some lines aloud in front of a microphone. The casting director will cast the roles in our production based upon these “luke warm readings.” Please take a moment to read the lines below several times, both silently and aloud. These monologues provide a bit of a “back story” giving an idea of who the characters are. Since radio actors often play several parts, we encourage the use of different voices or accents for the different roles.

ANNOUNCER: I'm the announcer. I introduce our story and quickly describe the setting for the radio listeners. Our program, In Old California is set during the rollicking gold rush of the late 1840s--it's called "Golden Dreams, Golden Nightmares!"

GRAMPS: I'm Gramps, and I'm telling this story to my grandkids--all seventeen of 'em. A miner's life wasn't easy in the "days of '49," but I survived and even thrived--a bit. It might not really be the way things happened, but it's the way I like to remember it.

EDDY: I'm Gramps when he was just 17 years old. I pan for gold and join up with a troop of miners to build a dam across the river, but things go, well sorta awry and a heap of "complications" set in. I finally do strike gold, but it ain't quite the way I pictured it. You'll see...

THE SCRIPT HAS BEEN TRUNCATED AT THIS POINT.

SOUND EFFECT ROLES

SOUND EFFECT ARTIST #1:

ROCKING CHAIR
FOOTSTEPS IN GRAVEL/FOOTSTEPS RUN UP
CICADAS
ROCK DROPPED
PUNCHES
ROCKS IN A BUCKET
GRAVEL CLEARED AWAY

SOUND EFFECT ARTIST #2:

RIVER
MAN YELLS "LOOKY THERE!"
CRACKLING FIRE
MAN WAILS "YEOW!"
GLASSES CLINK
WIND

SOUND EFFECT ARTIST #3:

SHOVELING
OWL
LETTER OPENING
ROCK CRASHES/CRASHES
SAWING

SOUND EFFECT ARTIST #4:

SLOSH
ROCKING (CRADLE)
TIN PLATES
HAMMERING
GUNSHOTS
THUNDER/RUMBLE

SOUND EFFECT ARTIST #5:

POUR
RATTLING GEAR
HOOFBEATS APPROACH, STOP
ROCK DRAGGED IN GRAVEL
GUNSHOTS
DISTANT SCREAMS - "HELP!" "FLOOD!"
PICK STRIKES ROCK

CAST MEMBERS WALLA WALLA:

EXCITED KIDS

ARGUING - "INDIANS!" "PIRATES!" "GRANDMA!"

CLAMORING - "YEAH!" "NO!" "PIRATES!"

MOCKING - "NO NUGGETS?" LAUGHTER

COMMOTION

CLAMORING

BUSTLING PEOPLE

BAR ROOM BUSTLE

FIGHTING - WOMEN SCREAM

ROUSING - "WHAT?" "CHILEANS?" "ROBBED?"

ANGRY AGREEMENT - "LET'S GO." "WE'LL TEACH 'EM!" "YEAH..."

ANGRY MOB

CLAMOR - "RAIN?" "RAIN!"

MEN PANICKING

MEN SWEEP AWAY

CELEBRATING CROWDS

DISAPPOINTED KIDS - "AWW." "WHAT?" "HEY!" "GRAMPS!"

KIDS CLAMOR - "YEAH!" "WHAT ABOUT GRANDMA?"

SOUND EFFECT COOKBOOK

ROCKING CHAIR:

Move a wooden chair's back or squeeze a Styrofoam egg carton.

FOOTSTEPS IN GRAVEL/FOOTSTEPS RUN UP:

Run wooden blocks through a gravel box.

CICADAS:

Shake several egg-maracas quickly.

ROCK DROPPED:

Drop a phone book into a gravel box.

PUNCHES:

Beat some plastic caveman clubs on together.

ROCKS IN A BUCKET:

Drop some rocks into a metal can.

GRAVEL CLEARED AWAY:

Scrap gravel with your hands--uncovering gold.

RIVER:

Spoon water rhythmically in a 5 gallon bucket.

MAN YELLS "LOOKY THERE!":

CRACKLING FIRE:

Crinkle stiff plastic bag.

MAN WAILS "YEOW!":

GLASSES CLINK:

Clinks some glasses or small plates together--not too often.

WIND:

Crank wind machine SFX device--slowly. Or use mouth sounds.

SHOVELING:

Use spoon to scoop up gravel from gravel box.

ENGINEER'S NOTES:**EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENT:**

This show requires three vocal microphones, one of which will have an (optional) reverb send. There will be one sound effects microphone--an omnidirectional mic is preferred. Two music playback devices are needed because several cues run back-to-back. They are indicated in the script cues as device [MUS-1] or [MUS-5], etc.

MUSIC AND EFFECTS CUES:

The complete engineer's script uses highlights to show how long music cues run (through scenes and dialogue) and which characters are using reverb and when.

- 1) In Old California Theme [BED] (0:45)
- 2) Flashback Gliss/Old Timey [BED] (1:11)
- 3) Campfire/Harmonica [BED/SOURCE] (0:59)
- 4) Shenandoah [BED] (2:34)
- 5) A New Method [BED] (0:44)
- 6) To Sacramento [BED] (1:06)
- 7) Bar Room/The Banks of the Sacramento [SOURCE/BED] (0:52)
- 8) The Forty-Niner's Lament [BED] (0:49)
- 9) The Mob [BED] (1:03)
- 10) Sad Success [BED] (0:36)
- 11) The Flood [BED] (1:04)
- 12) Struggling [BED] (0:50)
- 13) San Francisco, 1850 [BED] (1:25)
- 14) Flashback Gliss [BRIDGE] (0:19)
- 15) In Old California Theme [BED] (0:45)

Except for the folk songs, "Shenandoah" and "The Banks of the Sacramento" all music composed as well as arranged and performed by Anthony E. Palermo. © 2000 Twitshyre Tunes. (ASCAP) All rights reserved.