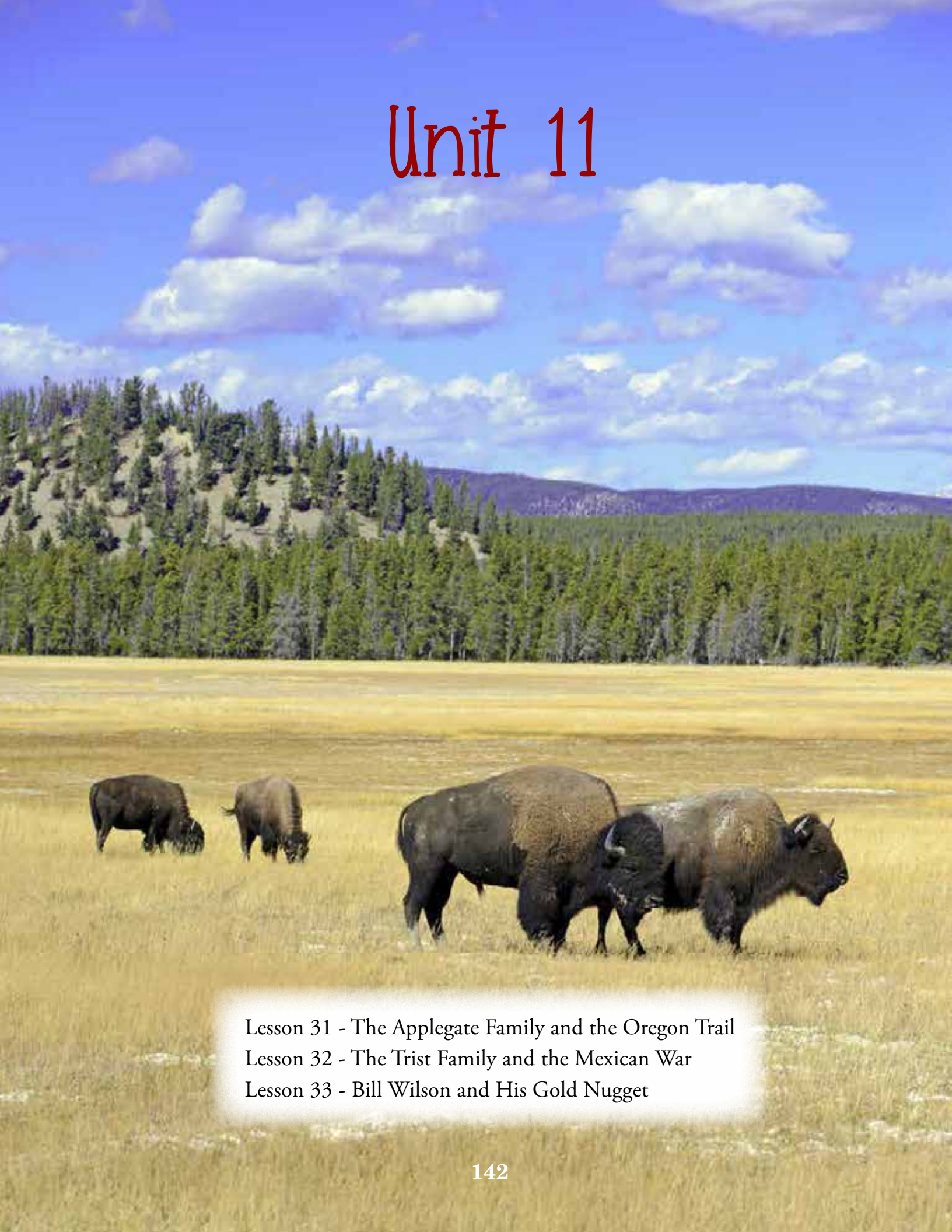
Unit 11



Lesson 31 - The Applegate Family and the Oregon Trail
Lesson 32 - The Trist Family and the Mexican War
Lesson 33 - Bill Wilson and His Gold Nugget

Lesson 31

The Applegate Family and the Oregon Trail

What would you think if your parents told you that you are going to leave your house and almost everything in it? You are moving two thousand miles away to a place you have never even seen a picture of. The journey will be an adventure! You will get to see new and exciting places. Your family will have a fresh start in a brand new place. The journey will also be a challenge. You have heard that Indians might attack. You wonder if you will be able to find enough food and water and firewood. It will take four to six months to reach your destination. What do you think? Do you want to go?

About 500,000 men, women, and children—like you—made this journey on the Oregon Trail in the middle of the 1800s.



Oregon Trail display at Scotts Bluff National Monument, Nebraska



Charles Applegate



Lindsay Applegate



Jesse Applegate (drawn by his nephew)

The Applegate Family Heads West

In 1843 brothers Charles, Lindsay, and Jesse Applegate moved their families from Missouri far west to Oregon Country. The Applegates joined a group of about one thousand people. The group gathered in Independence, Missouri. This was the first large group to travel on the Oregon Trail. They left behind their homes and farms. They left many friends and relatives.

Not long after they began their journey, the group realized they had too many wagons and animals to stay together. They divided into two smaller wagon trains. The Applegates became part of the group with large herds of cattle. This group was called the "Cow Column." They kept a tight schedule to ensure they made good progress on their journey.

A Day With the Cow Column

The men took turns staying awake at night. Their job was to make sure everyone was safe and the animals did not get away.

The men on duty at 4:00 a.m. fired their rifles as a signal that it was time to get up. There were sixty wagons and five thousand animals in the Cow Column. It took a great deal of time to get everything ready to start a day's journey! They had to prepare and eat breakfast. They had to take down their tents and herd their animals into place.





The Cow Column divided into fifteen groups of four wagons each. The groups took turns being in the lead. The leading group one day had to take a turn at the end of the line the next day. The end of the wagon train was a dusty place. Everyone knew they must be in their place by the time the trumpet sounded the signal at 7:00 a.m. Anyone not in place on time had to travel behind everyone else.

When each day's journey ended, the sixty wagons formed a tight circle. The circle of wagons served as a fortress to make sure everyone would be safe through the night. Before everyone went to sleep, they enjoyed talking with their neighbors, making music, playing games, and dancing together.





Across the Mountains

As the Cow Column traveled west, it seemed the prairie would never end. Mile after mile stretched out in front of them. The cows plodded on and the wagon wheels creaked. Finally the prairie did end, and the Rocky Mountains rose up before them.

The Rocky Mountains (or Rockies) stretch from Canada to New Mexico. In most places the Rocky Mountains tower high into the sky. By following the Oregon Trail the Cow Column crossed the Rockies at South Pass. South Pass is one place in the Rockies where travelers hardly notice they are going through a mountain range at all. When the Cow Column crossed South Pass, they were about halfway to Oregon.

Near the end of the Oregon Trail, the Cow Column came to the banks of the Columbia River. They had no choice but to make the dangerous crossing. Some members of the Cow Column drowned in the crossing.

The Applegate Family in Oregon

The Applegates finally reached Oregon. Jesse Applegate helped establish a government to provide law and order. New settlers continued to come west in a steady stream.

Columbia River in Oregon



Chief Halo



Applegate House



Bluegrass band at a modern-day Applegate House festival

A few years after they arrived, Jesse and Lindsay Applegate joined a group of men to explore the area. They established a safer route for travelers on the Oregon Trail. They did not want people to have to cross the dangerous Columbia River. This route was later called Applegate Trail.

Some settlers in Oregon Country were cruel to the native people who were already living there. The Applegate family, however, made friends with them. The United States government tried to force all the native people to move to a reservation of land they had assigned to them. Chief Halo of the Yoncalla Kalapuya tribe refused to go. The Applegates offered for Chief Halo and his family to live on their land. The Applegates later built a house for the chief and his family.

Applegate House

In 1852 Charles Applegate began building a two-story house for his family in the settlement of Yoncalla. The house took four years to build. It wasn't too hard for Charles to get the wood, brick, and sandstone he needed. The glass for the windows was a different story.

There weren't any glass factories in Oregon. There was no railroad to bring glass from the factories in the East. The glass had to travel by boat. It traveled south through the Atlantic Ocean and around the tip of South America into the Pacific Ocean. It then sailed far north to Oregon Country.

Once the glass arrived, Charles and his sons traveled nearly forty miles to the town of Scottsburg to bring the glass home. The Applegates traveled a long way to get to Oregon, but their route was short compared to the journey their windows made to get there!

The Legacy of the Applegates

The house that Charles Applegate built is one of the oldest houses in Oregon today. The Applegate family has owned it continuously ever since Charles Applegate built it. The house is now used to host events that teach about traditional arts and the customs of both the Kalapuya and the settlers who joined them in Oregon Country.

The legacy of the Applegate family and the role they played in settling Oregon lives on today. In addition to having a trail named after them, they have a river, a lake, a valley, a mountain, and a town named in their honor.

A good name is to be
more desired than great wealth,
Favor is better
than silver and gold.
Proverbs 22:1



Applegate Lake in Oregon

Lesson Activities

- Rhythms and Rhymes: Enjoy "Skip to My Lou" on page 27.
- Student Workbook: Complete the page for Lesson 31.
- Literature for Units 10-12: *Freedom Crossing*

Review Questions

- Why do you think a family would have wanted to move to Oregon?
- Why did the men in a wagon train take turns staying awake at night?
- What do you think would be hard about traveling on the Oregon Trail?

Hands-On History

- Pretend that you are traveling on the Oregon Trail! What could your wagon be? Perhaps your bed or the couch. What will you need to take with you? Make sure you're ready by the time you hear the trumpet!
- Use building blocks to build a wagon train.

Lesson 32

The Trist Family and the Mexican War

As the carriage wheels turned on the drive to Monticello, teenage Nicholas Trist caught sight of the grand mansion. Beautiful farmland rolled out in every direction. This was the home of Thomas Jefferson! Former President Jefferson was a friend of Nicholas' grandmother. Jefferson had invited Nicholas to come to Monticello and study law. Jefferson's mansion was exquisite. His bustling farm was full of life. His granddaughter Virginia was charming and beautiful. Nicholas was soon in love. He asked for permission to marry Virginia. Both his mother and her mother thought the couple were too young. After six years of waiting, Nicholas and Virginia finally became husband and wife in 1824.

Trist became Thomas Jefferson's personal secretary. The two grew to be close friends. They enjoyed spending time together as they walked and rode horses side-by-side. After Thomas Jefferson died, Trist helped to manage his home and land.



Monticello

The Trist Family Grows

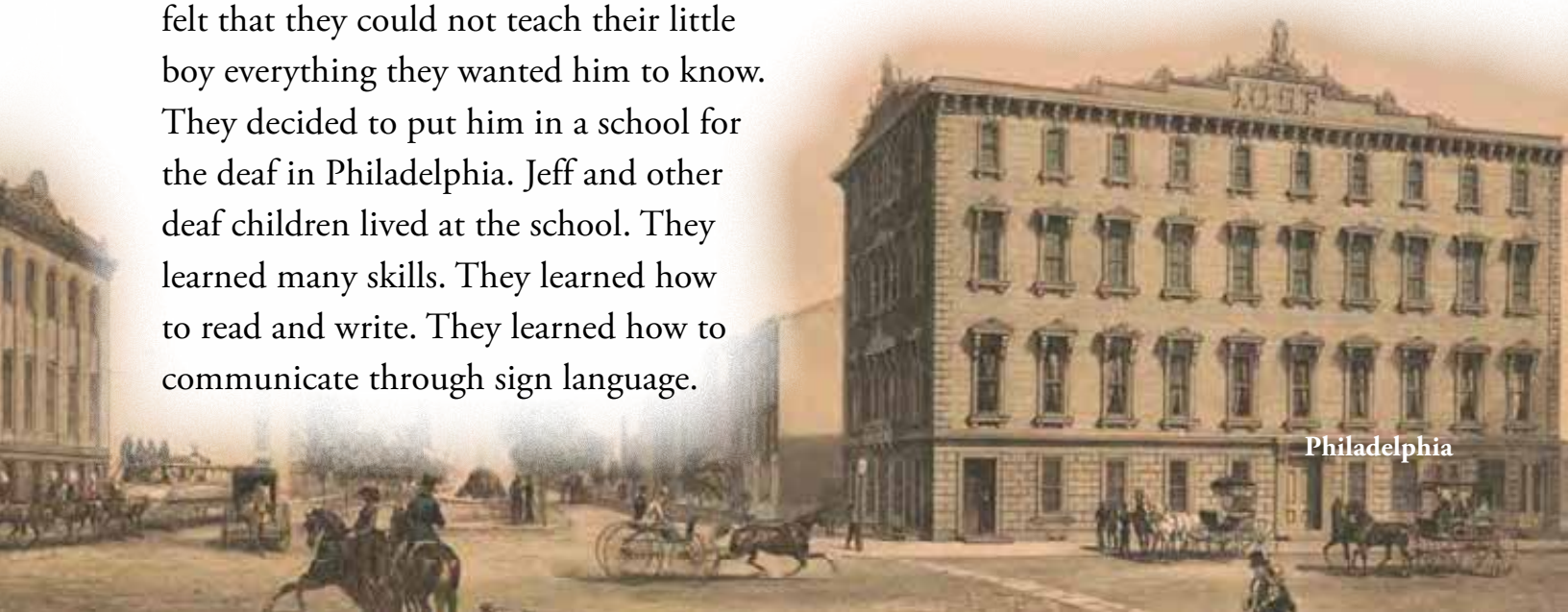
Virginia Trist gave birth to Pattie in 1826. Two years later she gave birth to their second baby. They named their little boy Thomas Jefferson Trist. They called him Jeff for short. Jeff was a happy and healthy baby, but Nicholas and Virginia's hearts were broken the day they discovered that their little boy was deaf.

Soon after Jeff was born, Nicholas Trist took a new job in Washington, D.C. He worked for the United States government as chief clerk in the State Department. People who work for the State Department are responsible for taking care of official government business with other countries. Virginia, Pattie, and Jeff moved to Washington the next year to join Nicholas. While they lived in Washington, Virginia gave birth to another little boy named Browse.

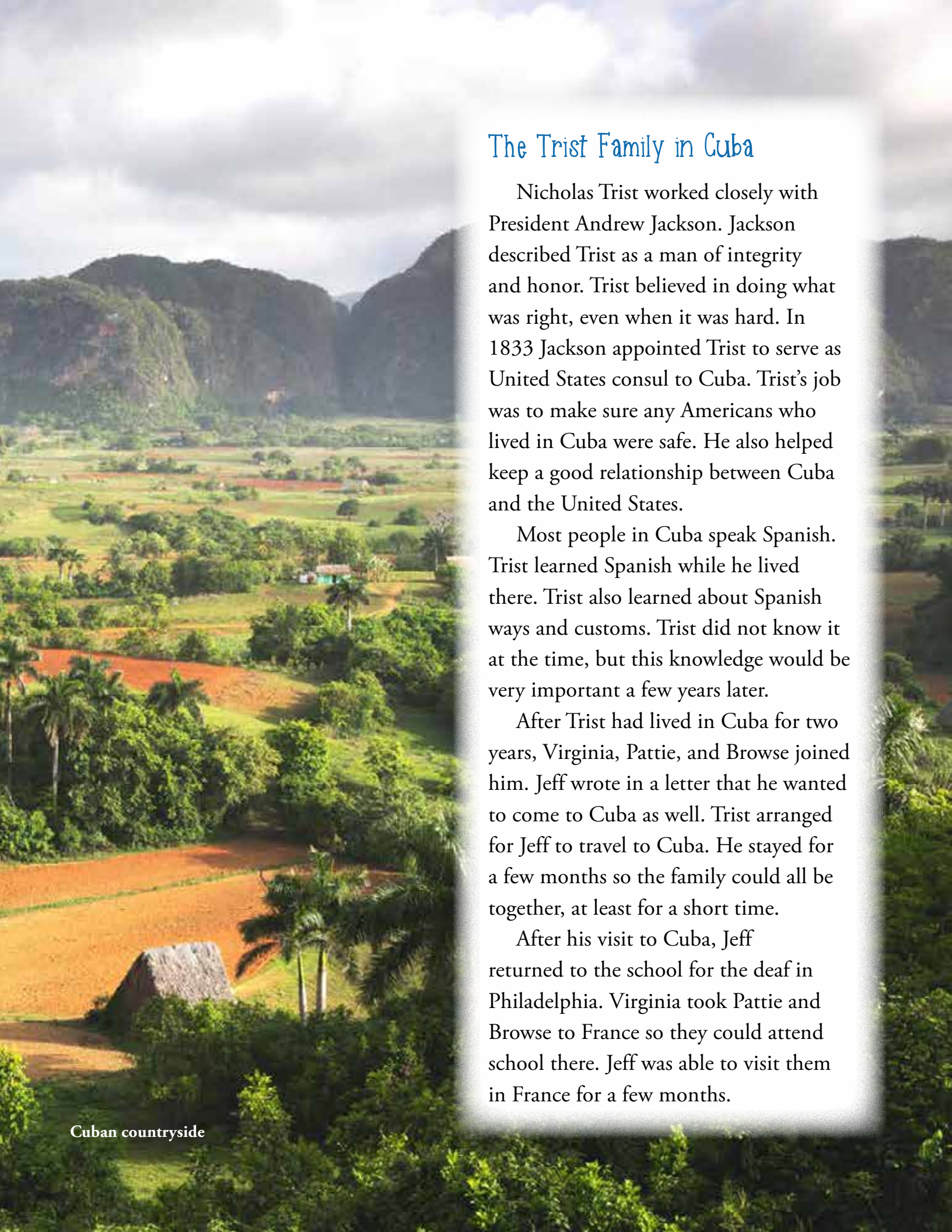
As little Jeff grew up he developed his own form of sign language to communicate with his family. His parents felt that they could not teach their little boy everything they wanted him to know. They decided to put him in a school for the deaf in Philadelphia. Jeff and other deaf children lived at the school. They learned many skills. They learned how to read and write. They learned how to communicate through sign language.



Washington, D.C.



Philadelphia



Cuban countryside

The Trist Family in Cuba

Nicholas Trist worked closely with President Andrew Jackson. Jackson described Trist as a man of integrity and honor. Trist believed in doing what was right, even when it was hard. In 1833 Jackson appointed Trist to serve as United States consul to Cuba. Trist's job was to make sure any Americans who lived in Cuba were safe. He also helped keep a good relationship between Cuba and the United States.

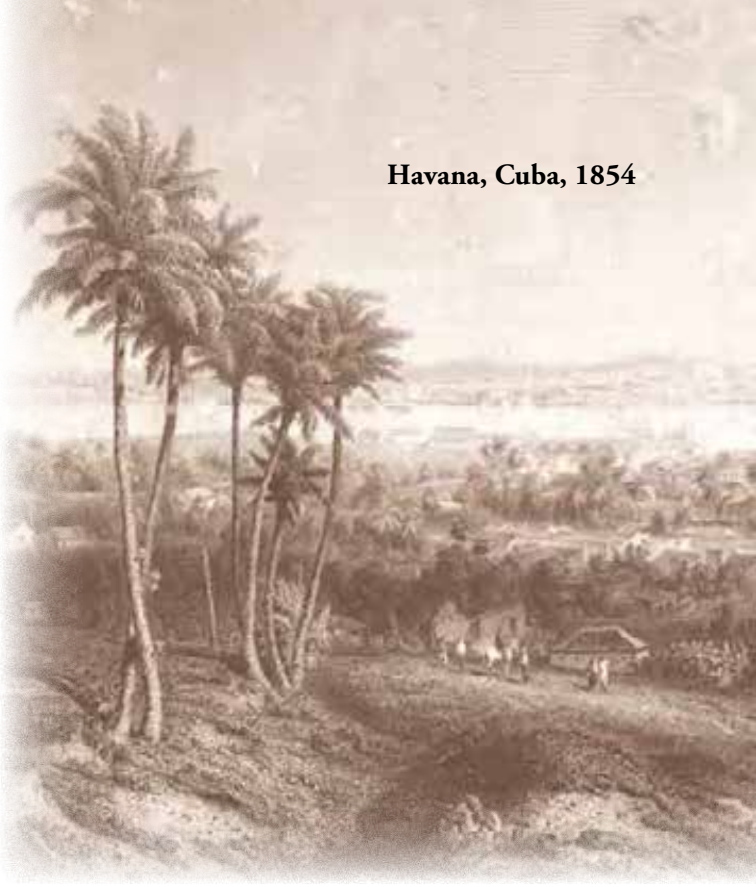
Most people in Cuba speak Spanish. Trist learned Spanish while he lived there. Trist also learned about Spanish ways and customs. Trist did not know it at the time, but this knowledge would be very important a few years later.

After Trist had lived in Cuba for two years, Virginia, Pattie, and Browse joined him. Jeff wrote in a letter that he wanted to come to Cuba as well. Trist arranged for Jeff to travel to Cuba. He stayed for a few months so the family could all be together, at least for a short time.

After his visit to Cuba, Jeff returned to the school for the deaf in Philadelphia. Virginia took Pattie and Browse to France so they could attend school there. Jeff was able to visit them in France for a few months.

Two years later, Virginia, Pattie, and Browse returned to Cuba. Trist lost his job as consul, but the family continued to live in Cuba. They owned a small farm and sold milk and vegetables in the nearby city of Havana.

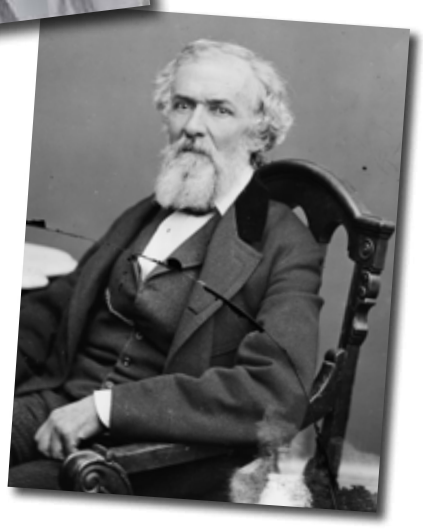
Jeff did well in his studies at the school for the deaf, but he missed his family. The family stayed in touch by writing many letters back and forth. His parents sent him gifts, such as a copy of the book *Robinson Crusoe*. As he grew up, Jeff became interested in politics. He also became a skilled artist.



Havana, Cuba, 1854



President James K. Polk



Nicholas Trist

The Mexican War

In 1845 the Trist family left Cuba and moved back to the United States. Trist went back to work for the State Department, this time under President James K. Polk. The next year, the United States went to war with Mexico. Texas had recently become part of the United States. The United States and Mexico disagreed about where the border between Texas and Mexico should be. Both countries wanted more land. President Polk hoped to gain all the land from Texas to the Pacific Ocean, which then belonged to Mexico. Some Americans, including the President, even wanted all of Mexico to become part of the United States.

Trist in Mexico

In 1847 President James K. Polk chose Nicholas Trist to travel to Mexico. Trist's job was to work out a peace treaty with the Mexican government to end the war. Since Trist spoke Spanish and was familiar with Spanish customs, he seemed like a good choice. Before long, President Polk was sorry he had chosen Trist. He was concerned that Trist would not push hard enough to get the most land possible from Mexico. Polk sent a message to Trist and told him to stop his work on the treaty and come home.



U.S. troops in Mexico



Trist was getting ready to leave Mexico City when a friend stopped by to visit. The friend convinced Trist to stay in Mexico and continue working for peace. To go against a president's order was a bold and daring thing to do. Trist knew this decision could mean the end of his political career. He did it anyway because he believed it was right. Trist believed it would be wrong for the United States to continue fighting against Mexico.

Trist worked out a treaty with the Mexican government to end the fighting. According to the treaty, the United States would pay Mexico for the land between Texas and the Pacific Ocean. The border between Texas and Mexico would be a river, the Rio Grande.

When the treaty reached President Polk for his approval, he was not happy. Still, he decided that the best thing to do was to go along with it. When the United States Senate approved the treaty, the Mexican War was officially over. Polk was furious with Trist for disobeying his orders and fired him from his job.

After the War

Through the years, the Trist family had often struggled to have enough money. Now that Trist did not have his job, they struggled all over again. Sometimes doing what you believe to be right makes things hard.

A few years after the Mexican War ended, Jeff Trist became a teacher at the school for the deaf in Pennsylvania which he had attended as a child. Three years later, Jeff married Ellen Lyman, who was also deaf. Thomas Gallaudet performed their wedding ceremony. Jeff was known as being intelligent, refined, and a faithful teacher. He had strong morals and was called "a true Christian in his daily walk." Like his father, Jeff knew that it was important to do what is right.

Let us not lose heart
in doing good,
for in due time we will reap
if we do not grow weary.
Galatians 6:9

Lesson Activities

- Student Workbook: Complete the page for Lesson 32.
- Literature for Units 10-12: *Freedom Crossing*

Review Questions

- Why did Jeff Trist live in a different place from his family?
- How did Nicholas Trist's knowledge of Spanish help him after he left Cuba?
- Why did Nicholas Trist decide to disobey President Polk's order?

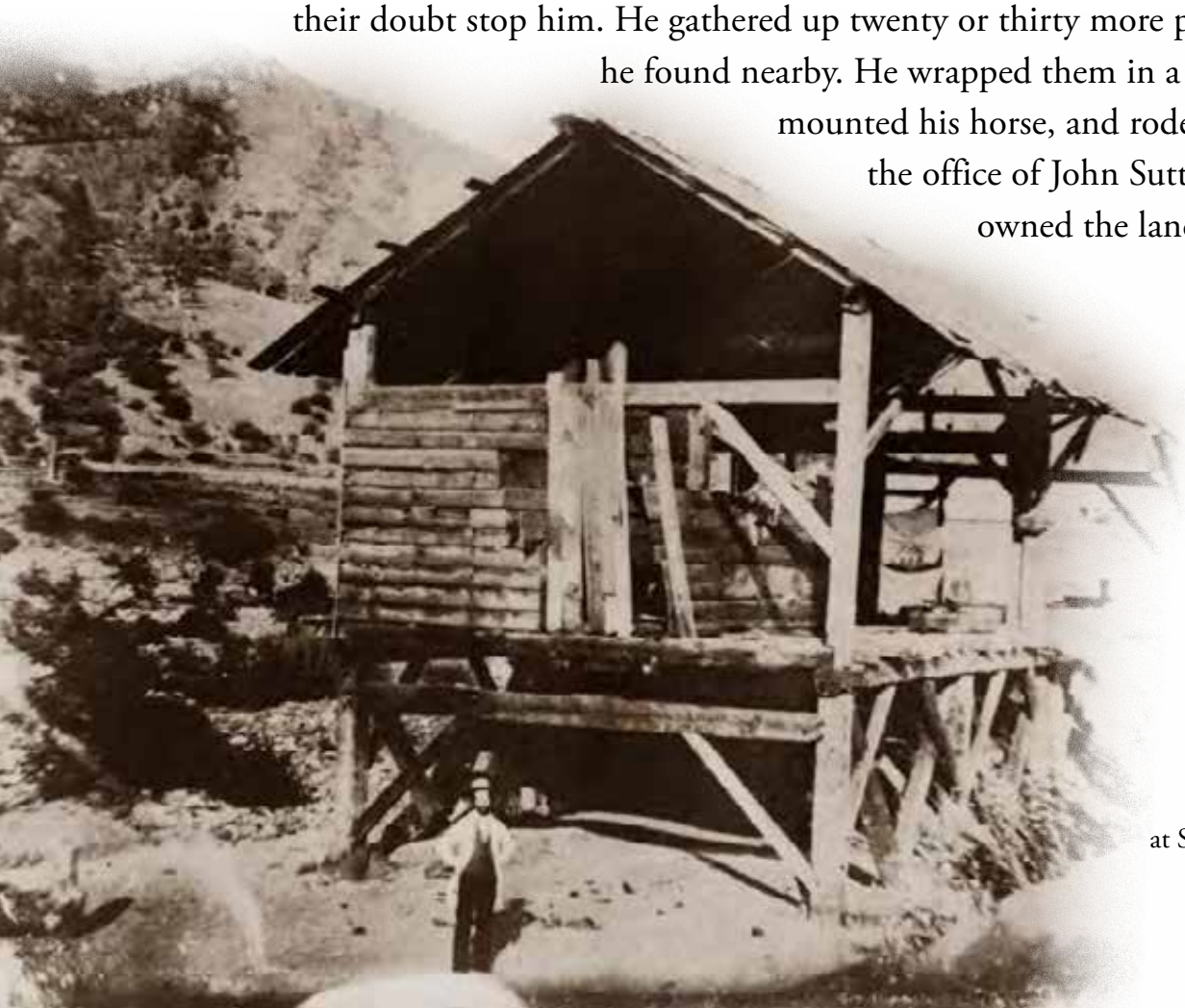
Hands-On History

- Pretend that you have a small farm in Cuba. Take care of your family, animals, and crops. You can also sell milk and vegetables at a market.
- Use building blocks to build Monticello, home of Thomas Jefferson (pictured on page 174).

Lesson 33

Bill Wilson and His Gold Nugget

On a January day in 1848, James Marshall was at work as usual. He was overseeing the construction of a sawmill for General John Sutter in California. As Marshall walked along the bank of the stream at the construction site, he saw something glittering on the ground. He didn't think much about the shiny object at first and walked on. Then he saw another glittering object. He wondered if he should take the trouble to investigate. After debating with himself two or three times, he bent down and picked it up. He was astonished. It appeared to be pure gold. When he showed the workmen what he had found, some of them laughed. They thought he was crazy! Surely it couldn't be real gold. Marshall didn't let their doubt stop him. He gathered up twenty or thirty more pieces he found nearby. He wrapped them in a rag, mounted his horse, and rode off to the office of John Sutter, who owned the land.



James Marshall
at Sutter's Mill, c. 1850

When Marshall arrived, he told General Sutter he had some important and interesting news for him. He asked if they could speak privately. General Sutter led Marshall into a private room, but he forgot to lock the door. Just as Marshall pulled his precious rag out of his pocket, a clerk opened the door into the room. General Sutter later remembered, "how quick Mr. M. put the yellow metal in his pocket again can hardly be described." As soon as the clerk was gone again, Marshall made sure the door was locked before he showed General Sutter what was in his pocket.



General John Sutter

At first John Sutter wasn't sure the pieces in James Marshall's rag were really gold. He read the long article about gold in his encyclopedia. He performed some simple experiments. Then he was convinced. It was gold!

The next day, General Sutter visited the construction site and spoke to the men working for him on the mill. He asked them to keep this discovery a secret for just six weeks. He had some business he needed to take care of before word started to spread. His men promised, but they soon broke their promise.



California Gold Rush

News of the discovery at Sutter's Mill spread quickly. The next year, thousands of men rushed to California. They came from all corners of the United States and from other countries around the world. They hoped to find gold and make a fortune.



Gold nuggets

People traveled from as far away as Chile, China, France, Germany, Ireland, Mexico, and Turkey. The year was 1849, and those searching for gold were called '49ers.



Some pioneers who had recently traveled west on the Oregon Trail quickly headed south down the Applegate Trail in hopes of getting rich. Lindsay Applegate was one of those pioneers. He made it to California ahead of the big rush and found $6,000 worth of gold.

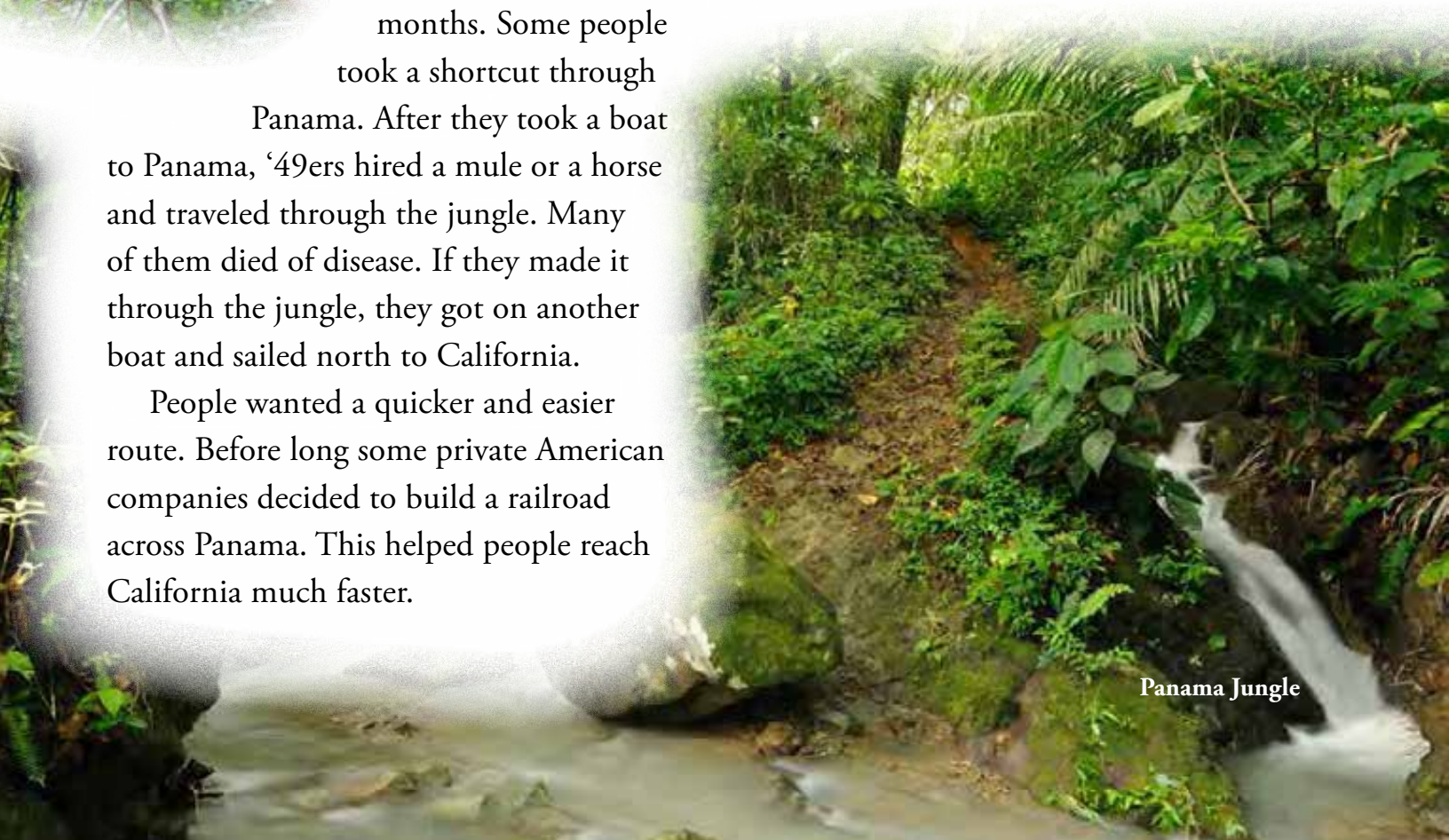
Even though they were anxious to get their hands on the gold in California, people in the eastern United States did not have a quick way to get there. They could travel over land on the Oregon Trail, or they could travel by boat around the southern tip of South America. Both trips could take up to six months. Some people took a shortcut through Panama. After they took a boat to Panama, '49ers hired a mule or a horse and traveled through the jungle. Many of them died of disease. If they made it through the jungle, they got on another boat and sailed north to California.



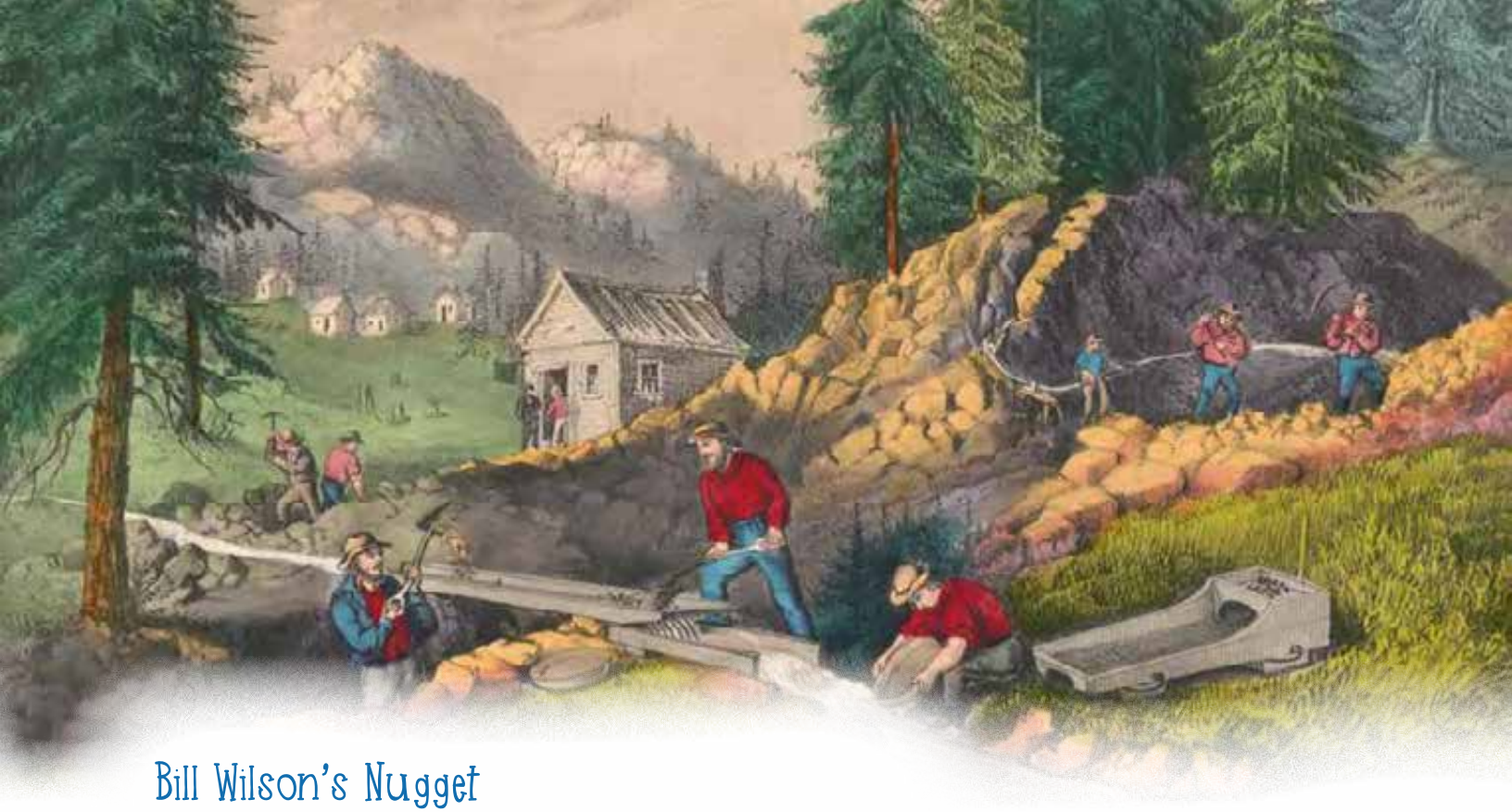
People wanted a quicker and easier route. Before long some private American companies decided to build a railroad across Panama. This helped people reach California much faster.

Travel Routes of the Gold Rush





Panama Jungle



California mining camp, c. 1850

Bill Wilson's Nugget

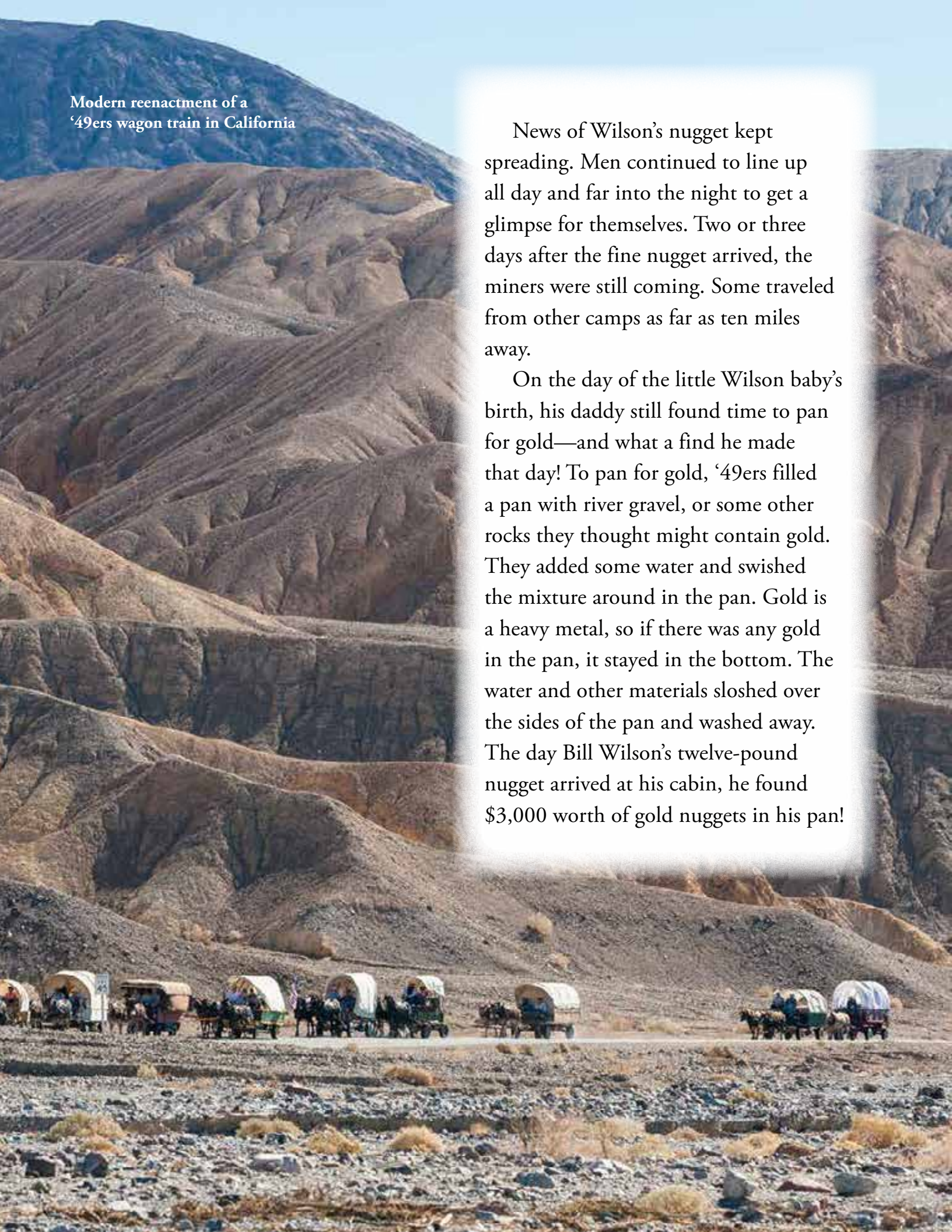
Women and children were a rare sight in the gold mining camps. Bill Wilson was one of the few '49ers who brought his wife with him. On Christmas day in 1849, Wilson's wife gave birth to a twelve-pound baby boy in their mining camp on California's Canyon Creek. One of Wilson's fellow miners decided to play a joke on the other '49ers in the area. He spread the news that Bill Wilson had found a twelve-pound nugget and that it was the most handsome nugget ever seen. Every miner in the camp wanted to see this amazing find. They quickly began to line up at the Wilson cabin.

Bill Wilson was in on the joke himself. He took the men, just a few at a time, into his cabin. He proudly showed them his twelve-pound nugget, the best and the biggest ever found on Canyon Creek!

The miners loved the joke, and they loved seeing a real baby. They hadn't seen one in a long time. As the men left the cabin, they told the other men waiting outside that Wilson's nugget was indeed the finest they had ever seen.



Panning for gold, 1849



Modern reenactment of a '49ers wagon train in California

News of Wilson's nugget kept spreading. Men continued to line up all day and far into the night to get a glimpse for themselves. Two or three days after the fine nugget arrived, the miners were still coming. Some traveled from other camps as far as ten miles away.

On the day of the little Wilson baby's birth, his daddy still found time to pan for gold—and what a find he made that day! To pan for gold, '49ers filled a pan with river gravel, or some other rocks they thought might contain gold. They added some water and swished the mixture around in the pan. Gold is a heavy metal, so if there was any gold in the pan, it stayed in the bottom. The water and other materials sloshed over the sides of the pan and washed away. The day Bill Wilson's twelve-pound nugget arrived at his cabin, he found $3,000 worth of gold nuggets in his pan!

Even after everyone knew what Bill Wilson's twelve-pound nugget really was, miners still loved to stop by to see the baby. The Canyon Creek miners were proud of the fact that they had a baby in their camp. They had a beautiful ring made for the baby's mother, using pure gold they had found themselves.

The End of the Gold Rush

By 1855 the California Gold Rush was pretty much over. While a few people struck it rich, most people did not. After their panning days were over, some '49ers went back home. Others made a new home for themselves in California.

Since the days of the Bible, people have valued gold. The Bible makes it clear that even though gold is special, there are things that are much more important than gold:

> How much better it is
> to get wisdom than gold!
> And to get understanding
> is to be chosen above silver.
> Proverbs 16:16



Gold mining pan

Lesson Activities

- Rhythms and Rhymes: Enjoy "The First Baby In Camp" on page 28.
- Timeline: Look at pages 22-23.
- Student Workbook: Complete the Lesson 33/Unit 11 Review page.
- Literature for Units 10-12: *Freedom Crossing*

Review Questions

- Why do you think General Sutter wanted his workers to keep the discovery of gold a secret?
- Describe the different ways people traveled to California to find gold.
- Why do you think most miners did not bring their families with them?

Hands-On History

- See the Unit 11 Project instructions on page 186.

Unit 11 Project

James Marshall Finds Gold!

Supplies

- construction paper in these colors: black, blue, brown, gray, and gold or yellow
- pencil
- glue stick
- scissors
- small shoes to trace



Directions

1. Draw a wavy line diagonally from one corner to another corner of the blue paper. Cut along the wavy line.
2. Glue one part of the blue paper onto the brown paper to make a "stream" and "bank."
3. Trace a pair of shoes on the black paper. Cut them out and glue them on the brown paper to make James Marshall's "footprints." It's okay if the footprints hang off the edge of the paper.
4. Tear round and oval-shaped "rocks" from the gray and yellow paper. Make most of them gray and just a few yellow. Glue them along the edge of the stream.