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Becoming Argonauts:
Scots in the California Gold Rush, 1848-1860

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Abstract

This thesis examines the Scottish experience in the California Gold Rush through the lens of the Scottish diaspora. From 1848 to 1860, at least 3,000 Scots from across Scotland and its wider diaspora funneled into the Golden State in search of wealth and opportunity. The resulting Scottish population in California, representing over twenty countries and five continents of first-time migrants and transmigrants alike, was a coming together of the Scottish diaspora from far apart. Dubbed ‘Argonauts’, those who took part in the California Gold Rush were primarily sojourners, temporary migrants who intended to eventually return home. In contrast to the existing Scottish diaspora historiography, this thesis asserts the dynamic role of diaspora throughout the entirety of the migrant experience.

Traditionally, the existence of a diaspora in a host society is defined on the basis of collective manifestations of a distinctive culture. Addressing the limited understanding of the more ‘invisible’ migrants or ethnics who appeared to assimilate to the host society, this study emphasises the active role and experience of the individual migrant in the Scottish diaspora. Intent on returning home, Scottish Argonauts integrated with the Anglo-American community and left little trace of Scottish ethnic communities and institutions during the Gold Rush. Meanwhile, in the private realm, Scottish Argonauts employed letters as transnational agents to maintain vital links with the homeland. As this study demonstrates, personal correspondence was a central mechanism of the Scottish diaspora as it sustained ethnic networks and could play a large role in negotiating migrants’ identities abroad.

Over the course of their stay in California, as the rush for gold diminished, some of these Scottish Argonauts decided to remain. Notably, the shift in what the individual migrant sought affected the ways in which they interacted with their homeland connections and diaspora. No longer Argonauts, Scottish Californians paid more heed to rebuilding their ethnic communities in their new homes. More broadly, this thesis offers a comparative context to other Scottish diaspora locations across the globe and throughout time, refining the understanding of locational influences on Scottish communities abroad and how we understand the Scottish diaspora as a whole.

This study uses a variety of sources to reconstruct the Scottish Gold Rush experience. The first chapter employs data from the 1850 Federal Census, the 1852 California State Census, and the 1860 Federal Census to identify and situate the Scottish demographic presence in California. The remaining chapters employ a range of Scottish-authored diaries, correspondence, and memoirs, as well as Scottish and Americans periodicals, to construct a narrative arc that begins in Scotland with the arrival of news of the Gold Rush and concludes a decade later in California. From the journey to California, to their arrival, and whether they eventually returned back home, remigrated elsewhere, or chose to settle in California, Scottish Argonauts’ relationship with the homeland and diaspora was both affirmed and reshaped by the processes of sojourning and settlement. Through the context of the California Gold Rush, this study offers some important insights into the nature of movement across the Scottish diaspora, the diasporic actions of individual migrants, and their shifting conceptions of opportunity, home, and ethnic expression abroad.
Lay Summary

This is a Scottish diaspora study that looks at the experiences of Scots in the California Gold Rush (1848-1860). During the Gold Rush, approximately 300,000 hopeful migrants, dubbed ‘Argonauts’, descended onto California from all over the world. Of those, at least 3,000 were Scottish migrants that came not only from Scotland, but from across various locations around the world. A recent territory gained by the United States, the Anglo-American population in California soon gained enough influence to exert a xenophobic and racial hegemony through intimidation, physical violence, and law. Anyone not a US citizen, they declared, were unworthy of California’s spoils. Yet as this thesis demonstrates, Scottish Argonauts were in a position of privilege to ally and incorporate with the emerging Anglo-American hegemony. Largely Anglophone, Protestant, and identifying as Anglo-Saxon, Scottish Argonauts openly embraced their similarities with Anglo-Americans. On the surface, Scots travelled, arrived, lived, and prospected as ordinary Argonauts. On deeper investigation, however, the process by which Scots incorporated into Gold Rush society was not a straightforward story of assimilation.

This study has three main goals: to identify the Scottish Argonauts and the circumstances from which they came, to explore their strategies of adjustment to life in Gold Rush society, and to explore how their Gold Rush experience implicated their relationship with Scotland and its diaspora. This study also employs a comparative dimension throughout to other Scottish migrant destinations in order to better understand the locational influences on the Scottish migrant experience and constructions of Scottishness abroad. The introduction establishes a working definition of ‘diaspora’ in the context of the growing realm of Scottish diaspora scholarship and also underscores the study’s contributions to scholarship: namely the role of the individual migrant in the diaspora, the nature of movement across the diaspora, and migrants’ shifting conceptions of opportunity, ‘home’, and ethnic expression abroad. The first chapter is a demographic study of the Scottish population in both San Francisco and Sacramento. The findings indicate a population that was predominantly young single males – typical of Gold Rush societies – but also indicate a globally represented, disproportionately skilled, and integrated Scottish population in both locations. The second chapter explores the reception and dissemination of Gold Rush information in Scotland through Scottish newspapers. Of all the newspaper content on California, published Scottish Argonaut letters exemplified the mechanisms of an active diaspora as they facilitated a transnational space where the people of Scotland and its diaspora could communicate. The third chapter follows both the overland and sea journeys of Scots to California. This was a formative experience where migrants were not only exposed to different worlds, but also began to engage with their diaspora to anchor themselves in their changing surroundings. The fourth chapter looks at the initial experience of Scots in Gold Rush society, and how Scottish Argonauts engaged in a variety of diasporic actions, primarily through personal correspondence, while they adapted to their surrogate Anglo-American communities in California. Finally, the fifth chapter investigates how Scots fostered components of their cultural identity during the Gold Rush. It explores how homeland connections, Anglo-American society, and changing conceptions of ‘home’ both affirmed and reshaped a multifaceted identity abroad. Overtime, while the majority returned home or moved elsewhere, some Scottish Argonauts decided to settle permanently in California. Putting down roots altered the ways in which they engaged with the homeland, and through the process of chain migration and ethnic associationalism, they began to rebuild their Scottish communities on Californian soil.
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Introduction

In most histories of the California Gold Rush, the opening narrative usually goes something like this: On a January morning in 1848, James Marshall made a discovery in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada mountain range that would reverberate across the globe. Over the past few months, Marshall had been working as a foreman on a sawmill project on the South Fork of the American River. That particular morning, the ground still damp from an overnight storm, Marshall spotted a yellow glimmer as he examined the millrace. ‘Boys’, he reportedly exclaimed after some careful inspection, ‘by God I believe I have found a Gold mine’. Initially, Marshall tried to keep the discovery a secret. But eventually, murmurs of gold in California began to spread in ever-widening circles. As the rumours gave way to evidence, the world responded in force. Within a few years, tens of thousands of migrants, dubbed ‘Argonauts’, hailing from the Americas, Great Britain, Europe, Asia, and Australasia, flocked to California in search of wealth. By 1854, it is estimated that around 300,000 prospectors had travelled to California by land and sea. The United States had never before experienced this magnitude of multinational migration. Thus far, this order of events is pretty well-known in Gold Rush history. What follows is not.

The study that follows explores the Scottish experience in the California Gold Rush and investigates how the Scottish diaspora intertwined with Gold Rush California. In 1852, official census enumerators recorded almost 3,000 Scots in California. While this statistic put Scots

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3 From the United Kingdom, the FamilySearch.com database for the California State Census of 1852 returned: 11,122 Irish, 9,501 English, 2,959 Scottish, and 442 Welsh. From Continental Europe, the most numerous nationalities were: 8,085 German, 5,744 French, 749 Italian, 580 Swedes, and 532 Swiss. The
among the top five nationalities in California from Europe, the various places from where these
Scottish Argonauts came from holds the most significance. Scots’ reputation as a ‘mobile
people’ is virtually undisputed in scholarship, their diaspora in the nineteenth century spanning
regions far beyond Britain’s imperial reach. Yet the nature of this movement is not fully
understood. Focus on the Scottish diaspora through the California Gold Rush offers some
important insights into the movement and networks of Scottish migrants in the mid-nineteenth
century. Because of their global dispersion, Scots can be accounted for in almost every inbound
migration route to California and were among the very first to respond to the rumours of gold.
Some did not have to travel very far at all. From nearby came the early pioneers, Scottish
merchants and sailors who had previously traded their former lives to settle in Hispanic
California. Soon after, word quickly spread via California’s trading links and reached more
Scots living in the Hawaiian Islands. Struck with gold fever, they set sail with a throng of fellow
hopefuls for the rumoured El Dorado. From the South rushed Scottish traders and entrepreneurs
who had tried their luck in Latin America, eager to cash in on the next big thing. Meanwhile,
other Scots who had settled the American borderland marched to California from the east. They
came from the Oregon Territory and beyond, leaving behind their homesteads in hopes of
securing a better fortune. All told, this handful of Scots were among the 6,000 people who made
their way to California before the end of the year, the original Gold Rush Argonauts.

In December 1848, President James K. Polk officially confirmed California’s abundant
supply of gold. As Polk’s confirmation circumnavigated the globe, the rush was on – this was the

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limitations of the 1852 California State Census are discussed in the first chapter, as such the figures
should be seen as broad estimations. The California State Census, 1852. Familysearch.com.
6 Sucheng Chan, ‘A People of Exceptional Character: Ethnic Diversity, Nativism, and Racism in the
proof the rest of the world had waited for. Scots flocked from all directions. Later that month, Scots were on board the first ship full of Argonauts from the Eastern United States. In January of the new year, Scotland’s first wave of California prospectors departed its shores from Greenock. The farther-reaching global Scots followed suit when Polk’s announcement reached their respective parts of the world over the following months. In the 1852 California State Census, Scots had come from a variety of places such as Canada, Britain, Ireland, France, Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, China, French Polynesia, the Bahamas, Peru, Uruguay, and Brazil. The California Gold Rush brought various representations of the Scottish diaspora to one place.

Whether they came straight from Scotland or somewhere else as transmigrants, the Scots who came to California during the Gold Rush all arrived as Argonauts. A Classics term adapted at the time to describe those that flocked to California’s abundant supply of gold, the original Argonauts were a band of sailors in an ancient Greek epic that went in search of the Golden Fleece. Much like the Argonauts of old, Scots looked to this distant land as a place of opportunity and sojourn. For the vast majority, their time in California was meant to be temporary with a return journey home in the not-too-distant future. This understanding shaped much of the way Scots integrated into society during the initial years of the Gold Rush. Anglo-Americans, guided by the doctrine of Manifest Destiny and riding on the recent victory in the Mexican-American War, deemed that the treasures of California should be for themselves. As

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7 The literal definition of ‘transmigrant’ is an individual in the process of migrating and moving from one place to another. In this study, a Scottish transmigrant is someone who came to California from another location besides Britain. While contemporary studies have adapted the use of ‘transmigrant’ to characterise modern-day immigrants ‘whose daily lives depend on multiple and constant interconnections across international borders’, this study uses the more traditional definition to highlight the variety of Scottish migrant backgrounds. Quote from Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch, and Cristina Szanton Blanc, ‘From Immigrant to Transmigrant: Theorizing Transnational Migration’, *Anthropological Quarterly* 68, no. 1 (1995): 48.

they increased in number and influence, they imposed a xenophobic and racial hegemony that they enforced through intimidation, physical violence, and law. Whether Indigenous Peoples, Latin Americans, French, Irish, or Chinese, foreigners faced a variety of struggles that hindered their success during the Gold Rush. Yet as this thesis demonstrates, Scottish Argonauts were in a position of privilege to ally and incorporate with the emerging Anglo-American hegemony. Largely Anglophone, Protestant, and identifying as Anglo-Saxon, Scottish Argonauts openly embraced their similarities with Anglo-Americans while they maintained their more personal connections to Scotland in the private realm. Intent on a temporary stay, they also saw little reason to re-establish ethnic communities in Gold Rush California. Besides, any display of foreign allegiance could spark nativist backlash from their Anglo-American counterparts. To Anglo-Americans, the Scots were an acceptable foreign presence in their ideal version of Gold Rush society.

Meanwhile, Scotland remained transfixed on the happenings in the ‘diggings’. Gold Rush California became a feature in Scottish popular culture as the local newspapers provided regular updates on the state of affairs in California. The public’s interest became more personal as newspapers regularly published first-hand accounts from Scottish Argonauts. More than official updates, fellow countrymen provided valuable and trusted information about the journey there and the state of affairs in California, and also a pull for others to follow. Importantly, these personal accounts proved that Scots belonged in California, despite the reports of Americans’ distrust of foreigners on Californian soil. An even stronger pull was the influence of friends and family members in California that maintained the channels of chain migration after the initial rush to gold. As some Scottish Argonauts elongated their stay, over time they realised a new sense of home and belonging in California. This shift altered the ways in which they expressed
their identity in California and how they interacted with the wider Scottish diaspora. When the
Gold Rush era concluded, the Scots that remained finally began to establish their Scottish
communities, explicitly, on Californian soil.

The Scottish California Gold Rush experience is a story of movement and a coming
together of the Scottish diaspora from far apart. The majority of Scottish Argonauts eventually
left California and continued their migration journeys elsewhere. While others, as this study
reveals, found a home in a place unintended. In doing so, they cemented California’s place in the
diaspora and facilitated a pull to California long after Marshall’s fateful discovery. In analysing
the experiences of Scottish Argonauts, this study offers some important insights into Scottish
migrants’ shifting conceptions of opportunity, home, and ethnic expression abroad. This study
also demonstrates how Scottish Argonauts engaged with the diaspora through the various stages
of migration – from the journey to their eventual settlement. More broadly, this thesis offers a
comparative context to other Scottish diaspora locations across the globe and throughout time,
refining how we understand the Scottish diaspora as whole.

Scottish Diaspora Literature Review

The term ‘diaspora’ has drastically evolved from its etymology– a combination of the
Greek words dia and speirein which translate to across and scatter. ‘When applied to humans’,
Robin Cohen explained in Global Diasporas: An Introduction, ‘the ancient Greeks thought of
Diaspora as migration and colonization’.\(^9\) Over time, with the proliferation of Christianity, the
concept of diaspora became synonymous with the forced dispersal and resettlement of Jews from
Palestine. This association of diaspora with victimhood and exile continued well into the

nineteenth century when scholars conceptualised other ethnic groups as diasporas, such as those displaced by the Armenian genocide or the African slave trade. Within the past few decades, and not without resistance from those who uphold the conventional interpretation of ‘diaspora’, the concept in scholarly discourse has expanded to encompass virtually any group of migrants. By the early 2000s, scholars’ use of diaspora to suit various topics and methodologies spurred Rogers Brubaker to point out that a ‘“diaspora” diaspora’ now existed, ‘a dispersion of the meanings of the term in semantic, conceptual and disciplinary space’. In 2001, Kim Butler sought a scholarly consensus on the working definition of diaspora and underscored three basic features. First, a diaspora needed to reflect its original meaning and have a minimum of two destinations. Second, some sort of relationship to the homeland is required to exist, whether it be real or imagined. Third, there must be an ethnonational group consciousness that binds these dispersed people not only to their homeland or the idea of it, but to each other. Scotland’s emigrants, considering that the majority migrated voluntarily and adapted and integrated with their new communities, were far from the conventional ‘victim’ diaspora. Yet, the presence of a growing body of Scottish diaspora scholarship over the past few decades demonstrates how the concept of diaspora has since evolved. However vast the interpretations of diaspora are across academia, Scottish diaspora scholarship in recent years has honed in on some stimulating

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interpretations of its own diaspora which help enhance the wider understanding of the nature of diaspora itself.

As T.M. Devine has pointed out, Scotland’s history provides ‘a fascinating historical laboratory’ for scholars of migration and diaspora.\(^\text{14}\) Scottish migrants have scattered across the globe in significant numbers for centuries. During the nineteenth century from 1815, coinciding with the earliest available statistics for comparing European emigration, Scotland consistently placed in the top three countries of emigrants per capita.\(^\text{15}\) This tradition of migration has interested historians of Scotland long before they embraced the concept of diaspora.\(^\text{16}\) Particularly in the last quarter of the twentieth century, with the developing trend of globalism in historical scholarship, scholars such as R.A. Cage and Eric Richards attempted broad surveys of the global mobility of Scotland’s emigrants.\(^\text{17}\) Others, like Alan Karras who looked at Scots in Jamaica and the Chesapeake, employed more of a transatlantic approach to compare and connect specific Scottish migration experiences abroad. While these works were a valuable contribution to the understanding of the motivations and experiences of Scotland’s emigrants across space and time, they fall short in addressing the interconnectedness between these global Scots and their homeland.

Over the past twenty years as scholars conceptualised the existence of Scotland’s own diaspora, Scottish migration scholarship has undergone a sea change. Moving beyond the


\(^{16}\) In 1966, Gordon Donaldson was the first to attempt a broad survey of Scottish migrants. Gordon Donaldson, *The Scots Overseas* (London: Hale, 1966).

retelling of migrant experiences in earlier accounts of Scottish migration, the more recent works consider the effects of the diaspora on individuals and their families, their host and home countries, and the transatlantic networks and spaces these migrants created. This shift in discussion is demonstrated in the growing number of monograph and collaborative works that situate Scottish migration either in the context of individual diasporas, such as work on the United States, Canada, and New Zealand, or in the broader framework of unifying themes across a global setting. Notable works, such as Tanja Bueltmann’s study of nineteenth and twentieth-century Scots in New Zealand, have helped refine the concept of diaspora in a Scottish setting.

‘Rather than simply denoting the movement overseas of particular migrant groups,’ Bueltmann argues, ‘diaspora thus connects a homeland with a new place of settlement; it also gives recognition to other places where migrants from the same homeland settled. Consequently, diaspora is not a passive entity, but represents a matrix of relationships that links the old homeland with these diverse new worlds through its members.’ Crucially, a diaspora requires active historical agents in order to exist and serve its members.

Due to being a relatively new field, the geographic coverage of the current Scottish diaspora scholarship is fairly limited. Coverage predominantly reflects the more popular

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localities Scots migrated to, especially those which have an obvious component of Scottish influence today: Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and parts of the United States.\textsuperscript{20} Other scholars have attempted a multinational, even global framework of the Scottish diaspora, but they too are limited by their omissions.\textsuperscript{21} Most notable is Devine’s series of monographs which attempts to synthesise the existing scholarship on Scottish migration throughout the British Empire and around the world.\textsuperscript{22} Large gaps still remain in Scottish diaspora scholarship, particularly with Scottish migrant experiences in the United States which is discussed shortly. The existing works have highlighted, more than ever before, the diverse array of Scottish migration across time and space. In doing so, they have also emphasised the need for more period and location specific studies to better explain divergences from one region of settlement to another. As Kevin Kenny warned in 2003, diaspora scholarship must remain mindful of the locational influences abroad that can shape distinctive migrant experiences and ethnic identities.\textsuperscript{23} As such, this thesis provides a new comparative context to add to the existing knowledge of the Scottish diaspora. When appropriate, this study compares the Scottish Argonaut experience in California to those featured in existing studies on other Scottish migrant destinations. Only by interrogating the places where Scots migrated and sojourned, and then


comparing them to one another, are we able to gain a better appreciation for this complex network of migration, communication, and kinship across the global Scottish community.

Existing Scottish diaspora studies have established the importance of moving beyond the broad socio-economic generalisations of earlier studies to explain Scotland’s high rate of migration. These studies recognise the various influences that factored into a migrant’s decision to go to a specific destination and thus provide a more nuanced understanding of the patterns of emigration from Scotland. Nevertheless, particularly in the introduction, generalisations are useful to establish the context in which these decisions were made to migrate. Marshall’s discovery of gold in California came at a time when conditions in Scotland fostered a receptive attitude towards migration and the Scottish diaspora was already widespread. By the mid-nineteenth century, Scotland’s average annual proportionate rate of emigration was second only to Ireland amongst European countries. Scotland was in the midst of an industrial boom. In the fifty years prior, the Scottish population had grown from 1.6 to 2.8 million. This had resulted in the development of a wide-ranging and skilled workforce that had grown too big for the country’s capabilities. As Scotland’s urban and industrial centres became more crowded, the competition for work increased. As a result, this generation of Scots looked at migration in a different way than those before them. Instead of pursuing pastoral traditions and fleeing industrial advancement, the majority of Scots who emigrated during the mid-nineteenth century and beyond had embraced these advancements in Scotland and left home to seek better

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24 Between 1851 and 1860, the top four countries with the highest average annual rate of emigration were Ireland (14/1000), Scotland (5/1000), Norway (2.4/1000), and England and Wales (2.4/1000). Dudley Baines, Migration in a Mature Economy: Emigration and Internal Migration in England and Wales, 1861-1900 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 10.

25 Devine, To the Ends of the Earth, 50.
opportunities elsewhere. This is the broader context in which potential migrants in Scotland chose to become Argonauts.

Accordingly, when California and its Gold Rush came to occupy public attention the state soon became another destination of the Scottish diaspora. Indeed, news of attainable riches on a distant shore immediately tempted those who desired something else. Those in Scotland who could fund their early onset of gold fever left for California soon after hearing or reading the initial reports. They were of a particular social status that allowed them to make such a gamble – young and typically male, with some sort of capital and few responsibilities that bound them to their homeland. Meanwhile, as this study later reveals, this first wave of Scottish Argonauts would facilitate additional movement to California by relaying their trials and experiences back home to Scotland and across the wider diaspora. These diasporic actions can be seen throughout the duration of the Gold Rush and beyond, as Scottish Argonauts influenced family and friends of various ages and walks of life to join them in California.

This thesis maintains that Scottish Argonauts, or ‘sojourners’ as temporary migrants are known in Scottish diaspora scholarship, were as much a part of the diaspora than those who emigrated with the intent to permanently settle abroad. As recent works dealing with return migration to Scotland have shown, return migrants included seasonal workers, sojourners, and those who came back to Scotland due to failed resettlement or personal circumstances.\(^{26}\) By nature, Scots’ global movement was often multi-directional and not always predicable. Several diaspora scholars including Mario Varricchio, Marjory Harper, and Douglass McCalla have demonstrated that sojourners and other return migrants were active agents in the Scottish

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diaspora during their time abroad, and also when they returned to their homeland. ‘Diaspora is not simply a term to describe the scattering of Scots abroad’, Angela McCarthy reminds us, ‘it operated as an active link between old and new worlds, making tangible those links, particularly through communication processes.’ 27 These active connections to Scotland also facilitated going home, which Bueltmann observed in her study of Scots in New Zealand. 28 Thus, communication across the diaspora secured far flung locations to one another which facilitated movement back home and abroad. While the Gold Rush spurred a very specific migration in that most of its migrants only intended to be in California temporarily, the event emboldened a variety of Scottish connections between California and Scotland, and also created connections across the diaspora from California to the wider Scottish world.

Since this thesis explores a Scottish identity it is necessary to define it within the context of this study. As for a definition, ‘identity’ in its simplest form is what distinguishes an individual or group from one another. In reality, the meaning of identity is not so clear. As well as the trouble with defining what made someone ‘Scottish’ during the mid-nineteenth century, which is discussed shortly, individuals can have and express multiple identities. In this study, the analysis of the Scottish Argonaut identity and its expression is largely informed by the understanding that an individual’s identity is multifaceted by nature. In 1994, T.C. Smout depicted the Scottish identity as a combination of ‘concentric loyalties’, the latter represented by rings of territorial identifications (e.g. clan, county, nation, and state) which are intersected and sometimes reinforced by a range of social characteristics (e.g. gender, race, class, occupation, and religion). 29 While Smout’s concentric model is useful for visualising the numerous identities

27 Bueltmann, Scottish Ethnicity and the Making of New Zealand Society, 1850-1930, 211.
28 Ibid., 201.
that one might have, more recently Scottish diaspora scholars have found these distinct segments of identity too rigid. Now, identities are understood to overlap one another and are highly adaptive in response to external factors.\textsuperscript{30} This is especially relevant in the context of migration where certain identities could limit or determine new opportunities.

In 2014, Scottish diaspora scholars Tanja Bueltmann, Andrew Hinson, and Graeme Morton warned of the difficulties of tracing the Scottish migrant identity abroad:

the key to understanding ethnic identity is that there is no one identity: some Scots readily embraced the opportunities their new homeland offered while others more or less openly practised their ethnic identity. There was a wide spectrum of possibilities for being a Scot in a settlement in the Scottish diaspora.\textsuperscript{31}

The role of Scottish ethnicity and identity has been a controversial topic in Scottish diaspora scholarship.\textsuperscript{32} On one end of the spectrum are those who uphold the process of assimilationism after emigration, arguing that Scots in particular settlements shed their ethnic origins in favour of integration in their new societies. In 1988, for example, Eric Richards claimed this very sentiment for Scottish immigrants in Australia.\textsuperscript{33} Similarly, in 2005, David Armitage deemed Scots in North America and Australia ‘invisible ethnics’ and ‘eager to assimilate’.\textsuperscript{34} Meanwhile, other scholars have pointed at the presence of Scottish societies and Caledonian Games in the New World as telling evidence that Scots both maintained their homeland cultures aboard and developed a rich ethnic associational scene.\textsuperscript{35}

\textsuperscript{30} See Andrew Mackillop, ‘Europeans, Britons, and Scots: Scottish Sojourning Networks and Identities in Asia, c.1700-1815’, in \textit{A Global Clan}, 19.

\textsuperscript{31} Morton et al., eds., \textit{Ties of Bluid, Kin and Countrie}, 10-11.

\textsuperscript{32} See Devine’s overview of the conversation on ethnicity and identity among the Scottish diaspora: \textit{Ibid.}, 166-7.


\textsuperscript{35} See Devine, \textit{To the Ends of the Earth}, 166-167; Tanja Bueltmann, \textit{Clubbing Together: Ethnicity, Civility and Formal Sociability in the Scottish Diaspora to 1930} (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press,
Scholars have attempted to explain the reasons behind this broad range of Scottish ethnic expression abroad. Marjory Harper has argued that the manner in which Scots left home had an effect on how they expressed their ethnic identity, claiming that ‘those who felt they had been forced out’, namely ‘exiles’, ‘being more likely to cling to their Scottish roots.’ Meanwhile, ‘adventurers’, predominantly lowlanders who migrated for entrepreneurial reasons or personal advancement, ‘generally played the ethnic card in pursuit of individual economic betterment rather than cultural solidarity…Their more individualistic, ambitious approach made them less inclined overtly to cultivate memories of home, and that in turn inhibited the development of a clear concept of diaspora or even shared experience.’ Yet more recent studies have suggested otherwise. Bueltmann, for example, has shown in New Zealand that Scottish migrants, mainly lowlanders who fit Harper’s classification of ‘adventurers’, partook in as much ethnic expression as their ‘exiled’ counterparts. They actively maintained their cultural traditions, from observing their religion and national holidays, to participating in ethnic clubs and associations.

The sojourner identity adds a further complexity to the migrant identity because of their intent to return home. Andrew Mackillop, looking at Scottish sojourners in India, argues that their expression of their Scottish identity was reliant on their plans to return home and reintegrate into Scottish society. As a result, their Scottishness abroad was far more for practical needs than sentimental; be it through keeping Scottish company for a sense of cultural familiarity or sustaining communication networks with Scotland to maintain their hand in affairs back home for their return. Because of this imminent return, Mackillop also argued that most sojourners

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36 Harper, ‘Exiles or Entrepreneurs’ in *A Kingdom of the Mind*, 34.
'retained a confident, unassuming sense of themselves as Scots.'\textsuperscript{38} This assuredness of their Scottish identity, he argues, is why eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Scots in India were ‘far less demonstrative or reliant on outward symbols, ethnic badges, or societies’ than their Scottish counterparts across other parts of the diaspora.\textsuperscript{39} To an extent, this was also true of California’s Scottish Argonauts. However, their intent to return home does not wholly explain the lack of Scottish associationism and public expressions of Scottishness during the Gold Rush period. The locational circumstances in which these migrants found themselves also greatly impacted the ways and extent in which they engaged with their Scottish identity. Using the context of the California Gold Rush, it is apparent that various social, political, and personal factors also influenced the expression of Scottish ethnic identity across time and space.

To date, the setting of Scottish diaspora studies has tended to focus on locations where Scottish ethnic expression was the most visible rather than destinations where Scots appeared to assimilate with the host society. Bueltmann recognised the disparity in her own study, admitting that her exploration of Scottish ethnic expression in New Zealand was ‘one of extreme associationalism.’\textsuperscript{40} So what of the Scots who appeared to assimilate and blend in with their new host societies? Did they maintain their Scottish identity, and more importantly, were they active agents of their wider diaspora? The Scottish experience in the setting of the California Gold Rush provides important insights to these questions. Initially, a small group of Scots attempted to establish a Scottish associational scene in San Francisco, but minimal interest failed to sustain it. Instead, as this thesis demonstrates in chapters 4 and 5, Scottish Argonauts actively blended in with the Anglo-American society and meanwhile used less visible channels across their diaspora,

\textsuperscript{38} Andrew Mackillop, ‘Europeans, Britons, and Scots: Scottish Sojourning Networks and Identities in Asia, c.1700-1815’, in \textit{A Global Clan}, 40.
\textsuperscript{39} \textit{Ibid}.
\textsuperscript{40} Bueltmann, \textit{Scottish Ethnicity and the Making of New Zealand Society, 1850-1930}, 210.
such as personal correspondence, to foster their ethnic identities during the Gold Rush. Crucially, this does not translate as Scots severing their homeland connections and assimilating to their host societies. This study argues that even though Scottish Argonauts did not robustly celebrate their ancestral roots compared to their more visible counterparts in other parts of the diaspora, they were just as much as engaged in diasporic actions and maintaining their cultural traditions. In addition to maintaining their connections to Scotland during the Gold Rush, those who decided to remain in California and make it their permanent home expressed their Scottishness in more robust ways.

As for what makes a ‘Scottish’ identity, there is no clear consensus of its constituent parts and how Scots defined themselves as being Scottish. Bueltmann, Hinson, and Morton have adapted the thinking of social theorists and identify markers of a Scottish identity among the diaspora as ‘boundaries of presentation’. ‘Boundaries’, they explain, ‘are created by endogamy and by some form of social inclusion and signposts where we learn about ourselves.’\(^41\) Migrants indicated their belonging in a distinct ethnic group by presenting and collectively maintaining various boundary markers that were informed by connections to their ancestral homeland. ‘Scotland’s diasporic identity’, Bueltmann et al. continue, ‘was formed “out of place”, in the boundaries of its national symbolic representations and out of its everyday institutional and cultural characteristics.’\(^42\) These defining characteristics include ethnic associations such as St. Andrews and Caledonian societies, the persistence of language such as Scots and Gaelic, and adherence to religious traditions and national holidays. While these markers of a Scottish identity are useful for identifying communities of Scots abroad, complications arise when the migrant population is scattered, boundaries are shared with other ethnic groups in their host society, and

\(^{42}\) *Ibid.*
their presentation of such boundaries is not so obvious. Such was the case with Scottish Argonauts, as the majority integrated with the dominant society and did not actively present boundaries that made them distinct from their Anglo-American counterparts.

Instead, Devine’s appropriation of the term ‘cultural baggage’ is used to help distinguish aspects of a Scottish identity in California. Compared to boundaries, which search for collective displays of a diasporic identity abroad, this conceptualization shifts the focus to an individual’s methods of maintaining connections to their homeland and the wider diaspora. Devine defines cultural baggage as portable ‘markers of identity’ that Scottish migrants took with them from Scotland. Part of this baggage had been the same for generations of Scottish emigrants, mainly their civic institutions like churches and schools. While other components were particular to the mid-nineteenth century, namely myths, symbols, and traditions that stemmed from a recent movement in Scotland to recognize and appreciate a distinctive past. As Smout has reminded us, ‘National identities are constructed out of references to history, or, more exactly, to received popular ideas about history that achieve mythic status, irrespective of what modern academic historians perceive to be their actual truth or importance.’ This included the use of tartan, bagpipes, and the kilt, as well as the celebration of national heroes such as Robert Burns, William Wallace, and Robert the Bruce.

The Scots who left for Gold Rush California certainly packed their cultural baggage with them. But as will be revealed, the Gold Rush experience deeply altered the ways in which they unpacked it. Whilst St. Andrews and Caledonian Societies took off across the East Coast of the United States, Scottish Argonauts in California kept their symbols and memories of Scotland packed away in the private realm, intent on unpacking them when they returned them to their

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rightful place back home. Furthermore, these were the aspects of their cultural baggage that could alert Anglo-American Argonauts of their foreign affiliation, and therefore hamper the chance of success in Gold Rush society. It was not until the mid 1860s, as the dust from the Gold Rush truly settled, when the Scottish population in California finally unpacked their cultural baggage and collectively embraced their Scottish identity.

This study is an addition to the growing pool of location-specific Scottish diaspora studies that explore how local conditions influenced constructions of Scottishness. Thus, it offers some comparative insights on the ways in which Scots maintained their ethnic identity abroad. While we are still far from knowing the extent of the divergences of Scottishness across the diaspora, we are another step closer to establishing what aspects were consistent, and what were more likely to be shaped by local influences. Notably, the Gold Rush period in California offers a glimpse at how Scottish migrants altered their relationship with Scotland and its diaspora overtime. While the majority of Scottish Argonauts returned home or continued their travels to other promising destinations, this study also follows those that came to view their intended place of sojourn as their eventual home and permanent place of settlement. This change affected how they identified with Scotland overtime, and thus how they viewed and expressed their Scottish identity.

During the frenzied years of the Gold Rush, Scottish Argonauts in California were very much active members of their diaspora despite engaging with their homeland connections in a ‘subdued’ manner. As noted earlier, an essential component to a diaspora is a maintained network to the homeland. Traditionally, this homeland connection has been identified by manifestations of a distinctive culture in a socially collective setting instead of on an individual level. While a small number of Scots initiated Scottish clubs and associations that faded into
obscurity during the Gold Rush, this is not evidence that Scottish Argonauts severed themselves from their national identity and the wider Scottish diaspora. Instead, Scottish Argonauts maintained their Scottishness by constructing transnational social networks which were facilitated by personal correspondence. From their journey to California, through their trials and tribulations of adjusting to Gold Rush society, to their eventual departure of California, or long after their decision to stay, Scottish Argonauts and Californians were active diasporic agents.

**United States and Gold Rush Scholarship**

Wading through the scholarship on Scottish migration to the United States is particularly challenging due to the reputation of the Scottish migrant in American historiography. For one, the general profile of the Scottish migrant in the US has been largely obscured by a culture of Scotophilia. During the late-nineteenth century, an influx of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe revived nativist sentiments across America. In an effort to argue their belonging in America, Scottish associational societies, along with a host of other immigrant and ethnic groups, commissioned works to highlight the accomplishments of their countrymen and descendants. The resulting publications heralded Scots for their ease of assimilation and their contributions to American society. Called ‘Scots Counting’ by one historian, these early publications established a filiopietistic tradition that would long endure in Scottish-American scholarship. In an article in 1954, George Shepperson challenged ‘the chauvinistic enthusiasm of the Burns Supper school of Scottish-American historians’ and called for a ‘less uncritical and

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one-sided viewpoint’ on the Scottish experience. Yet the problem has persisted. For example, during a period when US immigration scholarship actively challenged assimilationism and promoted multiculturalism, Gordon Donaldson had this to say in the *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups* (1980):

> Among the characteristics of Scots overseas have been their adaptability and capacity to assimilate…it was to their advantage that they could be remarkably tolerant of the ways of others…with a broader and less insular outlook than the English, they did not regard all ways of life other than their own as backward, quaint, or barbarous.

As Devine recently pointed out, there has been a ‘remarkable resurgence of the chauvinistic writing’, apparent in such titles such as Michael Fry’s *How the Scots Made America* (2004) and Rick Wilson’s *Scots Who Made America* (2016). Works of this nature have done more to distort the Scottish migrant experience during the nineteenth century than provide any noteworthy insights.

Such is the case with the current understanding of Scots in the American West. The few book-length studies that are relevant all feature filiopietistic methodologies akin to ‘Scots Counting’. One is Ferenc Morton Szasz’s *Scots in the North American West, 1790-1907*

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51 Somewhat related, William Turrentine Jackson has looked at the presence and influence of Scottish capital in the American West. He too, however, attributed national stereotypes such as ‘tenacity of the Scot’ and their ‘canniness’. Jackson, *The Enterprising Scot*. 

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(2000).\(^{52}\) In it, Szasz argues that the Scottish presence in the American West had an inordinate influence on the region’s history, claiming that: ‘A sense of adventure, a self-confidence, a familiarity with harsh landscape, a work ethic, an individualism that combined nicely with group loyalties, and, often, a set of industrial or agricultural skills set Scots apart from many of the other immigrants.’\(^{53}\) Meanwhile, the most recent work dedicated to the subject is Jenni Calder’s *Frontier Scots: The Scots Who Won the West* (2009). As the title suggests, the study identified successful Scottish immigrants and their descendants in the West, making it yet another modern representation of ‘Scots Counting’.

As for the topic of this study, the Scottish presence in California is also vague. The Gold Rush even more so. Currently, the only relevant literature is limited to pre-Gold Rush California. These exist in the form of a biography entitled *A Scotch Paisano* (1978) by Susan Bryant Dakin, and an article, ‘Scots in Hispanic California’ (1973) by Martha Vought.\(^{55}\) While these works confirmed and illuminated a Scottish presence in California, they too presented Scots in a filiopietistic manner. As it stands, the Scottish presence in California and the American West is broadly obscured and a revision is overdue.

More broadly, the majority of works that examine Scottish migrants in the US are during America’s colonial era where their influences on settler society were most pronounced.\(^{56}\)

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Meanwhile, despite a higher influx of Scottish migrants in the century that followed, there is no book-length study that solely concentrates on the Scottish immigrant experience in nineteenth-century America. Compared to the estimated 100,000 Scottish migrants that arrived between 1700 and 1815, the number increased to approximately 488,749 between 1820 and 1910. This neglect of nineteenth-century Scots in American historiography is because of the prevailing notion that they rapidly assimilated. For example, Ian Graham simply wrote off the Scottish presence post-Revolutionary War because of a perceived lack of visibility. ‘The Scots immigrants, in spite of their greater numbers,’ he claimed, ‘were lost in the general ferment of mass movement to the New World.’ Instead, most of the knowledge on the Scots during this period comes from surveys of British immigrants in America, which explained below, have various limitations.

Scots, alongside English and Welsh migrants (who all fall under the ‘British’ categorisation in this study), have received unsatisfactory attention across generations of scholarship in America. Much of this can be blamed on their reputation as ‘invisible immigrants’. In 1972, Charlotte Erickson coined the term which, she believed, reflected the degree that nineteenth-century English and Scottish migrants blended into American society.

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57 While it is true that the rate of Scottish immigration fell in the years surrounding the Revolutionary War, War of 1812, and Napoleonic Wars, their numbers sharply increased throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century. Devine, *To the Ends of the Earth*, 108.
58 Graham, *Colonists from Scotland*, 182.
59 A note about the usage of ‘British’ in this study: While it is true that the Irish were British subjects during the nineteenth century, the recurring waves of civil unrest in Ireland made it very clear that its people harboured strong oppositions to the Union and a British identity. Furthermore, the vast historiography of the Irish Diaspora in the US has consistently demonstrated that one’s Irish identity had far more impact on their immigrant experience, both internally and externally. As not to discount the Irish sentiments and experiences at home and abroad, this study does not include the Irish in its classification of ‘British’.
Erickson, like those before her, upheld the conventional view that because British migrants in the US were predominantly white, Protestant, and Anglophonic, they had a relative ease of assimilating compared to other foreign migrant groups. However, the term ‘invisible immigrants’ more accurately describes the British presence in US immigration and Gold Rush scholarship than their actual lived experiences. As it stands, assimilation is a problematic concept in immigration scholarship which implies that immigrants shed their ancestral identities to conform to the dominant culture. Unlike other immigrant groups, the understanding of the British experience has not evolved with the trends in US immigration historiography. So, while the field of US immigration scholarship has broadly changed over time – from assimilationism to ethnic studies and multiculturalism – the majority of scholars still hold the opinion that British migrants quickly assimilated and therefore have neglected to consider them in the revised frameworks.  

To fully comprehend this negligence, it is necessary to discuss migration numbers. According to official US records, almost 28 million foreign migrants came to the US between 1820 and 1910. The vast majority, approximately 90 percent, had emigrated from Europe. The official report, which scholars still use today, clearly points to Britain and Ireland as the top

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61 Alan Kraut completely neglected British immigrants in his study of industrial America. Thomas Archdeacon gave the British better treatment in Becoming American but gave them a very vague overview after stating ‘less can be said [compared to other immigrant groups]’ of their process of adjusting to American society. John Bodnar recognised the regional variations of migration across Europe, Britain, and even in Scotland, but his discussion is largely devoid of the British after their arrival to America. And Roger Daniels largely neglected the British after the Revolution. ‘By the beginning of the eighteenth century, if not before,’ he stated, ‘the character of what was to become the United States was pretty well set. It would be English and Protestant.’ Alan M. Kraut, The Huddled Masses: The Immigrant in American Society, 1880-1921 (Arlington Heights, IL: Harlan Davidson, 1982), 109-11; Thomas J. Archdeacon, Becoming American: An Ethnic History (New York: Free Press, 1983); John E. Bodnar, The Transplanted: A History of Immigrants in Urban America (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985); Roger Daniels, Coming to America: A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life (New York: Harper Collins, 1990), 52.

62 The exact figure for the total number of immigrants is 27,918,992, while the total from Europe is 25,528,410. United States Immigration Commission (1907-1910) and William P. Dillingham, Reports of the Immigration Commission (Washington, DC, 1911), Table 7, p. 12. See D.T. Gleeson, English Ethnicity and Culture in North America (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2017), 3.
contributors: ‘from 1820-1910, more immigrants came from the United Kingdom than any other country, the number being 7,766,330.’ While the American officials recorded the nationalities of English, Scottish, Welsh, and Irish, it should be noted that a tenth of this number were listed under ‘United Kingdom, not specified’. Therefore, minus the Irish, the number of British migrants recorded during this period was at least 2,760,360, but probably closer to 3 million if we account for some of the unspecified figures as non-Irish. More recent attempts to revise these figures have put the British in even sharper contrast. Dudley Baines, Charlotte Erickson, and William Van Vugt have each observed that the official US immigration records vastly undercounted British migrants for Irish. In 1999, Van Vugt estimated that between 1845 and 1855 alone, the total number of British arrivals in the US was close to a million. While the British were not the most numerous migrant groups during the nineteenth century, they were amongst the top five foreign arrivals in the US and composed ten percent of the net total.

Of the migrants from Britain and Ireland, the Irish have received the most attention from immigration scholars. This is especially so for the mid-nineteenth century as an overwhelming proportion of poor, Catholic, and unskilled workers emigrated from their famine-stricken homeland. Between 1845 and 1851, over 750,000 Irish migrants settled in the US, representing

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66 Of the countries representing the highest number of immigrants from 1820-1910 were: German Empire with 5,351,746; Ireland with 4,212,169; Austria-Hungary with 3,172,461; Italy with 3,086,356; Russian Empire with 2,359,048; England with 2,212,071; British North American Possessions with 1,231,107; Sweden with 1,021,165; ‘United Kingdom, not specified’ with 793,801; Norway with 665,189; Scotland with 488,749; France with 470,868; China with 326,060; Denmark with 258,053; and Switzerland with 237,401. *Ibid.*
over half of the European immigrants during that time.\textsuperscript{68} In response, feelings of nativism in America reached a peak during the 1850s as gold fever raged on in California. For nativists, Irish Catholics represented immigration and its attendant problems which threatened the advancement of the American Republic. Meanwhile, Scottish migrants for example were less threatening to the dominant population because they were fewer in number, integrated instead of segregated, broadly represented a skilled workforce, and were predominantly Protestant. To be sure, Scottish newcomers generally had an easier time adjusting to American society and blending in, but as Bueltmann has argued, ‘adaptability should not be advanced as a reason for the Scots’ neglect…migrants do not simply become invisible because of assimilative forces.’\textsuperscript{69}

While scholars’ attention has been focused on the more ‘visible’ and marginalised groups in US immigration studies, we are still largely unaware of the experiences of other foreign groups (who were often the victimisers themselves). Instead, there is a more practical term that describes the British migrants that came to the US and blended into society – rather than ‘invisible’, they were ‘acceptable’. Reframing Scots as acceptable migrants, for example, encourages us to pick apart the factors that helped them navigate American society whilst acknowledging the presence and influence of a Scottish identity and a broader diaspora. For instance, Scottish Argonauts in California had privileges as foreigners because they were acceptable to Americans in appearance, language, and cultural behaviour. This combination of ‘acceptable’ appearances and behaviours meant that Scots appeared to assimilate in a society where being othered could have a detrimental impact on one’s success in California. Meanwhile,


these Scottish Argonauts maintained links back home – through the diaspora – to retain a sense of belonging in a familiar Scottish world.

At present, the most recent US immigration scholarship combines an array of frameworks and new perspectives. Using global and transnational frameworks, scholars are considering the historical implications of borderlands and immigration policy, as well as implementing more comparative and multigroup methodologies. Nevertheless, because the British remain understudied, we are still unsure of a large dimension of the immigrant experience in US history. Recent survey studies have acknowledged this problem. Paul Spickard in *Almost All Aliens* (2007) repeatedly admitted ‘we do not know’ throughout his summary of British migrant experiences during the latter part of the nineteenth century. The omission of the British experience means that we have a large segment missing from the spectrum of migrant experiences in the US during the nineteenth century. As a result, even though we now know of a greater variety of migrant experiences throughout US history, it is difficult to properly contextualise them without understanding the adjustment experience of their British counterparts.

For Scottish diaspora studies, these gaps in scholarship mean that there is little information available from which to compare the Scottish experience in the US to that of other British migrants. Ultimately this makes it more difficult to pinpoint some aspects of the migrant experience that were intrinsically Scottish instead of a commonality among British migrants in America. More broadly, the habit of using ‘British’ as a unit of analysis has had an unfavourable

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effect on the understanding of the Scottish migrant experience in the US. This area of scholarship remains underdeveloped because there is little consensus on what or who is ‘British’.

Representation of the English usually dominates in British studies while the Scottish and Welsh are typically disregarded or underrepresented when grouped with the English to form a general picture of a British migrant in the US. For example, although Erickson’s study is comprehensive of British immigrants and includes some correspondence between Scottish families, she does not consider any characteristics of Scottish immigrant trends. And while Van Vugt dedicates a section in his study to the distinctiveness of the Welsh migrant, he oddly lumps the Scots together with the English. Given the discrepancies, searching for a ‘British’ experience conceals, and even distorts, the ways in which a Scottish, Welsh, or English background could impact one’s migrant experience. These differences started at home, where each British nationality had different rates of migration to the US during the nineteenth century. For instance, while Scots made up fourteen percent of the British population, they represented a quarter of the British migrants that came to the US between 1845 and 1855. As Devine argues in his recent study, these differences in migration patterns, among other national distinctions, make Scottish, Welsh, or English-focused studies worthwhile:

individual nations of Britain still do merit specific consideration in their own right as part of the broader British dynamic. This is true in terms of the nature of their emigration, migrant identities and global impact because of the distinctive nature of their own economic, social and intellectual structures.

72 Van Vugt, *Britain to America*.
73 Van Vugt calculated that of the British migrants that came to the US between 1845 and 1855, the English represented sixty-six percent, the Scottish twenty-nine percent, and the Welsh five percent. At the time, the English represented eighty-one percent of the British population, while the Welsh composed five percent. *Ibid*, 17.
74 Devine, *To the Ends of the Earth*, xvi. Studies by the likes of Dudley Baines and Jeanette Brock have further demonstrated that emigration patterns differed by not only national-level, but county-level across Britain. Brock, *The Mobile Scot*; Baines, *Migration in a Mature Economy*. 

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Until we reach a better understanding of the migrant experiences of each nationality that make up the British people, it is counterproductive to try and understand Britons’ migrant experiences through a British lens.\(^\text{75}\) As for this study, using a Scottish lens instead of a British one is akin to using a fine sieve to separate the peculiarities of the Scottish experience from the English and Welsh. Because each national experience tells us something different, this case study can help modify our understanding of the British immigrant experience in America. Surely, to best understand what remains an ambiguous whole – in this case the British immigrant experience in America – its parts should be clearly defined and understood first.

As this study demonstrates, Scots in California shared an array of advantages with other British Argonauts that helped them fit in with the dominant Anglo-American community. A Scottish focus however allows us to go one step further and explore how a Scottish background and diaspora implicated their Gold Rush experience, and vice versa. Furthermore, unlike the aforementioned studies tinted with Scots Counting and claims of Scots’ disproportionate contributions, this study treads carefully with such claims due to a lack of scholarship on other British ethnic groups in California. Until such studies are undertaken, it is difficult to properly assess the level of influence that Scots had as an ethnic group in California.

Given the treatment of the Scots in US immigration studies, it is no surprise that they have been largely absent from contemporary California Gold Rush scholarship. As a matter of

fact, the Scottish Argonaut was clearly present in early Gold Rush works where first-hand accounts and secondary sources used ‘Scotch’ or ‘Scot’ to describe some of the Argonauts in California. Crucially, this is evidence that Scottish Argonauts were not in fact invisible or indiscernible.\textsuperscript{76} Over the proceeding years however, as American exceptionalism dominated the narrative, the Scottish and British Argonauts would fade into obscurity in Gold Rush scholarship.\textsuperscript{77} These scholars commended the Anglo-American people for their efforts in bringing order and democracy to the far western territory of California. The rapid progress of society during the Gold Rush, they argued, was a distinctive triumph of the American spirit. Meanwhile, they had little time for the multinational makeup of the population. Instead, the history of California and its gold was Anglo-American history. Save the Spanish-speaking groups and the Chinese, which these historians identified as the main antagonists, the other foreign groups were all but written out.

As the centennial of the Gold Rush approached, scholars began to take a closer look at California’s cosmopolitan population.\textsuperscript{78} In 1941, Doris Wright published an important demographic study that served a stark reminder of the significant presence of foreign Argonauts. In a two-part article entitled ‘The Making of Cosmopolitan California’, Wright used census and immigration records to survey the state’s native and foreign-born population between 1848 and

\textsuperscript{76} Hubert Howe Bancroft and Theodore Hittell, both considered pioneers of Gold Rush scholarship, acknowledged a number of Scotsmen in their volumes. Hubert Howe Bancroft, \textit{The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft History of California: Vol. VI, 1848-1859} (San Francisco, 1888); Theodore Henry Hittell, \textit{Brief History of California} (San Francisco, 1898).


By 1850, foreign-born Argonauts had represented one fourth of the total population. Over the Gold Rush decade, it grew in number to represent well over a third of California’s population by 1860. Additionally, Wright also acknowledged the abundance of British and Irish migrants. ‘Of the thousands of immigrants who reached California from Europe between 1848 and 1870’, she wrote, ‘by far the largest number came from the British Isles.’ For 1850, Wright noted 3,050 migrants from England, 2,452 from Ireland, 883 from Scotland, and 182 from Wales. For 1860, the numbers increased to 12,227 English, 33,147 Irish, 3,670 Scottish, and 1,262 Welsh. Wright derived these numbers from the Federal census records, which are still used today. As chapter 1 discusses in depth, the 1850 enumeration for California does not include a record for several counties including San Francisco, meaning it is incomplete. Furthermore, the highly transient population during the Gold Rush made it virtually impossible to record exact figures. Acknowledging that these are rough estimations, the point stands that British Argonauts represented a large part of California’s foreign population. Nevertheless, Gold Rush historians continue to give their numbers little mind because of assumed assimilation.

Like US immigration scholarship, the knowledge on Scottish Argonauts in Gold Rush historiography has also been obscured by being lumped into the British categorisation.

80 For 1850, Wright listed 69,610 native-born and 22,358 foreign-born. The most numerous foreign nationalities were: 6,454 Mexican, 3,050 English, 2,926 German, 2,452 Irish, 1,546 French, 887 South American, 883 Scottish, 834 British North American, and 660 Chinese. For 1860 Wright listed 233,466 native-born and 146,528 foreign-born. The most numerous foreign nationalities were: 34,935 Chinese, 33,147 Irish, 21,646 German, 12,227 English, 9,150 Mexican, 8,462 French, 5,437 British American, 3,670 Scottish, 2, 805 Italian, 2 250 South American. Wright, ‘The Making of Cosmopolitan California’, 339-340.
Speculations about the British Argonaut experience cemented into undisputed facts over time. In 1953, S. Laird Swagert published a series of articles which primarily discussed London’s concern over the Gold Rush and British capital. 83 While he presented an interesting account of the latter, later studies chose to adopt his hasty depiction of English Argonauts in California. Citing an article from the Illustrated London News, Swagert claimed that ‘Many of the westbound Englishmen did not plan to dig for gold, but to sell goods at high California prices’. 84 On deeper investigation, there was no mention of English Argonauts in the aforementioned article – it merely reported the high prices of commodities in California. In 1963, the British made another appearance in an extensive article by Ralph Roske on the international impact of the Gold Rush. 85 Acknowledging Wright’s earlier findings, Roske cast a partial light on the British, including the Irish, and noted: ‘the immigration from the British Isles constituted the largest group of Europeans in the diggings’. 86 His following analysis said little of their exploits in California, other than a loose modification of Swagert’s earlier claims. ‘Many Britons’, Roske misleadingly stated, ‘arrived in California with commodities for sale, and instead of prospecting opened mercantile establishments.’ 87 On the contrary, as this study demonstrates, the Scottish Argonaut population featured a diverse array of skills and occupations in Gold Rush society. 88

86 A note about the Irish representation in California: It is true that by 1860, the Irish represented two-thirds of those from the British Isles (see Wright’s figures on p. 31). However, if we are to give the 1852 census figures any credence (see note 3 on p. 1.), the English, Scottish, and Welsh migrants still outnumbered the Irish in California during the most active year of gold production.
88 Also of note is R. A. Burchell’s demographic study of the British-born in San Francisco. Focusing on the years 1852 and 1872, Burchell was the first to provide a detailed breakdown of a British population (English, Scottish, Welsh, Irish, and Canadian) in Gold Rush California. Significantly, his findings
In the last quarter of the twentieth century, the influence of social history on Gold Rush scholarship brought a variety of ethnic and minority groups into focus. Now, scholars began to contrast the experiences of the other against the archetype of the white, Protestant, and English-speaking Argonaut. This revisionist movement also had a direct effect on the English, Scottish and Welsh Argonauts who fit the above mould and sunk further into ambiguity. Nevertheless, it is important to highlight that each of these ethnic-specific studies demonstrated that Argonauts’ ethnic and national backgrounds had a distinctive effect on how they experienced the Gold Rush. The vast majority of these works feature minority groups such as African Americans, Chileans, Chinese, Irish, and French. Historians have also looked at those from the British Antipodes, but it is important to note that Australians too faced adversity in California as

suggested distinctive differences between each nationality. Of those from Britain and Ireland, for example, Burchell found that the Scottish Argonauts had the lowest percentage of labourers and the highest percentage of skilled workers. This study goes further and considers how conditions in Scotland and across its diaspora may have influenced these demographic trends in California. Burchell, ‘The Gathering of a Community: The British-Born of San Francisco in 1852 and 1872’, Journal of American Studies 10, no. 3 (1976): 280.

89 In 1989, Patricia Limerick designated this shift in scholarship as ‘New Western History’. In a sort of manifesto, Limerick stated that it was time for America to confront the conception of its conquering of the West and question the traditional model of ‘progress and improvement’. Patricia Nelson Limerick, Clyde A. Milner, and Charles E. Rankin, Trails: Toward a New Western History (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1991).

90 See David Lavender’s comprehensive history which helped solidify the American archetype of the Gold Rush Argonaut. ‘The vast majority of the American stampeders’, Lavender stated, ‘were young, healthy, white, and Protestant.’ David Lavender, California: Land of New Beginnings (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 166. Also see Sucheng Chan’s discussion in ‘A People of Exceptional Character’, 47.

assumed criminals. Crucially, this study’s focus on Argonauts that are white, English-speaking, and mainly Protestant does not intend to discredit the focus on marginalised groups. Because we know so little about the array of British experiences, there is still much to learn about the social hierarchy and stratifications of Gold Rush society. As this thesis demonstrates, Scots were not passive actors in the dominant Anglo-American hegemony but active allies. Marginalised groups in California were up against a range of discriminatory forces that were not fully American in origin. And to not understand what they were up against is to not understand the nature of their struggle.

The current trends in Gold Rush scholarship emerged during the turn of the century where it expanded on the national and global scale. It is important to point out that while many of these scholars aspire to retell the history of the Gold Rush using a more inclusive framework, they continue to neglect a substantial foreign population as if they were fully assimilated. Of note is Malcolm Rohrbough’s *Days of Gold* (1997) which told how the event was a shared national experience. While he touched on the relations between minority and immigrant groups, Rohrbough’s narrative largely followed the white, English-speaking, archetype. In doing so, he also misrepresented Scottish migrants as fully assimilated Anglo-American Argonauts.

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Throughout *Days of Gold*, Rohrbough uses the account of William Elder to help illustrate the experience of an American in Gold Rush California. Not once does he mention that Elder was born and raised in Scotland and a first-generation immigrant.

Although Gold Rush historians sometimes acknowledge the presence of Scottish Argonauts, neither their influence, nor their impact, is discussed. Instead, mentions of Scottish men and women primarily exist in the literature as anecdotes to colour depictions of Gold Rush society. In 2000, for example, Susan Johnson reconstructed the social world of the Gold Rush from the perspective of foreign miners and their families in California. Like the revisionists of US immigration history, Johnson demonstrated that Gold Rush society was a place of interconnected social realms with multiple nationalities and cultural identities.  

In one of her many examples, Johnson referenced a Scotsman performing a highland dance in a ‘largely Anglo-American’ mining town but overlooked the significance of the foreign display and its enthusiastic reception. What is more, she also used a first-hand account by a Scottish artist named J.D. Borthwick throughout her work. One of the more popular memoirs in Gold Rush scholarship, scholars either disregard Borthwick’s Scottish background, mislabel it as English, or hastily identify him as Scottish or British and attach no significance to his foreign identity. This study, on the other hand, considers how a Scottish background may have influenced one’s perception and experience of Gold Rush California.

In the past two decades, nation-specific transnational studies have demonstrated the wealth of information that can be garnered on the foreign California Gold Rush experience. For

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94 The same year, Sucheng Chan published an excellent article which reworked the existing studies on Gold Rush immigrants and minorities into one interconnected work. Chan, ‘A People of Exceptional Character’.


example, Madeline Y. Hsu’s *Dreaming of Gold, Dreaming of Home* (2000) demonstrated how Chinese migrants sustained commitments with those they left behind and the implications of the transnational networks on each community.\(^97\) Another example is Rohrbough’s recent study, *Rush to Gold: The French and the California Gold Rush* (2013). Similar to Hsu’s approach, Rohrbough’s split focus between France and California allowed him to explore various angles of the French Argonaut experience that would have remained obscure if he had confined his focus to California. In both studies, the context of the Argonauts’ home country and connections there profoundly shaped their experiences in California. Each study also shed further light on the global impacts of the Gold Rush through considering its effects abroad. As such, this study uses a similar transnational scope, but also goes further by integrating it within a diaspora framework.

The studies above use transnationalism more as setting than a theoretical concept. Nevertheless, it is useful to briefly engage with transnationalism and how it relates to diaspora. Thomas Faist has deemed the concepts of diaspora and transnationalism as ‘awkward dance partners’.\(^98\) Indeed, diaspora and transnationalism are often used interchangeably in scholarship, and while they do overlap in some areas, there are some differences.\(^99\) Transnationalism both encompasses a diaspora and exists within it. Transnationalism concerns the various processes that transcend national borders, such as the links that migrants created and maintained between their home and host countries. As such, this study uses transnational movement and engagement of Scottish Argonauts to argue their belonging in the Scottish diaspora. More broadly,


\(^99\) Like diaspora, the interpretations of transnationalism in scholarship are contested and broad-ranging. See Faist’s volume above, as well as Ato Quayson and Girish Daswani, *A Companion to Diaspora and Transnationalism* (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated, 2013).
transnationalism also captures social groups and ideas with a transnational presence, that unlike diaspora, are not confined by ethnic or religious categorisations. This thesis acknowledges the transnational reach of the so-called Gold Rush fever on Scotland and its diaspora. In so doing however, unlike the existing transnational studies on the Gold Rush, this study is not limited to Argonauts’ experiences between their native country and California.

Compared to a traditional transnational framework between two nations, a diaspora framework that is mindful of the various migrant experiences across the diaspora allows for a more nuanced analysis of the Scottish Gold Rush experience while addressing the main research questions in this study. The research questions that guided this study are as follows and revolve around three main themes:

1) Who were the Scottish Argonauts in Gold Rush California, and where did they come from? More specifically, what were the circumstances in Scotland that shaped their decisions to join the California Gold Rush? If they came from elsewhere as transmigrants, what can the context of their previous destinations inform us about the Scottish diaspora and migrants’ relocation to California?

2) What was their travel and arrival experience in California? More specifically, what were their strategies of adjustment, how did they integrate into Gold Rush society, and what made them ‘acceptable’ migrants to the dominant Anglo-American hegemony?

3) How did they express their Scottish identity, or cultural baggage, in Gold Rush California? And how did their Gold Rush experience and strategies of adjustment implicate their relationship with Scotland and its diaspora? More broadly, how did the
latter compare to other destinations of the Scottish diaspora throughout the same time period?

Addressing these questions revealed a prevailing theme of movement that nuances the understanding of Scottish diaspora history. This theme of movement encompassed migrants’ mobility from one place to another and the significance of the journeys between them, as well as the changeability in what migrants sought from their intended destinations. The context of Gold Rush California, which for many Scottish Argonauts transformed from a temporary land of opportunity to a place to settle permanently, provides insights into how individual migrants shifted their conceptions of home abroad. As this study reveals, the shift in what the individual migrant sought affected the ways in which they interacted with their ancestral links and diaspora.

During the initial years of the Gold Rush, the majority of Scottish Argonauts considered themselves sojourners and made the choice to integrate with their Anglo-American counterparts instead of forming Scottish ethnic communities and institutions in California. Not intent on making California their permanent home, Scots maintained aspects of their Scottish identity in the private realm, predominantly through personal correspondence. As their time progressed in California, Scottish Argonauts followed diverging pathways dependent on their circumstances and whether they ultimately decided to stay in California or leave. The majority returned home or followed new opportunities elsewhere, their diasporic movements branching out of California similarly to how they funneled into the territory only years before. Meanwhile, those who decided to stay in California and call it home became more confident in expressing their Scottishness outwith the private realm and formed thriving ethnic clubs and associations.

Scottish Argonauts turned Scottish Californians, these individuals laid down their roots and enriched their new homeland with memories and symbols of the Old World they left behind.
Replacing the original pull of gold after the Gold Rush, this population of Scots would then encourage the movement of the next generation of Scots to California.

While this study considers itself primarily in the home of Scottish diaspora scholarship, it does provide some insights to California Gold Rush history that require highlighting. The Scottish Argonaut experience casts new light on the global implications of the Gold Rush, as well as the stratifications of Gold Rush society. In order to better understand the latter, it is important to establish the role and significance of some of these acceptable foreigners. In California, the Scottish Argonaut experience was equally shaped by the Gold Rush environment and by sustained connections to Scotland and the diaspora. On the surface they travelled, arrived, lived, and prospected as ordinary Argonauts. On deeper investigation, their Scottish background profoundly shaped their Gold Rush experience. The process by which Scots incorporated into Gold Rush society was not a straightforward story of assimilation, as previous historiography has led us to believe, but an adaptive and multifaceted strategy of adjustment that maintained strong links with the diaspora.

**Methodology and Structure**

For this study, the Scottish Argonaut experience is reconstructed with the use of correspondence, periodicals, diaries, memoirs, and census and directory data. As some chapters are more dependent on certain forms of source material over others (for example census and directory data in the first chapter, and Scottish periodicals in the second) the chapters themselves discuss the particular limitations. Overall, personal correspondence informs much of the analysis in this study. Given the limited scholarship on nineteenth-century Scottish migrants discussed earlier, this study represents part of a small realm of scholarship that employs the personal testimonies of Scottish migrant experiences in the United States. In comparison, Irish diaspora
scholarship is rich in its analysis of nineteenth-century personal correspondence such as David Fitzpatrick’s study, *Oceans of Consolation*. In it, he argued that:

Emigrant letters supply facts, assertions, and responses to experience which cannot easily be found elsewhere, and which often provide a salutatory corrective to glib generalizations from statistical aggregates…the private and semi-public domain of personal correspondence encompasses a far wider range of questions and answers than the public discourse of the emigrant handbook.

More broadly, historians of migration have systematically utilised personal accounts and correspondence for over a century. As the breadth of immigration scholarship has shown, from William B. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki’s first use of immigrant writings in 1918, to contemporary Scottish diaspora historians use of oral testimonies more recently, personal accounts can offer insights on the migration experience beyond the capacity of official records or ephemera.103

There is no mistaking that emigrant letters have been and continue to be a valuable primary data source for historians of immigration. Nevertheless, their usability as a source has sparked considerable debate in historical scholarship and they must be carefully navigated. For one, there is the question of their representation of the wider migrant community. Of course, not all migrants could or chose to write letters. Making matters more difficult is the fact that not all

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100 David Fitzpatrick, *Oceans of Consolation: Personal Accounts of Irish Migration to Australia* (Cornell University Press, 1994).
101 Ibid., 25.
letters have survived, with an even smaller fraction of those accessible to the public. For these reasons, the experiences detailed in personal correspondence cannot be taken to represent the majority. Instead, as Fitzpatrick has suggested, letters should first be appreciated for their range of diversity. In so doing, generalisations are not dispensed entirely but are constructed cautiously. As Bueltmann has demonstrated in her own study, ‘it is possible to synthesise individual responses among common themes. Thus, we can begin to discern common migrant experiences.’ This study utilised all the known letter collections of Scottish Gold Rush Argonauts. The number of available collections is small, but the variety of migrant backgrounds they represent is wide-ranging. The writers include John James Hamilton, a hopeful self-proclaimed ‘gentleman merchant’ from Kirkcudbright; William Elder, an established Scottish transmigrant who left his wife and family behind in New York; James Thomson, a baker by trade from Aberdeenshire who looked to California as his big break after disappointments in Chicago and Montreal; and Jessie Anderson, a teacher from the Kingdom of Fife who hoped California would provide her more opportunity than her limited prospects at home. As will be revealed, their Gold Rush experiences were indeed broad ranging, but there were also commonalities between them of a Scottish dimension. While this study is mindful of the fact that its source base of personal correspondence only represents a minority of the Scottish Argonaut population, it is the hope that these surviving letter collections are an appropriate sample. At the least, the featured correspondence demonstrates the range of profiles that chose to write home from Gold Rush California and engage with their diaspora.

By nature, personal letters are highly subjective and selective in topic. Therefore, written testimonies are not canon and should not be treated as such. Eric Richards, in his study of

Australian immigrant letters during the nineteenth-century, observed that emigrant letters covered a limited scope of observations and were ‘normally focused on their immediate circumstances’ compared to the vast distances they travelled and alien environments they encountered.\textsuperscript{105} Primarily ‘domestic communications’, Richards argues, migrants’ letters to family and friends rarely had any explanatory value in depicting the wider world around them.\textsuperscript{106} In the case of Gold Rush however, many Argonauts in their letters home depicted their wider surroundings in California in great detail, with recognition that they were participating in a once in a lifetime event. In Scotland, like the US, these Gold Rush letters circulated the public sphere in newspapers around the country. This not only demonstrated their rich descriptive value, but also the level of national interest in the California Gold Rush. As the second chapter in this thesis explores the role of Argonaut letters in Scottish newspapers, their specific methodological considerations are discussed there.

Another complication letters present as historic sources is that their contents are highly dependent on their intended recipient. Letter-writers could twist the truth for various reasons, whether to impress friends and family back home or to avoid worrying their loved ones. Some of the letter collections in this study, such as the Hamilton correspondence, contained sequences of letters to different family members and friends that spanned almost a decade. Patterns can be seen for example in the ways that Hamilton was more forthcoming about his reality in California to his brother, yet romanticised his accounts and glossed over his dire living conditions in letters to his mother and sister. While these discrepancies must be carefully navigated, they provide glimpses of how migrants maintained working relationships with their letter recipients back


\textsuperscript{106} \textit{Ibid.}, 61.
home and across the diaspora. As Bruce Elliot, David Gerber, and Suzanne Sinke argue, ‘However great the interpretive issues, they provide access to the immigrant’s attitudes, values, aspirations, and fears as no other source has the potential to do.’

As mentioned earlier, letters were an important component of the diaspora. Fitzpatrick argues that for migrants, a letter from home ‘was a token of solidarity and an instrument of reassurance, confirming the durability of long-established familial groups.’ This study demonstrates that Scottish Argonauts valued correspondence no differently. Lapses of communication caused Argonauts anxiety, worsened homesickness, and at times made them feel exiled from their native country. It is important to add that Gold Rush letters were not lacking in domestic topics despite their descriptive nature noted earlier. As shown throughout this study, Scottish Argonauts employed letters as transnational agents to maintain links with family and friends in the homeland. In so doing, personal correspondence sustained ethnic networks and played a large role in negotiating migrants’ Scottish identity abroad. Over the course of the Gold Rush, Scottish Argonaut letters charted evolving perceptions of California, identity, and what they deemed as home. More broadly, this study demonstrates how personal correspondence was a central mechanism of the Scottish diaspora.

Another portion of this study’s source base is derived from newspapers. While the methodology of interpreting newspaper articles is discussed in the second chapter, this research employed the use of digital newspaper archives and thus analysed newsprint in digital form. There has been much speculation regarding the value of digitised newsprint and how one should approach it effectively. Indeed, as Tim Hitchcock warned of digital newspaper databases in

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107 Ibid., 4.
109 See Tim Hitchcock’s 2013 article, which warned against the reliability of Optical Character Recognition (OCR) and searching ‘markedly inaccurate representations of text’. Near a decade on, OCR
2012, ‘digital makes them different’.110 One methodological concern is the loss of valuable historical context when newsprint is accessed in digital archives. ‘These digital resources’, James Mussell explains, ‘decontextualize their contents, isolating articles from the pages, sections, issues, and volumes to which they are inextricably connected…they encourage a form of research where such material is mined indiscriminately for the content that it contains’.111 As such, search ‘hits’ returned by the digital newspaper archives were investigated alongside their surrounding contents.112 This process is demonstrated in the second chapter, where space and context on the newspaper page is given equal value to its text. As a result, these extra insights shed further light on the public presence and popularity of the California Gold Rush in the Scottish press. While these digitised sources need careful navigation, there are strengths in digitised newspapers and manuscripts that the hard copies lack. As various historians have argued and demonstrated, digitisation allows further interrogation of the data present in historical publications.113 Katherine Bode, for example, used a sample of thousands of articles from over technology has advanced leaps and bounds. A major problem digitised newspapers now present to historians, as Paul Fyfe and others have demonstrated, is that ‘the scope of what is digitized and digitally accessible exerts a strong historiographic influence on published scholarship’. Tim Hitchcock, ‘Confronting the Digital’, Cultural and Social History 10, no. 1 (2013): 14. Paul Fyfe, ‘Access, Computational Analysis, and Fair Use in the Digitized Nineteenth-Century Press’, Victorian Periodicals Review 51, no. 4 (2018): 716. For more recent insights on how mass digitisation efforts have evolved, particularly with Gale’s approach, see Seth Cayley, ‘Digitization for the Masses: Taking Users Beyond Simple Searching in Nineteenth-Century Collections Online’, Journal of Victorian Culture 22, no. 2 (2017).


112 Both Gale and ProQuest were utilised for this research, which provided access to about twenty nineteenth-century Scottish newspapers during the Gold Rush decade. Of these digitised newspapers, it is believed that this study has identified most of their content on California and the Gold Rush. The range of search terms used to sift through the database included ‘California’, ‘San Francisco’, ‘Sacramento’, and ‘Gold’.

250 Australian nineteenth-century newspapers and radically revised the understanding of fiction reprinting in Australia.\(^{114}\) Although the sample size for this study is not as large, namely because of a narrower time period and more specific subject matter, the digitised form has made it possible to trace the representation and frequency of California and its Gold Rush in Scottish newsprint overtime.\(^{115}\)

The timeframe of this study begins in 1848 when reports of gold in California started transforming Scots around the world into Argonauts. It ends in the 1860s when the Scots who remained in California no longer considered themselves Argonauts – but instead settled Californians who were less distracted by instant wealth and more open to collectively embracing their Scottish identity abroad.

The first chapter is a demographic overview of the Scottish population in San Francisco and Sacramento from 1850 to 1860. A step into the realm of economic history, this chapter acts as a scene-setter and uses information gathered from censuses and city directories to situate the Scottish demographic among the general Gold Rush population. When applicable, comparisons are also made with the demographics of other Scottish diaspora groups elsewhere. The Scottish Gold Rush population displayed several distinct trends that point to Scotland’s industrial background and a highly transient population. Their demographic patterns also indicated their integration with Gold Rush society: a skilled workforce, active partnerships with members of the Anglo-American community, and an absence of ethnic cohesion. What is more, the majority of Scottish Argonauts in California were transmigrants that had come from a variety of places across the diaspora. When grouped by their previous place of residence, each migratory stream


\(^{115}\) Bode’s timeframe consisted of 40 years, from 1865-1895, and also saw ‘golden age’ of newspaper publication where newspaper titles and circulation proliferated.
exhibits distinctive demographics that provide insights on the movement and characteristics of the more transitory Scottish migrants in the diaspora.

The remaining four chapters follow a narrative arc that begins in Scotland and concludes in California. The second chapter provides a contextual overview of Scotland and looks at how and why the Gold Rush captured and held the nation’s attention. Primarily with the use of Scottish newspapers, this chapter analyses the types of information that Scots could access on California and identifies which Scots were most likely to become Argonautes. Not long after the first Argonautes from Scotland arrived in California, Scottish newspapers began publishing Scottish Argonaut letters. These became a popular feature, not only for their entertainment value, but for their credible retelling of the particular Scottish experience in California – a valuable resource for prospective Argonautes in Scotland. The remainder of this chapter analyses these letters, their writers, and the people involved in their publication as diasporic agents in Scotland and its wider diaspora.

The third chapter looks at the journey Scots took to California. Whether by sea or overland, the journey to California formed a significant part of the Argonaut experience and provided the first taste of becoming an Argonaut. In journals and letters home, Scots described their travel experiences and the various nationalities and ethnicities they encountered. These interactions hinted at the social and racial hierarchy that Scots would contend with in Gold Rush society. Overall, Scottish Argonautes had a fairly normal transit experience compared to their Anglo-American counterparts and integrated relatively easily into their travelling communities. But in retelling these trips to California, this chapter emphasises the significance of the journey in the Scottish diaspora. In transit, Scottish Argonautes maintained familiar links by writing letters
home, bonding with fellow Scots on their travels, and used memories and symbols of the Old World to anchor themselves in their constantly changing surroundings.

The final two chapters take place in California. These chapters explore the Scottish Argonaut experience in California, their strategies of adjustment, and the ways in which Scottish Argonauts engaged with Scotland and its diaspora. These chapters also explore how the Scottish identity worked within, and independently of, Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-American identities to help them adapt to their new environments. It is important to note here that Anglo-Saxon does not exclusively mean English or from England. As Colin Kidd argues, ‘The “Celtic” label is one which most nineteenth-century Lowland Scots would have vociferously rejected.’116 Instead, Scotland’s close association with England during the nineteenth century meant that Scots also could identify as Anglo-Saxons themselves.117

The fourth chapter focuses on Scots’ preliminary experiences in the Golden State’s urban centres and mining territories. The discussion highlights a variety of Scottish experiences during a period when Scots truly saw themselves as Argonauts. On the surface, they are not so different than those of the archetypal Anglo-American Argonaut. However, a deeper look exposes some interesting insights on the Scottish Argonaut’s position in Gold Rush society and how they navigated being foreign amidst the swelling tide of nativism. This chapter also explores the various diasporic actions that Scots implemented during the Gold Rush and argues that they were active members of the diaspora despite integrating with the dominant Anglo-American community.

116 Additionally, various proponents of Anglo-Saxonism, such as the English scholar Goldwin Smith, believed the Anglo-Saxon race resided outwith the English borders and into Scotland and Wales. Colin Kidd, ‘Race, Empire, and the Limits of Nineteenth-Century Scottish Nationhood’, The Historical Journal 46, no. 4 (2003): 874.
Finally, the Gold Rush environment provides some interesting insights on how Scots abroad fostered their Scottish identity depending on their migrant status as temporary sojourners or permanent settlers. As such, the fifth chapter explores how Scots addressed components of their cultural identity during the Gold Rush. Over the course of their stay in California, Scots cultivated a multifaceted identity that adapted to the fluctuating conditions of Gold Rush society and their changing conceptions of ‘home’. Notably, how they expressed their Scottish identity was dependent on their level of success and stability, and on whether they ultimately decided to stay in California or leave. While Scottish Argonauts primarily engaged with the diaspora and homeland connections through personal correspondence, Scottish Californians paid more heed to rebuilding their ethnic communities after they decided to stay put. How Scots in California constructed networks and tailored their identity demonstrates that, while they could identify as British and even American citizens, they continued to uphold important aspects of their Scottish identity at the same time.

As a final note, the Scots who came to California are referred to as immigrants, migrants, Argonauts, and Californians depending on the context throughout this study. Migrant is a more general term given to those who have moved place and whose relocation could be temporary. An immigrant, meanwhile, denotes someone who has moved to another country to settle permanently. An Argonaut, described early on in this introduction, is used to identify any migrant that came to California for opportunistic reasons during the Gold Rush. Argonauts are different from Californians in that they only saw their time in California as a sojourn. Finally, Californian is used to describe an individual that has settled in California as an immigrant. The specific use of these terms further demonstrates how Scots who participated in the California
Gold Rush moved from one identity to another, all while maintaining links to their diaspora and homeland.
Chapter 1

Demographics of Scottish Argonauts in San Francisco and Sacramento, 1850-1860

This chapter uses Federal and state censuses to provide a demographic breakdown of the Scottish population in two key Gold Rush localities, San Francisco and Sacramento. 1 The attractions of Gold Rush California promoted distinctive social patterns such as extremely disproportionate gender distributions, a scarce presence of families, and an excessive representation of miners in the workforce. While the Scottish Argonaut population mirrored much of the age, gender, and domestic trends of the general population in California, it also demonstrated some diverging trends that are more consistent across the wider Scottish diaspora. One is the high representation of skilled workers. 2 Indeed, Scots in Gold Rush California were more likely to be miners compared to Scottish migrants elsewhere in the diaspora. However, in both San Francisco and Sacramento, Scottish Argonauts disproportionately filled skilled and in demand positions. More Scots came to California to ‘mine the miners’, rather than mine the gold themselves.

The other finding, and perhaps the most interesting, has to do with the fact that the vast majority (87 percent) of Scottish Argonauts in this data set were transmigrants that had recorded their last place of residence outwith Scotland. The California Gold Rush brought together various segments of the Scottish diaspora that each exhibited a distinctive demography. Grouped by their previous residence and viewed separately, these migratory streams provide valuable snippets of demographic information on the Scottish migrant populations they left behind. The data also

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1 The database can be accessed at https://edin.ac/3faIRPk.
2 Devine, To the Ends of the Earth, 289.
sheds light on Scots’ motives for emigration and remigration across various parts of the diaspora. Taken as a whole, the demographics of Scottish Argonaughts in California offer new insights for Scottish diaspora studies in that it concerns a Scottish migrant population that was particularly mobile and far-ranging. Nevertheless, there are strong indications in the data that the Scottish Argonaut population, familiar with relocation and the pressures of adjustment, successfully integrated with California’s Anglo-American community.

This demographic study confines its data to San Francisco and Sacramento for matters of feasibility. By using these two cities, it is the hope that they provide a representation of the Scottish Gold Rush population throughout California. Gold Rush historians tend to focus on San Francisco as the era’s epicentre, however, the lack of scholarly attention on Sacramento does not accurately reflect the city’s significance to Gold Rush California. Indeed, San Francisco’s harbour facilities on the Pacific ensured that the majority of international Argonauts funnelled into California through ‘The City by the Bay’. However, the smaller mining town of Sacramento demands equal attention. Located 90 miles inland from San Francisco and situated 50 miles west from the original discovery of gold at Sutter’s Mill, Sacramento was in close proximity to mining camps and prospered as the Gold Rush’s transportation hub.

In the early 1850s, the two localities existed symbiotically. The ‘Second City of California’, as Sacramento was known, serviced gold and essential natural resources to San Francisco. Meanwhile, San Francisco’s economic authority dictated Sacramento’s market and commercial infrastructure. Investigating the Scots in California’s most populated urban centre, along with those that resided closer to the mining territories, provides a more comprehensive

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picture of the Scottish Argonaut population. Furthermore, this split focus demonstrates how Scots adapted to their changing societies over the span of the Gold Rush. In the latter part of the decade, Scots’ demographic trends in each location diverged as Sacramento became more economically independent of San Francisco.

Remarkably, Gold Rush scholars have dedicated little attention to California’s census data. Instead, their understanding of the period is primarily formed from first-hand accounts such as correspondence and diaries. While this usually is not an issue in historical study, Karen Clay and Randall Jones have called attention to the fact that these sources, the vast majority penned by Anglo-Americans, only represent a fraction of Gold Rush participants. As non-Anglo-Americans represented a sizable portion of the Gold Rush population (35 percent in 1852 and 40 percent in 1860), the dependence on such sources has obscured the understanding of the era’s social dimension. That aside, there is a small number of census-based studies that have reinforced the wealth of enumeration data and helps put aspects of Gold Rush California into sharper focus. When feasible, these studies offer a comparative context to better situate the Scottish population in Gold Rush society. Furthermore, it is problematic to thoroughly compare

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the Scottish demographic data in California to other Scottish migrant destinations, owing to
different source data and time periods used in the respective studies. Some general comparisons
however can be made to offer some additional perspective on the demographic makeup of
Scottish Argonauts.\(^8\)

Enumeration data can, in some respects, compensate for the small pool of first-hand Gold
Rush accounts by minorities and foreign nationals. In the case of this project, a demographic
study of the Scottish population in California provides some contrast to the limited number of
personal accounts by Scottish Argonauts. The data for this chapter is extracted from the Federal
Census of 1850, The California State Census of 1852, and the Federal Census of 1860. The
enumerations conducted during California’s Gold Rush provide a valuable glimpse of the
Scottish presence, though none are wholly dependable on their own. The rapid population
growth and transient nature of Argonauts disrupted any sort of accuracy in California’s first
census count in 1850. Causing even more frustration for historians is the fact that San
Francisco’s enumeration for that year no longer exists. Even though Dennis Harris remarked that
it was ‘one of the most flawed for any state and therefore of little use for the study of
California’s history’, the 1850 census is not entirely useless.\(^9\) Discussed shortly, the data for

\(^8\) Like Gold Rush scholarship, there are a limited number of demographic studies in Scottish diaspora
scholarship. Of note and the most relevant to this study is Rebecca Lenihan’s work on Scots in New
Zealand. Similar to California, New Zealand was a settler society with its own gold rush during the mid-
nineteenth century. Rebecca Lenihan, *From Alba to Aotearoa: Profiling New Zealand's Scots Migrants

\(^9\) Dennis Harris also noted that many counties suffered from ‘shoddy reporting’ and that the ‘usefulness of
the population schedule is limited by the inconsistency in the thoroughness of reports filed by census
enumerators.’ Dennis E. Harris, ‘The California Census of 1852: A Note of Caution and Encouragement’,
*The Pacific Historian* 28 (1984). As the census provides a less than perfect record of the population of
California, with many entries indecipherable, the data for this thesis does not represent the whole Scottish
population that resided in San Francisco and Sacramento. Confidently, over ninety-five percent of the
Scottish inhabitants in San Francisco and Sacramento have been identified.
Sacramento provides a small but valuable glimpse of the demographics of 79 Scottish Argonauts.\textsuperscript{10}

Meanwhile, California’s first constitution of the state, adopted in October 1849, mandated that an additional census count would commence in 1852 to ‘serve as the basis of representation in both houses of the legislature’.\textsuperscript{11} The constitution also scheduled decennial state census counts starting in 1855, but the state-sanctioned census in 1852 would also be its last. Nevertheless, the 1852 survey provides a standalone wealth of information. While including the cities and outer lying counties of both San Francisco and Sacramento, the 1852 census provides a bonus to researchers in that it documents individuals’ last place of residence.\textsuperscript{12} In San Francisco, the number of individuals born in Scotland was confidently over seven hundred. Whereas in Sacramento, Scottish Argonauts numbered just over a hundred.

There are some downsides, however. The surviving records are in poor condition with many pages that are damaged or faded beyond repair. Furthermore, there are multiple instances of duplicate entries that document an individual more than once. One can attribute this to California’s largely transient population and the enumeration taking six months to complete. Furthermore, a recent study by Warren Wood also suggests foul play on the part of the enumerators themselves for political reasons.\textsuperscript{13} Yet despite its imperfections, the data still

\textsuperscript{10} Data in the 1850 Federal Census included: Name, age, sex, race, occupation, count of residents in the household, value of real estate, place of birth, indicated whether or not an individual married or attended school within the year, and noted those ‘over 90 years of age who cannot read or write’ and ‘whether deaf and dumb, blind, insane, idiotic, pauper, or convict.’

\textsuperscript{11} T.H Hittell, \textit{General Laws of the State of California, from 1850 to 1864, Inclusive} (San Francisco, 1864), 31.

\textsuperscript{12} California’s 1852 census listed: Name, age, sex, race, occupation, place of birth, and last place of residence.

\textsuperscript{13} In order to gain more Representatives for the state, Wood estimates that census agents overcounted the white male population of San Francisco by up to twenty-five percent. In addition to several duplications and nearly three thousand unnamed white males, enumerators counted nearly six thousand Chinese as white. Given the rate of transience and a ‘tendency of nineteenth-century censuses to undercount’, Wood
provides valuable information on the Scottish presence in each city that cannot be found elsewhere. Unlike the Federal censuses of 1850 and 1860, the 1852 state census asked a person’s last place of residence in addition to their place of birth. Consequently, the 1852 state census is the backbone of this chapter as it provides valuable information on the movement of Scots across the diaspora to California.\footnote{Care has been taken to omit duplications and to identify inaccuracies. Whether down to foul play or simple human error, Scots were too subject to imperfect reporting in census enumerations. For example, in the 1852 census for San Francisco, 39-year-old ‘John Chambers’ and his five children from Ireland is a suggestive duplicate of 39-year-old ‘James Chambers’ and his five children from Edinburgh. His reappearance with his family in the 1860 enumeration confirms that they were from Scotland, but this time his name had been recorded as ‘James Chalmers’.
14} As will be seen shortly, this data sheds light on Scots’ circumstances in the places they left behind, revealing a wide variety of migrant backgrounds that came to Gold Rush California.

By 1860, the mania over California’s gold had curtailed. That year, the Federal census enumerators surveyed a more stationary population compared to the previous enumerations. As a result, this enumeration data is the most reliable.\footnote{In addition to the questions asked by the previous federal census, the 1860 Federal Census also documented an individual’s real estate and personal estate.} Here, the Scottish presence in San Francisco decreased to just over six hundred, while in Sacramento it doubled from its 1852 count to just over two hundred. Notably, the 1860 census identifies Scottish migrants that maintained a presence in California after the boom years of gold mining. While the variances among the Scottish population declined because many individuals had abandoned hope in California, the 1860 census indicates a growing presence of Scottish Californians and their families. Furthermore, the 1860 census data also shows a clear divergence of demographic trends between...
the Scottish population in San Francisco and that of Sacramento. As with the other findings, these are discussed later on in this chapter.

This chapter also employs city directories to map the Scottish presence in San Francisco and Sacramento. As with the censuses, these publications present research challenges. From 1850 to 1860, a variety of publishers in San Francisco and Sacramento sporadically circulated city directories. It is worth noting that these were commercial publications, and publishers likely required a fee from individuals and businesses for their inclusion. So while these publications are fairly useful for providing information on Gold Rush businesses and entrepreneurs, there are grave inconsistencies with the personal listings. Furthermore, it is challenging to identify Scots among the entries as certain directories only started listing one’s nationality during the latter part of the decade. Instead, Scottish individuals can be identified in earlier directories by cross-referencing the listings with census data. This is achievable because the city directories included both business and home addresses, making it possible to map out a rough distribution of the Scottish community in both cities.

1850 Federal Census

As for quantitative data, the initial Gold Rush migrants are the most obscure. In a letter to Congress dated April 1851, the US Commissioner in charge of California’s census count addressed the difficulties of his assignment:

The result of this enumeration, when completed, will, with all reasonable probability, fall short of the entire population of the State from 33 to 50 percent. Such a result must naturally occur to the mind of every person conversant with the circumstances surrounding those engaged in the mines – probably the most numerous of our population – residing as many of them do, in unknown and unfrequented localities – while others are

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constantly changing their places of abode, this absolutely precluding the possibility of their being found at all by the “census man.”\textsuperscript{17}

To add to his shortcomings, he never received the completed questionnaires from Contra Costa and Santa Clara Counties. What is more, before the commissioner sent his final report to the Census Bureau, one of San Francisco’s great city fires destroyed its enumeration returns (at the time of writing the letter the commissioner stated that the initial population count for San Francisco was 21,000).\textsuperscript{18} Despite lacking data for the most populated city in California, the enumerations for Sacramento alone are still useful for investigating the Scottish Argonaut presence in 1850. Sacramento’s enumeration for 1850 counted 79 individuals of Scottish birth (Figure 1.1). Representing just near one percent of the population, Scots were by no means a considerable presence in Sacramento.\textsuperscript{19} Nevertheless, their demographic presence throughout

\begin{figure}
\centering
\caption{Scottish Population in California- San Francisco and Sacramento}
\begin{tabular}{|l|c|c|c|}
\hline
 & 1850 & 1852 & 1860 \\
\hline
\textbf{San Francisco} & & & \\
Males & 79 (1.17\%) & 710 (1.96\%)* & 604 (1.06\%)* \\
Females & 73 & 593 & 402 \\
 & 6 & 117 & 202 \\
\hline
\textbf{Sacramento} & & & \\
Males & 79 (1.17\%) & 105 (0.85\%) & 204 (1.48\%)* \\
Females & 73 & 94 & 145 \\
 & 6 & 11 & 59 \\
\hline
\textbf{Total} & & & \\
Males & 79 & 815 & 808 \\
Females & 73 & 690 & 547 \\
 & 6 & 125 & 261 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{figure}

*Percentage of Scottish population of total city population in parentheses. 

\textsuperscript{17} Alta California, 18 April 1851.
\textsuperscript{18} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{19} De Bow’s \textit{Statistical View of the United States} lists Sacramento with 9087 inhabitants in 1850. De Bow, \textit{Statistical View of the United States}, 970.
Sacramento’s urban centre, as well as its outer lying mining camps, indicates that Scots held active and successful positions in the community.\textsuperscript{20}

In 1850, the demographic trends among the Scottish population in Sacramento more or less aligned with those of the general population of California. As for the gender makeup in Sacramento, which was 94 percent male, the Scottish figure for the county was 92 percent.\textsuperscript{21} Likewise, the average age and domestic status of the Scottish community in Sacramento echoed the statistics for the state of California. While the average age of the Scottish segment was 30.5 years old, it is necessary to compare the medians of each population because the Census Bureau only noted the total of persons within each age bracket. For both, the median age range was 20 to 29 (those ages represented 50 percent of California’s total population, and 45 percent of the Scottish population in Sacramento).\textsuperscript{22} Furthermore, the vast majority of Scots in Sacramento, like the general population of California at the time, was listed in the census as single (Figures 1.2 & 1.3). To be sure, many of these men could have been married, but with the census only reporting a spouse if they lived in the same household together (or married within the previous year) it is difficult to ascertain whether or not these individuals left family behind. In the ensuing censuses, individuals’ reappearances with newly settled family members do help to solve the mystery for some.

\textsuperscript{20} The 1850 Census included mining camps within Sacramento County, such as Negro Bar and Mormon Island.
\textsuperscript{21} De Bow, \textit{Statistical View of the United States}, 970.
\textsuperscript{22} De Bow, \textit{The Seventh Census of the United States: 1850} (Washington, DC, 1853), xlii.
Figure 1.2
Average Age of Scottish Population - San Francisco and Sacramento

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1850</th>
<th>1852</th>
<th>1860</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>San Francisco</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>30.8</td>
<td>33.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sacramento</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>33.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>32.8</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>30.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Figure 1.3
Domestic Status of Scots – Sacramento, 1850

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Males</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Females</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family Units</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of Individuals listed w/ children</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4 (5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*9 of these individuals stated that they had been married in the previous year.
** Family Units consist of a married couple with at least one Scottish individual OR at least one Scottish adult with a child.
Source: 1850 United States Federal Census
The census data for Sacramento in 1850 also introduces a distinguishing characteristic of the Scottish population that stayed consistent throughout the Gold Rush decade. While there is a significant presence of Scottish miners, representing 22 percent of the Scottish workforce in Sacramento county, the more notable trend is the prevalence of non-mining occupations. Compared to the general population of California, where miners constituted 74 percent of the workforce, over half of the Scots in Sacramento held, at the least, semi-skilled occupations (Figure 1.4). Niche occupations such as watchmaker, engineer, and medical physician suggest that these individuals settled in California to continue their trades, rather than try their hand at mining. Indeed, it would be another year or so before the dwindling presence of gold in the diggings funnelled vast amounts of Argonauts back to California’s cities, in search of familiar occupations from their prior lives. The fact that the majority of the Scottish population were not miners suggests that the Scots living in Sacramento were perceptive in understanding where the real money was made in California, even as early as 1850.24

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23 Ibid., 970.
### Figure 1.4
**Occupations of Scots - Sacramento, 1850**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pre-industrial Tradesmen</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpenter</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watchmaker</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brick Mason</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baker</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blacksmith</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
<td><strong>23%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Industrial Tradesmen</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>3%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td><strong>3%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mercantile/Business Owners</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchant</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trader</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boarding House</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saloon</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td><strong>7%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professional</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Doctor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerk</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td><strong>7%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public Service</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fireman</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td><strong>1%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Domestic</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiter</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washerman</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washerwoman</td>
<td>1 (1 Female)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td><strong>6%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agriculture</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herdsman</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stablehand</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td><strong>6%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Seamen</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Porter</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seaman</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabin boy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td><strong>9%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mining</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
<td><strong>22%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Labourer</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>11 (1 Female)</strong></td>
<td><strong>16%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Employed</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>69</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment of Males ≥ 15 Years Old</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>93%</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unemployed/Unknown</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital Patient</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blank</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>79</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*5 Males, 15 years of age and over, Unemployed.
Source – 1850 Federal Census
The latter notion applies to the Scottish labourers as well. Constituting 16 percent of the Scottish population in Sacramento, labourers in California faced much better prospects than those back east (Figure 1.4). According to the enumeration data for 1850, labourers only represented three percent of the workforce in California. Because the majority of able hands had flocked to the diggings, labourers were in high demand in the urban centres. In many cases, Gold Rush labourers decided on their own wages and type of work. In Sacramento, it was not uncommon for a general labourer to request $1.50 an hour for their services.25 This amount was more than the daily wage of labourers in the East Coast.26 Although Scots displayed a higher than average occupational count for labourers, it does not necessarily reflect a lack of skilled ability. At the time, the trend merely reflected the great demand for unskilled work.

Here it is necessary to explain the use of occupational classifications. As Margo Conk once noted, occupations are ‘one of the most complex indicators used in social science...capable of being coded into an infinite number of categories and subcategories.’27 The occupational classification in this study was constructed to facilitate comparison with existing Gold Rush studies, as well as works in the Scottish diaspora. The categories used were broadly based on those used by R.A. Burchell in his demographic study of the British-born in San Francisco.28 In mind of Britain’s industrial workforce, Burchell categorised skilled tradesmen as either pre-industrial or industrial. This categorization also translates well to analysing the migration of the Scottish industrial workforce to California. Furthermore, while the division between skilled and

25 Ibid., 195.
non-skilled can be fuzzy, a broad theme in Scottish diaspora scholarship is the overrepresentation of skilled workers among Scotland’s emigrants. T.M. Devine, in his survey of the Scottish diaspora, has argued that Scotland’s emigrants were disproportionately skilled and had a ‘decided advantage over the peasant masses that flocked across the Atlantic in their millions.’

Traditionally, unskilled work is defined as something than can be performed by any able-bodied person. Roles included labourers and domestic servants, and the work entailed a task or set of tasks that could usually be learned on the day of employment. While panning for gold could also be considered unskilled, the nature of the Gold Rush meant that Argonauts in the mines came from a range of skilled and unskilled backgrounds. For many, their time as miners was a lapse in their typical employment as a skilled worker. Therefore, while this study groups labourers, domestic servants, and miners as unskilled workers, the occupational profile of Scottish Argonauts provided by the census does not factor the high probability that several Scots in these occupations came from skilled backgrounds.

1852 California State Census

While Sacramento’s entry in the 1850 federal census confirms an active Scottish Argonaut population from the onset of the Gold Rush, the survey does not provide sufficient information regarding individual’s previous circumstances. Instead, the 1852 state census better illustrates migration trends because it recorded each individual’s ‘last place of residence’. Before discussing these findings, it is necessary to summarise some of the general demographics.

29 Ibid., 289-91.
30 Stephan Thernstrom, Poverty and Progress; Social Mobility in a Nineteenth Century City (Cambridge;: Harvard University Press, 1964), 18-19.
31 In many cases, an individual’s migration pattern can be traced by the birthplace of their children. However, because the majority of the initial Gold Rush migrants were single males (or males who left their families behind), the 1850 records have little use in this aspect.
obtained from the census data. The year 1852 witnessed the peak of the Gold Rush’s output in capital.\textsuperscript{32} Incidentally, the 1852 census provides a glimpse of the Scottish Argonaut population during the most active year of the Gold Rush, with 710 Scots recorded in San Francisco (representing two percent of the population) and 105 Scots in Sacramento (representing 0.7 percent of the population) (Figure 1.1).\textsuperscript{33}

The 1852 state census failed to aggregate the ages and domestic statuses of the whole population of California, so these aspects are unknown. Nevertheless, the average age of the Scottish population in San Francisco and Sacramento was 30 years (Figure 1.2). Meanwhile, 80 percent of the Scottish population in both districts had no indication of a spouse (Figure 1.5). The gender distribution among the Scottish population followed suit with the general population in California. In San Francisco, the ratio of Scottish females to males was 1 to 6 compared to the city’s ratio of 1 to 5 (Figure 1.1).\textsuperscript{34} In Sacramento, the ratio of Scottish females to males was 1 to 10 compared to the county’s ratio of 1 to 6. Although only a small increase in women from the previous census, this growth aligns with the slow but steady increase of a female presence during California’s Gold Rush era. Sacramento’s lower ratio of females merely reflected its closer proximity to the vastly male-dominated mining districts.\textsuperscript{35}


\textsuperscript{33} In 1852, the census recorded San Francisco’s population at 36,154, and Sacramento’s at 12,418. De Bow, \textit{Statistical View of the United States}, 982.

\textsuperscript{34} Wood, ‘Fraud and the California State Census of 1852’, 40.

Rebecca Lenihan’s demographic study on Scots in New Zealand offers further perspective on the demographic trends of Scots in Gold Rush California. Like California, the ratio of males to females in New Zealand was uneven, however the difference was not as drastic. During the mid-nineteenth century, the ratio of Scottish females to males was around 4 to 5 in New Zealand.\textsuperscript{36} While Lenihan attributed this difference to New Zealand’s own gold rush, this was not the colony’s only attraction. From the 1840s, colonial immigration schemes were in place that recruited migrants with an assisted passage to New Zealand. Assisted migration was usually age restricted, with preference given to families with young children. This is reflected in Lenihan’s data and explains many of the divergences from the Scottish demographic profile in California. Compared to the average age of 30 for Scots in California, the average age of Scottish...

\textsuperscript{36} Lenihan, \textit{From Alba to Aotearoa}, 109.
migrants in New Zealand was in the lower 20s.\textsuperscript{37} One third of the Scottish population in New Zealand were children (compared to around one twentieth in California in 1852), and married Scots in New Zealand also outnumbered those who were single.\textsuperscript{38} This high presence of Scottish families, argues Lenihan, factored in the strong persistence of Scottish culture and traditions in New Zealand from early on.\textsuperscript{39} Conversely, the relative absence of settled Scottish families in California would help explain the lack of Scottish ethnic expression during the Gold Rush.

As far as occupations, there is also an evident trend of skilled Scotsmen in the 1852 census data (Figure 1.6). What is most striking, however, is the low unemployment rate of three percent for Scottish males across San Francisco and Sacramento. Seeing that the state-wide rate of unemployment was 31 percent in 1850, the rate two years later was probably not far off.\textsuperscript{40} Furthermore, Roger Lotchin has demonstrated that even during San Francisco’s boom years from 1850-1853, unemployment in San Francisco was widespread.\textsuperscript{41} He highlighted one Argonaut’s observation in 1852 which stated: ‘There is [sic] more people in this country that is [sic] out of money and destitute than any other country I was ever in.’\textsuperscript{42} At only four percent in the city, the Scottish statistic was drastically low. The low unemployment rate among the Scottish population, as well as the prevalence of skilled occupational positions, suggests that Scots were adapting to life in California successfully and had secured a foothold in Gold Rush society.

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., 113-14.
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., 114-15
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., 116.
\textsuperscript{40} Unlike the 1850 and 1860 census counts which included the sum total of each occupation throughout the state, the 1852 census report did not include any kind of occupational tally. Therefore, there are no reliable statistics for the state population to compare the Scottish occupational profile with; David Hornbeck and Mary Tucey, ‘The Submergence of a People: Migration and Occupational Structure in California, 1850’, Pacific Historical Review 46, no. 3 (1977): 475.
\textsuperscript{41} Roger W. Lotchin, San Francisco, 1846-1856: From Hamlet to City (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), 84.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid.
The 1852 census data also indicated that Scots continued to have a minimal presence in the mines. Although the number of Scottish miners in Sacramento increased from 15 in 1850 to 26 in 1852 (representing 30 percent of the Scottish workforce), this was still relatively low for an urban centre close to the mining regions.\textsuperscript{43} Even in the mining districts of Placerville to the north-east and Mariposa to the south, Scots represented less than one percent of each population (Appendix 4.1 & 4.2). Their social behaviour in the mining districts also helped their reputation (or lack of) in the mines. As the fourth chapter demonstrates, Scottish miners integrated and allied with their Anglo-American counterparts instead of forming their own foreign alliances against them. For now, the census data shows that, as a nationality, Scottish miners were not threatening in number to the Anglo-American hegemony in the diggings. Personal accounts in the later chapters also reveal that Scottish Argonauts participated in gold mining in some form while they also held employment in a more stable job. This was not an exclusive Scottish Argonaut trait, as others also split time between the diggings and another job. However, this does indicate that Scots established themselves in the various realms of the Gold Rush workforce.

\textsuperscript{43} Current estimates put 100,000 miners in California in 1852. Paul, \textit{California Gold}, 25. In 1853, the government reported ‘many inconsistencies’ with California’s 1852 enumeration figures and estimated the population at either 224,435 or 255,122. Neither included the Native American population. De Bow, \textit{Statistical View of the United States}, 982.
### Figure 1.6

**Occupations of Scots – San Francisco and Sacramento, 1852**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>San Francisco</th>
<th>Sacramento</th>
<th>San Francisco &amp; Sacramento</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pre-industrial Tradesmen</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpenter</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>119 (19%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cabinet Maker</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tailor</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mason</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bottler</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baker</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blacksmith</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painter</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printer</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beds</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoemaker</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carriage Maker</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moulder</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooper</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanner</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brewer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Builder</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Tinner</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hair Dresser</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mill</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coffee Manufacturer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butcher</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bricklayer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoemaker</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dress Maker</td>
<td>1 (female)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Industrial Tradesmen</strong></td>
<td>46 (8%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td>47 (7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineer</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanic</td>
<td>23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machinist</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boiler Maker</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Light Lineman</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camphor Manufacturer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mercantile/Business Owners</strong></td>
<td>73 (13%)</td>
<td>10 (11%)</td>
<td>83 (13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchant</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storekeeper</td>
<td>4 (1 Female)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grocer</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Druggist</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trader</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storage</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>3 (1 Female)</td>
</tr>
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<td>Inn Keeper</td>
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<td>Custom House</td>
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<tr>
<td>Confectioner</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>(Female)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clothes</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquors</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eating Stand</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts/Education/Religion</td>
<td>4 (1%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td>5 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musician</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Teacher</td>
<td>2 (2 Females)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clergyman</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>4 (15%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td>5 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawyer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physician</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justice of the Peace</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>7 (1%)</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
<td>9 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steward</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerk</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Book Keeper</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>19 (3%)</td>
<td>5 (6%)</td>
<td>24 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Servant</td>
<td>7 (5 Females)</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washing</td>
<td>3 (3 Females)</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gardener</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiter</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>5 (1%)</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
<td>7 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisherman</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>7 (1%)</td>
<td>3 (3%)</td>
<td>10 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tram</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cartman</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courier</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamster</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage Driver</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seamen</td>
<td>145 (27%)</td>
<td>5 (6%)</td>
<td>150 (24%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mariner</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordinary Seaman</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sail Maker</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ship Master</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sailor</td>
<td>63</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boatsman</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ship Carpenter</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrecker</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drabler</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drayman</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shipwright</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Incidentally, the demographics of Scottish Argonauts in 1852 display additional patterns of adjustment when individuals are grouped by their last place of residence. Of the predominant locations, 25 percent of Scots came from Britain and Ireland (with 13 percent direct from Scotland), 45 percent came from the United States, 19 percent from Australasia, and seven percent from Latin America (Figure 1.7). As it stands, this is the only demographic study of a Scottish diaspora destination that comprises such a range of Scottish transmigrants from around the world. Lenihan’s study, which also had the resources to track migrants’ previous destinations, found that just under 12 percent of the Scottish population in New Zealand were transmigrants.\(^{44}\) Of the 796 Scots in San Francisco and Sacramento in 1852, 690, or 86.7 percent resided in another country outwith Scotland before their migration to California. Of those, 358, or 45 percent of the Scots in this study, migrated to California from their residences across the

\(^{44}\) Lenihan, *From Alba to Aotearoa*, 56-57.
US. While there is not enough information to trace where these Scottish Argonauts came from across Scotland (US census enumerations very rarely specified more than ‘Scotland’ as the birthplace or last place of residence), one of the most striking findings of this study is that they came from virtually all across the Scottish diaspora.
Figure 1.7
Last Place of Residence—San Francisco and Sacramento, 1852

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SAN FRANCISCO</th>
<th>SACRAMENTO</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BRITAIN</td>
<td>183 (26%)</td>
<td>19 (20%)</td>
<td>202 (25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCOTLAND</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>106 (13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGLAND</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>86 (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WALES</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 (0.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRELAND</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>7 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NORTH IRELAND</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 (0.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NORTHERN AMERICA</td>
<td>302 (44%)</td>
<td>70 (68%)</td>
<td>372 (47%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>358 (45%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CANADA</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA</td>
<td>49 (7%)</td>
<td>3 (3%)</td>
<td>52 (7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHILE</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
<td>35 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERU</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>6 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEXICO</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3 (0.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARGENTINA</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 (0.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URUGUAY</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 (0.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRAZIL</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 (0.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUERTO RICO</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 (0.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNSPECIFIED</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3 (0.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUSTRALASIA</td>
<td>143 (21%)</td>
<td>10 (10%)</td>
<td>153 (19%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUSTRALIA</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>146 (18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEW ZEALAND</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VAN DIEMEN’S LAND</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRANCE</td>
<td>1 (0.1%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 (0.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHINA</td>
<td>8 (1%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>8 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SANDWICH ISLANDS</td>
<td>4 (0.6%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>4 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHILIPPINES</td>
<td>1 (0.1%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 (0.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAHAMAS</td>
<td>1 (0.1%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 (0.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAHITI</td>
<td>2 (0.3%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>2 (0.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>694</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>796</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERCENT DOCUMENTED</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 1852 California State Census
Scotland

The 106 Argonauts direct from Scotland, representing 13 percent of the Scottish population in San Francisco and Sacramento, strongly characterise Scotland’s new generation of emigrants during the mid-nineteenth century (later in chapter 3, a Scottish Argonaut named Robert Watt noted a generational ‘spirit’ surrounding migration in Scotland). Of all the Scottish migratory streams in this study, the group that came directly from Scotland had the youngest average age. As the following chapter demonstrates, those in Scotland had access to a broad range of information on California with which they could make informed and calculated decisions on migrating there. Prospective Argonauts knew that mining towns such as Sacramento required able-bodied men and women to weather the harsh conditions of settler society. In Sacramento, all documented immigrants direct from Scotland (including the sole female, Jessie Anderson whom we will also meet in the third chapter) were young with an average age of twenty-four and single (Figures 1.8 & 1.9).

Figure 1.8
Summary of Scots Direct from Scotland - San Francisco and Sacramento, 1852

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>San Francisco</th>
<th>Sacramento</th>
<th>San Francisco &amp; Sacramento</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>74 (80%)</td>
<td>13 (93%)</td>
<td>87 (82%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Age:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Age</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>23.9</td>
<td>27.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 1852 California State Census
Of particular note is the uneven distribution of Scots between San Francisco and Sacramento. In 1852, San Francisco’s population was three times that of Sacramento, yet the ratio of Scots in San Francisco to Scots in Sacramento was seven to one. The greater concentration of Scots in San Francisco suggests that Argonauts direct from Scotland were more attracted to the opportunities of the growing urban centre rather than the unpredictability of mining for gold. San Francisco had a slightly older population of Argonauts direct from Scotland, with an average age of 28. The vast majority of women in this stream also resided in San Francisco. In addition to offering more employment opportunities for women, urban environments such as San Francisco housed better facilities to care for and raise a family. Thus, unlike Sacramento, San Francisco had a presence of families with dependents who came directly

![Table]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>San Francisco</th>
<th>Sacramento</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Males</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Females</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>24.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family units</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individuals w/ children</strong></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 1852 California State Census
from Scotland. The makeup of these families is explored shortly, but first, it is worthwhile to consider this migratory stream’s occupational profile.

With the majority of Scots residing and working in San Francisco, the census data suggests that migrants coming from Scotland pursued other ways to make their fortunes rather than mining for gold. All but two males in this stream were employed, and there was a clear trend of skilled and even professional occupations (Figure 1.10). Seaman also constituted a sizable portion of this steam’s workforce at 40 percent, but a later section discusses seamen as a separate entity. In her study of Scottish occupational trends in Montreal during the mid-nineteenth century, Heather McNabb also noted a low representation of unskilled work, suggesting that ‘a great number of the Scots immigrant population who settled in Montreal had the knowledge, trades, and skills that would help them to be relatively successful in an urban environment.’ If the same notion is applied to the Scottish workforce in San Francisco, these Argonauts most likely came from Scotland’s urban centres, having learned of the city’s high demand for skilled workers among the Gold Rush information that circulated Scotland.

### Figure 1.10
Occasions of Scots from Scotland - San Francisco and Sacramento, 1852

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>San Francisco</th>
<th>Sacramento</th>
<th>San Francisco &amp; Sacramento</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pre-industrial Tradesmen</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpenter</td>
<td>13 (19%)</td>
<td>1 (8%)</td>
<td>14 (17%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tailor</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mason</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baker</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blacksmith</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painter</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beds</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dress Maker</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 (Female)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Industrial Tradesmen</strong></td>
<td>5 (7%)</td>
<td>5 (6%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machinist</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mercantile/Business Owners</strong></td>
<td>5 (7%)</td>
<td>5 (6%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchant</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inn Keeper</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Arts/Education</strong></td>
<td>2 (3%)</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musician</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Teacher</td>
<td>1 (Female)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professional</strong></td>
<td>3 (4%)</td>
<td>3 (4%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawyer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physician</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justice of the Peace</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Domestic</strong></td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td>1 (8%)</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Servant</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiter</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agriculture</strong></td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Seamen</strong></td>
<td>28 (40%)</td>
<td>3 (21%)</td>
<td>31 (38%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mariner</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordinary Seaman</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sail Maker</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ship Master</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sailor</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boatman</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ship Carpenter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mining</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7 (54%)</td>
<td>7 (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Labourer</strong></td>
<td>11 (16%)</td>
<td>1 (8%)</td>
<td>12 (15%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Employed</strong></td>
<td>69</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment of Males ≥ 15 Years Old</strong></td>
<td>68 (93%)</td>
<td>12 (92%)</td>
<td>96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unemployed/Unknown</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loafer</td>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unidentifiable Blank</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>91</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* In San Francisco – 2 males, 15 years and older, unemployed; In Sacramento – 1 9-year-old male with Irish parents.

Source: 1852 California State Census
Significantly, the Argonauts direct from Scotland represented the bulk of the professional occupations across the whole Scottish community of San Francisco in 1852. This demands further attention. The average age among these Scottish professionals was 36.46 Markedly older than the general population, the mature age range suggests that they were persons of means before they emigrated to California. As Burchell demonstrated in his study of British Forty-Niners, Argonauts direct from the British Isles were more likely to continue their occupations where ‘capital and entrepreneurship were prerequisites for success’.47 Like the skilled workers above, the professionals’ intentions to continue their careers in Gold Rush California suggests a tactfully considered entrepreneurial venture, rather than a rash decision prompted by gold fever.

There are other clear trends among this segment of the Scottish population that suggest well-equipped migrations. Both of the single women listed in the census who came directly from Scotland appear to have been in a stable position in San Francisco. One of them was 33 years old and employed as a schoolteacher. While the other, who was 29 years of age with a one-year-old child, was most likely married. The state enumeration did not specify an individual’s domestic status or household, but other aspects of her record help give a better idea of her circumstances. Her daughter was born in San Francisco, which suggested that she had already settled in California with a husband. Immediately under their listing was an older couple who also came directly from Scotland.48 Most likely, her husband was somewhere in the mining districts whilst she resided in the safe care of trusted friends or family.

46 The lawyer was 36 years old, the physician was 35, and the Justice of the Peace was 39.
48 William Myres and Mrs Myres were respectively 56 and 41 years of age and had no listed occupations.
The nine other couples, or family units, that came directly from Scotland also show signs of well-judged migrations. They are aged 32, a step more mature than the general population of California (Figure 1.9). Besides the older couple mentioned in the previous paragraph, each Scottish male head of household listed a skilled or well-paying occupation or both. Among them were a painter, an innkeeper, a mason, a sailor, and a Justice of the Peace. The latter individual, John Chambers, did not indicate a wife and brought four daughters and a son with him from Edinburgh. Meanwhile, the three remaining households which included Scottish women and their English or Irish husbands (a later section discusses spouse nationality) also seemed to have stable foundations. One was married to an Englishman listed as a broker; another had an Irish husband who worked as a builder; the final woman was employed herself (her occupation is unclear) and married to an Irish labourer.

As the following chapter demonstrates, while the Gold Rush ignited interest across Scotland, certain Scots were predisposed to become Argonauts. In Sacramento, the range of young and single Scots implied that they exercised a privileged freedom to venture from their native country. Their high employment rate, especially in San Francisco, indicates a preparedness to migrate to California, as well as a capability to integrate and secure a foothold within Gold Rush society. Furthermore, with the vast majority of Argonauts direct from Scotland residing in San Francisco and representing the skilled working class, this group suggests that its majority had prior knowledge of the Gold Rush’s infrastructure and the skills in demand. While much of the Gold Rush population took a gamble in ‘seeing the elephant’, this segment of the Scottish population had ensured that their risks were minimal upon their arrival.

49 A family unit in this study denotes either a married couple (with or without children) with one or both being Scottish or at least one Scottish head of household with children.
United States

The majority of Scots in California came from previous residences across the United States. Between the San Francisco and Sacramento enumerations for 1852, 358 Scottish individuals listed their last place of residence in the US. This represented 45 percent of the Scottish population in both cities (Figure 1.7). On closer inspection, these Scottish transmigrants exhibited many similarities to their American counterparts, even more so than their countrymen and women who came directly from Scotland. Yet despite this, the Scottish Argonaut stream from across the US still exhibited the Scottish diaspora trend of a high rate of skilled occupations.

Like the American Argonauts, the majority of Scottish Argonauts in this migratory stream came from large urban centres. Those who listed New York as their last place of residence represented over half of the Scottish transmigrants from the US, as well as a quarter of the aggregated Scottish population in this study (Figure 1.11). Numerous Scottish Argonauts also hailed from Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Louisiana, and their respective port cities. This is no surprise, as the majority of Scottish migrants in the US resided in urban centres. Meanwhile, the minority in this stream previously resided in the southern, midwestern, and western regions of the country. In the South, Scottish Argonauts hailed from Virginia, Kentucky, South Carolina, Alabama, and Mississippi; among the midwestern states, they came from Michigan, Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and Missouri; and in the states and territories of the West, Scots migrated from Texas, Oklahoma, Colorado, Arizona, and Oregon. (Figures 1.12 & 1.13)

50 Clay et al., ‘Migrating to Riches?’, 1001.
51 As per the 1850 census: the greatest number of Scots lived in New York, at 23,418; followed by Pennsylvania with 7,292; Ohio with 5,232; Illinois with 4,661; and Massachusetts, at 4,439. De Bow, The Seventh Census of the United States, xxxvi.
their numbers are nowhere near the New England and Mid-Atlantic states, the range of localities is testament to the wide and scattered presence of the Scottish diaspora throughout the US.\textsuperscript{52}

\textbf{Figure 1.11}

\textit{Scottish Transmigrants from United States - San Francisco and Sacramento, 1852}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>San Francisco</th>
<th>Sacramento</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District of Columbia</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iowa</td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kentucky</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>35 (12%)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>39 (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryland</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>22 (8%)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25 (7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missouri</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>178 (61%)</td>
<td>22 (33%)</td>
<td>200 (56%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Carolina</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oregon</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>19 (6%)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>23 (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhode Island</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Carolina</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>291</strong></td>
<td><strong>67</strong></td>
<td><strong>358</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 1852 California State Census

\textsuperscript{52} Devine, \textit{To the Ends of the Earth}, 143.
Figure 1.12
Scots from US – San Francisco, 1852

Source: 1852 California State Census

Figure 1.13
Scots from US – Sacramento, 1852

Source: 1852 California State Census
The Scottish stream that came from across the US mirrored the general age, gender, and domestic trends of Gold Rush California. Scottish men in this stream represented 90 percent of the population in San Francisco and 95 percent of the population in Sacramento. The slightly skewed gender distributions between San Francisco and Sacramento again reflected the exaggerated male-dominant presence in the mining districts. Meanwhile, the stream’s average age, 30.6 for males and 29.2 for females, was slightly higher than those that came directly from Scotland (Figure 1.14). This older age average most likely reflected Scottish transmigrants’ length of residence of a few years or more in their previous destinations. Further, much like the general population of the time in California, 90 percent of the Scottish men in this stream were single or had left their wives and family behind.53 Representing the most substantial transmigrant group in this study, the stream only included 40 family units. Of those, 19 included children (Figure 1.15). There is no apparent pattern among the family units in California and their last residence.

53 Unfortunately, it is impossible to calculate the number of Argonauts who left their families behind. The state census of 1852 did not indicate households or domestic status, while the Federal censuses of 1850
This stream also exhibits occupational patterns of a skilled and in-demand workforce. Of the Scottish transmigrants that came from the US, only two percent of the adult males were unemployed (Figure 1.16). Furthermore, out of all the Scottish migratory streams in this study, this stream had the highest representation of skilled workers which included a number of carpenters, mechanics, blacksmiths, and merchants. Compared to those who left their previous lives to gamble as miners in California’s goldfields, Clay and Jones demonstrated that the

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outcome for non-miners was far more optimistic: ‘to the extent that non-miners in California were previously professionals, managers, clerks, craftsmen, and salesmen, the effect of migrating on their wealth was positive and large.’\textsuperscript{54} Indeed, tradesmen’s wages were markedly higher in California than across the rest of the US. Carpenters, for instance, earned six times more in California than those in the eastern urban centres.\textsuperscript{55} A head start in navigating the American workforce on the east coast may have also facilitated Scots’ employment in San Francisco and Sacramento. The fourth chapter further demonstrates that Scottish Argonauts were more likely to be in business arrangements with Anglo-Americans instead of other Scots or Britons. As far as this group of Scottish Argonauts was concerned, they were in a relatively better position to improve their prospects in California.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\caption{Occupations of Scots from USA – San Francisco & Sacramento, 1852}
\begin{tabular}{|l|c|c|c|}
\hline
                     & San Francisco & Sacramento & San Francisco & Sacramento \\
Pre-industrial Tradesmen & & & & \\
Carpenter              & 50 (21\%)     & 20 (32\%)  & 70 (23\%)  \\
Cabinet Maker          & 11           & 2           &             \\
Mason                  & 2            &             &             \\
Bottler                & 2            &             &             \\
Baker                  & 4            & 6           &             \\
Blacksmith             & 8            & 4           &             \\
Painter                & 2            & 3           &             \\
Printer                & 3            &             &             \\
Shoemaker              & 1            & 1           &             \\
Moulder                & 2            &             &             \\
Cooper                 & 3            & 1           &             \\
Tinner                 & 1            &             &             \\
Butcher                & 1            &             &             \\
Lightlineman           & 1            &             &             \\
Brickmason             & 1            &             &             \\
Hair Dresser           & 2            &             &             \\
Mill                   & 2            &             &             \\
Furniture              & 1            &             &             \\
Coffee Manufacturer    & 1            &             &             \\
Builder                & 1            &             &             \\
Paper                  & 1            &             &             \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{55} Clay et al., ‘Migrating to Riches?’, 1021.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Tradesmen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineer</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanic</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machinist</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boiler Maker</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camphor Manufacturer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercantile/Business Owners</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchant</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grocer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confectioner</td>
<td>1 (Female)</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trader</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Druggist</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clothes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eating Stand</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Inn Keeper</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Custom House</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saloon</td>
<td>2 (Female)</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boarding House</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts/Education/Religion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clergyman</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerk</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steward</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Keeper</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Servant</td>
<td>3 (Female)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Washing</td>
<td>1 (Female)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Gardener</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cook</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiter</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisherman</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Transport</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cartman</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courier</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage Driver</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamster</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seamen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mariner</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ship Master</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordinary Seaman</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sailor</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boatman</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ship Carpenter</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drayman</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stevedore</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sailmaker</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lightman</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

84
While this transnational stream exhibited similarities to those directly from Scotland, such as an overrepresentation of skilled workers, the census data also demonstrates that different locations could have a distinct influence on Scottish migration trends. More than any other migratory stream in this study, the Scottish Argonauts that migrated from their previous residences across the US were predominately male. As Rohrbough observed in his study, California had such a profound attraction to American men that ‘In addition to a society without women in the West, the Gold Rush created a society without husbands, brothers, and lovers in the East.’ Of the thousands that proceeded on the overland trail to California in 1849, scholars estimate that women only made up ten percent. Later in 1852, the state’s white female population was at a similar proportion, at just under fourteen percent. While the male majority in this Scottish Argonaut stream may have reflected a predominance of Scottish males in the US to begin with, there is also no way of knowing the number of Argonauts that left wives and children behind. We do know however that Scottish transmigrants, such as William Elder (whose

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>1852 California State Census</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>1 (0.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labourer</td>
<td>58 (24%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Employed</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment of Males ≥ 15 Years Old*</td>
<td>240 (97%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed/Unknown Gentleman</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unidentifiable</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blank*</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>291</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* In San Francisco – 7 males, 15 years and older, unemployed.

Source: 1852 California State Census

57 Levy, *They Saw the Elephant*, xvii.
story begins in the third chapter), were part of this American exodus that kissed countless wives and lovers goodbye for California.

Furthermore, as the census data has suggested thus far, the ensuing chapters demonstrate that Scottish transmigrants from the US had already secured important footholds in Anglo-American society. As we will see, Scots with Anglo-American connections in their previous residences often found them to be valuable assets in adjusting to life in Gold Rush California. Meanwhile, when investigating the Scottish transmigrants from other locations, such as those from Australasia, their demographics suggest different circumstances of adjustment in California, but integration all the same.

**Australasia**

During the 1850s, the Antipodes were a popular destination for Scottish migrants, especially when Australia’s own Gold Rush kicked off in 1851. That decade alone, around 90,000 Scots sailed from Britain to Australia. It comes as no surprise that in the 1852 California census, 19 percent of the Scottish population in San Francisco and Sacramento listed their last place of residence as Australasia (Figure 1.7). Representing just over 150 individuals, the demographics of this migratory stream exhibited some strong diversions from the overall Scottish Argonaut community. As a matter of fact, these Scots shared many demographics with the typical Australasian migrant.

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59 Devine, *To the Ends of the Earth*, 86.

60 Situated among the 1,339 immigrants who came from Australia to San Francisco in 1852, the Scottish count represented four percent; whereas the Irish represented 44 percent, the Australian natives 28 percent, and England and Wales 22 percent. Ricards et al., ‘The Sydney Ducks’, 31.
Firstly, this Scottish stream exhibited a much lower male to female ratio of three to one (Figure 1.17). In a demographic study of San Francisco, Sherman Ricards and George Blackburn challenged the notorious reputation of the Australian Argonauts, otherwise known as the Sydney Ducks. Often portrayed as vagrants and violent convicts, Ricards and Blackburn found that the census data suggested otherwise. Unlike the other male Argonauts, the men who came from the antipodes were more likely to bring their wives and families with them. Indeed, half of the Scottish Argonauts who came from Australia and New Zealand migrated with their spouses. This was by far the highest percentage of any other Scottish stream in this dataset. Burchell, in his own study, found a similar trend of those who migrated from the Antipodes. The ‘remigration’ of Britons from Australasia, he concluded, ‘was very much a family matter, far

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61 Ibid., 28.
62 The male to female ratio among the ‘Sydney Ducks’ was 1.5 to 1. Ibid., 26-27.
more so than that from other areas. This can be linked back to the colonisation efforts by the British Empire which encouraged British couples and families to migrate to Australasia. Initial migration as a family unit ensured later patterns of familial transience. As well as a high representation of couples, at least eight families in this Scottish stream had children that were born in Scotland or England which indicated that they initially emigrated from Britain as a family.

The Scottish stream that came from Australia and New Zealand also were the most likely to have children (Figure 1.18). In the 1852 census for San Francisco and Sacramento, one-third of migrants in this stream stated that they had children. In their own study, Ricards and Blackburn found that the Sydney Ducks also brought a disproportionate number of children compared to the general population of San Francisco. While California at that time had 14 youths (aged 20 or under) for every 100 adults, the ratio for the whole Australian stream was 62 to 100. Meanwhile, in the respective Scottish stream, for every 100 adult Scottish migrants from Australasia, there were 52 youths, a ratio almost four times larger than that of the population of California. The age and place of birth of each Argonaut’s child provide some further insights. According to the data, Scots and their families spent an average of seven and a half years in Australia or New Zealand before they decided to uproot to California. Furthermore, for those who uprooted with their families, the average household travelled with 2.5 children. These insights provide further information on the lives of Scottish transmigrants and the circumstances in which they uprooted themselves to continue their search for a home or opportunity elsewhere.

64 In the US at the time there were 117 youths for every 100 adults. Ricards and Blackburn, ‘The Sydney Ducks’, 28.
Growing a family abroad did not mean permanent roots, and the California Gold Rush made Argonauts out of single Scots and Scottish families alike.

For the Scots that travelled with dependents, financial stability in California was more pressing than the average Argonaut. Thus, this stream’s occupational trends hold an extra level of importance. Compared to Ricards and Blackburn’s data for the Australian stream, the Scottish migrants appear to have had the highest employment rate out of all the migrants from Australia. Eight percent of adult males from Australia were unemployed in San Francisco, but this did not account for any Scots as all under the same category were employed.65 In fact, the vast majority of the Scottish heads of household who reported children held skilled occupations (Figure 1.19).

65 Ibid., 29.
These included carpenters, an engineer, a trader, and a mechanic. The assurance of income, especially the higher wages made by skilled and in-demand workers, saw that these Scottish Argonauts had a solid foundation from which to support their families in Gold Rush society.

Furthermore, this stream also had the highest occurrence of labourers in this study. In San Francisco, for instance, 32 percent of Scottish males from Australasia reported labourer as their occupation (Figure 1.20). While this was lower than the figure for the Sydney Ducks (labourers represented 56 percent of the Australian workforce in San Francisco), there is still a strong
indication that coming from the antipodes increased one’s likelihood of being a labourer.\textsuperscript{66}

Indeed, during the mid-nineteenth century, Australia was the choice destination for married agricultural labourers and single women from the UK. Much of this had to do with government-assisted migration which funded over half of the passages from the British Isles.\textsuperscript{67} Crucially, as Robin Haines has demonstrated, the vast number of British migrants to the antipodes were not paupers. Instead, she argues, they were ‘active respondents to information which encouraged rural labourers and artisans to exchange potential (or real) immiseration in the United Kingdom for the likelihood of improved social, economic, and employment prospects in Australia.’\textsuperscript{68}

Therefore, the labourers among the Australian stream who were able to fund further passage to California and then secure work were resourceful transients that followed opportunity. Not, as history recalls, violent convicts or ‘villainous-looking vagabonds.’\textsuperscript{69}

Of the 153 Scottish individuals from Australasia, a man named George Little in Sacramento was the only Scotsman who reported himself as a miner. He was also the only Scottish miner in Sacramento with a family and lived with his Scottish wife and two-year-old daughter born in Australia. He reappears in the 1860 census and is one of the minority who persisted mining by the turn of the decade. The mining industry dramatically changed over the Gold Rush, and by 1860 miners came to represent only 34 percent of the working population in California.\textsuperscript{70} That year, Little reported an additional two children born in California and 500

\textsuperscript{68} Ibid., 247.
\textsuperscript{69} Ricards et al., ‘The Sydney Ducks’, 20.
\textsuperscript{70} Average wages for miners in California dropped from $16 per day in 1849, to $10 in 1850, $8 in 1851, and plummeted to $3 a day by 1859. Meanwhile, California’s gold production fell from $81 million at its prime in 1852, to $46.8 million in 1859. Jung, ‘Capitalism Comes to the Diggings’, 59, 68; Kennedy, \textit{Population of the United States in 1860}, 35.
dollars in personal wealth. The fact that he persisted as a miner with a growing family and extra capital evidences some sort of success in his mining venture. At the least, their circumstances suggest that they had successfully adapted to life in California after uprooting themselves from their previous home in Australia.

While Little’s prior residency in Australia helps to explain his atypical domestic status as a miner, it is unclear whether or not his initial mining venture began in Australia. As the following chapter demonstrates, some Scottish Argonauts participated in both Californian and Australian gold rushes. It is extremely difficult, however, to measure any sort of migratory trend to do with Scottish miners between these two locations because the 1852 census in California was conducted on the eve of the Australian gold rush. By the time the federal enumerators came back to San Francisco and Sacramento in 1860, only a few Scottish families from Australia reappeared from the 1852 census. Most likely, as Burchell has suggested, the others were predisposed to continue their transient lifestyles elsewhere – even back to Australia after its gold rush kicked off. Yet the prevalence of new individuals from Australasia in the 1860 census indicates that California continued to attract Scottish migrants and their families from the antipodes throughout the Gold Rush decade.

---

**Figure 1.20**

**Occupations Held by Scots from Australasia in San Francisco and Sacramento, 1852**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>San Francisco</th>
<th>Sacramento</th>
<th>San Francisco &amp; Sacramento</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pre-industrial Tradesmen</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpenter</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2 (33%)</td>
<td>21 (22%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoemaker</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carriage Maker</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tailor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanner</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mason</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheelwright</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baker</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooper</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blacksmith</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Industrial Tradesmen</strong></td>
<td>3 (3%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>3 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanic</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mercantile/Business Owners</strong></td>
<td>17 (19%)</td>
<td>17 (18%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storekeeper</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trader</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchant</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inn Keeper</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saloon</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boarding House</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Domestic</strong></td>
<td>4 (4%)</td>
<td>1 (17%)</td>
<td>5 (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Servant</td>
<td>3 (2 females)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transport</strong></td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cartman</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agriculture</strong></td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Seamen</strong></td>
<td>16 (18%)</td>
<td>16 (16%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mariner</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordinary Seaman</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drayman</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ship Master</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sailor</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrecker</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drabler</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mining</strong></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1 (17%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Labourer</strong></td>
<td>29 (32%)</td>
<td>2 (33%)</td>
<td>31 (32%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>91</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employment of Males ≥ 15 Years Old</strong></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unemployed/Unknown</strong></td>
<td>51</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gentleman</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unidentifiable</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blank</td>
<td>47</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>142</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Only Scottish males with no listed occupation were both under the age of 15.

Source: 1852 California State Census
The Scottish Argonauts from Australasia reflected both domestic and occupational trends of their antipodal counterparts. With families in tow, the vast majority of these Scottish Argonauts bypassed the diggings and took advantage of California’s more stable opportunities. However, the principal characteristic of a predominantly skilled workforce is also evident in this stream. Just like the Scottish transmigrants from the US, the enumeration data of Scots from Australasia indicate a resourceful, well-adjusted, and highly transient migratory stream in California.

**Latin America**

In the 1852 California census, 52 Scots in San Francisco and Sacramento reported a previous residence in Latin America (Figure 1.7). Representing seven percent of the Scottish Argonauts in this study, they came from a variety of Latin American countries such as Peru, Uruguay, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, and Chile. The Scottish presence in Latin America is no surprise, given its links with the British Empire. After the Latin American countries gained independence from Spain in the 1820s, Britain adopted the region as part of its ‘informal empire’. British involvement in Latin America peaked in 1825 as merchants, entrepreneurs, and shipping agents flocked to the region to sell cheap manufactured goods and finance the exportation of in-demand consumables such as sugarcane and coffee beans. A host of British miners also came hoping to capitalise on the region’s abundance of silver. Indeed, several of our Scottish Argonauts had pursued similar interests in Latin America before they migrated to California. As it stands, the Scottish presence in Latin America has received little attention in

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Scottish diaspora studies. While this stream consisted of a small number of individuals, their demographics shed light on a segment of the Scottish diaspora which is relatively unknown.

During the Gold Rush, Chile was the biggest contributor of Argonauts from Latin America. This was also true for the Scots in this stream, as over half came from Chile. On the eve of California’s Gold Rush, Chile had retained a sense of internal stability as revolutionary unrest spread throughout Latin America. Since then, British interests had refocused on Chile’s more stable economic market and concentrated their operations in the bustling seaport of Valparaiso. Serving an international fleet, it was only a matter of time until the local population contracted and spread gold fever. If the initial lure of California was not enough in 1848 and 1849, Chile’s own revolution in 1851 probably pushed more Scots to remigrate to the Golden State. In the face of political upheaval, California provided a reasonable alternative. San

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73 The estimations are vast and range from 3,000 to 60,000. Abraham P. Nasatir, ‘Chileans in California During the Gold Rush Period and the Establishment of the Chilean Consulate’, *California Historical Quarterly* 53, no. 1 (1974).

74 Ibid., 9.
Francisco’s rapid expansion and oceanic transport links offered similar capitalistic opportunities that had previously attracted entrepreneurs to Latin America.\textsuperscript{75} The census data reflects this as the vast majority of Scots from Latin America resided in San Francisco compared to Sacramento (Figure 1.21).

Like the Scottish migrants from Scotland and the US, single males represented the majority of the Latin American stream at 69 percent (Figure 1.22). Unlike Australia and New Zealand, which Great Britain promoted as a colonising opportunity, Latin America was a destination for economic endeavours. The predominance of single, unattached males reflected

\textsuperscript{75} Within the first few months of the revolution, more than 1,200 emigrants left Chile. \textit{Ibid.}, 61.
this. The smaller group of married individuals in this stream are also of interest because of their interethnic marriages. In San Francisco, for example, a Scottish merchant named J.F. Spence listed his last residence as Puerto Rico and resided with his Puerto Rican wife and their five-year-old daughter. Similarly, another Scotsman in the city named A.P. Muir stated his last residence as Chile and worked as a carpenter. He also resided with his Chilean wife and their nine-year-old daughter. While these marriages were atypical among the Scottish Argonauts as a whole, it was not uncommon for Britons in Latin America to strengthen their social ties by marrying into prominent native families.  

Naturally, Scots across the diaspora intermingled with other peoples and cultures. ‘Marrying overseas and having children there’, argues Douglas McCalla, ‘were signs that a man had ceased to be a sojourner and was becoming rooted in his new land.’ As this data suggests however, sojourners and transmigrants could also continue their search for opportunity elsewhere with their growing families in tow, the presence of loved ones providing a sense of ‘home’ as they reached new and unfamiliar places.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>San Francisco</th>
<th>Sacramento</th>
<th>San Francisco &amp; Sacramento</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pre-industrial Tradesmen</strong></td>
<td>3 (8%)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpenter</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mason</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cast Iron</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Industrial Tradesmen</strong></td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mercantile/Business Owners</strong></td>
<td>8 (19%)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7 (18%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchant</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storage</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Domestic</strong></td>
<td>3 (8%)</td>
<td>1 (50%)</td>
<td>4 (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washing</td>
<td>1 (Female)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professional</strong></td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
<td>1 (50%)</td>
<td>2 (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physician</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transport</strong></td>
<td>2 (6%)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cartman</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Seamen</strong></td>
<td>9 (25%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>9 (24%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shipwright</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mariner</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sailor</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Labourer</strong></td>
<td>9 (28%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>10 (26%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column</th>
<th>Total Employed</th>
<th>Employment of Males ≥ 15 Years Old</th>
<th>Unemployed/Unknown Unidentifiable Blank</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>San Francisco</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacramento</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Francisco &amp; Sacramento</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*In San Francisco – 3 males under 14 years old
Source: 1852 California State Census
The occupational trends in this stream reflected the British Empire’s capitalistic ambitions in Latin America. Of all the migratory groups in this study, the Latin American stream had the highest representation of Scottish merchants at 19 percent (Figure 1.23). Furthermore, the merchants were slightly older than the general Argonaut population with an average age of 36. This maturity suggests that these individuals had prior experience as merchants in Latin America, at least during the 1840s before the Gold Rush coaxed them to California. What is not known, however, is whether these merchants saw California as an opportunity for expansion or as a fresh start. Because the 1852 census did not indicate an individual’s wealth, it is difficult to ascertain any prior success in Latin America. Much like the fate of the Gold Rush, only a minority of the foreign Argonauts who initially migrated to Latin America made a sizable profit.78

We do know the circumstances of at least one of these Scottish individuals. In 1852, Alexander Cross neared his fourth year in San Francisco when he stated his age – 44 – and his occupation – merchant – to the census enumerator. Born to a prominent merchant family in Glasgow, Cross moved to Valparaiso in the late 1830s to expand the operations of Cross, Hobson & Co.79 Over the next several years, Cross’s merchant fleet regularly traded at the port of Yerba Buena, the small port town destined to be San Francisco. In August 1848, he decided another business expansion was in order when a handful of California gold returned with one of his ships.80 Cross was probably the first to respond to the Gold Rush of all the Scottish Argonauts from abroad. The following month he left for California and by the end of the year

78 Miller noted that ‘The influx of British merchants during the independence era resulted in immense profits for a few but disappointment and bankruptcy for most.’ Miller, Britain and Latin America, 79.
80 Monaghan, Chile, Peru, and the California Gold Rush of 1849, 67-76.
Cross, Hobson & Co. had opened its San Francisco branch.\footnote{Ibid, 95.} By 1852, Cross and Hobson had parted ways as partners, but business was booming in California. Cross & Co., as it was now called, had secured a strong foothold in San Francisco as one of the first commission merchants. The firm had also recently erected a new business premises on Battery Street. Intended to be fireproof, the three-story ‘iron warehouse’ also functioned as the Customs House for the US Government (Cross later sued the latter for not paying rent) and reportedly cost upwards of a hundred thousand dollars to build.\footnote{Congressional Serial Set, (U.S. Government Printing Office, 1859), 1-11.}

While the remainder of the Scots from Latin America were probably not as financially successful as Cross, all adult males in this stream stated an occupation. Once again, this data suggests that Scottish Argonauts found the workforce accessible, and even accommodating, in San Francisco and Sacramento. Of further note is the fact that none of the Scots in this stream were miners. Ranging from merchants, doctors, tradesmen, and labourers, the Scots from Latin America were in positions to ‘mine the miners’ – perhaps something they had learned of economies built on mining during their previous pursuits in Latin America.
The Global and Seafaring Scots

The remaining residences reported by Scottish Argonauts uphold Devine’s argument that ‘Scots were never limited to the formal empire as migrants and adventurers’ (Figure 1.24). The representation of Scottish Argonauts from France, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, as well as the US, reaffirms the global presence of Scottish migrants outwith the British Empire. While the others, who reported the Sandwich Islands, the Bahamas, China, and Tahiti, further reiterate the active participation of Scots throughout the British Empire. Unsurprisingly, all 17 in this global stream resided in the international hub of San Francisco rather than in Sacramento. Furthermore, the males from this stream were all single with an average age of 33. Most likely, their bachelor status reflected the Gold Rush’s attraction to unattached men. In the first place, young single men were the most likely to leave Scotland to sojourn to far-flung locations. As a whole, the only apparent occupational trend in this group is the 40 percent who reported a maritime profession. While this does explain the global dispersion of some of the better-travelled individuals in this study, it is also worthwhile to consider the Scottish seamen altogether as an additional stream.

83 Devine, To the Ends of the Earth, xiii.
84 Those that came from Tahiti probably migrated there before the Anglo-French Convention of 1847, which deemed France the sole protectant.
85 Harper, Adventurers and Exiles, 283.
During the Gold Rush, first-hand accounts often mentioned the vast presence of ships in San Francisco Bay. It is no surprise then that seaman represented almost a quarter of the Scottish Argonaut population between San Francisco and Sacramento in 1852, numbering at 150 (Figure 1.6).\textsuperscript{86} Unfortunately, scholars often disregard the seamen that took part in the Gold Rush as outliers. For example, while Burchell recognised the significant number of seamen in his study

of the San Francisco British, he proceeded to discount them altogether. A closer look at the Scottish seamen in this dataset demonstrates that they were an integral part of Gold Rush society.

Undoubtedly, a number of the seamen in the 1852 census were transient. Warren Wood claims that enumerators, who were under the influence of political chicanery, included ship crews docked in the San Francisco Bay, despite the knowledge that the majority of these individuals resided on their vessels in transit, not in California. Nevertheless, no matter how long one’s layover in San Francisco, these sailors played an active role in linking Gold Rush society to the rest of the world, including a direct link to Scotland and its diaspora. As we will see in the following chapters, countless sailors could not resist California’s temptations when they arrived in San Francisco. It is difficult to discern the number of men who left their ships for the diggings, but there is a suggestive presence of three Scottish ‘ordinary seaman’ in Sacramento who were far from any type of naval or sea vessel. This indicates that at least some ex-sailors still reported themselves as seamen even though they were probably trying their hand at mining. With this in mind, as well as the presence of local seaman, it makes more sense to include seaman as Argonauts that participated in the Gold Rush rather than discount them.

Understandably, ‘The City by the Bay’ recorded the majority of Scottish seamen. Of those, the most common were sailors (43 percent), mariners (18 percent), and ordinary seamen (11 percent) (Figure 1.25). Again, while it is difficult to determine exactly how many actually resided in California, several in this group also reported living with spouses and or children (15 individuals reported spouses and 5 of those couples also had children). Furthermore, the remaining assortment of maritime occupations in this stream were traditionally port-based; 11 percent held roles in the ship construction industry as sailmakers, shipwrights, and ship

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carpenters; 9 percent provided local transport as boatmen, draymen, and lightmen; and 2 percent worked on and around the docks as wreckers and stevedores. Meanwhile, of the five Scottish seamen documented in Sacramento, two individuals reported local occupations as a boatman and a ship carpenter. The remaining three, the ordinary seaman accounted for previously, had probably abandoned their vessels in the San Francisco Bay to search for gold around Sacramento.

**Figure 1.25**

*Summary of Scottish Seamen – San Francisco, 1852*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Single</th>
<th>Married</th>
<th>Family Units</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mariner</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4 (1 w/ children)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordinary Seaman</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3 (1 w/ children)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sail Maker</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ship Master</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sailor</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boatman</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ship Carpenter</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrecker</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drabler</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drayman</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shipwright</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lightman</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stevedore</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>145</strong></td>
<td><strong>131</strong></td>
<td><strong>14 (5 w/ children)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source – 1852 California State Census

Finally, when assigning the seamen to their previous places of residence, the vast majority came from Scotland and the US (Figure 1.26). This, of course, reflected Scotland’s heavy focus on maritime industry. A nation rich in naval history with a long seafaring tradition, Scotland established itself as the world leader in shipbuilding during the mid-nineteenth century. In the decades leading up to the Gold Rush, shipbuilders on the Clyde harnessed new industrial
technologies such as iron hulls and steam-powered engines.\textsuperscript{89} In 1851, tens of thousands of Scots were employed as part of Scotland’s naval industry – from ship crews to naval engineers to iron manufacturers.\textsuperscript{90} Naturally, those with skills in shipbuilding and naval trade were among the Scots who migrated in large numbers to seek higher-paying positions in the US.\textsuperscript{91} In fact, Devine has demonstrated that during the late 1840s and early 50s, a ‘dramatic peak’ in Scottish emigration occurred during an economic depression in Scotland’s industrial sector.\textsuperscript{92} Thus, this could be why there was such a high representation of Scottish Argonauts with maritime occupations from the US. Whether these Scottish seamen were on a quick layover, had abandoned their posts on arrival, or came to California as Argonauts themselves, these Scotsmen represented an essential component of Gold Rush society. Significantly, Scotland’s seafaring tradition could be seen in its Argonauts’ demographic trends in Gold Rush California.

\begin{center}
\textbf{Figure 1.26}

\textit{Previous Residence of Seamen – San Francisco, 1852}
\end{center}

\begin{tabular}{|l|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{SCOTLAND} & 28 & 20\% \\
\textbf{WALES} & 2 & 1\% \\
\textbf{ENGLAND} & 19 & 13\% \\
\textbf{IRELAND} & 1 & 1\% \\
\textbf{AUSTRALASIA} & 17 & 12\% \\
\textbf{UNITED STATES} & 57 & 39\% \\
\textbf{LATIN AMERICA} & 9 & 6\% \\
\textbf{CHINA} & 5 & 3\% \\
\textbf{BAHAMAS} & 1 & 1\% \\
\textbf{SANDWICH ISLANDS} & 1 & 1\% \\
\hline
\textbf{UNKNOWN} & 5 & \\
\hline
\textbf{TOTAL} & 145 & \\
\hline
\end{tabular}

\begin{flushleft}
Source – 1852 California State Census
\end{flushleft}

\textsuperscript{89} Devine, \textit{To the Ends of the Earth}, 71.
\textsuperscript{91} Van Vugt, \textit{Britain to America}, 60-61; Berthoff, \textit{British Immigrants in Industrial America}, 69-70.
\textsuperscript{92} Devine, \textit{To the Ends of the Earth}, 105
1860 Federal Census

The data from the 1860 Federal Census sheds additional light on how Scottish migrants adapted overtime in California. Although this census provides less information on where these individuals came from (only those with children and their place of birth suggests previous residences), San Francisco continued to have a greater variety of Scottish transmigrants compared to Sacramento (Figure 1.27). However, San Francisco also witnessed a drop in its Scottish population to 602 inhabitants, which now represented only one percent of the city’s population. Meanwhile, the Scottish population in Sacramento rose to 204, which increased their presence to 1.5 percent of the city’s population (Figure 1.1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Last Residences of Scots – San Francisco and Sacramento, 1860</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>UNITED KINGDOM</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australasia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PROPORTION OF WHOLE SCOTTISH POPULATION</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 1860 United States Federal Census

In both cities in 1860, the gender distribution among the Scottish population had developed alongside the general population. The presence of Scottish males lowered to 67 percent in San Francisco and 71 percent in Sacramento (the general male population in each city was 62 percent and 69 percent respectively) (Figure 1.1).\(^9^3\) Over the Gold Rush decade, the

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gender gap decreased as more women and families came to settle in California. It is apparent that the Scottish population followed suit, especially when one also considers the difference in domestic trends. In San Francisco, 41 percent of Scottish males reported that they lived with a spouse, while in Sacramento, the percentage had doubled from the previous enumeration to 23 percent (Figure 1.28). The discrepancy between the two cities reflected the fact that San Francisco’s urban centre had modernised much faster than the rest of California. With a population of over 55,000 in 1860, San Francisco now offered many familiar comforts to the Victorian nuclear family that much of the mining towns still lacked. As such, the number of Scottish family units increased to 238 in San Francisco compared to 57 in Sacramento. In San Francisco over a third of the Scottish population reported having child dependents, while in Sacramento, the representation was just over a fourth. This was a major change from the 1852 enumerations which reported only 15 percent of Scottish Argonauts with children in San Francisco and 10 percent in Sacramento (Figure 1.5).

Over the Gold Rush decade, Scots in California increasingly married into Anglo-American families which further suggests their integration into the dominant society (Figure 1.29). In 1850 and 1852, the Scots in Sacramento and San Francisco with spouses had a clear preference for Scottish or British partners. Indeed, as Albert Hurtado has observed, men looking for wives in Gold Rush California did not leave their racial, ethnic, and religious prejudices behind.94 Some of the Scottish Argonauts we follow in the ensuing chapters had obvious preferences. For instance, John James Hamilton never married while he was in California, but his failed attempts at courting a preacher’s daughter, and then an English woman, hinted at his ideal partnership.95 Hurtado also highlighted that for single men looking to settle in California, but

94 Hurtado, ‘Sex, Gender, Culture, and a Great Event’, 15.
95 Hamilton eventually married during his time in Chile in the 1860s. His wife was English.
unhappy with the local dating pool, it was not uncommon to send for brides abroad.⁹⁶ For example, when Robert Brownlee decided to remain in California, he found a Scottish wife in his brother’s sister-in-law, who resided back in Arkansas. Meanwhile, some men in California were happy as long as they found someone to love them back. In 1854, after five years in California with no luck, James Beith started to attend dancing classes to improve his desirability. At that point, he did not seem picky about his potential suitors: ‘As I have entered the field for Matrimony and intend marrying the first opportunity that presents itself. In the next ten years, the next four miles after that will be to find one that will have me.’⁹⁷ Yet despite his efforts, Beith remained a bachelor the rest of his life.

![Figure 1.28](image.jpg)

**Figure 1.28**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domestic Status of Scots – San Francisco and Sacramento, 1860</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family units*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average # of children per family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals listed w/ children</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Family units constitute at least one Scottish individual in a married couple or one Scottish head of household with a child.
Source: 1852 California Census

⁹⁶ Hurtado, ‘Sex, Gender, Culture, and a Great Event’, 14.
⁹⁷ James Beith, 1 September 1854, James Beith Letter Book, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 11.
By 1860 in San Francisco, the Scottish population that lived with their spouses were more likely to report an Anglo-American partner. Compared to 8 Scottish-American couples in 1852, 62 Scottish-American couples resided in San Francisco in 1860 (Figure 1.29). As previously mentioned, in earlier California censuses, it is more difficult to identify which Scottish Argonauts were married – and to whom – so a number of these unions could have preceded the Gold Rush. Nevertheless, the point stands that as more and more Scots decided to settle in California, their marriage patterns increasingly suggested their successful integration.
into the dominant Anglo-American community. As Charlotte Erickson demonstrated in her own study, British immigrants were more likely than other migrant groups to have American partners. Let us also not forget that this speaks of Anglo-Americans more willing to marry them, too. They were not only acceptable migrants to the dominant population, but acceptable spouses as well.

The Scottish occupational trends in 1860 continued to indicate a disproportionately skilled and adaptive workforce in California. First, the labourers in San Francisco’s Scottish workforce markedly decreased from 25 percent in 1852 to 11 percent in 1860 (Figure 1.30). Over the last eight years, thousands of Chinese and Irish newcomers had oversaturated the market for unskilled labour in the city. The noticeable decrease in Scottish labourers suggests that Scots in San Francisco responded to the evolving job climate and even progressed up the occupational ladder. In fact, in both cities, Scots reported a wider variety of jobs in 1860 compared to 1852. What is more, Scots adapted their career choices to the evolving infrastructures of each city. In San Francisco’s expanding metropolis, the range of mercantile and administrative professions soared in the Scottish workforce. Meanwhile, the Scottish workforce in Sacramento had shifted towards the agricultural sector. Over the last few years, Sacramento increased its focus on agriculture to gain more economic independence from San Francisco. From a complete absence of Scottish agricultural workers in 1850 to three in 1852, and finally to 28 in 1860, agricultural roles now represented 20 percent of Sacramento’s Scottish workforce. Comparatively, the figure for San Francisco was only 1 percent. Lenihan found a

98 Erickson, Invisible Immigrants, 72.
99 In California in 1860, labourers represented 12% of the workforce. Kennedy, Population of the United States in 1860, 35.
101 Terry, ‘German Immigrants in Sacramento’, 30.
similar pattern in the Scottish workforce in New Zealand, where the primary occupational sector varied in different provinces. For example, a much smaller representation of Scots were engaged in agriculture in the West Coast, compared to the rest of the country.\textsuperscript{102} Like San Francisco, the urban centres in New Zealand – Wellington and Auckland – had greater representation of Scottish professionals and tradesmen, even representing a higher proportion than the general population.\textsuperscript{103} Whether or not further research will expose similar patterns in other parts of the Scottish diaspora, it is clear that the Scottish workforce in both California and New Zealand was wide-ranging and responsive to the evolving economies and their respective demands.

\begin{figure}
\centering
\caption{Occupations of Scots – San Francisco & Sacramento, 1860}
\begin{tabular}{|l|c|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{Pre-industrial Tradesmen} & \textbf{San Francisco} & \textbf{Sacramento} & \textbf{San Francisco & Sacramento} \\
\hline
Carpenter & 100 (26\%) & 27 (20\%) & 127 (24\%) \\
Cabinet Maker & 25 & 3 & \\
Tailor & 4 & 2 & \\
Baker & 2 & 2 & \\
Blacksmith & 13 (1 Female) & 2 (1 Female) & \\
Painter & 7 & 8 & \\
Printer & 2 & 2 & \\
Shoemaker & 3 & & \\
Carriage Maker & 2 & 1 & \\
Moulder & 2 & 1 & \\
Cooper & 8 & & \\
Ink Maker & 3 & 2 & \\
Iron Moulder & 1 & & \\
Tinner & 1 & & \\
Butcher & 3 & & \\
Brickmaker & 2 & & \\
Furniture & 2 & & \\
Clothier & 1 & & \\
Plumber & 1 & & \\
Coppersmith & 1 & 1 & \\
Stonemason & 1 & 1 & \\
Dressmaker & 4 & & \\
Milliner & 2 (Females) & & \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{figure}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{102} Lenihan, \textit{From Alba to Aotearoa}, 139-41. \\
\textsuperscript{103} Ibid., 41.
\end{flushright}
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupations</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plasterer</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seamstress</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glazier</td>
<td>2 (F)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photographer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matchmaker</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upholsterer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chiffonier</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Industrial Tradesmen</strong></td>
<td>31 (8%)</td>
<td>4 (3%)</td>
<td>35 (7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineer</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machinist</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boiler Maker</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Apprentice to</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camphor Manufacturer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mill Borer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundry Man</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miller</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreman</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distiller</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marble Yard</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundry</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mercantile/Business Owners</strong></td>
<td>62 (16%)</td>
<td>23 (16%)</td>
<td>85 (16%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merchant</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Merchant</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real Estate Merchant</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stockdealer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salesman</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Storekeeper</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel Keeper</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel Owner</td>
<td></td>
<td>1 (F)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saloon Keeper</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lodging House</td>
<td>1 (F)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bar Keeper</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurant</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grocer</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confectioner</td>
<td>1 (F)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquors</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper Dealer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soda Water Maker</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gas Fitter</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camphor Dealer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bookseller</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobacco Dealer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dry Good Dealer</td>
<td>1 (F)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florist</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junk Business</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts/Education/Science</td>
<td>2 (1%)</td>
<td>2 (0.5%)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemist</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytical Chemist</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>3 (1%)</td>
<td>2 (1%)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawyer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physician</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Service</td>
<td>10 (3%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse</td>
<td>5 (1 Female)</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fireman</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policeman</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comp Bulletin Officer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dep. W.S. Surveyor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>22 (6%)</td>
<td>11 (8%)</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerk</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steward</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bookkeeper</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Agent</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broker</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Agent</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saloon Proprietor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance Co. Agent</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>27 (7%)</td>
<td>15 (11%)</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Servant</td>
<td>13 (Female)</td>
<td>6 (Females)</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gardener</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laundryman</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housekeeper</td>
<td>1 (Female)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook</td>
<td>5 (1 Female)</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>5 (1%)</td>
<td>28 (20%)</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ranchero</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ranchman</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmhand</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisherman</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm Labourer</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>5 (1%)</td>
<td>4 (3%)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shipping Agent</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Express Wagon</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omnibus Driver</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamster</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courier</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seamen</td>
<td>75 (19%)</td>
<td>4 (3%)</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mariner</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master Mariner</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Officer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ordinary Seaman</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ship Joiner</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ship Builder</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sailor</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boatman</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The occupational infrastructure of mining in California had also undergone a dramatic change. Over the Gold Rush decade, corporations and wage workers replaced the abundance of independent prospectors in the diggings.¹⁰⁴ From representing three-quarters of California’s workforce in 1850, miners dropped to represent just above a third in 1860.¹⁰⁵ The Scottish workforce in Sacramento followed suit with 30 percent of miners in 1852, to only eight percent in 1860. (Figure 1.30). Further, an increase in the number of Scottish miners in San Francisco validates that Scots encompassed a range of positions in California’s transformed mining sector. Individuals could state their wealth in the 1860 census, which makes it possible to identify those higher up in the corporate sector of mining from those who laboured in the diggings as wage workers. Duncan McKay, for example, was a 29-year-old Scottish miner who reported $30,000

¹⁰⁴ Jung, ‘Capitalism Comes to the Diggings’, 53.
¹⁰⁵ Miners represented 38 percent of the workforce. Kennedy, Population of the United States in 1860, 35.
worth of real estate. Enumerators recorded him living in San Francisco’s Second District with an Irish servant and an English merchant and his wife. Located on the outskirts of the central business centre, McKay’s neighbourhood was a ‘fashionable’ area preferred by the middle-class. Meanwhile, on the other end of the mining spectrum, a 25-year-old Scotsman named Arch Downie resided in the notorious Third District to the south. Unlike McKay, he reported no wealth as a miner and shared a household with two Polish men, a merchant and a sailor. Considered a ‘bad neighbourhood’ at the time, the Third District encompassed San Francisco’s rumoured criminal hangouts of Sydney Valley and Telegraph Hill.

Furthermore, the 1860 census is especially useful because it divided both cities into their respective neighbourhoods. Geographically, the Scottish population in both San Francisco and Sacramento did not cluster into ethnic groups. Instead, Scottish inhabitants were vastly scattered throughout each city. This contrasts with Lenihan’s finding of various ‘pockets of Scottish settlements’ throughout New Zealand during the same time period. In San Francisco, more Scots resided in the First, Second, Ninth, and Tenth districts, while those present in the remaining neighbourhoods were fewer in number but roughly distributed (Figure 1.31). The First District, otherwise known as the central business district, was the financial hub of the city. Meanwhile, the Ninth and Tenth Districts, which shared the boundaries of Market and Second Street, were primarily occupied by the working class. The census data from Sacramento suggests a similar pattern of distribution (Figure 1.32). Scots populated all four wards within the city boundaries, but a higher concentration resided in the First and Fourth Wards. The First Ward was the most densely populated and financially active part of Sacramento, while the Fourth

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107 Ibid.
108 Lenihan, From Alba to Aotearoa, 61-91.
Ward housed Capital Park and an expanding residential area. Meanwhile, in Sacramento’s outlying townships, which primarily consisted of mining and farming territories, the Scottish inhabitants distributed themselves fairly evenly. Altogether, the census data suggests that the location of Scottish residences was more dependent on occupation and financial status, rather than ethnic identity.

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The enumeration data of Scots in San Francisco and Sacramento suggests a high level of Scottish integration in Gold Rush society. In addition to their marital and settlement trends, Scots’ occupational patterns indicate that despite being foreign, Scots could prosper in California. Their skilled workforce and low unemployment rate not only uphold a known trend in the Scottish diaspora but points to their level of inclusion Gold Rush society. Furthermore, because the Scottish population in California was small in number, particularly in the mining territories, Anglo-Americans in California had little incentive to brand the Scottish presence as a threat. Indeed, Scots’ demographic trends suggested nothing that prompted nativist aggressions – such as large population, living and working in ethnic clusters, and appearing to have a high representation in the lower classes of society. All told, the Scottish demographics of San Francisco and Sacramento suggest that the vast majority of Scots were accepted as foreigners and successfully integrated members of Gold Rush society.

Finally, of all the Scottish individuals recorded in either the 1850 or 1852 census enumerations, only around 50 reappear in 1860. To be sure, these individuals represent only a small fraction of the Scottish Argonauts who ultimately chose to settle in California. Remember, the Gold Rush population was largely transient, especially within the state itself. Argonauts ventured to multiple locations throughout California in their search of prospects, and in addition to the fact that more continued to arrive in California after 1852, the level of Scottish persistence is near impossible to judge. Nevertheless, it is apparent that the majority of Scottish Argonauts did the same as the rest of the Argonaut population – eventually returned home or continued their search for better opportunity elsewhere. As the 1852 census demonstrated, most

There are additional factors that account for the low persistence rate: the missing 1850 federal census records for San Francisco; inconsistencies with name recordings and transcriptions; and the difficulty that comes with identifying separate individuals with a common name.
Scots originally left for California from places other than Scotland. This group of Argonauts, rather, much of the Scottish diaspora, were already a mobile people by nature.

**Conclusion**

On the whole, the demographics of the Scottish community in California were a product of the Gold Rush environment and a distinctive national diaspora. While Scottish Argonauts shared many commonalities with the wider Gold Rush community, they also exhibited some trends that are more commonly associated with the Scottish diaspora. At the outset, California predominantly appealed to young and unattached men eager for opportunity. This was true of the Scottish population of San Francisco and Sacramento, where young single men were proportionately the most represented group. In 1850, 1852, and 1860, the overall Scottish age, gender, and domestic trends in San Francisco and Sacramento closely aligned with those of the general population. Meanwhile, the Scottish workforce in California stood in stark contrast. Instead of following the majority who took up mining, Scottish Argonauts were employed in an array of skilled and in-demand occupations. Devine’s argument, which contends that a distinction of the Scottish diaspora is its richness of social capital, is also true for Gold Rush California.\(^{112}\)

One of the ways in which the Gold Rush is significant to the Scottish diaspora is that it brought many of its far-flung migrants together in one place. The various localities represented in this study not only substantiate the extensive global presence of Scots in the nineteenth century but also highlights migrants’ transient nature and capacity for movement. As the majority of Scottish Argonauts were transmigrants who had settled elsewhere before venturing to

\(^{112}\)Devine, *To the Ends of the Earth*, 143.
California, their backgrounds defy generalisation. The demographic data presented in this study, with Scottish Argonauts grouped by their last place of residence, provides valuable insights into Scots’ circumstances in the places they left behind, as well as suggesting possible motives for their initial emigration from Scotland and later remigration to California. As this chapter has shown, Scottish Argonauts came to California under a wide variety of circumstances: whether first-time emigrants from Scotland, as husbands leaving their wives behind across the United States, as family units from the Antipodes, as merchants and traders from Latin America, or as sailors that happened to catch gold fever when their ship docked at San Francisco Bay. Yet altogether, their demographics suggest an integrated, if not scattered, Scottish community in Gold Rush California.
Chapter 2

‘A Perfect Mania’: Scotland’s Reception of the California Gold Rush

In late July 1850, the Scotsman announced a new attraction in Edinburgh that had recently arrived from the ‘diggings’ of California. At Messrs Mackay and Chisholm’s, a jeweller on North Bridge, passers-by could observe a sample of the gold that had driven the world mad. According to the Scotsman, the specimen was in its original state and of ‘remarkable purity’, weighing in at a substantial three pounds.1 Meanwhile, update after update circulated in Scotland that California continued to yield abundant amounts of gold. In June, for example, the Scotsman relayed to its readers that California’s ‘supplies of gold seem to be as unfailing as ever.’2 Later in September, the newspaper reported that the most recent intelligence from the mines was ‘of the most flattering character…The amount of gold becomes greater every day’.3 More than a year after the official rush started, California was still a hot topic in Scotland.

This chapter investigates the reception of the California Gold Rush in Scotland through the lens of the Scottish press. An open attitude towards migration in Scotland made Scots receptive to, and interested in, information from and about California. As explained in the introduction, the Gold Rush occurred during a pivotal demographic transformation in Scotland, which had amplified social tensions and competition for work.4 Despite the expansion of skill in the country’s workforce, Scotland had the lowest average wage in the United Kingdom and the vast majority of the Scottish population, over seventy percent, remained on the bottom of the

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1 Scotsman, 27 July 1850.
2 Scotsman, 19 June 1850.
3 Scotsman, 25 September 1850.
4 Devine, To the Ends of the Earth, 63.
social ladder. For many Scots, sourcing a job or a better income meant moving. In the British 1851 census, a third of the Scottish population had relocated at least outside their home county. T.M. Devine has suggested that Scots’ high mobility abroad was an extension of their habits at home. This pattern of movement influenced much of the public discourse around Scotland, where migration and access to information on it became a normality. In effect, argues Devine, the migratory tendencies in Scotland fostered ‘an informed and mobile population which had access to sources of information such as newspapers, letters from relatives and intelligence from returned migrants that enabled judgements about emigration to be considered.’ Accordingly, when the Gold Rush came to occupy public attention, accessible information on California abounded in Scotland.

In addition to shedding light on the making of Argonauts in Scotland, this chapter explores the relationship between the Scottish public and its international diaspora. Scottish newspapers fully narrated the Gold Rush mania in Scotland and fostered much of it too. The first outlet to spread word of California’s gold on a nation-wide scale, Scottish newspapers shared local insights on the progression of gold fever across Scotland. Significantly, newspapers also acted as diasporic agents and provided a wealth of valuable information for prospective Argonauts. Newsprint in Scotland relayed the latest intelligence on the occupational climate and living situations in California so potential migrants could better weigh their options. They also informed readers of reputable and up-to-date resources through their advertisements and reviews of emigrants’ guidebooks. The most notable newspaper content, however, was personal

6 Devine, To the Ends of the Earth, 73.
7 Ibid., 100.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid., 101.
correspondence from Scottish Argonauts. During the Gold Rush, periodicals across Scotland published a variety of letters from Scots in California. To prospective Argonauts, these accounts were both credible and encouraging, as they helped build familiarity with ‘El Dorado’ by painting a vignette of what it was to be Scottish in Gold Rush California.

Furthermore, as this chapter later argues, these newspaper letters and their various agents – the writers and their friends and family, newspaper editors, and readers – exemplify the mechanisms of an active diaspora. ‘Letters’, argues William Jones, ‘were the medium by which immigrants and their homeland correspondents created a transnational social space in which to reformulate their relationships.’ Their subsequent publication in the press, Jones adds, ‘represents a significant public manifestation of the phenomenon of transnationality.’

The intermediaries involved in the publication of Scottish Argonaut letters effectively reinstated emigrants’ voices in Scotland’s public realm. Oceans away, Scottish Argonauts provided frequent updates on California and shaped public debates on migration. As this chapter demonstrates, published migrant letters upheld and strengthened the notion of an international Scottish community.

**Gold Fever Arrives in Scotland**

On 19 September 1848, the *Hibernia* steamship started on a routine voyage from the New York harbour. Headed across the Atlantic Ocean for Liverpool, England, her journey would span almost two weeks. As usual, the vessel carried the recent Sunday edition of the *New York Herald*. A publication dubbed the ‘first successful popular transatlantic newspaper of the century’, the *Herald* was one of the more trustworthy sources on American affairs for newspaper

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agents in Britain. Nevertheless, British newspapers such as the London Times were careful to reprint excerpts from the American media in their foreign affairs section, quick to ignore any accounts hinting of sensationalism. Indeed, when the initial reports of California gold arrived in Britain weeks before, editors had passed over them. Visible gold lining miles and miles of the Californian riverbeds exemplified precisely the type of embellishment that British observers came to associate with the American press.

This time, the Herald’s update on the state of affairs in California included correspondence direct from the source. Dated ‘California, July 1st’, a letter acknowledged that spreading rumours presented ‘facts stronger than fiction’. Yet ‘Paisano’, who identified himself as the writer, confirmed the accounts of plentiful gold. Entire towns, he reported, had been abandoned for the outlying riverbanks. The whole population of California had contracted gold fever.

On the second of October, the Hibernia anchored in Liverpool’s busy harbour. As dock workers unloaded her cargo, they transferred the Herald so that it could continue the rest of its journey overland. The newspaper arrived by train in London later that day. Now in the hands of various newsagents, those representing the more credible papers such as the Times again passed over what they saw as hyperbolic accounts. Instead, this intelligence from California was perfect for London’s sensationalist press — the dailies.

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The first printed report of the California Gold Rush in Britain appeared the following morning in the Tuesday edition of The London Daily Newspaper. Under the foreign affairs section on the second page, the Daily recounted the ‘highly amusing’ update from California:

On some of the branches of the Sacramento River, those in particular called the “Feather and the Fork,” gold has recently been discovered in quantities scarcely credible. It is found in the sands of the shores of these rivers, in grain varying from the size of a mustard-shot to that of nearly an ounce in weight. So abundant is this gold, and so extensive are the districts where it is found, that the whole American population of California has repaired to the banks of these rivers.13

Although the Daily did not attach much seriousness to the report, it would inspire other news outlets across Britain to pick up on the development. That Friday, publications in Manchester and Yorkshire chimed in on the California gossip, as well as more dailies in London.14 Of these, The Manchester Guardian was the first major regional newspaper in Britain to report the supposed mania in the newest US territory. It cautioned its readers, however; declaring ‘How far credence is to be attached to his accounts, we must leave our readers to decide for themselves’.

The following week in Scotland, a newspaper in the Highlands first published the news on California. On the seventh of October, The Nairnshire Mirror dedicated a mere two sentences on the subject amongst its foreign updates:

In California gold is said to have been discovered in large quantities in the sand of various rivers, to which the whole American population of the country have removed for the purpose of collecting it. The excitement on this subject is quite unusual.15

Nairn, the place of publication, was an active port for British and foreign trade.16 The intelligence from California most likely arrived by sea from another British port, rather than by

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13 The Daily News, 3 October 1848.
14 The Manchester Guardian, 4 October 1848; Hull Advertiser and Exchange Gazette, 6 October 1848; London Evening Standard, 6 October 1848; The Morning Chronicle, 6 October 1848.
15 The Nairnshire Mirror, 7 October 1848.
land. On the ninth, the following Monday, an Edinburgh daily publication introduced the Gold Rush to the Scottish capital. ‘A perfect mania for gold collecting’, reported the *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, ‘is said to pervade society, from the lowest to the highest class.’ Nevertheless, even the sensationalist newspapers voiced their suspicions. The *Courant* of Edinburgh and the *Morning Chronicle* of London both shared the opinion that ‘very keen but dishonest’ land speculators were behind the claims of gold.¹⁷ For the time being, British newspaper editors encouraged their readership to remain sceptical.

As it was, on the same day that Edinburgh first published news on the Gold Rush, the *Hibernia’s* bigger sister arrived in Liverpool with the latest *New York Herald*. This issue featured a two-column span on California, including another letter from ‘Paisano’ as well as a variety of first-hand accounts from the diggings.¹⁸ The reports claimed that in the mining districts, ordinary men using only a tin pan and shovel earned as much as $128 a day.¹⁹ Meanwhile, with most of the population off to the mines, tradesmen such as carpenters and blacksmiths earned at least twice as much in California as those back on the East Coast. With murmurs already circulating Britain, the nation’s major newspapers could no longer ignore the developing mania in California.

On the tenth of October, the *Times* finally succumbed to the rumours and printed a small extract from the *Herald’s* feature on California.²⁰ Yet the editors provided no comment on the matter as Britain had more important issues to report. In addition to heightened national tensions because of The Youth Irelander Rebellion in July, another disastrous outbreak of cholera threatened the British population. Events in Europe also dominated the headlines as

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¹⁷ *Edinburgh Evening Courant*, 9 October 1848; *The Morning Chronicle*, 6 October 1848.
¹⁹ *Ibid*.
²⁰ *Times*, 10 October 1848.
revolutionary waves reverberated throughout the continent. In stark contrast, the possibility of a real ‘El Dorado’ amid all this turmoil caught and held the attention of the British public. Thus, when the Times finally reported the intelligence from California, the story started to gain real traction across the United Kingdom.

That week, more newspapers across Britain followed suit. Three days after the Times, the Glasgow Herald broke the news on California to its readers.21 The next day, the Scotsman in Edinburgh quoted the letter from ‘Paisano’ with a preface that stated: ‘California seems to realise the old dreams of Eldorado’.22 The following week, news of gold in California had spread throughout Scotland, from its southernmost county of Dumfries and Galloway which extended into the Irish Sea, to the north-eastern tip of the Scottish Highlands at John o’ Groats.23

As news coverage on California swelled to reflect public interest, newspaper editors on both sides of the Atlantic approached the accounts with wariness. In its initial report, the Glasgow Herald included a note of advisory from the New York Herald that stated, ‘We need hardly observe that it is necessary to view these statements with great caution.’24 In Scotland, like the rest of the world, newspapers flip-flopped on the reality of ‘El Dorado’ in California. In November, for example, the Scotsman announced that the gold in California was a hoax, claiming that the gold ore was only yellow mica.25 Yet when more correspondence arrived a month later the Scotsman’s interest in California became more enthusiastic: ‘It appears from

21 Glasgow Herald, 13 October 1848.
22 Both the Glasgow Herald and the Scotsman were not yet dailies. Each paper had a set bi-weekly publishing schedule, so it is not fair to say that one took the news to heart faster than the other; The Scotsman, 14 October 1848.
23 Greenock Advertiser, 17 October 1848; Fife Herald, 19 October 1848; Perthshire Advertiser, 12 October 1848; Dundee, Perth, and Cupar Advertiser, 17 October 1848; Aberdeen Press and Journal, 18 October 1848; Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser, 24 October 1848; Dumfries and Galloway Standard, 25 October 1848; John o’ Groats Journal, 20 October 1848.
24 Glasgow Herald, 13 October 1848.
25 Scotsman, 18 November 1848.
these documents, that the value of the gold mines in that region has scarcely been overrated, even by the most sanguine of the many adventurers in mining.\textsuperscript{26} Despite the change in tune, new doubts took over on whether or not the supply of gold would continue in abundance. This is what kept the rest of the United States, Scotland, and the world from going to California themselves.

Meanwhile, the White House had received verification from the military governor of California, Colonel Richard Mason, that the rumours were true:

\begin{quote}
I could not bring myself to believe the reports that I heard of the wealth of the gold district until I visited it myself. I have no hesitation now in saying that there is more gold in the country drained by the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers than will pay the cost of the present war with Mexico a hundred times over.\textsuperscript{27}
\end{quote}

To strengthen his claims, 230 ounces of gold accompanied the report. On the fifth of December, President James K. Polk announced Mason’s findings as part of his annual address to Congress. The following day, the \textit{New York Herald} printed the President’s confirmation in its entirety. While the official word sparked gold fever across the American East Coast, a steamship carried more issues of the \textit{Herald} across the Atlantic. When they arrived a fortnight later in Scotland, as it happened throughout the United States and Britain, the attraction to California’s prospects finally overcame doubt.

To better understand the dissemination of Gold Rush news in Scotland, it is useful to present a brief background on the inner-workings of the Scottish press. In the decades leading up to Marshall’s discovery, the Scottish press was disjointed from the affairs across the rest of Britain. Compared to major English newspapers such as the \textit{Times}, which circulated throughout England with the help of sufficient railway networks, Scotland’s limited transit networks promoted more regional news outlets. As a result, Scottish urban centres established their own

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext{26}{\textit{Scotsman}, 16 December 1848.}
\end{footnotes}
newspapers with a primary focus on local issues and a secondary focus on Britain and the Empire. By the mid-nineteenth century, Scottish new outlets were more up to date with the affairs down south as transit and communication technology improved. More than ever, Scottish newspapers supplemented their pages with extracts from major southern news outlets, mainly on Parliament and the state of the Empire. Indeed, Scots were very much involved with being ‘British’ and supporting the Empire (this further demonstrated by Scottish Argonauts in the fifth chapter). Nevertheless, Scottish newspapers retained a distinctive Scottish character with a focus on local and national interests such as religion and education. Their readership reflected this. Even as dispatch and transit times shortened between England and Scotland, Scots remained loyal to their local Scottish publications. The most populated cities in Scotland — Edinburgh, Glasgow, Aberdeen, and Dundee — continued to circulate the majority of the nation’s newspapers. Similarly, in his study of the Welsh press in the nineteenth century, Aled Jones argued that the expansion of the Welsh press during the mid-nineteenth century drove a sharper distinction between the public spheres in Wales and the rest of Britain. There existed ‘a shift towards a definition of Wales as a place which had its own public sphere…that emphasized both Wales’s territorial autonomy from, and its political and other connections, with England.’

More broadly, the proliferation of the press throughout Britain enhanced the level of discourse in the public sphere and created new channels of international, national, and local awareness. Despite the improved connections between British news outlets in the mid-nineteenth century, the English, Welsh, and Scottish press remained forums of local discourse. Therefore, produced

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by and for Scots, Scottish newspapers are a legitimate medium through which to assess Scottish popular interests and attitudes.

Scottish newspapers are a valuable source to this study because they provide a Scottish voice in response to the events in California. On the eve of the Gold Rush, there were about 80 newspapers throughout Scotland. Of them, the Glasgow Herald and the Scotsman had the largest readerships. While readership numbers are low compared to modern standards, for example, the Scotsman recorded 2,900 subscribers in 1850, both the Scotsman and Glasgow Herald had a national impact. The smaller news outlets throughout Scotland often looked to the major Scottish newspapers for content, frequently supplementing their reports word for word. As the Scotsman and Glasgow Herald acted as hubs of information for newspapers around Scotland, their passages provide a good indication of what the nation as a whole reported and consumed. Additionally, while newspaper’s political leanings are usually essential to keep in mind, the discussion that follows demonstrates that the Scottish press were unanimous in how they reported the Gold Rush. Scottish newspapers responded to the demands of its readers for factual and trustworthy updates and reported extensively on the happenings in California and the diggings. As this chapter will reveal, sometimes there was an obvious effort by letter-writers to either encourage or discourage emigration to California. The Scottish press amplified a wide

30 Newspapers often supplemented their content on the US with reports from American periodicals. While these inclusions demonstrate trust in the source, in as much to relay the information to its readers, a British or Scottish opinion on the matter is sometimes difficult to pin down. Care has been taken to focus on Scottish-authored sources. Regardless, the inclusion of Gold Rush news in Scottish newspapers meant that newspaper editors in Scotland anticipated and responded to the interests of its readers.
34 At the time, critics considered the Scotsman a leading liberal publication, while the Glasgow Herald belonged to the conservative camp. Cowan, The Newspaper in Scotland, 281, 287.
variety of first-hand Argonaut accounts and showed no inclination towards publishing more successful or disastrous Gold Rush experiences.

Of course, a country’s literacy rates limited the reach and impact of written information. Although Scotland in the mid-nineteenth century had the highest literacy rate in Britain, literacy alone did not grant citizens access to newsprint. Before the 1850s, newspapers incurred high ‘taxes on knowledge’ that they reflected in their selling price. To make up for their own taxes from paper, stamps, and advertisements, news outlets charged their consumers an average of seven pence per issue. This expense limited its subscribers to the upper classes, but to be sure, this did not mean that the lower classes in Scotland were entirely excluded from newspaper content. One could get a hold of a copy at coffee or public houses, often with the price of a drink or meal. As for the non-literates or working men and women, they most likely heard the latest news announcements to and from work; and at the workplace, it was common for someone to recite the day’s newspapers while they worked. With this in mind, it is not hard to accept A. Aspinwall’s claim that ‘every copy of a newspaper in Great Britain as a whole was read by perhaps twenty-five persons on average.’

Coincidently, a revolution among the Scottish press was underway as gold began to funnel out of California. During the 1850s, the Scottish press flourished in production, variety, and readership. Editors in Scotland had challenged the ‘taxes on knowledge’ and eventually caused their removal. As a result, the Scottish population had improved access to newspaper

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37 Newspapers were also available in libraries, however, these too were limited in access. Membership was not free and usually cost a Guinea annually. A. Aspinall, ‘The Circulation of Newspapers in the Early Nineteenth Century’, *The Review of English Studies* 22, no. 85 (1946): 30.  
40 The Advertisement duty ended in 1853, the Stamp Tax in 1855, and the Paper Duty in 1860.
content. *The Scotsman*, at four and a half pence per issue, was not out of reach for those with a small amount of disposable income.\(^{41}\) By 1860, the number of publications and readership figures doubled in Scotland, signalling a more informed population than ever before. \(^{42}\) To be sure, the lower classes of society still had limited access to public and international information. Yet although members of the lower classes were the least likely to pursue any dreams of reaching California, we should not discount them from the discussion. As this chapter demonstrates, the California Gold Rush was a national obsession.

To properly gauge the hold that California came to have on the Scottish public, it is useful to discuss its prior reputation in Britain. Indeed, it was not the Gold Rush that initially put California on the map of British interests. After Mexico gained independence from Spain in 1821, the new republic relaxed its trading and settlement policies. In the two decades that followed, Britain took advantage of the new jurisdictions. Its interests focused the territory of California, where British sailors, merchants, and trappers had become accustomed to its far-reaching shoreline on the Pacific. Now with improved access, a string of government and privately funded expeditions left Britain for California. For many Scots that later went to the Gold Rush, they had grown up with a certain image of California depicted by British explorers and naturalists. As these expeditionary teams sent word back to Britain, the press kept the public informed of the discoveries. British scientists classified California’s landscape as paradisiac and ‘perfectly healthy’. \(^{43}\) Meanwhile, explorers depicted a territory inhabited by native Californios and a growing population of white settlers. The latter reportedly lived in ranchos granted by the

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\(^{41}\) One pound in today’s standards. The National Archives currency calculator.


Mexican government, in hopes that they would help ‘civilise’ the area. To British observers, California had a reputation as a land with great potential, a potential that could only be brought to fruition by the Anglo-Saxon race.

California’s longevity as a Mexican territory was uncertain, especially as the local white, mainly Anglo-American presence grew ever more proactive against the constantly changing government. Britain too had imperial interests in California, but it kept them quiet in observance of the United States’ intentions to fulfil its Manifest Destiny. After all, Manifest Destiny was merely an offshoot of a popular British sentiment of Anglo-Saxon superiority. In July 1845, the Scotsman voiced its support for the American cause in California:

Almost every town and village in the western and south-western states are sending forth their bands of hardy enterprising settlers. Many of these emigrants who had originally designed to seek their fortunes in the Oregon territory, are turning aside towards California, and there is no room to doubt that, in a very few years, a strong and prosperous American population will occupy the best portions of that smiling and fertile regions. Thus surely and rapidly is the Anglo-Saxon race on this continent fulfilling its destiny.

Accordingly, the British press supported the American cause when revolutionaries began to take action in Upper California later that year. The Scotsman even raised an eyebrow at Mexico gearing for war against the United States, suggesting “If it was beaten by the Texians when standing alone, how can it fight them when backed by the people of the United States!” When

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44 A small community of Scots had settled in Hispanic California, married into native families and claimed their own ranchos. See Martha Vought’s ‘Scots in Hispanic California’. Also, see Burchell, ‘The Loss of a Reputation; or, the Image of California in Britain before 1875’, California Historical Quarterly 53, no. 2 (1974).
45 The Mexican government was in debt to Britain, having taken out two separate multi-million dollar loans during the 1820s. The annexation of California to Britain was a possible debt negotiation until the Mexican-American War. See Lester G. Engelson, ‘Proposals for the Colonization of California by England: In Connection with the Mexican Debt to British Bondholders 1837-1846’, California Historical Society Quarterly 18, no. 2 (1939).
46 Scotsman, 2 July 1845.
47 Scotsman, 3 September 1845.
tensions eventually escalated into the Mexican-American War, the conflict did not tarnish California’s positive image in the Scottish press. In the summer of 1846, for example, the *Scotsman* reprinted extracts from Alfred Robinson’s *Life in California* that featured Scotsman who had gone to California themselves.  

A year later in 1847, as the war against Mexico continued, the *Scotsman* advised its readers of a new traveller’s account throughout the interior of California.  

Before the Gold Rush, and even while warfare endangered the territory, the Scottish press enticed its readers to imagine the potentials of California.

The British press continued to follow affairs in California after the US and Mexico signed the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848. Before word of gold crossed the Atlantic and changed the image of California forever, over the years its reputation had remained much the same. In September, a month before gold rush rumours reached Britain the *Scotsman* predicted what the annexation of California would bring to the American people: ‘With a territory, at least in places, highly fruitful, a climate free from the noxiousness of the opposite coast, and a temperature not otherwise than equable, they can hardly fail a return from their labour’.  

Ironically, the newspaper thought that an abundant presence of silver, not gold, would be California’s primary export.  

For Scots looking for opportunity elsewhere, pre-Gold Rush California already had some things going for it. And now, finally in the hands of fellow Anglo-Saxons, the territory could flourish.

On New Year’s Day 1849, Scottish newspapers began to circulate Colonel Mason’s official report from California.  

Within weeks, Gold Rush fever had taken hold of Scotland.

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48 *Scotsman*, 25 July 1846.  
49 *Scotsman*, 30 June 1847.  
50 *Scotsman*, 20 September 1848.  
51 *Scotsman*, 20 September 1848. Other British newspapers also reported this stipulation. Burchell, ‘The Loss of a Reputation’, 118.  
52 *Glasgow Herald*, 1 January 1849.
Newspaper features on California spanned columns and surpassed the usual attention given to foreign and domestic affairs. Mentions of California in newspapers increased exponentially, and the territory even gained its own heading in the foreign affairs page. From barely a couple dozen hits the previous year, ‘California’ appeared in almost every issue of the *Scotsman* in 1849 (Figure 2.1). In several instances, the newspaper acknowledged the popular demand for frequent updates on California even when they did not have any. Updates such as ‘no later news from California’ assured their readers that they still maintained a close eye on the territory. Robert Cowan, in his pioneering study on nineteenth-century newspapers in Scotland, claimed that before the Civil War the Scottish press rarely dedicated more than a paragraph on American affairs. Instead, it was the California Gold Rush that marked the turning point of Scottish newspaper coverage on the United States.

### 2.1 Mentions of ‘California’ in Issues of the *Scotsman*

![Bar chart showing mentions of California in issues of the Scotsman](chart.png)

*Source: ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Scotsman*

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53 *Scotsman*, 18 July 1849.
54 *Scotsman*, 20 June 1849.
Straightaway, the Scottish press spread accounts of their countrymen’s involvement in the Gold Rush. Over the next few years, these accounts would become a popular feature in Scottish newspapers. On the eleventh of January, reports started to circulate that a ship had already departed from Greenock for California. The Inverness Courier, which originated the report, stated that ‘a number of “navies”’ were on board, ‘armed with a due supply of spades and smelting pots.’56 Less than one week later, another account in the Aberdeen Journal stated that a local man had already made his California fortune without even leaving Scotland. Reportedly, the Aberdonian had shipped 1,200 spades to ‘the new El Dorado’ and had ‘netted £4000 by the spec.’57 To onlookers in Scotland, their countrymen were already participating in the mania, some of them seeing success.

Come February, more candid accounts of the conditions in California reached Britain. Readers in Scotland learned that the prospectors lacked food and shelter and had taken on a ragged appearance. Despite this, readers also learned that many of these miners carried small personal fortunes of gold.58 For those interested in trying their hand at mining in the diggings, Scottish newspapers presented an array of resources and opportunities. A prime example is the Scotsman’s advertisement section on 14 February 1849. In the shipping notices a listing announced an upcoming voyage of the Jansen from Leith to San Francisco. Jon Broadfoot & Son, the shipping broker, directed interested parties to apply by the end of the month.59 Two columns over, another listing informed readers of an upcoming lecture on California at Edinburgh’s Music Hall. The speaker, David T. Anstead, was a professor of Geology at King’s

56 Inverness Courier, 11 January 1849; Scotsman, 19 January 1849.
57 Aberdeen Journal, 17 January 1849.
58 Glasgow Herald, 3 February 1849.
59 Scotsman, 14 February 1849.
College London and had recently authored a new guidebook, *The Goldseeker’s Manual*.\(^{60}\)

Finally, California also made its way into the personal ads. Here, twenty-three-year-old Alexander Forbes announced that he sought investors to assist his entrepreneurial venture in California. An aspiring businessman, Forbes would later establish a successful import business in San Francisco.\(^{61}\) Newspapers, and especially their adverts, reflected the public interest in California. That several mentions of California should appear in a single newspaper issue suggests many in Scotland had already succumbed to Gold Fever.

Local newspaper reports also help paint a picture of how the Gold Rush craze affected Scottish popular culture. In Edinburgh, entrepreneurs and entertainers quickly latched on to the mania for profit. In April a local vaudeville company added a new act to their programme, a sketch entitled ‘Cocknies in California! Or, a Run upon the Grand Metallic Gold Dust Banks of Sacramento.’\(^{62}\) The following month on The Mound, entrepreneurs installed a panorama featuring moving images of California. From within a massive rotunda, guests could view projected images of Monterey, San Francisco and Sacramento with accompanying music and commentary. The entertainment was a form of early cinema and could even be called Scotland’s first proper western.\(^{63}\) With an affordable entry fee of one shilling, this provided a chance for Scots who could not afford passage to California to experience the Gold Rush themselves. In fact, the California panorama was so well-received that it returned for a second run at the end of the year.\(^{64}\)

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\(^{60}\) *Scotsman*, 14 February 1849; The 28 February edition of the Scotsman included a recap of the lecture, for those who could not attend.

\(^{61}\) Judging by his entry in the California census of 1860, Forbes’ early establishment as a merchant in San Francisco proved to be a wise venture. Forbes occupation was listed as an ‘importer’, had since married an Englishwoman, and had been joined by his brother, Charles.

\(^{62}\) *Scotsman*, 11 April 1849.

\(^{63}\) *Scotsman*, 5 May 1849.

\(^{64}\) *Scotsman*, 29 Dec 1849.
The Scots’ fixation on the Gold Rush even led to some claiming their own El Dorado in Scotland. Soon after California made headlines, some Elgin residents turned to investigate their own territory. In April, The Elgin Courant stipulated that a barren tract of land on the outskirts of the city might ‘lead to the discovery of riches equalled only by the diggings’ in California. As expected, nothing came of it, but this did not stop Scots wishing for their own Gold Rush. The next year in 1850, the Stirling Observer reported that rumours of a ‘Highland California’ in the Cairngorm mountain range had since disappointed over 200 hopefuls that travelled there to find gold. In Scotland, California became such a desired destination that its citizens attempted to imagine the fertile, golden landscape as their own.

Meanwhile, the Scottish press advised its readers of the various ways one could make their California dream both a reality and a success. Prospective migrants could look to newspapers to direct them towards useful information on joining the California Gold Rush. Wildly popular at the time were travellers’ accounts which initially existed as a source of entertainment. Once gold fever spread throughout Scotland, however, their purpose expanded. In turn, Scottish newspapers started touting their usefulness as guides and often quoted extracts. In February, for example, the Inverness Courier reviewed the available selection of California literature and affirmed to its readers that they only put forth the most credible:

the “Californian fever” continues to display itself in individual cases in this country…This fresh information from the land of promise reminds us of a pledge…

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65 The Elgin Courant and Morayshire Advertiser, 13 April 1849.
66 The Elgin Courant, 13 April 1849.
67 Stirling Observers, 19 September 1850.
68 Scottish newspapers during 1849 mentioned the following books available for purchase: Joseph E. Ware, Ware’s Guide to California, (St. Louis, 1849); Edwin Bryant, What I Saw in California (Philadelphia, 1849); J. Tyrwhitt Brooks, Four Months Among the Gold Finders (London, 1849); David Anstead, The Gold-Seeker’s Manual (London, 1849); William Thurston, Guide to the gold regions of Upper California (London, 1849).
69 Scotsman, 21 February 1849; Inverness Courier, 22 February 1849; Inverness Courier, 1 February 1849; Scotsman, 11 April 1849; Scotsman, 2 May 1849.
provide our local readers with a column or two of interesting matter from the numberless works on California that already team from the press.\(^70\)

As it turns out, the book they endorsed, *Four Months Among the Gold-Finders*, was revealed as a fictional account 40 years later.\(^71\) In hindsight, however, the account did provide more of an accurate representation of California than not. *Four Months Among the Gold-Finders* depicted violence and a rampant display of vices such as gambling and drinking that one could expect to find in the diggings. Notably, struggle and hardship dominated the account as much as discovered fortunes and success stories.

The more practical volumes that appeared that year, such as manuals and guidebooks, shared a similar pragmatism. One such was the aforementioned *Goldseeker’s Manual* by David Anstead. Although Anstead never travelled to California himself, his advice was a useful introduction to those unfamiliar with mining. He included tips on how to identify gold, and meticulously described how to mine it. Crucially, for those solely dependent on luck to find their fortune, Anstead made it apparent that hard work was a requisite in California. This level of practicality would become a prevalent theme in the array of information that Scots could access on the Gold Rush. While the following chapter discusses emigrants’ guidebooks in more detail, it is useful to introduce them. The United Kingdom imported guidebooks on California from the United States before more relevant volumes for British Argonauts appeared later in the year. Nevertheless, the American guidebooks still provided useful introductions such as what routes to take, what provisions to pack, and what to expect in California. Meanwhile, *California: Its past history; its present position; its future prospects*, published in London in 1850, is a suitable example of the type of California guidebook more relevant to a British audience. It included a

\(^70\) Inverness Courier, 22 February 1849.
\(^71\) Henry Vizetelly, *Four Months among the Gold-Finders in Alta California: Being the Diary of an Expedition from San Francisco to the Gold Districts* (London, 1849).
copy of the new state’s constitution and a practical overview of what to expect with mining. Its
soundest advice, however, had to do with other occupational pursuits in California:

the only proper emigrants to California, are steady, industrious workmen in all the useful
trades; persons with small capitals, accustomed to business; and those willing to work, who
do not object to the payment of a considerable sum for passage-money and outfit, and to
encounter a six months’ voyage, for the sake of being placed in a position where industry
and skill are certain to command a market, and a remunerative return. Gold-digging may
be left to the adventurous and the hardy. The steady tradesmen will, in the end, prove the
true gold-finder.72

In actuality, British guidebooks on California were not far off depicting the truth. This meant that
Scots had access to the right sort of guidance that made money in California—the notion of
‘mining the miners’. But that is not to say that they all followed it. As the following chapters
reveal, Scottish Argonauts, as much as any other Argonaut, had a hard time resisting the
temptation of mining for gold.

Despite being oceans away from California, prospective Argonauts in Scotland had
access to an expanding library of reputable resources. There was no question of accessibility
either, as those with the financial means to get to California could also afford the resources to
better inform them of their prospects. Indeed, the majority of California migrants, even from the
United States, were not poor.73 In 1849, a British guidebook stipulated that from New York to
San Francisco the cheapest route by sea cost around 350 US dollars.74 Working out to around 70
British pounds, the cost travel to California in 1849 required well over a year’s worth of wages
for the average working-class citizen in Scotland.75 At the time, 70 percent of the Scottish

72 E. A. Flemming, California: Its Past History; Its Present Position; Its Future Prospects (London,
1850), 231.
73 Rohrbough, Days of Gold, 35.
74 Thurston, Guide to the gold regions of Upper California, 71.
75 In 1849, the exchange rate of US dollars per British pound was $4.81. Lawrence H. Officer, ‘Dollar-
Pound Exchange Rate From 1791’, MeasuringWorth, 2020,
http://www.measuringworth.com/exchangepound/.
population earned less than £30 a year – this included both unskilled and a range of skilled workers as well. The next rung in the social ladder, who represented a further 20 percent of the Scottish population, would have also struggled to afford a voyage to California. This included the top of the lower class, who were mostly higher-skilled workers, and the bottom of the middle class. This group’s average annual income only peaked at £50. Realistically, only 10 percent of the Scottish population, representing the upper middle class and above, could afford a passage to California in 1849. Therefore, at least during the initial craze, becoming an Argonaut was out of reach for the majority in Scotland.

To be sure, there were options for Scots with less financial means to get to California. In many instances, prospective Argonauts relied on the help of their family members to fund their journeys or made agreements with ship captains to work their passages at a reduced rate. This was the case for a couple of our Argonauts whose accounts are presented in the following chapter. Newspapers in Scotland also advised its readers of another option, California companies. While the majority of these companies originated in England, Scottish newspapers provided information on their benefits and how to become a member. Two weeks after Colonel Mason’s report arrived in Scotland, the Scotsman advised its readers that several companies in London only required a five-pound membership fee for travel to the California mining districts. Essentially, these British-California companies were cooperatives where one gained admission by purchasing a share. In return, the shareholder gained passage to California with provisions and mining tools. Typically, their arrangements were supposed to continue in the mines where the company worked together and divided the total yield amongst themselves. However, the vast

77 Scotsman, 13 January 1849.
majority disbanded soon after their arrival to California. As a result, little more than their
existence is on record.78

As Scotland came to grips with the reality of El Dorado in California, the mining season
of 1849 had yet to begin. Prospective Argonauts in want of fresh updates on the output of the
diggings had to wait. In March, the Scotsman reprinted worrying correspondence from the
diggings, the most recent dated 25 December 1848. The accounts told of widespread fever and
disease as miners waited out the wet season. Murders were on the rise as increasing population
numbers heightened the sense of competition.79 Three days later, the Scotsman’s next issue
included another troubling account from the diggings which plainly stated: ‘I may say with truth,
that both person and property are insecure in Upper California at this time.’80

The next month, the Scottish press geared its readers for a steady stream of updates from
California. Having received word that the last winter freeze in California had finally thawed, the
Scotsman announced that the mining season of 1849 had officially kicked off: ‘the gold-seekers
are hastening back to the mines to resume this lucrative but severe and somewhat dangerous
labour.’81 Over the following months, California society took on a more chequered appearance in
the Scottish press as more and more Argonaut accounts travelled across the Atlantic. Meanwhile,
readers of Scottish newspapers observed the weekly progression of the new society from six
thousand miles away. In Scotland, updates from California proved to be popular – not only for

78 Newspaper content has confirmed at least one effort to form a California company in Scotland. On 9
June 1849, the Scotsman advised that the Scottish California Association had limited openings: ‘now only
Three Vacancies to fill up. Three respectable Young Men, of active and industrious habits, commanding
£50, may be admitted. This sum includes passage money, provisions for six months after arriving, and
full camp equipments.’
79 Scotsman, 7 March 1849; 10 March 1849.
80 Scotsman, 10 March 1849.
81 Scotsman, 21 April 1849.
the constant twists and turns similar to fictional entertainment but for the benefit of those interested in going there themselves.

While the certainty of California’s gold never wavered in the Scottish press, reports of the undesirable living conditions presented a stark contrast. According to an account reprinted in the Scotsman in April, the rate of murders in the diggings had increased to too many to count. But, almost in the same breath, the correspondent continued: ‘Gold, real pure gold, is so plenty, you may see it piled up on counters and tables like so many bags of shot, one to three hundred ounces in a bag.’ 82 As a steady stream of news came from the placers and mining towns, the Scottish press developed a pattern of casting a harsh light on the negative aspects of Gold Rush society amidst reports of seemingly inexhaustible gold. Always under debate was the morality of the place and whether or not it was safe. In May, for example, the Scotsman summarised their latest updates from California: ‘Confusion, anarchy, and scarcity of provisions at San Francisco and the gold regions.’83 Exactly two weeks later, however, the newspaper had renewed its faith in the Pacific territory and stated that law and order had been restored.84 Meanwhile, the Scottish press rarely questioned California’s yield of unlimited gold. Later in July, The John o’ Groat Journal in the Highlands left no room for doubt: ‘the marvellous stories respecting the abundance of gold are not at all exaggerated, but, on the contrary, fall short of reality.’85

The array of updates from California both encouraged and deterred prospective Argonauts as Scottish newspapers demonstrated a genuine attempt to cover all aspects of the Gold Rush. In an extensive update in June, the Scotsman did their best to include every facet of

82 Scotsman, 28 April 1849.
83 Scotsman, 16 May 1849.
84 Scotsman, 30 May 1849.
85 The John o’ Groat Journal, 13 July 1849.
the mania from their most recent correspondences. First, the newspaper presented more positive accounts, those that shared extravagant gains in the mines and high wages for ordinary labour:

San Francisco, March 6, 1849.—I have been offered 200 dollars a month, as a clerk, if I would bind myself for a year, but I prefer trying the diggings one season at least. From all I can learn, the average of the miners is about twenty dollars to thirty dollars per day.86

The final account that concluded the piece, however, juxtaposed everything before it:

Gold mines, February 26, 1849…This is the place to make a fortune, but I would advise nobody to bring a family, for it is the most degraded place I ever saw. It is a mixed multitude from all parts of the world. Vice of all kinds is without bound. I saw three men hung almost without judge or jury.87

With this kind of presentation, the Scotsman had left readers to make their own decisions about California. As the year progressed, Scottish newspapers continued to provide an array of first-hand accounts from the diggings. These, as will be demonstrated, were highly useful to those tempted to go to California themselves.

Although a sea apart, Scots were no more out of touch with California than their American counterparts on the East Coast. It took anywhere from one to three months for news to travel between California and New York, and only two more weeks for the same intelligence to reach Scotland. With that in mind, the extent of information provided by Scottish newspapers gave prospective migrants the benefit of budgeting their future in California. From the start of the mining season, the Scottish press reported continuously on the going occupations and their respective wages, as well as prices of provisions and housing costs. In July, for example, the Scotsman updated its readers that as of the first of May in California, ‘Wages and salaries still kept up.’ The report continued:

One gentleman was offered 12,000 dollars per annum to become clerk of a mercantile house…Other offers of 4500 dollars and 3000 dollars for clerks were made…Carpenters

86 Scotsman, 27 June 1849.
87 Scotsman, 27 June 1849.
were getting 15 dollars per diem and common labourers 5 dols. to 10 do.; seamen’s wages, 100 dols. Per mensum, and waiters at the hotels obtained 150 dols. per month.\textsuperscript{88}

However, while wages were temptingly high, the Scotsman was careful to advise readers that ‘Against these high rewards for labour must be placed the expenses of lodging and provisions.’\textsuperscript{89}

In September, the newspaper continued to alert its readers that the prices of simple foodstuffs in California were still extortionate: ‘Butter, 2 dols. per lb. ; milk is 50 cents a quart, and scarce ; eggs are very scarce, and worth at a café 3 reals each (1s 2d. sterling).’\textsuperscript{90} As gold fever persisted in Scotland, the comprehensive newspaper content on the California Gold Rush reminded potential wealth-seekers to align their expectations with reality.

As the year progressed in California, San Francisco’s harbour became overcrowded with ship masts displaying the world’s nationalities.\textsuperscript{91} Those who weighed the decision to migrate to California must have felt somewhat at ease reading about its growing cosmopolitan population. Even more so knowing that their countrymen were involved. Back in Scotland, the press played an essential role in highlighting Scottish participation in the Gold Rush. In September, the Glasgow Herald shared their delight in seeing Scottish names in an issue of San Francisco’s Alta California:

\begin{quote}
We were glad to see the advertisement of Cross, Hobson, & Co., who have Commission Houses at Valparaiso, Chili, and San Francisco, for we observe their partners are Alexander Cross and William Hooper. San Francisco; William L. Dobson and David Thomas, Valparaiso; and William Cross, Glasgow. Amongst the other business cards we observe many respectable looking names, some of which we may claim as Scottish. There is Gillespie & Co., auction and commission agency office; Blythe and Co., ship-brokers; E. Mickle & Co., importers; Semple and Robinson: Robert Wells & Co.: D. Witt and Harrison; Edward E. Dunbar; James Creighton, &c. \textsuperscript{92}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{88} Examples of detailed reports include: Scotsman, 30 May 1849; Scotsman, 16 June 1849; Scotsman, 26 June 1849; Quote: Scotsman, 7 July 1849.
\textsuperscript{89} Scotsman, 7 July 1849.
\textsuperscript{90} Scotsman, 12 September 1849.
\textsuperscript{91} Scotsman, 6 June 1849.
\textsuperscript{92} The Glasgow Herald, 10 September 1849.
The above segment reflects efforts on part of Scottish newspaper editors to promote the notion of an international Scottish community in the public sphere. Using Gold Rush California as an example, the Herald assured its readers that Scots and their institutions were securing footholds abroad. In the same column, what followed was practically an encouragement to others to do the same. The Herald included more excerpts from the Alta, stating that they provided ‘an excellent bird’s eye peep of this extraordinary community.’ With calls for employment, high wages, a bustling market, and modern living arrangements, San Francisco seemed full of promising opportunities and an ideal place for prospective migrants.

In the months that followed, correspondence from Scotsmen in California came to be a popular inclusion in Scottish newspapers. Allowing for the time it took to travel to California, and then for a letter to make its way back to Scotland, the first accounts only started to appear in newspapers in the autumn of 1849. As the following section demonstrates, the circulation of Argonaut correspondence would be a steady feature in Scottish newsprint for the next few years. For the past year, the Scottish press had provided prospective migrants with a wealth of information on the Gold Rush. Throughout 1849, future Argonauts in Scotland could look to newspaper editors, guidebooks, and traveller’s accounts to base their decisions on California. As Gold Rush fever neared its first-year anniversary in Scotland, California very much retained its image as a land of opportunity for Scottish migrants. On Boxing Day, The Scotsman summarised the latest updates from the Pacific territory. It reported that in San Francisco, a recent steamship departure for the Atlantic carried more than a million dollars’ worth of gold dust – much of it the personal acquisitions of passengers on board who had started their return journey home. Back in the diggings, the Scotsman continued, ‘gold was still plentiful, and those who were able to

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93 The Glasgow Herald, 10 September 1849.
94 Scotsman, 26 December 1849.
stand the fatigues of digging it got fairly rewarded for their exertions…about ten dollars per day.’

Finally, the mention of ‘at least one hundred British vessels in the harbour’ confirmed a familiar and substantial presence of compatriots. Their letters, over the following years, would serve as transnational agents that joined their social spaces of Scotland and California.

**Migrant Letters in the Scottish Press**

Published migrant letters in newsprint are a divisive historical source. Charlotte Erickson and David Fitzpatrick, each leading historians in their respective fields of immigration, have strongly argued against the use of published correspondence.\(^95\) Instead, they turned to private letter collections to inform their understanding of their chosen migrant group, claiming they were superior in credibility and authenticity compared to those in print which were prone to distortion. In *Oceans of Consolation*, Fitzpatrick explained that he excluded letters published in newspapers ‘since the function of these letters was fundamentally changed by the removal to the public domain, and editorial excisions render textual analysis unfeasible.’\(^96\) While it is true that published letters existed in the public sphere, therefore acting as a useful lens between writers and their readers of the public, scholars such as William Jones have rightly pointed out that all types of letters blurred public and private categorisations.\(^97\) For example, it was not uncommon for private letters to be passed around and experienced communally. Further complicating matters is the fact that, as this study and others have noted, letters published in newspapers were

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sometimes supplied by their recipients without the writer’s knowledge or consent. While taking the considerations outlined thus far and as follows, this study observes Jones’s stance that published immigrant letters ‘have greater substance, variety, and significance than scholars have usually accorded them’.

Scottish Argonaut letters found their way into newspaper print by several means. Some, such as the case of the Dundee correspondent who is introduced shortly, wrote directly to the periodical with full knowledge that their correspondence would be made public. Of course, one should question the writer’s motives in writing for the public eye, and thus the authenticity of their accounts. But that does not mean that their value as a historical source is untrustworthy, as several scholars have suggested. The common speculation is that these writers’ main intentions were to garner some fame back home for their adventures in print. Even if that were the case for some our Argonauts, the intention to broadcast their story in a public outlet strongly indicates a desire to sustain transnational connections to their homeland. As is demonstrated shortly, another motive that compelled Argonauts to write directly the press was to provide their community a personal perspective on California’s prospects for Scottish migration. As Alan Conway pointed out, the advice contained in personal correspondence to friends and family was limited in reach. Instead, migrants utilised the press to circulate their experiences abroad, ‘In this way they expected to benefit as many as possible from the wider publication of their

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98 See Jones, “Going into Print”, 176, 83; Also see Theodore Christian Blegen, Land of Their Choice the Immigrants Write Home, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1955), 3-7, 83-88, 179.
99 Jones, “Going into Print”, 176.
experiences.\textsuperscript{101} Furthermore, Jones found in his own research that migrants who sought publication of their letters were ‘partly motivated by pragmatic considerations’, one being laziness.\textsuperscript{102} Instead of writing multiple letters to a variety of relations or waiting for one letter to make the rounds in their private circles, some migrants wrote to their local papers back home so that everyone could be updated at once. No matter the motive, all migrants who shared their experiences directly with the press conveyed a desire to maintain a presence in and connection to their homeland.

In response to demand for information on California, newspaper editors also played a hand in sourcing Argonaut letters. Such was plainly stated in an issue of the \textit{Dumfries and Galloway Standard and Advertiser} before a published letter from California:

\begin{quote}
The following interesting and valuable letter was written at our request by an esteemed friend, now resident in San Francisco. We were anxious to obtain the testimony of an intelligent and trustworthy witness regarding the wonderful region of California; and having received it, we have great pleasure in laying the same before our readers.\textsuperscript{103}
\end{quote}

It is clear that Scottish newspapers regarded Argonaut letters worthy content, as they often spanned one to two broadsheet columns and were regularly printed throughout 1850 and 1851. Newspaper editors were aware of the role they played in not only sharing information to the public but providing a public stage for both local Scots and Scots across the diaspora. In this way, they were facilitators and mediators of a transnational Scottish community. Essentially, the Scottish press existed as a social network that allowed migrants to maintain relationships with the Scottish community, and vice versa.

\textsuperscript{101} Alan Conway, \textit{The Welsh in America: Letters from the Immigrants}, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1961), vi.
\textsuperscript{102} Jones, ““Going into Print””, 187.
\textsuperscript{103} Letter dated 28 February 1850, \textit{Dumfries and Galloway Standard and Advertiser}, 8 May 1850.
In many cases, the original recipients of private migrant letters, commonly family members or friends, were the ones who forwarded correspondence to the periodical. The majority of Argonaut letters in Scottish newspapers seem to have been sourced this way. Editors often prefaced these letters with background commentary on the writer and who forwarded the letter. Very rarely, newspapers gave the Argonaut’s name and sometimes they provided their initials. In most cases, the writer’s identity was limited to only their occupation and their native village or county. In sharing their personal correspondence and even exposing aspects of their private lives, the recipients of migrant letters showed a duty towards sharing knowledge with the wider community. These letter recipients therefore engaged with and shaped the public conversation on migration, California, and the transnational Scottish community. Through this process they also reaffirmed their loved one’s place in the Scottish public realm, despite them being thousands of miles away. The various intermediaries that migrant letters could pass through before their eventual publication in the Scottish press not only shows the complicated process behind making a private letter public, but the cooperation among the community to amplify and circulate migrants’ voices abroad. Thus, the international Scottish community was very much a presence in Scotland itself.

As far as the completeness of published correspondence, newspaper editors were divided on whether to include content considered more personal. Some published Argonaut letters were obviously extracts which solely focused on the writers’ Gold Rush experience. In these cases, it is clear that editors tailored content to be more entertaining for their readers or relevant to prospective migrants. There are also several instances where editors included the majority, if not the whole letter which included a range of irrelevant, personal, and even damning information about the writer. Jones similarly observed this in his own study, noting that content of a personal
nature ‘helped to establish the credibility of personal documents. It encouraged readers’ acceptance that the letter-writers were real individuals in real situations, and as a result increased the likelihood that their letters would be considered authentic and trustworthy’.\textsuperscript{104} As the remainder of this chapter demonstrates, Scottish-authored letters came to have more credibility to readers than the objective content of newspaper updates and guidebooks.

In October 1849, the first Scottish Argonaut account was publicised in the Scottish press. Occupying a prominent space in the newsprint, the correspondence was from a so-called friend of the \textit{Inverness Courier} and soon reprinted in various Scottish newspapers including the \textit{Scotsman}. Before addressing the topic of gold, the writer described his surroundings in great detail. He was conscious of his Scottish audience and provoked readers to imagine California as their own landscape:

\begin{quote}
The entrance [to San Francisco] is narrow—somewhat like the Sutars of Cromarty. Then the waters expand to a large inland sea, landlocked, with several creeks and arms running into the country—some of those arms as large as Loch-Ness.\textsuperscript{105}
\end{quote}

Oftentimes, when Scottish Argonauts in California wrote home, they compared their new surroundings to familiar landscapes in Scotland. Tanja Bueltmann also noticed this in her own research on Scots in New Zealand. ‘Such descriptions’, Bueltmann argues, ‘were a memory transfer for their writers, but also served as an epistolary strategy to make the new homeland more accessible for those who were still in Scotland.’\textsuperscript{106} Effectively, these writers blended transnational landscapes to facilitate their readers’ familiarity with locations across the diaspora. This is yet another instance where published migrant letters in the press represented ‘a significant public manifestation of the phenomenon of transnationality.’\textsuperscript{107} After transporting his readers to

\begin{footnotes}
\item[104] Jones, “‘Going into Print’”, 186.
\item[105] \textit{Scotsman}, 20 October 1849.
\item[107] Jones, “‘Going into Print’”, 190.
\end{footnotes}
Gold Rush California, the correspondent gave a detailed account of the activity in the ‘diggings’.

Since the initial mania over the Gold Rush in Scotland, a Scottish Argonaut voice finally confirmed the rumours from California:

> There must be a great deal of exaggeration in the ‘old country’ as to the state of things here. Still the quantities of gold to be found here would warrant a good deal of high colouring. Lumps of solid gold, of six, twelve, and fourteen pounds weight, are frequently met with.\(^{108}\)

In a study of the dissemination of Gold Rush information, Richard Stillson found that personal letters transformed how prospective migrants measured ‘credibility criteria’. In the US, Stillson claims, newspaper content on the Gold Rush in 1850 had drastically altered from the year before. Initially, throughout 1849, potential Argonauts attached the most credibility to sources claiming ‘officialdom and expertise’: trusted newspapers, guidebooks, and government reports. By 1850, Stillson argues, personal letters began to carry just as much credibility, especially as newspapers increasingly published private correspondence. In Scotland, just as much as Stillson demonstrated in the American press, ‘the personal experience of ordinary people, became important.’ \(^{109}\) Newspapers that shared Scottish-authored letters from California had more intentions than providing entertainment, encouraging national pride, or providing updates on relations abroad – they relayed a wealth of credible information on the particular Scottish experience in California. In turn, these insights prompted Scottish readers to attach a sense of familiarity to a foreign place and learn about the wider world in which their diaspora scattered across.

On the fourteenth of November, the *Scotsman* printed another letter from California ‘written by a young man belonging to Edinburgh’. \(^{110}\) It proved a popular feature in the Scottish

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\(^{108}\) *Scotsman*, 20 October 1849.

\(^{109}\) Stillson, *Spreading the Word*, 181.

\(^{110}\) *Scotsman*, 14 November 1849.
press, not only because it placed a local in the gold diggings, but because it had been sourced by a major reputable newspaper. Over the next two weeks, the letter widely circulated the Scottish press in papers such as the Glasgow Herald, the Stirling Observer, the Elgin Courant, and the Morayshire Advertiser. The writer, who signed his initials as ‘J.A.’, detailed his Gold Rush experience from the moment he decided to go to California:

I said “I will take my chance if I can make one or two thousand dollars in a year or so, it will be more than I can save at my business in many years, and by that time I will be an old man pretty well worked done by hard labour.”

He then described his first impressions of San Francisco when he arrived in the summer: ‘a great many stores and houses were being erected and everything was life and bustle, house carpenters were getting an ounce of gold or the value of an ounce per day’. Yet he quickly disfavoured life in the expanding city, with constant wind and dust making it ‘a most unpleasant place to live in.’ He moved on to the diggings:

I sailed up the Sacramento 158 miles, and landed at a village now called Sacramento City. The now well-known saw mill, where gold was first found, is about 48 miles beyond this. Here I first dug gold; the first few days not so very successfully—making half an ounce per day. I worked in company of two others. We soon left that, and moved a mile further up the river; worked over three weeks, averaging 1 oz. per day each. This was on the south fork of the American river…We next tried the middle fork for a few days, and then the north fork, when I now write. This is the seventh week I have been here; we have averaged here from 18 to 32 dollars every day till this week …As far as I can judge, those who work steadily can make from twelve to thirty dollars per day. Cases are occurring of some getting from 100 to 200 dollars per day, and the next day getting only an ounce.

At certain times the letter reads as if it spoke directly to those still undecided about going to California. Hard work, the writer affirmed, was unavoidable if one wanted to make a fortune.

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111 This letter was reprinted in the following newspapers: Edinburgh Evening Post and Standard, 17 November 1849; Glasgow Herald, 19 November 1849; Stonehaven Journal (Kincardineshire), 20 November 1849; The Stirling Observer, 22 November 1849; The Elgin Courant and Morayshire Advertiser, 23 November 1849.

112 Scotsman, 14 November 1849.

113 Ibid.
But, he told himself and his readers, he now neared ‘that summit of ambition which Burns terms “the glorious privilege of being independent”’. He continued with more tempting prospects:

    Vast quantities of gold have been got in these mountains, but I believe they yet contain an immense amount of the yellow metal…you people in the north never have any idea of such a country… I can safely say I have never had better health. 114

Finally, the writer commented on the half-ounce of gold he enclosed with his letter: ‘A half-ounce of gold is nothing here. I can take a tin pan…and will always get from a shilling to a dollar’s worth of gold in it.’ 115 As letters began arriving from California, Scottish readers could now envision members of their community in the famed ‘El Dorado’. These letters, Stillson further highlights, ‘provided a connection between the local goldrushers and the community that made the gold rush story, at least in part, a local story vividly concrete.’ 116 In addition to creating and bridging the transnational space between Scotland and its Argonauts in California, published newspaper letters and their various agents, discussed in detail below, could also facilitate the movement of additional Scottish Argonauts to California.

‘’Tis better to get wisdom than gold’

In 1850, the number of arrivals in California doubled from 1849. As Stillson has argued, much of this can be attributed to an increase of information for prospective Argonauts. 117 Indeed, the Scots still contemplating joining the Gold Rush in 1850 had access to more information compared to the year before. The Gold Rush had roused the global market to quicken transit times, so within a year updates from California reached Scotland in a month and a half. 118 More

114 Ibid.
115 Ibid.
116 Stillson, Spreading the Word, 162.
117 Ibid., 153.
118 In 1854-55, transit times shortened again to about a month.
than ever, newspapers in Scotland provided consistent reports on the state of affairs in California. This meant that potential Argonauts could better judge and predict the conditions on their arrival. Furthermore, Scots also had a better selection of guidebooks on California, many specifically tailored to the British migrant.\(^{119}\) Now, those coming from Scotland could gain a better sense of the technicalities of the various travel routes, as well as a better sense of what to pack for their long journeys from the other side of the Atlantic.

Of all the informational developments, however, the most important was the increase in private correspondence available in the public realm. Back in California, enough time had passed for the original Scottish Forty-Niners to reflect on their Gold Rush experiences. Just as well, at the end of 1849, winter conditions had slowed productivity in the diggings. Miners laid down their pans and shovels and instead picked up pen and paper to write home for the first time since their departure. When these letters arrived in Scotland the following year, many of them would be published and circulated in Scottish newspapers. For prospective Scottish Argonauts, personal stories of Scotsmen in California were a vital resource of information.

While remaining critical of the various intermediaries that letters could pass through before their publication, an element of intimacy remained in the newsprint which readers associated with credibility. For prospective migrants, argues Bueltmann, ‘Letters sent home transmitted unfiltered information on the destination country, including descriptions of the new life, opportunities, and, in some cases, failures. Migrants became an outpost for those who had stayed in Scotland’.\(^{120}\) From 1850, prospective Argonauts in Scotland could look to the Scottish press for a wide variety of Scottish Argonaut accounts, published on a regular basis. In one such


\(^{120}\) Bueltmann, *Scottish Ethnicity and the Making of New Zealand Society*, 46.
letter, published in the *Dumfries and Galloway Standard and Advertiser* in May, the correspondent provided valuable information on the state and costs of living in Gold Rush society:

I inquired the rent of a tent in a not very public street, covering an area of ten feet square, it was 175 dollars per month. The wages of labourer and mechanics ranged from 8 to 18 dollars per day; a Scotch journeyman baker, who came out in the same ship, indignantly refused, in my presence, a permanent engagement of 150 dollars per month, and his board. Board and lodging ranged from 16 to 40 dollars per week—a good meal could be got for a dollar. \(^{121}\)

The writer proceeded to share his experience in the diggings where he found himself in limbo. Every day he got just enough gold ‘not quite to be grumbled at’, yet after daily expenses, he was no closer to realising his fortune. He did, however, bear witness to others striking it lucky:

A man found a 5-lb lump about a mile below the place where I was; and I saw a lump which a Mexican got out about a hundred yards from my hole, weighing about 3 lbs.—as rugged and ugly in its appearance as the worst specimen of Irish potato. \(^{122}\)

While some letter writers encountered more luck than others throughout 1850, they all continued to verify the plentiful presence of gold. The Dumfries native concluded his account as such:

I suppose that many, as well as myself, found this country not quite all their fancy painted it; but however that may be, there is not the least shadow of a doubt that a vast auriferous region exists, abounding in gold. \(^{123}\)

In October, the *Elgin Courant* circulated a letter from a Bo’ness native that upheld California’s appeal: ‘The gold I believe is almost inexhaustible, as the whole soil seems to be mixed with it; for you cannot take a shovelful of it that has no gold.’ \(^{124}\) Although the writer admitted that he had spent most of his hard-earned money, he affirmed that he would be sticking it out in the

\(^{121}\) *Dumfries and Galloway Standard and Advertiser*, 8 May 1850.
\(^{122}\) Ibid.
\(^{123}\) Ibid.
\(^{124}\) *The Elgin Courant and Morayshire Advertiser*, 11 October 1850.
mines for the foreseeable future. He trusted that his hard work in California would guarantee him a comfortable future back home in Scotland, something which would have never materialised otherwise: ‘I hope to get enough of gold in this land to keep me at home.’ Like the Bo’ness native, several Scots in California wrote that they intended to stick it out a few more years before they returned home. This indicated to readers back in Scotland that even as another year passed, California remained a destination for opportunity.

Throughout 1850, Scottish newspapers continued to publish letters that featured both positive and negative experiences in California. In April, the *John o’ Groat Journal* printed an extensive letter from an Orkney man named William Leith. The editor introduced the account with a solemn note: ‘Many persons have already paid the penalty for their ambition to be rich, and many more will follow. How true is the saying—“’Tis better to get wisdom than gold.”’ Earlier in December, Leith wrote from the Feather River. The weather and conditions in the diggings were not treating him well:

I had not been two weeks in the mines when I was attacked by bilious fever, and I was just getting well when I began to write this letter. Since then I had a slight attack of dysentery and bloody flux; and now I have had the scurvy for three weeks. It is in my gums, and joints of the left knee, where it is blue and purple, and the calf of my leg is hard and swollen to the ankles. The cape off the knee is so still that I can hardly bend my leg—it is nearly as crooked as James C------’s—and can scarcely walk.

His unforeseen medical expenses had cost two weeks’ worth of wages. Now, almost seventy dollars out of pocket and barely able to pan for gold, little of the doctor’s treatments had helped. Despite his circumstances, Leith held on to hope that California would change his life for the better and intended to stay for another two years. Letters like these were valuable to prospective Argonauts because they included personal reflections on prior expectations and actual

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125 *John o’ Groat Journal*, 19 April 1850.
experiences. Personal accounts, especially the more cynical, helped potential migrants weigh up possible destinations. Writers, newspaper editors and readers, and the various go-betweens these letters passed through before their publication each saw the value in sharing the trials and tribulations of migrant life abroad. Otherwise, these accounts would not have been presented as such. Effectively, prospective Argonauts could tune into an active transnational discussion on California’s prospects through the Scottish press.

In July, the *Dundee Courier* published the first instalment of a series of letters by a Scottish correspondent on his way to California. In his introduction, dated the first of June, the correspondent acknowledged that some of his readers would follow his intelligence for more than entertainment purposes: ‘I calculate that the information which my letter will contain may prove useful to such as a desire to visit the golden regions.’ Currently, in New York, the correspondent found himself waiting. He had arrived earlier in May after a ‘most delightful’ 12-day voyage from Liverpool. Yet to his dismay, all outward passages had been booked to California until the middle of June. His anxiety rose as he waited for the day of departure: ‘On the 13th, two steamers left with about 1000 passengers between them, all bound for the gold regions. I am afraid the gold will not be as formerly’. He also shared concerns about his upcoming journey and signed off with reservations: ‘I will write you again from San Francisco (provided I get safely past the robbers on the Isthmus)’. Significantly, the letter conveyed genuine sentiments that might have deterred others in Scotland from going to California themselves. The distance required to travel to California was more than just a physical obstacle. It was a psychological one as well. For potential migrants, letters also provided validation of real concerns, particularly to do with the extraordinary journey from Scotland to the Pacific Coast. As

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127 *Dundee Courier*, 3 July 1850.
newspapers published these types of accounts, the journey to California became more relatable and familiar. Thus, would-be Argonauts could better imagine themselves making the journey, too.

Readers of the *Dundee Courier* had over a two-month wait before the next instalment. The letter’s heading, ‘Sacramento City, California, July 26’, confirmed that the correspondent’s journey was a success. More entertainment and advice followed:

> We had rather a rough journey across the Isthmus, but landed all safe and well at Panama. There were a great number of people there, some of them having been detained for eleven and twelve weeks, in consequence of there not being steamers belonging to the Company they had gone to take them forward.\(^{128}\)

The correspondent noted that his prior arrangements in New York saved him from a similar fate: ‘We went by Howland and Aspinall’s line, which is the only one you can depend on, and left there on the 2d’.\(^{129}\) After three more weeks of travel, he arrived in San Francisco. The rest of the letter detailed his observations about the city, along with some more advice: ‘Do not advise any person to come out here; they are better at home, *if they know when they are well off.*’ But perhaps the most significant part of the letter is when the correspondent ran into some men from his home town: ‘We have met with three Dundee sailors here, who are all bound for the mines, so that will make six of us, all from the same place, and we will likely stick together like bricks.’\(^{130}\) A developing theme in this thesis is that Scottish Argonauts were quick to identify other Scots throughout their Gold Rush experience. The presence of a Scottish diaspora in Gold Rush California, though small in number compared to some of the other migrant groups, is reflected in the numerous references in Gold Rush accounts of Scots meeting others by chance.

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\(^{128}\) *Dundee Courier*, 25 September 1850.

\(^{129}\) Ibid.

\(^{130}\) Ibid.
on the way to, or in California. Those who had access to these accounts in Scotland gained comfort from the assurance that if they travelled to California, they too could hold onto the comfort of meeting familiar people in an unfamiliar place.

The final instalment in the letter series arrived the following year in April. Dated late January, the correspondent found himself in Rattlesnake Bar on the American River. He had lost faith in mining: ‘Since we came here, we have gone on several exploring expeditions, both up and down the river, but cannot find anything nearly equal as last year.’ ‘[B]ut never mind,’ he retorted, ‘there is still some milk in it yet, even if it should be well watered—like your Dundee milk, about half Monikie.’ Instead of mining, he directed his efforts elsewhere:

> The most profitable, as well as the quickest, way of making money now is by turning the course of the river, for which purpose a company has been formed here...It is known by the name of the “Nabochlish Daming Company,” and of which your humble servant has been unanimously elected President...I will remain here all this year at all events

In mind of readers who were still on the fence about going to California, this letter was especially useful because it highlighted other opportunities one could pursue besides mining. As more Argonauts became disheartened by the diggings from 1851 onwards, Scottish newspapers circulated letters by Scots who picked up other pursuits in California. As time passed, these letters provided credible examples of how Scottish Argonauts adapted to the changing Gold Rush society. No matter the extent of their success, their written experiences continued to be useful to those in Scotland who still contemplated a future in California.

California still held the attention of the Scottish press when Australia’s own Gold Rush kicked off in the autumn of 1851. That October, The John o’ Groat Journal reminded its readers

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131 Bueltmann observed a similar pattern in her study of Scots in New Zealand during the same period. Bueltmann, Scottish Ethnicity and the Making of New Zealand Society, 55.
132 Ibid. Monikie is a small village north-east of Dundee.
133 Dundee Courier, 2 April 1851.
that California continued to prove itself: ‘In the excitement of the Australian gold discoveries, it must not be forgotten that California is still pouring its supplies of the precious metal as if its stores were inexhaustible.’ Naturally, the Scottish press often compared what unfolded in Australia to California. Even though Australia had closer ties to Britain as a colony, in November the *Scotsman* observed that loyalty to the Empire had little influence on which destination British Argonauts chose to seek their fortunes:

And while the rival El Dorados compete closely with each other in regard to the main element of attraction, the contingent advantages that each offers to the intending gold-seeker may appear to him so equally balanced as to embarrass him vastly in considering to which hand he shall turn to seek his fortune. To persons emigrating from Britain the consideration that any given district happens to be one of our own colonies or possessions scarcely seems to have any practical effect in determining their destination.

With enough time, Scottish newspapers started to circulate letters written by Scots who had experienced both California and Australia. These accounts provided a credible comparison between the two ‘El Dorados’ and helped designate which type of individual was better suited for each environment. The Scots that preferred life in California highlighted a common theme – freedom from authority and status constraints. In October, the *John o’ Groat Journal* published a letter written by a former ploughman from Aberdeen. ‘R.B.’, as he was known, had spent only four months in Australia when he lost faith in its prospects and sailed for California. Reflecting on his time a year later, R.B. upheld his decision to leave the British colony for the American territory:

> dig when I please, and where I please…I am determined to *stick* till I make something handsome; and I’m proud that I’ve had the luck to see this country where the flag flies

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134 *John o’ Groat Journal*, 17 October 1851.
135 For detailed discussions comparing California and Australia, see *Scotsman*, 10 September 1851; *Scotsman*, 22 November 1851; *Scotsman*, 18 December 1852; *The Stirling Observer*, 18 August 1853.
136 *Scotsman*, 22 November 1851.
137 Mining in Australia required licence fees. Although foreigners in California incurred a foreign miner’s tax, Scots were usually excluded (see chapter 4).
free and liberty is stamped upon the gold coin…Every man has the same chance as
another; and there is no respect of persons whatever.138

Two years later, in 1853, the Inverness Courier printed another personal assessment of
Australia and California. The letter, stated the Courier, had been received ‘from a young
townsman, who, after giving Australia a trial of about a year-and-a-half, determined upon
leaving the colony and pushing his fortune in California.’ A detailed account of life in both
mining districts followed. The writer compared wages and the price of provisions, but most
informative was his observation of old country traditions in Australia versus the lack of class
distinction in the New World. ‘Here’, stated the Scot in reference to California, ‘no distinction is
made, nor would be attempted; every man is as good as his neighbour.’ In his experience,
California society better aligned with his own principles:

From the first moment of his landing, the emigrant is fleeced and imposed upon in
Australia…A man feels himself a man here, for he sees that a just government has placed
no stumbling-blocks in the way of his honest endeavours towards bettering his position.139

Comparisons to Australia were not the only time that Scottish Argonauts pointed out the freedom
to be one’s own in California. In January 1851, the John o’ Groat Journal printed a letter from
an Aberdeen man who saluted society in California: ‘There is no place in the world where a man
can make a fortune so fast as he may here, and he is his own master.’140 The following year in
February, the Inverness Courier quoted a letter from a ‘young townsman’ that wrote: ‘There is
no outward distinction between the rich man and the poor for everyone does his own work.’141
It is a stretch to say whether these ideals were particularly attractive to Scottish migrants in
general. But what can be said is that these particular writers no longer felt limited by class

139 Inverness Courier, 15 December 1853.
141 Inverness Courier, 5 February 1852.
distinctions they may have experienced elsewhere. Now in California, these individuals felt free of such boundaries. Of course, other social distinctions such as skin colour and nationality played a large part in Gold Rush society. However, Scottish Argonauts in their letters home rarely complained about either being an impediment.

While not explicitly stated in the letters, correspondents that wrote of their migrant experiences in two distinct societies also demonstrated their freedom of movement. Perhaps more than is recognised today, migrants and prospective migrants alike were conscious of the possibility of remigration. As the first chapter demonstrated, more than twenty countries were represented by Scottish Argonauts as previous destinations of migration. This vast scattering of Scots, and their movement between these places, suggest that intercontinental movement among the diaspora was more commonplace than historians have acknowledged. Facilitating this movement were networks of information across the Scottish diaspora that carried news of the latest opportunities and conditions for Scots in various parts of the world. Such can be seen in the process of writing, sending, and publishing of the letters above, the newspaper acting as a hub of first-hand information from Scots in their various lands of settlement. Furthermore, as Jones has noted, letters from fellow countrymen and women abroad not only benefitted prospective migrants, but were a significant means by which nineteenth-century people learned about the wider world.142

Perhaps the most troubling updates for prospective Argonauts in Scotland were those that spoke of hostilities between Americans and foreigners. The Scottish press first alluded to rising nativist sentiments in California in the summer of 1849. In July, the Scotsman’s latest intelligence from San Francisco included a brief update on social relations in the mining districts:

142 Jones, “‘Going into Print’”, 190.
‘The Americans think foreigners ought not to be allowed to dig for gold.’\textsuperscript{143} For the remainder of the year, the newspaper provided vague updates on the foreigner question. Readers found little clarification on whether Americans were acting upon these sentiments, and more importantly to those deciding to go to California, whether or not they would be on the receiving end. For example, in August the \textit{Scotsman} reported that American miners intended to ‘prevent the riches of the mines from being carried away by strangers’, but nothing more.\textsuperscript{144} The following October, the newspaper reprinted a feature from a \textit{Times} correspondent in San Francisco which revealed that Americans had ‘expelled a great many Chileans and some Mexicans from the gold region.’\textsuperscript{145} But while the correspondent identified some of the subjects of the aggression, there was still no certainty of California’s classification of a ‘foreigner’.

As social tensions evolved in California over the next few years, the editors of the \textit{Scotsman} continued to provide little clarification on who Anglo-Americans deemed foreign and undeserving of California’s rewards. For instance, in September 1850 the newspaper gave another vague update which stated that ‘The excitement at the mines against foreigners is still strong.’\textsuperscript{146} Two years later, while much had happened to the Latino, French, and Chinese population in California, the \textit{Scotsman} updated its readers that: ‘The difficulty between the Americans and foreigners is far from being settled, and the former seemed determined to drive all foreigners, without distinction, from the mines.’\textsuperscript{147}

Indeed, as is discussed in chapter four, Gold Rush society in California struggled to establish its own classification of a ‘foreigner’. For prospective Argonauts in Scotland, personal

\textsuperscript{143} \textit{Scotsman}, 7 July 1849.
\textsuperscript{144} \textit{Scotsman}, 18 August 1849; 29 August 1849.
\textsuperscript{145} \textit{Scotsman}, 6 October 1849.
\textsuperscript{146} \textit{Scotsman}, 25 Sep 1850.
\textsuperscript{147} \textit{Scotsman}, 4 Sept 1852.
letters from California provided the best insight on whether a Scottish identity would negatively impact their Gold Rush experience. As Scottish newspapers provided updates on hostilities between foreign and American miners in California, the letters they published from Scottish Argonauts rarely mentioned concerns about American nativism. This apparent absence of Anglo-American hostility in personal letters quelled fears in prospective migrants that their foreign identity would hinder their Gold Rush experience. If being Scottish negatively affected one’s chances in California, surely letters home would have warned others about it.

In 1853, the *Inverness Courier* circulated a letter that explicitly told of a comradery between the Anglo-Saxon and Celtic races in California. Dated ‘Indian Diggings, February 7th’, the writer from Fort William neared his three-year anniversary in California:

> Sitting in my log cabin, before a blazing fire of oak timber, on the south side of the Sierra Nevada mountains I am reminded of home. We are here from seventy to eighty strong, Celts and Saxons; and the Indians have learned to fear and respect the ‘pale faces,’ as they call us…There are natives of all parts of the globe in California—Spanish, Dutch, French, Chinese, British, Americans, and Indians. We all agree wonderfully, but the whole Saxon and Celtic families unite, and are the strongest. Whether from New York or Old York, from Edinburgh in Scotland or Edinburgh in Texas, from Belfast in Ireland or Belfast in Indiana, the English-speaking races stand by each other.¹⁴⁸

Those who read these accounts gained confirmation that the notion of Anglo-Saxon comradery extended to California. When news updates in Scotland reported that tensions still existed between Americans and foreigners in the mines, readers knew the situation was not so black and white. While skin colour and nationality often determined one’s freedom to pan for gold in California, letters from Scottish migrants in the diggings told readers that Scots seemed to have just as much right as any Anglo-American.

¹⁴⁸ *The Inverness Courier*, 26 May 1853.
Scottish Argonaut letters also provided personal insights on societal progress in California that contrasted general newspaper updates. As was typical during California’s early years of statehood, news updates fluctuated wildly on the condition of its society. During 1851, according to the Scottish press, the outlook on California took a turn for the worse. In February, the Scotsman reported that ‘the accounts from California are not so encouraging as formally.’149 The mines seemed to be yielding less than before, crime was prevalent throughout the territory, and Native American depredations were on the rise. Reports worsened during the summer when news of ‘a tremendous fire at San Francisco’ reached Scotland in July.150 The following month, the Scotsman remarked that recent intelligence from California still painted a ‘frightful state of social affairs.’151 Readers learned of more devastating fires, increased murder counts, and vigilante committees that looked upon ‘Judge Lynch’ to enforce the law.152 Throughout the rest of the year, lawlessness in California assumed most of the attention. While reports improved on mining yields, the Scottish newspapers fixated on the ‘so-called Vigilante Committees’ and provided multiple examples of their ‘outrage on law and common morality’.153 In October, the Dundee Courier printed a two-column feature entitled ‘Lynch Law’. What followed was a frightful extract from the Alta California that depicted a committee hearing and execution in San Francisco. One of the accused, ‘McKenzie’, was unmistakably of Scottish or Irish descent:

The Committee of Vigilance take up the cause where it has been left off, and unrestrained by those rules of evidence which are recognised in all well-ordered courts, they forthwith decide that the exculpated man is guilty, and no sooner is their sentence pronounced than judgement follows at its heels; the panel is forthwith forcibly taken out of the hands of the Law, and dealt with as the Committee of Vigilance has directed—that is, he is hung by the neck before the sun goes down.154

149 Scotsman, 22 February 1851.
150 Scotsman, 2 July 1851.
151 Scotsman, 27 August 1851.
152 Scotsman, 20 August 1851.
153 Scotsman, 22 October 1851.
154 Dundee Courier, 29 October 1851.
Given the recent Scottish newspaper updates, California had lost much of its attraction as a place of migration and opportunity. But this was not the opinion of Scots writing from the diggings themselves.

Interestingly, newspapers printed Gold Rush letters from the same period that often described a different scenario. In January 1852, the *John o’ Groat Journal* circulated a letter from a Wick native in California. Dated ‘Senora, California, Oct. 13, 1851’, the writer depicted a more stable society: ‘The country is getting to be a settled state now; I have not heard of a fire for several weeks, and no more robberies or murders. Business is in excellent condition at present.’

As Scots spent more time in California, they began to reflect on its suitability for settlement rather than a place of sojourn. A letter from an Aberdonian man, published in the *John o’Groat Journal* in January 1851, provided some retrospect on his decision to stay put. Even though he did not find his fortune in California, he found something more valuable: ‘I do not regret leaving the city; if I have not made much money, I have had excellent health, and that is better than riches any time.’ Addressing those worried about the state of society in California, he painted a picture of the progress in Sacramento:

> We have some five or six churches in this city now, and a good many preachers in different parts of the mines. Several schools are started in the different towns, and, altogether, things are starting to look more like home now.

Against the fluctuating nature of news updates, personal letters provided dependable insights on California. By 1853, more Scots in California had stated their intent to settle. Instead of inspiring more single Argonauts, these accounts spoke to individuals looking for a place to emigrate with

157 Ibid.
their family. In the same letter that compared California to Australia in the *Inverness Courier*, the writer also shared his intent to settle in the US territory:

Most of the emigrants this year have come with the intention of settling in the country, with their wives and families…soon as I have sufficient funds I intend going down to the valley, and taking up a ranch, where I hope I shall settle for some time at least…This place is rapidly improving. New buildings are starting up on all hands, and now there are several brick houses in process of erection. Water has been brought into the towns and houses in pipes.158

Letters published in newspapers from Scots in California let up around 1853. However, they did not stop entirely. Once in a while, Scottish newspapers featured the pursuits of their countrymen in the Golden State. As the decade came to a close, the Scots who wrote home from California had intended to stay put. Now, instead of a temporary destination for fast fortunes, letter writers explained that California’s real attraction was its pastoral opportunities.

Such was the setting for a Glasgow native who had engaged in farming just outside of San Francisco. In a letter published in the *Paisley Herald and Renfrewshire Advertiser* in 1859, a Glaswegian reflected on his decision to migrate outwith a British territory: ‘I am glad I came to California, however; it is a grand country, with plenty of gold, good soil, an excellent climate, and fine weather all the year round.’ He also noted that another Scotsman ran a neighbouring farm, showing readers at home that California could be a familiar place to them, too. Although the Argonaut days were over, he concluded that California still had much to offer:

Many of the disappointed gold diggers are now working on the farms and ranches, and being soured in temper they curse this country…With steadiness and economy however, I believe it is possible to make money in this good land, which the Yankees’ curse.159

Judging by the number of times the word ‘California’ appeared in the *Scotsman*, Scotland remained transfixed on the territory until 1854. During the first two years, from 1849 to 1850,

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158 *Inverness Courier*, 15 December 1853.
159 *Paisley Herald and Renfrewshire Advertiser*, 24 December 1859.
readers of the Scotsman or the Glasgow Herald read of California in almost every bi-weekly issue. While mentions of California fluctuated in 1851, by 1852 updates on the Golden State dropped to a steady weekly rate until 1854. Afterwards, throughout the rest of the decade, ‘California’ typically appeared in the Scottish press around twice a month. Although a notable obsession with California calmed down over the decade, local news updates attested that the pacific territory continued to have relevance in Scottish society. By 1852, Scottish schools had added California’s global impact to their curriculum as yet another local gold rush disappointment played out Scotland.\textsuperscript{160} In 1853, insurance brokers advertised life insurance policies to cover travel to San Francisco.\textsuperscript{161} ‘California’ even transformed into an adjective in Scotland as newspapers used it to describe local weather.\textsuperscript{162} It also appeared in the Scottish fashion realm. In 1855, the Scotsman reported a missing 16-year-old, last seen wearing ‘California trousers’. Most likely, this also signified the arrival of Levi’s blue jeans in Scotland.\textsuperscript{163} Over the Gold Rush decade, mail dispatch notices to California came to outnumber updates on the state itself. These postal routes embodied the active links and networks between the people of Scotland and its diaspora in California. The land once known as ‘El Dorado’ had assumed a familiar presence Scotland, much to do with the diasporic actions of Scottish Argonauts and immigrants in California.

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item[\textsuperscript{160}] Scotsman, 4 August 1852; In May 1852, the Scotsman reported that upwards of 800 people, from near and far, had been digging for gold on the Lomond hill outside the village of Kinnesswood. The golden mineral they had been extracting turned out to be a worthless sulphureous ore. Scotsman, 22 May 1852.
\item[\textsuperscript{161}] Scotsman, 22 January 1853.
\item[\textsuperscript{162}] The Elgin Courant and Morayshire Advertiser, 21 March 1856.
\item[\textsuperscript{163}] Scotsman, 2 May 1855.
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Conclusion

The California Gold Rush ignited a country-wide obsession in Scotland. The Scottish press both fostered and catered to the mania. Newspapers in Scotland spread Gold Rush intelligence in all aspects of the word, from regular news updates and guidebook advice, to first-hand correspondence from Scottish Argonauts in California. California’s popular presence in the Scottish press reflected the current character of Scotland at the time, where the open, and even positive, attitude towards outward migration and the wider world facilitated the spread of information on prospective migrant destinations. Of all the newspaper content on California, Scottish Argonaut letters provided the most credible observation of Gold Rush society. In addition to making a foreign land a more familiar and accessible place, these letters spoke of a Scottish experience, meaning their contents were a tailored source of information for prospective Argonauts in Scotland. For a people that would become ‘invisible’ in California and American history, Scottish Argonauts claimed a place of status in the Scottish press.

As these published Argonaut letters contain a wealth of information about the Scottish Argonaut experience, they are also utilised throughout the following chapters. From now on, when this study references a newspaper letter it is crucial to keep in mind the complex processes involved in their publication, as well as their role in the diaspora. Whether letter-writers wrote knowingly to a public or private audience in Scotland, the act represented a desire to maintain personal links to the homeland. Further diasporic actions were demonstrated by the original recipients of these letters who then forwarded them to local newspapers for publication, as well as the newspaper agents themselves. Those involved in a letter’s journey to print promoted a transnational space in which the people of Scotland and its diaspora could communicate and
share knowledge of the wider world in which their countrymen and women explored and settled. In turn, this transnational space also facilitated the culture of migration in Scotland.
Chapter 3

*From Scotland to El Dorado: The Journey of Scottish Argonauts to California*

On 15 October 1850, hopeful Argonauts congregated on the Broomielaw quayside in Glasgow. Before them, the River Clyde lapped against the iron hull of the *Tintern*. Calling at Valparaiso, Panama City, and finally San Francisco, the *Tintern* was one of the several vessels that directly catered to the Scots who had succumbed to ‘Gold Fever’. This ship in particular embodied some of the more recent advances in maritime technology. In addition to its ironclad exterior, the *Tintern* housed a steam engine with a screw propeller. The latter, originally developed in the Clyde, was relatively new in steamship propulsion and would eventually replace the popular side-paddle model in the coming years.\(^{164}\) Emotions must have been running high as the passengers boarded. Already fourteen days past the original departure date, the voyagers were anxious to start their six-month journey.\(^{165}\) As the ship finally departed and chugged towards the open water, it seemed overburdened with passengers and mining equipment.\(^{166}\) The follow-up report in the *Scotsman* commented on the vessel’s sluggishness despite its rating for 220 tons of cargo. Almost two years since the initial reports of gold reached Scotland, Scots continued to make their way to California.

As the *Tintern* reached the open sea of the Atlantic, another throng of Scottish men and women joined the global migration towards California. Although they had at their fingertips, and perhaps now in their luggage, information to prepare them for their sojourn, their departure signified the beginning of their Argonaut experience. Now, these Scottish Argonauts were

\(^{164}\) Devine, *To the Ends of the Earth*, 71.

\(^{165}\) *Scotsman*, 14 September 1850.

\(^{166}\) *Scotsman*, 19 October 1850.
dependent on the ship’s captain and crew, their fellow passengers, and Mother Nature to see them safely to their new lives. Much like their prospects in California, the safe completion of this daunting voyage across the Atlantic and into the Pacific very much depended on luck.

Meanwhile, in California, the majority of the year’s overland migrants had already arrived. By the time the Tintern had left Glasgow, an Aberdeen man named James Thomson had already started his own lumber business near Sacramento. Six months earlier in April, Thomson had left Chicago to make the two-thousand-mile journey overland to the Golden State. Although California’s promise of widespread wealth was still very much speculation, the Gold Rush had prompted the greatest land migration across America. In 1850, Thompson joined the year’s forty thousand Argonauts who chose the overland passage. Like their seagoing counterparts, the California hopefuls that chose the overland trail too made a gamble. They put their welfare on the line for better prospects and faced over two thousand miles of diverse, challenging, and often barren terrain for spoken riches. Over the course of the Gold Rush, Scots were perpetually in motion to California.

In 1860, the California State Census listed more than 3,600 Scottish-born individuals in California. This chapter explores the journey experiences of Scottish Argonauts to California. At first glance, the Scots that marched and sailed westward experienced the common trials and tribulations of their chosen method of travel. However, a closer look at their travel experiences in the context of this study is worthwhile. This chapter demonstrates that diasporic actions occurred on the journey as much as the destination. On the ships and overland wagons to California,

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167 Holliday, The World Rushed In, 53.
169 The total population of California in the census was 379,994. Kennedy, Population of the United States in 1860, 622.
Scottish Argonauts looked to and engaged with their homeland in various ways to anchor themselves in their changing surroundings. Furthermore, as this chapter reveals, Scots’ travel experiences and interactions with their travelling communities foreshadowed what was to come in California. As they encountered a variety of new people and cultures that contrasted with the Old World they knew at home, their journeys gave them a sense of how they would fit into the social stratifications of Gold Rush society.

From Scotland, there were three main passages to California. The most reliable and straightforward route was entirely by sea. Known as going ‘round the Horn, the route headed south across the Atlantic Ocean and passed the equator, navigated around the Horn of South America, turned north into the Pacific, and crossed the equator again before it reached California. The journey spanned around 16,000 miles and took anywhere from five to eight months. But despite it being a well-established route, it was by no means safe. Sailing around South America’s Cape Horn meant navigating the most dangerous ocean in the world. As well as taking up crucial time for those eager to reach the gold districts, the Horn route also made the most infamous passage in nautical lore a reality for ordinary people. Of the travelling Argonauts we follow in this chapter, James Beith elected the Horn passage and departed from Glasgow in 1849.

The fastest option to California was by way of Panama, also known as the isthmus route. Argonauts that elected this passage broke up their sea voyage with a short overland journey across the Panamanian isthmus. On average, this route took three to four months and was generally the most expensive. Because more ships in America catered to this route, Scots who elected it would often sail for the eastern American seaboard and secure further passage from

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For the more nautically inclined, from Scotland, the trip around the Cape to California averaged around 14,000 nautical miles.
there. Such was the case of Jessie Anderson, a schoolteacher from Fife who sailed to Philadelphia in 1852 before heading to Panama. One could also reach the isthmus directly from the UK on one of the Royal Mail steamships which served the West Indies. In 1850, a native of Kirkcudbright named John James Hamilton elected this course and departed from Southampton on the *RMS Trent*.

The obvious downside to this method was the sixty-mile land crossing over the isthmus – half of it by dugout canoe and the remaining leg by a mule trail to Panama City. Those who made the crossing in the early days of the Gold Rush encountered the most hardships, as the old river and jungle trails were ill-suited for the accelerated flow of traffic. British migrants especially struggled in the tropical climate, and their suffering often continued from other causes when they reached the Pacific coast at Panama City. Furthermore, the initial supply of passenger ships to California simply did not match the demand of Argonauts who often remained stranded for weeks or more. Even by 1850, one Scottish transmigrant named William Elder found not much had changed.

The final route was perhaps for the most adventurous or those wary of a long journey at sea. After crossing the Atlantic, Scottish migrants could join the majority of Americans who elected the overland journey to California.¹⁷¹ There were several popular land routes, each taking four to six months on average. There is little evidence of Scots coming directly from Scotland who chose this route. However, many Scottish Argonauts who had already migrated to the United States, especially in the Midwest, elected the overland passage. While their circumstances are different from their countrymen that had not yet stepped foot from Scotland, their

experiences on the overland trail are still useful to explore as they too engaged with links and memories of the homeland during their travels.

Despite leaving Scotland five years ago, James Thomson’s connection to his family and Scottish roots remained strong. Originally from Aberdeenshire, Thomson worked as a baker in Edwardsburgh, Ontario when the Gold Rush began. Writing home in April 1849, he told his father that ‘The gold fever has not exactly reached the moving point with me.’ His scepticism lingered as he described how some of the locals prepared themselves for California. To him, it all seemed ‘too much like counting the chickens before the eggs are laid for an Aberdonian to be caught in such speculation.’ 172 However, truth be told he too was in search of better opportunity. The following month he left for Chicago ‘On the account of the dullness of business in Edwardsburgh and in Canada generally.’ 173 There, he abandoned the baker trade he had known since his youth and started work as a clerk for a lumber merchant. Nevertheless, this did not last long. Gold fever had taken hold of Chicago more strongly than Edwardsburgh, and as the year progressed Thomson noticed that many of the city’s respected businessmen abandoned good situations for California. By 1850 he decided to follow the entrepreneurs west.

Thomson’s circumstances shed some light on why some Argonauts chose the overland journey instead of by sea. Chicago was in a convenient location in that the journey time to California, by land or sea, was roughly the same. Thomson observed that there was no majority going one way or the other; they either travelled to the East coast to secure a vessel via Panama or headed west by wagon train. In the end, word of mouth and a desire to experience the fabled land route swayed his decision:

173 James Thomson to Alexander Thomson, 16 July 1849, Chicago, in Ibid., 125.
A good many have left Chicago this winter from San Francisco by way of New York, Chagres, and Panama but those who have travelled both ways recommend the overland route, especially from places so far west as this. The distance from Chicago to the ‘diggings’ across the Plains is estimated at about two thousand five hundred miles, rather a long journey to go in a waggon I admit, but my love of seeing the world feelings were always pretty strong, and I can’t feel satisfied until I have seen the ‘Far West’ (if there be such a place) 174

A successful journey very much depended on careful preparation. Introduced in the previous chapter, emigrants’ guidebooks were a popular tool for preparing for migration. In the United States, publishers responded quickly and released the first Gold Rush guidebooks in early 1849. California hopefuls that took the overland trail favoured Joseph Ware’s *Emigrants’ Guide to California*, as it provided a step-by-step description of the journey. 175 Although the book was useful in many aspects, the author himself had never been to California. 176 This shortsightedness, as this chapter later reveals, proved troublesome. Meanwhile, Argonauts travelling from Scotland seldom considered the overland journey because of the added technicalities. This is reflected by the lack of overland guides in Britain. 177 However, the information on the overland journey to California was there if Scots wanted it. Even though *Ware’s Guide* was never published in Britain, Edwin Bryant’s *What I Saw In California* provided a similar step-by-step account of the overland journey and was widely available to British readers. In fact, Ware had integrated much of Bryant’s narrative into his own guidebook. 178

Scots who waited to travel to California until 1850 had a better selection of guidebooks relevant to their journey from across the Atlantic. The aforementioned *California: Its past*

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175 Stillson, *Spreading the Word*, 57-58.
177 Stillson, *Spreading the Word*, 57.
178 Ibid., 58-59.
Among other pieces of advice, the volume included: a list of British passenger rights and regulations for sea travel, an overview of what to expect at the shipyards, suggested inventories of what to pack for the voyage (with detailed lists including such items as a ‘scotch cap’, ‘6 striped cotton shirts’, and ‘beaverteen trousers’), and finally, advice on one’s conduct and mannerisms during the journey. The guidebook also offered advice on which route one should take:

Emigrant vessels from this country to California, generally take the long sea voyage round the Cape Horn, which occupies about six months. The saving of time which might be effected by landing at Chagres, and crossing the isthmus of Panama, would be more than counter-balanced by the inconvenience of shifting luggage, and running the chance of finding an immediate conveyance, besides the additional expense and risk.

At this point, the safety and reliability of the isthmus crossing remained controversial. Reliable information on the journey via Panama was still scarce, and a dedicated guidebook did not materialise until 1851. Accordingly, traffic across the isthmus increased alongside available information on the route. However, the initial lack of information did not deter Scots from proceeding in that direction, nor did the warnings from newspaper correspondents. In January 1849, the Glasgow Herald gave a descriptive account of what to expect on the isthmus crossing but advised against it:

Besides the risk and possible expense of transit to the city of Panama, people who wish to visit California should consider that they may be detained in it, like rats in a trap, if no vessels come there to convey them to their destination. Vessels for California, touching at Panama, are few and very far between. Therefore, without security for being promptly taken from it, intending visitants to California should go by the Horn, preparing themselves for at least six months’ voyage from Britain.
While the press initially circulated most of the information on the isthmus crossing (probably because it was more novel and entertaining), editors and correspondents usually recommended the tried and tested journey around the Horn. As for the overland route, newspapers provided little more than updates on the current tide of migration. Again, this reflected its lack of relevance to readers in Scotland. Nevertheless, be it through guidebooks, traveller’s accounts, or newspaper features, Scots had access to some sort of information on each route.

Along with guidebooks to assist them on their travels, many Scottish Argonauts also packed diaries and stationery sets. Gold Rush historians have recognised that the journey to California, as Oscar Lewis states, was ‘one of the most articulate migrations in history’. \(184\) Hopeful Argonauts anticipated that the trip that lay before them would be an experience of a lifetime. Once they departed for California, many set out to record their passages and took pen to paper for the first time. \(185\) Travelling Argonauts wrote most about the different people, places, things, and experiences they encountered in their new reality. As this chapter reveals, the travel accounts of Scottish Argonauts voiced similar themes as their travelling counterparts. But in using a Scottish diaspora lens to analyse these travel accounts, there are also clear references to a shared cultural baggage that helped the writers make sense of their new surroundings. As this chapter demonstrates, the act of writing fulfilled a range of functions outside documenting an exciting experience. For Scottish Argonauts, writing could fulfill the diasporic desire to remain connected to the homeland.

\(184\) Oscar Lewis’ work on sea voyages is the cornerstone in Gold Rush maritime travel history. Although Lewis recognizes the international network of Gold Rush oceanic transit, his study only focuses on vessels which departed from the United States. Oscar Lewis, Sea Routes to the Gold Fields; the Migration by Water to California in 1849-1852 (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1949), 5.

\(185\) Ibid., 5.
Sea Goers

Marine historians rightly describe the Gold Rush as a maritime event. Compared to the estimated 25,000 migrants that came by land to California in 1849, from April of the same year almost 40,000 individuals reached California by sea. Initially, only a small number of European vessels docked in California. During the first ten months of 1849, San Francisco’s harbour welcomed less than 40 foreign ships. By 1850, however, the British maritime industry had eagerly responded to Gold Rush demands. Ship-owners and merchants were more than willing to add California to their trading routes as the Pacific Coast was an easy addition to the lucrative trading circle that ran from the U.K., the eastern United States, and China. By September that year, 93 ships left British ports for San Francisco. Of those, at least 12 had departed from Scottish ports, embarking from Leith, Glasgow, Dundee, and Greenock.

For those in Scotland considering California, participating in the Gold Rush became a reality when local newspapers advertised direct voyages to the Golden State. The following ad for the Tintern first appeared in the Glasgow Herald on 11 September 1850, and in the Scotsman the following day:

STEAMER FOR CALIFORNIA,
Calling at VALPARAISO and PANAMA
The fine A.1. Screw Steamer
TINTERN
220 Tons Burthen, will Sail from Glasgow positively on the 1st proximo, from the above ports and San Francisco. The vessel has been fitted up expressly for this voyage, has splendid accommodations for Passengers, and affords an opportunity seldom to be met with for parties proceeding to California. As a

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186 Further to Lewis’ study, see Delgado, To California by Sea, xi.
187 Ibid.
188 Ibid., 23.
189 In 1849, the two Scottish ships that left for California were Jansen and Jane Dixon. In 1850, the known Scottish vessels to California were Grace Darling, Queen of Sheba, Tintern, Thistle, The Retriever, The Humayoon, The Arab, Madura, Diana, Lyra, William, and Lady Lilford.
limited number of Passengers will only be taken, immediate
application is necessary to secure berths.
For Plan of Vessel, Rate of Passage, &c., apply to
AULD, COLVIL, & CO., Glasgow, or GEO. GIBSON & CO.,
Leith.190

With less than a month to spare, interested parties did not have long to act and source funds for
their passage. Travel fares from Scotland to California are obscure, as advertisements often
stipulated that the price was available upon request. Jessie Anderson, who sailed the isthmus
passage in 1852, disclosed her total travel costs in her first letter home from San Francisco: ‘I
asked George what I owed him so he gave me my bill 341 dollars no new gowns or cloak or
bonnet but it is of no consequence. I will soon make money as I am in good health.’191 Her
brother, George, had earned enough money to pay for his young daughter, brother and sister to
accompany him back to San Francisco where he worked as a shipwright. In 1852, 341 dollars
roughly converted to 70 pounds, far more than Anderson made in a year as a schoolteacher. 192
Nevertheless, she had high hopes that she would be able to repay her brother once she found
work in California.

In some instances, those wanting to reach California without the financial means to do so
could work their passages. This was how eighteen-year-old Robert Watt, a native of
Newtongrange, found his way out to California in 1850. His older brother had migrated there the
year before, and Watt was eager to join him. Writing his Gold Rush memories forty years later to
his daughter, he recalled that there was a generational shift between himself and his father on

190 *Glasgow Herald*, 13 September 1850; *Scotsman*, 14 September 1850.
191 Jessie Anderson Cameron to her mother, 10 May 1852, San Francisco, Jessie Anderson Cameron
Letters, California Historical Society, San Francisco.
192 Anderson’s annual salary probably ranged from 35-50 pounds, R. D. Anderson, *Education and the
Scottish People, 1750-1918* (Clarendon Press, 1995), 79. Currency exchange: Lawrence H. Officer and
Samuel H. Williamson, ‘Computing 'Real Value' Over Time with a Conversion Between U.K. Pounds
how they viewed migration. When Watt expressed his intent to go to California, he reported that his ‘Father did not take to it kindly, he could not understand this spirit that had got into young men, this desire to leave their own country where there were plenty of opportunities etc.’ He admitted that his situation at home was ‘a little better than those around us’. By day Watt worked on his family’s farm, and by night he carried out his apprenticeship under a local machinist. While he did not take for granted his sense of security at home, both chain migration (a process where relations abroad encouraged others to follow) and the evolving sentiments around emigration swayed his decision to move to California. With little expendable income, Watt was fortunate to secure a position on a California bound-vessel. Working as an ‘Ordinary Seaman’, he paid his way by cleaning the deck and performing the night watch. Although passage to California was financially out of reach for the average Scot, people like Watt and Anderson found other ways to fund their trips through family ties or work arrangements.

In the case of Anderson and Watt, the trusted word of family members in California was the most likely factor in their decision to become Argonauts. More than official reports or guidebooks, influence from friends and family had a much more powerful, albeit personal, pull of encouraging Scots to join the Gold Rush. In her study of Scots in New Zealand, Bueltmann has highlighted ‘the importance and influence of family, kinship, as well as the wider connection webs based on ethnic identity, in the immigration process’. ‘Migrants linked by acquaintance or kinship’, she continues, ‘were part of ‘the most effective units of migration’. As is demonstrated here and in the remaining chapters, the vast majority of Scottish Argonauts in this

193 Robert Watt to his daughter Elizabeth, 19 January 1892, Oakland, CA, Private Collection of Mark Miller.
study had either followed a relation to California or eventually created a new chain by encouraging other Scots to join them.

In many instances, Argonauts secured their passage before laying eyes on their chosen vessel. Despite recent advancements in the shipping industry, countless vessels were not up to standard. Shipbuilders and shipping agencies answered the extreme demand of passage to California with a hastily-made supply. Some turned whaling ships into passenger ships where no amount of cleaning could remove the smell of whale carcasses on board. While others resurrected decommissioned ships from the graveyard that were barely suited for travel. In New York, for example, Scottish travel writer J.D. Borthwick found his ship for Panama in a state of questionable repairs. A makeshift deck stood in the vessel’s cargo hold, and as for Borthwick could tell, ‘excepting the captain’s room, there was nothing which could be called a cabin in the ship.’ However, Borthwick and his fellow passengers disregarded the state of their accommodation for the bigger picture: ‘But all were in good spirits, and so much engrossed with thoughts of California that there was little disposition to grumble at the rough-and-ready style of our accommodation.’ The correspondent for the Dundee Courier, introduced in the previous chapter, encountered a similar situation. While counting down the days of his impending departure date, he paid a visit to the intended vessel, the Philadelphia: ‘I have seen her, but cannot say she is a beauty, but so long as she takes us safe there that is all we require.’ For the hopeful Argonauts, California’s riches outweighed the discomforts getting there.

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197 *Dundee Courier*, 3 July 1850.
Passenger lists for California commonly represented various nationalities and walks of life. The London, which left Liverpool for San Francisco in October 1849, carried among others: three Irishmen, a Scotsman, a Frenchman, a doctor, a carpenter, a painter, an African cook, various four-legged companions, an Irish captain, and a crew with an Irish majority. In a different vessel that left from Liverpool in 1850, a Fort William man recounted that he was happily in the majority – out of 32 passengers on board, half of them were Scottish. Meanwhile, Borthwick’s company of passengers from New York numbered about sixty and included Americans, English, Scottish, French, and German hopefuls for California. Among them, he recalled, were members of ‘nearly every trade’, doctors, lawyers, merchants, farmers, engineers, and ‘nondescript “young men”’. While there are few records of official passenger lists leaving from Scotland before the end of the nineteenth century, there is evidence in other sources that Scottish women and children also made the journey from Scotland to California. In June 1849, for example, the Scotsman announced that the California-bound Jane Dixon had a delayed departure from Leith on account of having to construct separate accommodation for female travellers. The following year, a ‘Mrs. Chevalier’ and her two children embarked from Leith as steerage passengers on the Queen of Sheba. With no sign of her husband on board, perhaps she headed to join him in California. What is more, the membership ledger of the now-defunct Association

198 For a more comprehensive look at the variety of passengers on Gold Rush vessels, see Charles Schultz, Forty-niners 'round the Horn (South Carolina: 1999), 34-39.
200 Letter dated Indian Diggings, 7 February 1853, The Inverness Courier, 26 May 1853.
201 Borthwick, Three Years in California, 33.
202 The Scotsman, 27 June 1849.
of Pioneer Women of California also lists about 30 women who took either the Horn or Isthmus route from Scotland during the Gold Rush.\textsuperscript{204}

Finally, there is Jessie Anderson, a twenty-three-year-old schoolteacher who left for California in 1852. Not yet married, and also probably fed up with the discrimination she faced as a female teacher in Scotland, Anderson decided to accompany her brother on his return trip to California.\textsuperscript{205} As soon as she left for California, Anderson religiously wrote detailed letters home about her experiences. Her letter collection plays a vital role in this study because it provides a valuable glimpse of what it was like being a Scottish woman in the Gold Rush. At present this is the only known personal account by a female Scottish Argonaut. While one woman’s accounts should not represent the experience of all Scottish Argonaut women, Anderson’s narrative sheds light on how one navigated being female \textit{and} Scottish in California, as well as the ways in which she continued to engage with her homeland.

A few years earlier, in 1849, eighteen-year-old James Beith departed Glasgow for California. The previous years had not been kind to him. On top of losing his mother, his father’s once successful merchant business had fallen on hard times.\textsuperscript{206} For Beith, his unfortunate family matters, along with reaching adulthood, coincided with the discovery of gold in California. Just as well, his circumstances appealed to the promise of immediate riches and the call for capable

\textsuperscript{205} In Scotland during the nineteenth century, female teachers experienced extreme prejudice in parish schools and were a grave minority in the teaching profession. As a result, most female teachers taught at adventure (private) schools, including those which catered to girls. For a discussion on the female experience in Victorian education in Scotland see Helen Corr, ‘Dominies and Domination: Schoolteachers, Masculinity and Women in 19th Century Scotland’, \textit{History Workshop Journal}, no. 40 (1995).
\textsuperscript{206} James Beith Letter Book, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.
bodies needed to yield them. So, with no future in the family business, Beith booked a vessel ‘round the Horn to carry him to the Golden State.\textsuperscript{207}

The journey to California around the cape of South America ‘offered an unrivalled opportunity to observe the sea in all its countless moods’\textsuperscript{208}. Taking six months on average, passengers lived half a year on the confines of a ship. Diaries often began with an ignorance of life at sea, but as time progressed on board, the language shifted towards a comfortable handling of sailing terms.\textsuperscript{209} Scots and other Argonauts often wrote of the interworking of the ship and crew, relationships with other passengers, boredom, attempts to quell the latter, and of their first impressions of native life and practices in exotic territories. While Beith’s comments are more on his experiences and observances at foreign ports, which will come shortly, his monotonous life at sea is evident.

While Argonauts that went via Panama spent less time at sea, they still experienced much of the same circumstances and situations as those who navigated the Horn. No matter the route, seasickness affected almost everyone. Anderson complained of seasickness during both of her voyages in the Atlantic, but her first trip was the worst. After she arrived at Philadelphia and journey to New York, Anderson recounted to her mother that on the ship, ‘I was unable to hold up my head for a whole week.’\textsuperscript{210} John James Hamilton, who travelled two years earlier, was even worse. After leaving Southampton on the \textit{Trent}, he suffered for a fortnight:

\begin{quote}
I must confess that I never before had an idea of what seasickness was for I anticipated that after the first few days when its violence was expended it would go away but it still continued… There was only one other gentleman on board who was equally ill with myself and it certainly was very disagreeable to see everybody else enjoying themselves
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{207} \textit{Ibid.} Scanned biography attached to the end of the journal, 287.
\textsuperscript{208} Lewis, \textit{Sea Routes}, 76.
\textsuperscript{209} \textit{Ibid.}, 4.
\textsuperscript{210} Jesse Anderson to her mother, 26 March 1852, New York.
while we lay still hardly able to move from the place on deck to which we had crawled getting up in the morning.\textsuperscript{211}

When passengers finally gained their sealegs, their main concern was how to pass the time. Surrounded by an endless expanse of water, there was little to admire about the monotonous scenery. Passengers struck up fast relationships with one another in an effort to quell boredom. Anderson relayed that after she recovered from her seasickness, ‘we all got acquainted and were so merry singing every night’.\textsuperscript{212} Hamilton also made acquaintances after his recovery and became particularly close with a newly minted doctor from Edinburgh who travelled with his brothers and cousins. Unsurprisingly, Scots gravitated towards the company of other Scots onboard their vessels. Malcom Prentis also observed this trend with Scottish emigrants on their way to Australia, especially when the passengers represented a range of nationalities.\textsuperscript{213} ‘Though diverse in the nineteenth century,’ argues Prentis, ‘Scots had more in common with each other than did the other British nationalities.’ There existed a ‘strong cultural affinity among Scots and a marked identity sustained not just by sentiment but also by a strong civic culture as well.’\textsuperscript{214} Hamilton remarked upon his newfound company and their amusements on board, ‘all under five and twenty and as full of frolic as I am.\textsuperscript{215} Together, a typical day on the Trent involved reading, writing, and playing ‘quiet games’ with the ladies during the day. After dinner, Hamilton explained, they typically sang, danced on deck, and admired the stars before retiring to bed.\textsuperscript{216}

\textsuperscript{211} John James Hamilton to his sisters, 11 December 1850, 370 miles north-east of St Thomas, John James Hamilton letters to family, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.
\textsuperscript{212} Jesse Anderson to her mother, 26 March 1852, New York.
\textsuperscript{214} \textit{Ibid}.
\textsuperscript{215} \textit{Ibid}.
\textsuperscript{216} John James Hamilton to his sisters, 11 December 1850, 370 miles north-east of St Thomas.
One of the more notable events onboard the Trent was the celebration of St. Andrews Day. The officers of the ship resigned their positions for the day and instead the Scotsmen on board took charge. At dinner, Hamilton recounted that he sat at the head of the table and delivered two speeches: ‘one proposing the health of the captain and officers of the ship and the other of the "Army and Navy"’. It would seem that a St. Andrew’s Day celebration on a British ship was nothing of significance, but the circumstances at the time suggest otherwise. Compared to today, the observation of the patron saint in Scotland and the rest of Britain was limited during the nineteenth century. To be sure, Scots in cities such as London, Liverpool, Manchester, and Belfast observed this tradition across the British Isles, but the more elaborate celebrations seemed to happen the further Scots found themselves from home. This occasion on board the Trent reaffirms that components of an active diaspora, such as promoting and celebrating memories of the homeland, were present on the journey as much as the destination.

Sea weary passengers welcomed the occasional stops on land for provisions. Hamilton revelled as his ship approached St. Thomas Island in the Caribbean:

> It was quite delightful this morning to feel the first smell of land, all the hills above the town are planted with kiwis and pineapples so that it was exactly as if we had been suddenly transported to a hot house.

Stops on land not only brought a change in scenery but a variation to the monotonous passenger diet. Argonauts often shared their enthusiasm for the variety of foods they encountered on their layovers. In Panama, Beith did not digress from the common observations of Gold Rush voyagers: ‘Here I lived and regaled myself upon all kinds of tropical fruits, such as, Bananas,

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217 Ibid.
219 John James Hamilton to his brother, 13 December 1850, Off St. Thomas.
Plantains, Oranges, Cocoanuts and figs which grow here and are sold very cheap’. Two years later in Jamaica on her own passage to California, Anderson wished she could share the native oranges with her family back in Scotland: ‘they are so sweet and cheap.’

Naturally, Scottish Argonauts commented on more than exotic food. During their brief engagement with life in a foreign land, Scots grappled with how reality compared to their prefabricated imaginings of the ‘uncivilised’. Scottish Argonauts in transit found themselves part of an international travel network that had been amplified by the Gold Rush. The long journey to El Dorado widened the horizons of a mass of people from all over the world. Nevertheless, more often than not, they held onto their assumptions of foreign races and nationalities that they had grown accustomed to at home. Notably, this idea that the Anglo-Saxon race was superior would be a source of cohesion for Scottish and Anglo-American Argonauts in California. For Anderson, the Jamaican population was both a source of humour and revulsion:

the first thing that greeted us was one little black who jumped off a ship calling out Give 10 Mussa, Give Mussa, well some of the Gents threw some into the sea, down went black, head first and brought it up in his teeth then there another half dozen came and there was such scrambling. The black women carried all the coal on their heads into the ship strange looking creatures they are

Hamilton, too, expressed disfavour towards the ‘inferior’ races he encountered on his travels. In his letters home, he began to voice racial stereotypes as soon as he embarked:

There are a few nasty dirty Spaniards on board who wear moustache and beard and have not I believe ever washed since they came on board they smoke too from morning till night and I am so disgusted with their practices altogether

Unsurprisingly, more of Hamilton’s racial preconceptions surfaced during his stay in Panama. He had this to say about the indigenous population:

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221 James Beith, 1 September 1854, James Beith Letter Book, 4.
222 Jessie Anderson to her Mother, April 1852, Sailing to Chagres.
223 Ibid.
224 John James Hamilton to his brother, 13 December 1850, Off St. Thomas.
They are the laziest set of beings I ever came across and joined with that are **proud, cowardly and impertinent**. It would be the very best thing in the world for them if the Yankees of the Southern States would take possession of the country and make them all slaves.\textsuperscript{225}

Meanwhile, Beith was surprised by how civilised the natives seemed during a stopover in Chile.

Regardless, this failed to shift his conception of Anglo-Saxon superiority:

> I was highly ammused when I was there with the manners and customs of the Chilians, their Grand processions during Mass days, struck me at first with awe, but not with reverence….As I had made no calculations, upon uncivilised race of beings outside of the limits of Great Britain need I add that I was astonished, the neat regularity of the streets, and the air of cleanliness, which pervaded the town, struck me at once.\textsuperscript{226}

As well as displaying a strong sentiment of where they belonged on a perceived racial hierarchy, travelling Scots often passed judgement on the Catholicism they encountered abroad. Although the Catholic population increased in Scotland during the nineteenth century, the majority remained staunchly Presbyterian and anti-Catholic. Furthermore, S. Karly Kehoe points out that at the start of the 1850s, anti-Catholic sentiment had intensified across Scotland. When Scots encountered Catholicism abroad, misconceptions they carried from home framed how they portrayed Catholics in their writings. In addition to Hamilton and Beith’s obvious distaste of Catholicism, William Elder shared similar opinions while crossing the isthmus:

> There is a rude Roman Catholic chapel while we were there they had a Holy day which partook both of a religious and comical character. Some of them had the most grotesque and comical masks that you ever saw. and their costumes were less comical than their actions \textsuperscript{227}

It is worthwhile to consider Elder’s background as a transmigrant. Having lived in the United States since 1827 (he was born in 1812 in Perth), it is hard to identify whether his aversion to Catholicism was fostered more in Scotland or the US. Yet what is more significant is that anti-

\textsuperscript{225} John James Hamilton to his brother, 31 December 1850, Island of Loboga, 13 miles from Panama.
\textsuperscript{226} James Beith, 1 September 1854, James Beith Letter Book, 2.
\textsuperscript{227} William Elder to his Cousin Catherine, 4 June 1850, Panama. William Elder letters, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.
Catholicism and Anglo-Saxon superiority were prevailing sentiments in both Scotland and the United States. Whether they knew it or not, Anderson, Beith, and Hamilton would find that their backgrounds were well suited for the nativism that came to characterise the society in California.

Meanwhile, for Argonauts rounding the Horn, the event rarely went smoothly. The strip of ocean below South America, known as Drake’s Passage, is exceptional in that there are no other landmasses around the whole circumference of the globe at that latitude. With nothing to buffer winds or break oncoming waves, vessels navigating the rocky coast of the Horn are completely exposed to unyielding forces of Mother Nature. Going east to west, as the Argonauts did, adds further danger. The prevailing winds, some of the strongest around the world, blow the opposite direction. For the Argonauts, rounding the Horn could take days or even weeks. Safe passage depended on the ability of the ship and its captain; and was also much reliant on luck. In a newspaper letter, ‘D. Gow’, a Caithness man who arrived in California during the summer of 1849, vividly recounted his own experience:

We were 14 days off Cape Horn, the wind blowing high, and right a-head. We had another severe gale, with a lea shore not 4 miles distant, and all the sail that we could carry, we had on. The fore-sail was close reefed, the main and fore-topsails double reefed, which was all the sail we could carry. We tacked 24 miles in 48 hours, and the gale then took off.  

William Kerr, an Irishman on board the aforementioned London, described how his vessel fared much worse. Suffering a constant bashing on its approach, the London took almost a month to round the Horn: ‘the waves were almost mountain high above the Ship sometimes she would be quite on her Broad side…sometimes she would ship a heavy sea & would leave the whole ship from poop to forecastle in a flood.’ Jaded by their experience, numerable Argonauts that

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228 Schultz, Forty-niners ’round the Horn, 48.
229 John o’ Groat Journal, 21 December 1849.
voyaged the Horn route vowed that they would never do it again. In fact, return migrants from California almost unanimously travelled via Panama, rather than face the dreaded Cape passage again.

After the Cape Horn travellers braved the gateway from the Atlantic to the Pacific, a reprovisioning in Valparaiso was commonly in order. Then, after around a fortnight of sailing up the coast of South America, vessels often stopped again at Panama City. Here, the two popular sea routes to California crossed paths. Soon after President Polk verified the abundance of gold, hundreds of impatient Argonauts rushed the docks in New York to catch one of the US Mail steamships for Panama. Once they landed, they followed an old Spanish trading route across the isthmus to gain access to the Pacific. At least a few Scottish transmigrants counted themselves among this group. Scotsmen C.M. Radcliff, John Kelly, and Alexander Austin timed their departures just right from New York in order to catch the first steamship from Panama to California. The vessel, aptly named SS California, arrived with the first shipment of Argonauts in San Francisco on February 28, 1849.

The isthmus route developed complications as the Gold Rush traffic intensified. Despite a shorter distance to California, the multiple transfers involved often caused delays. After a two-week passage across the Atlantic, Anderson faced a longer layover in New York than she anticipated. She wrote to her mother from her temporary accommodation in a boarding house, ‘there is such a rush to California that it is hardly possible to get a ticket’. But with some

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231 Schultz, Forty-niners ‘round the Horn, 177.
232 Ibid.
233 Lewis, Sea Routes, 154-166.
234 Committee of the Association, ed. First Steamship Pioneers, (San Francisco, 1874), 258, 32, 91.
235 Jessie Anderson to her mother, 26 March 1852, New York.
persistence, her brothers managed to secure through tickets to California, leaving in two weeks’
time.

From New York, the voyage to Panama took another two weeks until passengers reached
the small port town of Chagres. Their ensuing overland route depended on when they arrived.
During the initial years of the Gold Rush, when Elder and Hamilton travelled, the journey started
with a forty-mile river passage. Elder, along with three others he met on board his steamer, paid
forty-five dollars to rent one of the traditional dugout canoes. 236 It took them three days to
traverse the river; by day they paddled through both torrential rain and scorching sun, and at
night they slept under the canopy of the rainforest in a crowded tent. 237 Later in 1852, Anderson
was able to bypass the majority of the river journey. By then, the Panama Railroad Company had
a railway line under construction and travellers could make use of the operable track. After 25
miles, Anderson’s train journey terminated at the Cruces River. From there, she journeyed
overnight by a small riverboat and reached the trailhead at Gorgona the next day. Here, she faced
the same remaining passage that Elder and Hamilton had traversed two years earlier.

Upon reaching the trailhead at either Gorgona or Cruces, Argonauts could choose to
travel the remaining 20 miles to Panama City by foot or mule. Elder elected to walk and paid
thirty dollars to hire two horses to carry his luggage. Even though it was the dry season, wet
weather slowed their progress. Mindful that his wife and children might make the same journey
one day, Elder narrated his experience in a letter back home:

The Isthmus is not so bad as I expected it is very hilly but not rocky…it took us 1 ½ day
to accomplish the journey the road is in many places nothing more than a path where two
can scarcely walk abreast. 238

236 William Elder to Sarah Elder, 14 June 1850, Panama.
237 William Elder to his Cousin Catherine, 4 June 1850, Panama.
238 William Elder to Sarah Elder, 14 June 1850, Panama.
Following the same path two years later, Anderson had elected to travel by mule. Compared to Elder’s experience, the day’s journey was the highlight of her travels. After safely arriving in California, Anderson reminisced about her experience in a letter to her mother and sisters: ‘the road was so beautiful and romantic. Trees nearly all the way, and such hills and hollows and narrow passages…Indeed it was the pleasantest day of my journey’. Anderson’s easier journey demonstrated how much had changed in Panama over the past two years. Initially, Argonauts chose the route around the Cape at a ratio of more than 2 to 1. Yet as the Isthmus route continued to improve throughout the 1850s, Panama absorbed the majority of travel to and from California.

How long one stayed in Panama, anywhere from a few days to several months, was primarily dependent on the availability of passenger vessels to California. When Elder arrived in Panama City during the summer of 1850, he found that his intended vessel, the Republic steamship, was delayed for at least two months. Countless others found themselves in the same situation. Over the past year, the city had become a hotbed of stranded Argonauts, overcrowded and plagued with disease. In limbo, Elder found much time to write home about his current circumstances:

I do not consider Panama unhealthy and yet there is considerable sickness a great many encamp out of Town who are not properly sheltered by the rain many eat and drink to excess and as the climate is undoubtedly debilitating to our northern constitutions diarrhea and feaces in a mild form prevail to some extent.

Especially in Panama City, Argonauts encountered a variety of groups and ethnicities also making their way to California. Even more significant about this stopover was the high

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239 Jessie Anderson to her mother, 10 May 1852, San Francisco.
240 Lewis, Sea Routes, 170.
241 William Elder to Sarah Elder, 14 June 1850, Panama.
presence of Anglo-Americans. Here, one could get a glimpse of how they would fit into Gold Rush society. In their accounts, Scottish Argonauts never voiced any feelings of exclusion and seemed more or less incorporated with the mass of Anglo-Americans in transit. Accordingly, they found themselves in similar circumstances whilst stranded in Panama. After two weeks of biding his time, Elder decided he wanted out at the earliest opportunity. One morning, he awoke before dawn in an attempt to secure passage on the next steamer. Days earlier, the steamship company announced that they would release a limited number of extra tickets at face value. Elder queued in the pouring rain for hours and counted more than 1,000 others in the same predicament:

I underwent such a crowding jarring perspiring process as I certainly would not again undergo for $500 and after all did not obtain a ticket there were about 150 sold and more than the one half amount into the hands of speculators.242

With no luck, Elder considered whether to wait for his intended steamer or to take one of the sailing ships. The latter was a slower option and would add another four to six weeks to his travel time. Despite the delays and the state of his surroundings, Elder wrote home to his wife that his spirits remained high:

There are now I should think 4 or 5,000 Americans here many have been here from one to three months subjected to heavy expense and at considerable risk to health… A good many of the passengers are discouraged and some will return home without seeing California. For my part I am not, nor have I at any time been discouraged.243

Impatient to leave Panama, and perhaps fearing for his health, Elder chose to forego waiting for the steamship. Almost three weeks after arriving in Panama, he boarded the Harriet Rockwell for San Francisco. Fifty-nine days later, after ‘after a tedious but not otherwise unpleasant voyage’,

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242 Ibid.
243 Ibid.
Elder arrived on 16 August. ÆÊIronically, the Republic followed shortly behind and landed at San Francisco five days later. ÆÊ

While the Panama locals referred to all the foreigners in the city as ‘los Americanos’, the Scots were quick to point out the differences between themselves and the Americans. ÆÊIndeed, Scottish Argonauts had something to write about their Anglo-American counterparts. During his vessel’s stopover in Panama, Beith recounted the first time he ‘fell in with the Americans’:

Yankees they were in every sense of the word, jostling, pushing and crowding each other, wishing to know if we were bound to California, here they come helter skelter, pell mell, on board trying to secure a berth even before the anchor is on ground, at the risk of their necks ÆÊ

Meanwhile, Hamilton only stayed in Panama City for three days until he caught the Republic on New Year’s Day. Onboard, he longed for the company of the passengers he had made acquaintance with on the Trent. The American passengers on board the Republic did not impress him:

the conduct of those who call themselves gentlemen on board is the natural result of equality and republican institutions. I should prefer living under a despotism - there are but two on board whom I would think of speaking to in a civilized community. The one a Frenchman and the other a Scotchman… If I were to form my estimate of the American character from those on board It would be but a low one. I hear more swearing in one day here than all the previous parts of my life and as for allowing one to express an opinion unfavourable of their mode of government or finding fault with anything American that is quite beyond all their ideas of liberty. They are the most conceited and boasting set of people I ever met with. Each has some accomplishment in which he says he is almost unrivalled. ÆÊ

Elder also complained about some of his company of the last leg of his journey. Interestingly, he blamed a particular faction of Americans instead of the whole nationality:

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ÆÊWilliam Elder to Sarah Elder, 28 August 1850, San Francisco; Daily Alta California, 17 August 1850. ÆÊ
ÆÊDaily Alta California, 22 August 1850. ÆÊ
ÆÊBorthwick, Three Years in California, 29. ÆÊ
ÆÊJames Beith, 1 September 1854, James Beith Letter Book, 4. ÆÊ
ÆÊJohn James Hamilton to his sister Anne Hamilton, 20 January 1851, Steamship republic from Panama to San Francisco.
a good many of our passengers were to speak safely no better than they should be more than the half of our passengers were from the Southern States nearly all of whom were excessively addicted to swearing and many of them gambling.  

This was another instance where Elder’s time in the US had influenced his outlook and suggested his adaption to American society. Although he did not refer to himself as an American, he had picked up a Northern dislike of the South during his time in New York.

On the final leg of their journey, passengers faced more than rowdy Americans. For those on a sailing ship, including the Horn passengers, this part was often the most tedious. North of the equator, sailing vessels had to run counter to the prevailing winds. The going could be frustratingly slow and counterproductive. Beith encountered these very frustrations as his vessel neared San Francisco. Somewhere in the North Pacific Ocean his ship was ‘becalmed’ for 40 days. Beith recalled the atmosphere onboard: ‘Privations settled around thick and fast, but still they all kept up their hearts, As they thought they could endure anything going to the Golden Land.’ Meanwhile, the anticipation of gold kept morale high in otherwise insufferable conditions.

Anderson and her family only had a week layover in Panama before they boarded the Tennessee steamship for California. Here, they confronted the reality that the steamships serving the isthmus still struggled to match the demand of passengers. Anderson counted 644 voyagers on her vessel and complained about the extreme temperatures in close confines: ‘we felt the heat very much for about 3 weeks Some days the thermometer in the shade was 124’. In another account addressed to family in Paisley, the writer narrated the misery on board his ship:

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249 William Elder to Sarah Elder, 28 August 1850, San Francisco. Rohrbough observed that American Argonauts often voiced their provincial views of other Americans they encountered along the way. For example, Northerners and Southerners despised one another, Missourians seemed to be the most ill-judged, and Iowans the most respected. Rohrbough, *Days of Gold*, 63.
251 Jessie Anderson to her Mother, 10 May 1852, San Francisco.
The hot weather of the tropics, the crowd of passengers—800 to 1000 in one steamer—the sickness from cholera and vomito on the passage, the miseries of the isthmus crossing, all tend to make the trip unpleasant. Yet, after all, one is well repaid.\textsuperscript{252}

Although the promise of gold helped to maintain a positive spirit, death at sea was a common occurrence.\textsuperscript{253} Much of the disease that rampaged the crowded isthmus made its way onto the ships, and several Scots succumbed to an untimely death on the final leg of their trip. For example, in September 1851, a passenger named J.N. McGilvray jumped overboard from the \textit{Oregon} and drowned somewhere off the coast of Mexico. Records state that he had become deranged after suffering from a fever.\textsuperscript{254} Hamilton, on his second journey to San Francisco in 1851 (again electing the Panama route after a visit to the Grand Exhibition in London), had a close call when he contracted smallpox on the \textit{Great Western}.\textsuperscript{255} Restricted to the sickbay the majority of the trip, Hamilton found kind-heartedness in a fellow Scotsman as he regained his health. After some time together, Hamilton felt he could sum up his companion’s prospects quite well:

\begin{quote}
[he] is going out to San Francisco on pure speculation. He knows not a single person there and will land particularly low in funds & as like other of his country men he is rather proud & independent he will find himself rather awkwardly situated for some few weeks He is one however who is sure to succeed in the long run in a new country.\textsuperscript{256}
\end{quote}

Scottish Argonauts often wrote of meeting other Scots they encountered on the way to California. In Panama City, Hamilton told how he encountered a Scottish ship captain who lent him writing materials and offered shelter on his anchored ship.\textsuperscript{257} In Jamaica, Anderson shared

\begin{footnotes}
\item[252] \textit{The Paisley Herald and Renfrewshire Advertiser}, 4 November 1854.
\item[253] Lewis, \textit{Sea Routes}, 192.
\item[254] Rasmussen, \textit{San Francisco Ship Passenger Lists}, 205.
\item[255] John James Hamilton to his brother, 20 June 1851, RMS Great Western.
\item[256] \textit{Ibid}.
\item[257] John James Hamilton to his brother George Hamilton, 31 December 1850, Island of Loboga 13 miles from Panama.
\end{footnotes}
that she had met a Scottish planter family who invited her into their garden for refreshments.\textsuperscript{258} Meanwhile, after concluding his journey up the Chagres River, Elder wrote that he came upon an ‘intelligent old Scotchman’ who helped him negotiate with the natives to carry his luggage. Though he was very thankful for his assistance, Elder was quite perplexed at his situation: ‘I asked him what could induce him to remain in that inhospitable region. He told me he would not go back and live in Scotland for anything poor man’.\textsuperscript{259} In her study of Scottish migration to New Zealand, Bueltmann also observed Scots writing positively about chance meetings and finding themselves in the company of fellow countrymen.\textsuperscript{260} As Scots in transit widened the distance between themselves and the home they left behind, the presence of fellow Scots abroad was a source of comfort.

Eventually, after months in transit, the San Francisco Bay finally came into view. In the case of Hamilton, Elder, and Anderson, their experiences illustrate the range of choices and consequences Argonauts faced when taking the Panama route. Hamilton and Anderson, both travelling from Britain, took just under ten weeks to reach San Francisco. Meanwhile, despite Elder’s closer starting point from New York, he arrived in California after 13 weeks of travel. Beith, whose journey lasted six months around the Horn, was the longest journey of them all. Scottish seafaring Argonauts experienced a range of circumstances en route to California, yet their accounts express a shared sense of Scottishness. As Prentis observed, Scots in transit ‘were consciously taking a Scotland of the mind with them’.\textsuperscript{261} While it is clear they looked forward to golden land of opportunity, the Scots in this study also looked back to the land and people they left behind.

\textsuperscript{258} Jessie Anderson to her mother, April 1852, Sailing to Chagres.
\textsuperscript{259} William Elder to his Cousin Catherine, 4 June 1850, Panama.
\textsuperscript{260} Bueltmann, \textit{Scottish Ethnicity and the Making of New Zealand Society, 1850-1930}, 55.
\textsuperscript{261} Prentis, ‘Haggis on the High Seas’, 310.
Overlanders

Alongside the global migration that funnelled into California by sea, the internal movement by land was a feat itself. Marshall’s discovery of gold spurred an American exodus across the continent like never before. Especially during the initial years of the Gold Rush, the majority of American Argonauts chose the overland passage. In 1849 and 1850, an estimated 69,000 Argonauts traversed the overland trails for California. However, ‘The covered-wagon migration across the plains and mountains’, as one historian has claimed, was not ‘wholly American’. Scots, alongside English, Irish, German, French, and other overseas nationalities could count themselves amongst this movement.

While this study limits itself to Scottish migrants, the ‘wholly American’ conception of the overland trail is simple to disprove. Those who marched westward were very likely to encounter Scottish names, accents, or attire at some point throughout their journey. As for the Scots themselves, a Scottish identity did not hinder or handicap their experience on the overland trail. They were very much a part of the overland community, and perhaps this is why their presence has been obscure, until now. At first glance, the Scots who took the overland trail to California experienced a very different journey than those who went by sea. Though the method

262 As with Scottish migrants, it is difficult to estimate the number of American Argonauts that travelled by sea or overland. While it is safe to assume that the majority of overland migrants were Americans and transmigrants, the estimations for sea arrivals are harder to differentiate. Doris Wright compiled a list of passenger arrivals by sea at San Francisco (1852-1867) according to ports of origin, however, the high number of international transfers at Panama and the United States complicate whether a port of origin can indicate a passengers’ nationality. For overland estimations, Unruh’s figures are the most reliable: Overland Migration to California by years: 1849, 25,000; 1850, 44,000; 1851, 1,100; 1852, 50,000; 1853, 20,000; 1854, 12,000, Unruh, The Plains Across, 120.
By sea the estimations are: 1849, 39,000; 1850, 36,462; 1851, 27,202; 1852, 64,640; 1853, 35,396; 1854, 50,137. Wright, ‘The Making of Cosmopolitan California’, 341-343.
263 Unruh, The Plains Across, 120.
of travel could not be more different, a strong thread runs through each. Both land and sea Scottish Argonaut narratives shared a common theme of association with and idealisation of the homeland. Understandably, overland travellers did not find as many occasions to write on their travels compared to those at sea. Instead, most of overland accounts that inform this section were written after their arrival in California. In letters home informing friends and family of their safe arrival, Scottish Argonauts’ recollections of journeys that lasted months were condensed into a few lines or pages. Still, what Scottish Argonauts chose to communicate and share of their overland journeys shows that they too connected with Scotland in some shape or form.

Before they began their trip, overlanders faced the difficult decision of which route to take. There were two main choices, the well-known and established Oregon-California trail which crossed the Great Plains and the western frontier, or the newer Santa Fe trail which traversed the Southwest through recently acquired US territory. While the former followed the tried and true pioneer route from Missouri, through Wyoming, and across Utah, the latter passed through New Mexico, crossed in and out of Mexican territory, and trekked across modern-day Arizona. On either route migrants also confronted forks and cut-offs. Many promised to be timesaving alternatives, but they often tempted fate. Over the course of the Gold Rush, Scottish overlanders trekked across every well-known highway, traversed the less popular byways, and risked the various obscure cut-offs to get to California. Much like the sea routes, Scots were just as omnipresent on the overland trails.

While it is impossible to know exactly how many Scots took the overland passage to California during the Gold Rush, a variety of sources indicate their level of presence on the trails.265 As the first chapter demonstrated, the 1852 California state census is especially useful

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265 Although the station officers at Fort Laramie endeavoured to record a daily count of passers-by, they only tallied the number of men and wagons, Unruh, *The Plains Across*, 120-122.
because it provides an individual’s former place of residence. The further inland one resided, the more likely they were to elect the overland route to California over the sea passage. As Scottish Argonauts came from a variety of US residences from the Midwest and beyond, those individuals most likely followed the overland tide of migration to California.

Furthermore, while there was an undeniable majority of men on the overland trail, Scottish women also took this route to California. At present, the only known personal accounts of Scottish women on the overland trail are in a ledger book for the now-defunct Association of Pioneer Women of California. For the most part, the entries are brief such as ‘Father [from Ireland] came across plains by ox team and Mother [from Scotland] came same route by wagon.’ The most detailed entry (out of a total of three who took the overland trail) is only a few lines longer:

In July 1849 my parents [her mother was from Glasgow and her father from Connecticut] with three girls between the ages of five, nine, and a baby boy of two months weighing but 4 ½ lbs started with a company of twenty five families with ox teams to cross the plains in search of a better climate.

Despite this lack of information, it is important to acknowledge that Scottish women also experienced the overland trail to California. Like the sea goers, this is not an entirely male narrative.

Early on in 1849, thirty-six-year-old Robert Brownlee mulled over which route he would take from his home in Arkansas. On bed rest after a mining accident, it was little surprise that he

267 See Table 1.7.
269 Entry for Lucy E. Hammersmith in *Ibid.*, 93; Another entry by Mary Shafer Desmond reads: ‘Mother [from Scotland] came to California from New Orleans by oxteam. Father [From Germany] came by the Panama Route.’, 91.
had contracted gold fever during his recovery. Born in Aberdeen, Brownlee was not new to American life and following opportunity. He originally emigrated in 1836 to New York in response to news of devastating fires and the need for men to rebuild the city. Over the years, Brownlee followed masonry opportunities that eventually brought him to Arkansas. Here, with some money now at his disposal, he decided to buy some property outside Little Rock and test his hand at lead mining. As fate would have it, Brownlee was side-lined by an explosion just before Polk’s confirmation of gold in California.

Brownlee did not waste the idle time of his recovery. Several friends and neighbours had also succumbed to gold fever, and together they organised a travel company. After some deliberation, they decided to take the southern route which forked from the Santa Fe Trail to follow the Rio Grande River to southern New Mexico, then westward across the Arizona desert to California.²⁷¹ On 16 January 1849, they made their intentions public and announced the formation of the Little Rock and California Association in the *Arkansas Banner*.²⁷² Two weeks later, the organisers and all interested parties convened at the Little Rock City Hall to elect officials and draft by-laws.²⁷³ The procedures mirrored the formation of a military regiment, with a named captain, lieutenants, and a sergeant. For the generation fresh out of the Mexican-American War, it seemed rational to band together in military fashion.²⁷⁴

Companies like Brownlee’s were a common arrangement to tackle the overland trail. Bigger groups offered security and mutual aid whilst regulations ensured that some sort of order remained on the trail. According to John Faragher, overland companies also functioned as a

²⁷¹ In 1849, about 10,000 travellers chose the Southern Route to California, compared to the 30,000 who took the Oregon-California trail. Holliday, *The World Rushed In*, 296.
²⁷³ Ibid., 70.
²⁷⁴ Lavender, *The Overland Migrations*, 72.
‘surrogate society’ and essentially provided migrants with a mobile community that mirrored the social and cultural norms they left behind.\textsuperscript{275} Scottish transmigrants travelled with a variety of overland groups and companies that were predominantly composed of Anglo-Americans. As such, Scottish experiences in these companies can suggest the extent of their integration in American society. James Thomson, for example, began his trip across the Oregon-California Trail with a party of four Americans. All were neighbours and acquaintances from Chicago. They then merged with another small company and elected officers when they reached Council Bluffs. Most likely because of Thomson’s recent experience as a clerk (though not discounting the influence of the ‘canny Scot’ stereotype), the members elected him to be their treasurer.\textsuperscript{276} Meanwhile, Brownlee travelled with a much bigger company that neared 200 men. In their Articles of Association, the Little Rock and California Association identified their members as ‘respectable and intelligent citizens of the United States’.\textsuperscript{277} Indeed, Brownlee counted himself a US citizen, having applied and received his naturalisation papers in 1837.\textsuperscript{278} As the remainder of this chapter will demonstrate, Scottish overlanders appeared to be well-integrated members of their temporary travelling societies.

There was even one case of a British overland company. William Kelly, a recently arrived Englishman on his way to Independence, Missouri, described how easily his company came together when familiar accents and backgrounds met in unfamiliar places:

In coming down the Illinois [River] I made acquaintance of eleven young men, lately from England, bound for California; persons of respectability and education, with means, too, to fit out according to the standard my other friends and I had chalked out. We seemed mutually attracted to each other, and the moment the idea of union was broached they immediately acquiesced, making our muster fifteen; while an accession of ten more

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Thomson, \textit{For Friends at Home}, 133. For discussion on the Scottish stereotypes during the Victorian era see Devine, \textit{To the Ends of the Earth}, 149-150.
\item \textit{Arkansas Banner}, 6 February 1849.
\item Brownlee, \textit{An American Odyssey}, 32.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
at the City Hotel of the same class completed the number we desired – twenty-five, all
told; eight of whom were Yankees, two Scotchmen, and two Irishmen, leaving England
represented in our party in the ratio of two to one.279

Kelly’s company took it one step further and fashioned uniforms where each man donned green
caps and jackets with contrasting white trousers.280 Every member also carried their own
revolver, sword, and bowie knife.281 The extent of this ensemble hinted that the company had
expected a more dramatic experience on the overland trail, perhaps getting their ideas from the
popular fictional accounts set in the western territories. Indeed, many of the overlanders who
came from the cities or more eastern locations of the United States also had exaggerated
expectations of their trip. The vast majority of the overland travellers from the eastern states
were just as inexperienced with the region as those completely new to the country. Even
Brownlee, who had been in America for over a decade, made extra preparations for his
protection. He sawed off the barrels of one of his old shotguns and made sure to bring ‘a good
supply of bullets, besides buck-shot.’282

Preparations for the overland trip demanded some sort of capital. While usually less
expensive than the sea routes, especially the Panama crossing, the overland trail required a
decent investment. Before Brownlee commenced his journey, he paid eighty dollars for a horse,
another eighty dollars for a mule and harness, forty dollars towards a shared wagon (he had
joined a party of 3 others to split the cost of the new wagon), and another hundred dollars ‘for
provisions and general outfit.’283 His initial investment of $300 brings to mind J.S. HolliDay’s

280 Ibid., 37.
281 Ibid., 43.
283 Brownlee valued his property in Arkansas at $3,500 before he left for California. He stated that he was
‘short for ready cash’ after paying for his previous mining ventures and medical bills, so to finance his
trip he successfully chased someone down in Texas who owed him around $900. Ibid, 53-54.
claim that ‘goldseekers joined together more as ambitious businessmen than as carefree adventurers.’

To make matters more affordable, overland companies often observed a joint-stock policy where each member paid an equal amount for everything including stock, wagons, and provisions. Meanwhile, Thomson split costs with the three others in his company and detailed his outfit to his father back home in Scotland:

Our wagon (like all California wagons) is covered with canvas, drawn by four horses, We also take a canvass tent about ten feet square, which we can pitch in five minutes, a sheet iron cooking stove and four months provision &c.

Overland migrants could and did make do with lesser means. Throughout the spring and summer of 1850, various accounts noted a Scotsman who tackled the overland trail with only a wheelbarrow. His arrangements bewildered those who encountered him. For example, in late April, an anonymous traveller recorded crossing paths with the Scot at Ft. Kearny:

On the 29th of April, a Scotchman passed here with a wheelbarrow, refusing to join any company, saying in his own peculiar dialect. “Na, na, mun, I ken ye’ll all break doon in the mountains, an I’ll gang along mysel’.” He appeared to be a man about 35 years of age, well armed, and did not appear to be in the least fatigued.

The next known sighting revealed that the ‘wheelbarrow man’ had made good time. Three weeks later at South Pass, a Mormon missionary wrote that he met ‘a hardy Scotch man with his all upon a wheel barrow going to the gold mines’.

The last known sighting, which occurred a little more than a week later, put him at the modern-day border of Utah and Wyoming with a

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285 Ibid.
286 James Thomson to Alexander and James Thomson, 18 March 1850, Chicago, in *For Friends at Home*, 131.
broken wheelbarrow. The account noted that a passing wagon train allowed him to join their company, but whether he eventually reached California remains unknown. Like those travelling by sea, Scots who could not afford to make the journey under typical arrangements fashioned other means to get themselves to California. This is not to say that they were more industrious than other nationalities but instead adds to the point that Scottish Argonauts could count on the acceptance of the travelling community to help them along their way.

No matter the chosen vehicle, be it by covered wagon or wheelbarrow, overland travel adhered to a strict seasonal timeframe. Migrants needed to leave with enough time to avoid the coming of winter in the Sierra Nevada. Meanwhile, they could not go too early as they needed the spring crops in the plains to sustain their stock animals. In 1850, Thomson had to account for an extra month of travel to reach Council Bluffs in time, nearly five hundred miles away. Located in Iowa, Council Bluffs was one of the outfitting towns along the Missouri River that served both major overland routes. Among others such as Independence and St. Joseph in the state of Missouri, these towns existed as the official starting point of the overland passage to California. Days before his departure, Thomson wrote to his father and shared his optimism of what California could do for him: ‘The hope of being able to visit my native country will cheer me on the long journey now before me.’ In another section addressed to his sister, Thomson gave further assurances of his return:

> When I get back from California, I will come straight home and see all my friends and see if I can’t get a wife out among your acquaintences. I suppose if I had my pockets full of gold dust I could, but I don’t believe in buying a wife.

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So, with visions of Scotland in his mind, Thomson commenced the first leg of his journey on the first of April. 293 His intended route would follow the Oregon trail through Nebraska, ascend the South Pass of Wyoming through the Rocky Mountains, go via the Salt Lake Mormon settlement in Utah, and finally navigate the foreboding Sierra Nevada Mountains into California. 294

Situated five hundred miles directly south of Council Bluffs was Ft. Smith, the chosen starting point of the Little Rock Company. Although not yet fully healed from his mining accident, Brownlee had to observe the small window of time to commence on the trail. In mid-March, arm still in a sling, he needed assistance to mount his horse on the day of his departure. 295

From Little Rock, Ft. Smith was three hundred miles away. Brownlee and his team arrived two weeks later, made temporary camp, and waited for the rest of their company to assemble while signs of spring began dotting the landscape. 296 Unlike the majority of overlanders who headed due west on the Oregon-California Trail, the Little Rock Company intended to follow the Santa Fe Trail from Ft. Smith. First, they would travel across Oklahoma through the dense Cross Timbers forest to reach the Plains and then proceed over the Texas panhandle to get to New Mexico. 297 Next, when they reached Santa Fe, the wagon train would proceed south across the Mexican border into Santa Cruz, and then north-west across the Arizona desert towards southern California.

As March turned into April, the outfitting towns grew overcrowded with thousands of impatient travellers waiting for the prairie grasses to replenish. In 1849, the most eager

293 Thomson arrived in Council Bluffs the 20th of May 1850. James Thomson to Alexander and James Thomson, 6 October 1850. Nevada City California, in Ibid., 135.
294 Holliday, The World Rushed In, 53.
296 Ibid., 56.
297 In New Mexico, Brownlee’s company connected with the Santa Fe Trail near the town of San Miguel. This route, the Ft. Smith – Santa Fe Trail, saw about 40% of the immigrants who took the Southern route. Ibid., 74-75.
companies began breaking camp in mid-April to make their start.\textsuperscript{298} Such was the case of the Little Rock Company, which departed Ft. Smith on 16 April. It was a risk as the crops were still too sparse, but they wanted to get ahead of the majority.\textsuperscript{299} When the majority of overlanders made a start two weeks later, accounts described an unbroken procession of wagons that stretched miles.\textsuperscript{300}

Diary and letter writers were quick to point out the cosmopolitan representation of those travelling around them. Compared to the sea goers who were more or less restricted to the confines of a ship, the overlanders were in a constant state of interaction with those they met on the trail. The traveller’s urge to comment on the ‘other’ helps clarify the position and experience of Scots on the overland trail. This is where overland accounts by Anglo-Americans are particularly useful. William Huff, a southerner who travelled the Santa Fe Trail in 1849, recalled the multicultural make-up of his camp one Sabbath day: ‘Although there are not more than one hundred and fifty men in the camp, nevertheless nationalities are pretty well represented.’ Among them, Huff recounted, was the ‘open-hearted, iron muscled, firm handed witty harum scarum son of Erin,’ the ‘ever thoughtful and straight forward Scotsman,’ and ‘the beer and beef calculating Englishman.’\textsuperscript{301} Some Scots also earned identifying nicknames from Americans during their travels. For example, an overland account from 1849 referred to a Scottish company member as ‘Scotch George’.\textsuperscript{302} Later in 1858, another Scotsman named John Galdie was simply

\textsuperscript{298} Spring came late in 1849, so the majority of travellers departed the first week of May. Holliday, \textit{The World Rushed In}, 87.
\textsuperscript{299} Brownlee, \textit{An American Odyssey}, 54.
\textsuperscript{300} Bancroft, \textit{History of California: Vol. VI}, 146.
\textsuperscript{301} William Huff, 22 July 1849, William Huff Journal, The Dolph Biscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin.
\textsuperscript{302} Charles D. Ferguson, \textit{The Experiences of a Forty-Niner During Thirty-Four Years' Residence in California and Australia} (Cleveland, 1888), 51.
known as ‘Scottie’ to his travelling companions.\footnote{Thaddeus Stevens Kenderdine, \emph{A California Tramp and Later Footprints} (Newtown, Pennsylvania, 1888), 182, 236.} Yet perhaps the most interesting nickname
had been given to a Scot from Elgin in 1849. The following year, the \emph{Elgin Courant} circulated
his overland account where he ‘held the rank of a “Dashing White Sergeant” by election of the
company’.\footnote{\emph{Elgin Courant}, 2 August 1850.} The title was undoubtedly a reference to a well-known ceilidh dance in Scotland
which also had spread in popularity throughout the US.\footnote{H. A. Thurston, ‘Country Dances of the Recent Past’, \emph{Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society} 7, no. 3 (1954): 159.} Although Anglo-Americans singled
out and identified Scottish migrants on the overland trail, their accounts do not suggest that they
excluded them. Indeed, at least to Anglo-American overlanders, Scots were not invisible
migrants. The negative connotation of being a foreigner, however, did not apply to them. This
aspect of the overland passage – of being accepted as foreigners by their Anglo-American
counterparts – was another precursor of the Scottish experience in California.

The Little Rock Company reached the beginning of the Great Plains in early May. The
scenery had altered dramatically from their difficult struggle through the Cross Timbers – a
dense forest which separated Oklahoma’s prairie lands from the plains. Now, they faced an open
expanse of grassland, a similar terrain to what their counterparts on the northern trail had
commenced on.\footnote{Brownlee, \emph{An American Odyssey}, 73.} In retrospect, the Plains was the easiest part of the journey, but migrants still
harboured much anxiety. They had to ford dangerous rivers, disease was prevalent, and they
began to head deep into Native American territory. Like the seafaring Argonauts, those on the
overland trail could not conquer the terrain; they had to adapt. As such, they met various natural
obstacles that tested their endurance and perseverance, but perhaps the most foreboding were
river crossings. Drowning was the most common cause of accidental death on the trail, and many
overland diaries and letters feature close calls, if not eyewitness accounts. Brownlee had a near-fatal experience soon after he crossed into the Texas Panhandle. As he forded across Red Deer Creek ‘the most treacherous quick-sand’, he recalled, entrapped his mule-team and wagon. With quick action, Brownlee managed to free himself and his mules, but it took an additional fifty men to pull out his wagon.

Surpassing river crossings, disease was the most legitimate concern for overland migrants. Out of all the deaths on the overland trail, disease caused nine out of ten. The massive concentration of human bodies at the starting points and along the first leg of the journey encouraged sickness to spread and flourish, particularly cholera. As well as being highly infectious, cholera was a quick killer, and its victims often succumbed to death within twenty-four hours. The outbreak among westward Argonauts spread anxiety throughout the nation and abroad, especially for loved ones left behind. Overlanders wrote home to confirm the rumours, but to also comfort family and friends that they were still alive. These types of letters also made their way to Scotland. In 1849, an Orkney native wrote home to his mother and sister that while he avoided contracting the disease, others were not so lucky: ‘At St Jo cholera has been very prevalent, and a good many deaths have occurred.’

Of course, Scots themselves were not immune to the disease. In 1852, a Scotsman named John Richardson succumbed to cholera just after crossing South Pass. His fellow company member from Wisconsin recounted the day of his death in his diary:

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309 According to Unruh, four percent of overland travellers from 1840 to 1860 died en route. Unruh, The Plains Across, 408-409
310 Carter, 'Morality on the Overland Trail', 154-155.
311 Ibid., 148.
312 John o’ Groat Journal, 19 April 1850.
Had great difficulty in getting grave dug for [slate?]. Had to go 2 miles to get a place to dig a grave & then could not dig but 2 feet deep. Buried him, without coffin, put his clothes into the grave. Buried him without a tear being shed, not a prayer offered, barely a general sigh as we took the last look of 1 of our number who 9 hours before walked upright & and was a man of high Scotch spirit.  

While this account comes off as indifferent, a rash send-off for the departed was not unusual on the overland trail. A lack of time and resources limited the bereaved from performing proper burial ceremonies. Oftentimes, all that company and family members could do to preserve the dignity of the dead was to bury them. Going two miles out of the way to find a suitable burial place, Richardson’s company clearly treated him as their own.

The threat of cholera subsided dramatically on the Oregon-California Trail once travellers reached Fort Laramie. A US army post located in modern-day Wyoming, the fort signalled the quarter-way mark to California. Thomson and his company reached Ft. Laramie on 13 June 1850. Making good time from Chicago, they had travelled a thousand miles in just under a month and a half. Marching onwards, Thomson would spend the next two weeks traversing the increasingly rugged foothills that bordered the Rocky Mountains. A year earlier, about six hundred miles south of Ft Laramie, Brownlee also noticed a change in terrain as the Santa Fe Trail passed through the southern reach of the Rockies. On his approach, he was happy to leave the monotonous plains behind: 'You must bear in mind that travelling on this immense plain is exceedingly monotonous with scarcely any timber in sight, and not any mountains, so when we approached the Rocky Mountains…it was a welcome change.'

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315 James Thomson to Alexander and James Thomson, 6 October 1850, Nevada City California, in Thomson, For Friends at Home, 136.
Both Brownlee and Thomson would soon realise that the remaining part of their overland journey would be the most arduous. Coming up to the Rockies, the increasingly rugged terrain prompted migrants to lighten their loads in order to ease the burden on their weary animals. Here, travellers came face to face with the struggles of overland travel. The roadsides turned into a wasteland of abandoned belongings, as well as a graveyard for dead and dying animals. Decades after his journey Brownlee recounted the scene he encountered twenty miles from Santa Fe: ‘the road was lined with dead carcasses of horses and mules, lying just as they fell, the skins perfect, the eyes gone, but you could raise the skeleton on its feet and it could stand; and at a little distance looked life like.’

In this grim atmosphere overlanders also braced themselves for hostile Indian encounters. Indeed, the fear of ‘savages’ was very real for overland travellers but it was more imagined than a reality. Guidebooks were partly to blame as they warned readers about Native American encounters yet contained little information on how to interact with them. Letter writers also contributed to the hype. As John Unruh argued, it was much more common for writers to report what they had heard about Native Americans on the trail, rather than provide an eyewitness account. After all, those writing about their experiences for friends and relatives back home expected their readers to be more entertained with Native American encounters than their monotonous travel experiences. Despite having ‘had no trouble with the Indians’, the aforementioned Orkney native also made sure to comment on Native American hostilities in his letter home: ‘but there were many who had their cattle stolen by them on the Humbolt or St. May

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319 Ibid., 136-136.
320 Ibid., 134.
While migrants feared violent raids and scalping the reality was that Native Americans caused them little disruption. In fact, if one happened to encounter Indigenous Peoples during their journey, it was more likely to be a positive affair. Throughout Brownlee’s trip, for example, the indigenous population proved to be a valuable aid. In Apache Territory in New Mexico, Brownlee traded his horse with a Native for a more surefooted mule. Later on in Arizona, Pimas hosted the Little Rock Company for two nights. Further west, Cherokees protected his party from an altercation with a tribe of Yumas. And when crossing the Colorado River, a group of local Natives swam alongside their caravan to ensure their safe crossing into California territory.

Instead, fellow company members were the most likely culprits to interfere with the smooth running of caravan trains. As individuals adapted their priorities to suit life on the trail, companies often separated over differences in values. ‘Few companies’, Holliday argued, ‘reached California, or even Fort Laramie, without serious disputes that often caused division into two or more angry groups.’ Brownlee, for example, abandoned his wagon team when he arrived at Santa Fe in the latter half of June. Over the previous weeks he found that his messmates failed to pull their own weight: ‘as we were getting farther West, [our mess] would do nothing that they could avoid doing, and commenced whining’. After a few days in Santa Fe, Brownlee resumed his journey with a new wagon and a more capable group of men, claiming

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321 John o’ Groat Journal, 19 April 1850.
322 Unruh, The Plains Across, 327.
324 Ibid., 67.
325 Ibid., 68.
326 Ibid., 69.
327 Holliday, The World Rushed In, 146, 204.
328 Ibid., 146.
329 Brownlee, An American Odyssey, 57.
later that his team ‘was the fattest in the train’. To be sure, Scots frustrated others, too. ‘Scotch George’, introduced earlier, came to be an unfavoured member in his own company. This was not because of his nationality but rather a vice, his love for brandy. From the start of the journey, he had snuck swigs from the communal supply and diluted the remainder with water. By the time his company caught him a month later, he had almost exhausted the whole gallon’s worth.

Now with a new team, Brownlee continued south towards the Mexican border. As he moved further into the desert, new challenges arose. Across these lower elevations, the risk of alkaline poisoning increased. Yet the most immediate concern was the dry heat and scarcity of water. As he walked towards Mexico, Brownlee’s tongue swelled from dehydration, and his mind tortured him with mirages. The conditions temporarily improved while his wagon train trekked in and out of Mexico, but as they proceeded north-west across modern-day Arizona, the threat of alkali poisoning returned. Brownlee nearly succumbed to the latter after he and two others from his team drank from a small ditch outside of Tucson. But after noting a burning sensation in his throat, he suspected tainted water and countered the effects with eating pork. The fat brought him immediate relief and probably saved his life. The others, a doctor and an enslaved man, were not so lucky and died a few days later. The loss of both affected Brownlee deeply:

The impression made on me that day over the grave when Mr. Thibault was putting up a prayer to the Giver of all goodness, will never be forgotten by me, and I think by more present…The shock was severe as we all had so very fine health, to think we had buried one companion, and another about to depart.

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330 Ibid., 60.
331 Ferguson, The Experiences of a Forty-niner, 52-53.
332 Brownlee, An American Odyssey, 63.
333 Ibid., 85.
334 Robert Brownlee to his brother, 16 September 1849, San Felipie, Arkansas State Democrat, 30 November 1849.
Scots were susceptible to the many perils on the overland trail, including the devastating loss of a family or company member. In Brownlee’s case, he had lost two members of his small surrogate community that he had grown very close to. As we will see in the following chapter, the bonds that Scottish Argonauts made during their journeys, if they lasted, could later help their adaption to Gold Rush society.

Nearly a year after Brownlee reached Santa Fe, Thomson began his ascent across the South Pass of the Rocky Mountains. Weary travellers anticipated a rocky incline. Instead, they rolled across a gentle plateau which marked North America’s continental divide between the Atlantic and Pacific. The day’s journey through South Pass would be relatively peaceful for what was soon to come. With the Rocky Mountain Range now behind them, migrants faced a fork in the road and the heavy burden of choosing their fate. The left option followed the original Oregon Trail to Ft. Bridger and provided access to another cut-off towards Salt Lake City. The latter was a bit of a detour, but useful if travellers needed to rest and resupply their teams. Meanwhile, the option to the right was a tempting new cut-off suggested by Ware’s popular guidebook. Known as Sublette’s cut-off, it was supposed to reduce up to five days’ worth of travel, but the trade-off meant cutting across a barren forty-mile desert. The Argonauts coming overland in 1849 would be the first to put it to the test.

The Orkney native was among the Forty-Niners who put their trust in the various cut-offs that promised a faster journey to California. Either following Ware’s advice, trailing the tracks of those before him, or both, the Orkney man proceeded onto Sublette’s cut-off and travelled through a version of hell:

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335 Brownlee, *For Friends at Home*, 136.
There was one place – a desert of 50 miles – where the cattle were only a few yards apart, some dead, and some dying, for want of water and grass; they were driven as far as they could go, and were then left to die.  

Although he avoided a similar fate to those he had just witnessed, he would soon be tempted by another cut-off in the oncoming weeks. Meanwhile, the various routes and cut-offs across Wyoming, Idaho, and Utah reconvened back into the California Trail in north-eastern Nevada. From here, the California Trail had finally split from the original Oregon Trail and Argonauts veered to the south-west to cross the majority of Nevada along the Humboldt River. As they followed the river for three weeks, the last major test loomed in the distance, the Sierra Nevada Mountain range. Before ascending, migrants came upon another fork in the road. The option to the left continued south and followed the original route along the river to its termination at the Humboldt Sink. From here, the trail crossed another forty-mile desert where it forked again to follow either the Carson or Truckee rivers through the Sierra Nevada. The other option to the right, a new path called Lassen’s Cut-off, continued directly westward through more challenging terrain but promised arrival to the California mines in only ten days. Eager to save time, the Orkney man followed the new route after a recommendation from a passing ‘old mountaineer’:

There was a road that came by Lawson’s…it was said to be scare of feed, and difficult mountains to cross, but was 70 miles shorter…but we discovered it to be about 300 miles longer; and waggons that went the other road got to the city four weeks before us.

Within days of reaching Sacramento, he passed a government relief party headed in the other direction. Even though the Orcadian had escaped the cut-off just in time, several thousand Argonauts on the same route trailed behind as winter followed perilously close. While officers combed the trails to aid the stragglers throughout the following weeks, news of the troublesome

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338 John o’ Groat Journal, 19 April 1850.
339 Holliday, The World Rushed In, 247.
340 John o’ Groat Journal, 19 April 1850.
341 Holliday, The World Rushed In, 271.
short-cuts spread back to the east coast. It was not until late November when the relief effort returned from guiding the last to safety.342

In 1850, the year’s overlanders were wearier of the risks involved in specific cut-offs. As such, Thomson played it safe and stuck to the traditional Oregon-California Trail from South Pass until the California Trail diverged to follow the Humboldt River. From the Humboldt Sink, his party crossed the forty-mile desert and took the Carson River route that carved through the Sierra Nevada. After a challenging ascent, Thomson and his team reached the summit in mid-August. Although he found the terrain more difficult than anything he could have imagined traversing back home in Scotland, he reflected on the effort with nostalgia:

    took dinner on the tip top of the Sierra Nevada Mountains upwards of nine thousand feet above the level of the sea having travelled part of the forenoon on the top of snow banks deeper than any that ever graced the rocky caverns of Lochnagar. 343

Three days after reaching the summit of the Sierra Nevada, Thomson finally arrived at his destination at Hangtown on the twentieth of August. In total, his journey from Chicago lasted four and a half months.

    A little more than a year earlier, Brownlee and the Little Rock Company crossed into Southern California on the first of August. His journey was not yet over, however, as he still had another five-hundred miles to reach the northern mines.344 Fittingly, as Brownlee proceeded up the Pacific territory, he met an old Scottish frontiersman named John Gilroy. A former member of the Hudson Bay Company, Gilroy had abandoned his position in 1814 to settle in California. He had since married into a prominent ranchero family and resided on a hacienda with his wife and children. Brownlee remembered the encounter decades later, recalling that Gilroy ‘spoke

342 Unruh, Plains Across, 312.
343 James Thomson to Alexander and Helen Thomson, 6 October 1850, Nevada City, For Friends at Home, 136.
344 Brownlee, An American Odyssey, 92.
Scotch as broad as I ever heard’. Coincidentally, reminders of Scotland came again at the next landmark on the trail. At a place called Murphy’s Ranch, Brownlee recalled ‘the prettiest girl he had ever seen’ milking cows, and added that ‘Her dress was of Scotch tartan.’ A familiar accent and dress brought him some solace in the farthest place he had ever been from home. That these chance encounters remained prominent in Brownlee’s mind years later speaks of the significance migrants attached to reminders of their old homeland in the new.

In late October 1849, after six and a half months of travel, Brownlee settled at a small mining camp in Mariposa County. Finally in California’s northern mining districts and ready to get to work, Brownlee found another familiar comfort nearby in the Merced River:

In looking down I saw a wonderful sight. Right at my feet there were several salmon… I raised the gun and killed one…they were salmon, as their meat was reddish, and tasted like the one I had in Scotland. We had a fine feast, also a nice time in catching them.

Despite being transmigrants, both Brownlee and Thomson recalled images of Scotland as their journeys concluded. As Bueltmann has rightly argued, ‘Emotional attachment to the old home was, thus, potently expressed when exposed to situations, characters, or items that were reminiscent of, or could be related to, Scotland.’ An orientation to the homeland – a component of diaspora – was very much present on the overland trail to California.

**Conclusion**

The journey was a formative experience where migrants not only learned of the new world, but also began to engage with their diaspora. As the retelling of these travel experiences

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has made clear, the journey to California was long, harrowing, and often dangerous. While Argonauts in transit looked forward and imagined their future in California, they spent an equal amount of time, if not more, looking back to the old world they left behind. Like many migrants, Scottish Argonauts reached to what was familiar for a sense of comfort and security. As this chapter has demonstrated, more diasporic actions took place on the journey than is usually recognised in scholarship. Whether by land or by sea, Scottish Argonauts sought out the company of other Scots, used letters as transnational agents to maintain links with friends and family, wrote of homeland nostalgia in their travel diaries, and recalled elements of the old world to frame their understanding of the new. What is more, that Scottish Argonauts often encountered fellow scots on various points of their travels speaks to the expansive reach of Scottish migration and settlement during the mid-nineteenth century. To discount the significance and role of the journey is to discount a major component in the story of a diaspora.
Chapter 4
Scottish Argonouts Arrive in California

When freshly-arrived Scottish Argonauts wrote to their loved ones about their new surroundings in California, somewhere in their letters they would reassure them of their eventual return home. Soon after his arrival in 1851, William Elder promised his wife that the life he left behind would soon resume: ‘I look forward with great hope to the time when I can again join you my home was always a cheerful and happy one. and such I hope it will yet prove in the future.’¹ The following year, Jessie Anderson made similar reassurances. In a lengthy letter to her mother detailing her new life in Sacramento, she signed off: ‘till your affectionate daughter Jesse Anderson comes home’.² Like Elder and Anderson, the majority of Gold Rush migrants never intended to settle permanently. Instead, California was a short interruption of normality.³

This chapter explores the initial Scottish Argonaut experience in California, where the majority of Scots viewed their stay as temporary. From their arrival until their eventual departure or settlement, Scots became full-fledged Argonauts who put aside their foreign associations when in the public realm. If it was not already clear enough on their journeys over, Scottish newcomers quickly learned that the growing Anglo-American population intended to control the right of opportunity and wealth in California. Because Scots were predominantly Anglophonic, Protestant, and Anglo-Saxon, they had privileges that allowed them to blend in with the Anglo-American community. As Argonauts, Scots temporarily put the more foreign aspects of their identity aside, embraced their ‘acceptable’ Anglo-Saxon identity, and joined the dominant

¹ William Elder to Sarah Elder, 8 January 1851, San Francisco.
² Jessie Anderson to Mrs Anderson, 25 July 1852, Sacramento City.
³ Rohrbough, Days of Gold, 33; Holliday, The World Rushed In, 11.
hegemony for the best returns. As this chapter demonstrates, being Scottish did not limit one’s opportunities in California. Rather, on the surface, the Scottish Argonaut experience in California closely aligns with that of the general Anglo-American in Gold Rush scholarship.

Through the lens of diaspora, however, the Scottish Argonaut experience in California is far more nuanced. This chapter argues that because Scottish Argonauts initially did not see California as a place of settlement or a new home, this directly affected how they engaged with their homeland connections and the Scottish diaspora. The intent to return home, argues Andrew Mackillop, ensured that most Scottish sojourners ‘still felt connected to Scotland and so retained a confident, unassuming sense of themselves as Scots’.4 While they did not build institutions typically associated with diaspora, such as churches, ethnic communities, Scottish Argonauts in Gold Rush California still engaged with their homeland connections and diaspora in other ways which were equally as authentic. As Scottish Argonauts adapted to their new surroundings, they largely maintained a strong connection to Scotland through personal correspondence. As this chapter demonstrates, letters acted as a transnational lifeline that allowed migrants a continued sense of engagement with ongoing life in the homeland. Furthermore, whether comprising of repeated promises to return, waves of nostalgia, or bouts of homesickness, correspondence was a means by which Scottish Argonauts expressed and solidified their Scottishness abroad as they adjusted to life California.

4 Andrew Mackillop, ‘Europeans, Britons, and Scots: Scottish Sojourning Networks and Identities in Asia, c.1700-1815’, 40.
Arrival

Scottish Argonauts recounted a highly dramatic scene when their vessels finally entered the San Francisco Bay. As the captain and crew navigated their final test through the harbour’s rocky reefs and strong currents, a crowded concentration of masts from all over the world came into view. By the end of October 1849, reports counted over 100 British ships in the San Francisco harbour.\(^5\) Perhaps the Scottish passengers felt some comfort of familiarity when they spotted the colours of a Union Jack or The Saltire among the web of sail riggings.

James Beith vividly remembered the excitement when passengers could finally disembark. The majority of passengers left the ship immediately, ready to embrace the beginnings of their California experiences. The most eager passengers paid ten dollars to land themselves and their luggage 200 yards away on the shore. Not even off the ship himself, Beith already confronted California’s high prices and equally high stakes: ‘I thought this was paying rather steep for an introduction into California. one of the passengers went with one Dollar. and returned in four hours with 1900 Dollars which he had won at a Monte Table’.\(^6\) Beith, meanwhile, allowed himself two more nights on board to adjust to his bearings before he moved ashore. By the first night, the vessel had become an empty shell; Beith was the only passenger remaining beside the captain and six of his crew. The rest had deserted.\(^7\)

Well into 1851, it was near impossible for a ship to maintain its crew when it made landfall in San Francisco.\(^8\) As a result, the vast majority of vessels that anchored in San Francisco Bay during the Gold Rush lay abandoned. Scottish ships were among them. On the 10\(^{th}\) of October 1849, the *Dundee Courier* printed a letter from a Scottish sailor turned Forty-

\(^5\) *Scotsman*, 26 December 1849.
\(^6\) James Beith, 1 September 1854, James Beith Letter Book, 4.
\(^7\) *Ibid*.
\(^8\) Delgado, *To California by Sea*, 97-99.
Niner who arrived in San Francisco on New Year’s Day. Originally engaged on a Scottish brig named the Alert, it was not until the seaman reached California when he was ‘suddenly taken sick with a disease that was raging there at the time, viz—the Gold Fever’. Soon after arriving, the sailor recounted how his entire crew abandoned their posts, took the Alert’s longboat, and made their way to the goldfields.

A few months later, a Glaswegian named William Downie was released from his work contract when his vessel anchored at San Francisco. Like several others, Downie had found an opportunity to work his passage to California instead of paying the high fare. He arrived in late June and recalled the atmosphere: 'The thirst for gold and adventure had seized everybody…all hands left the ship at once, for such was the custom of '49.' His former crewmates, having deserted their posts, followed Downie onto the shore and marvelled at the rapid growth of what had resembled a hamlet the year before. In October, another Scottish Argonaut perfectly summed up his first impressions of the city in a letter later printed in the Stirling Observer: ‘The city of San Francisco has sprung into existence as if by the touch of a magic wand.’

Despite the rapid pace at which San Francisco’s infrastructure had expanded, it could not match the influx of goods and people. In 1849, the city appeared as a disordered encampment, with piles of goods scattered everywhere. In November, an Inverness native described the atmosphere with ‘no houses to be seen —nothing but tents, and these crowded with people.’ In 1851, the city continued to struggle with the surge of people. At the coming of winter, Hamilton braced for the wet season where the city streets had turned to mud: ‘the town has extended in all

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9 Dundee Courier, 10 October 1848.
10 William Downie, Hunting for Gold (San Francisco, 1893), 9.
11 Ibid., 10.
12 The Stirling Observer, 24 January 1850.
13 The Inverness Courier, 23 January 1851.
directions far beyond where they have ever thought of planking so there we will have the pure unmitigated mud up to our knees.’ Conversely, during the dry season, every passer-by or flurry of wind kicked up dense clouds of dust. Writing in August 1849, an Edinburgh resident made up his mind about the future of San Francisco. He was not going to stay:

It is perhaps a most unpleasant place to live in, at least in summer. A strong breeze of wind blows every day from the Pacific, and the dust is intolerable. The building ground is small, and a great part is just a sand hill. Whatever California may be eventually, its chief town will never be a desirable place to live in.

For the weary travellers that featured in the previous chapter, their long-simmering expectations of California seemed to match first impressions. Ten days after his arrival in San Francisco, Elder wrote home to his wife and described his new surroundings:

San Francisco is a city of considerable size. It probably contains upwards of 30,000 inhabitants it is pleasantly situated overlooking the fine bay...as a whole my first impressions are quite favourable and such I think are generally the first impressions...people look as healthy and vigirous as they do in any part of the States that I have been in and there is more business activity than I have seen anywhere else.

Elder continued with excitement as he shared the various directions he might take in the near future: ‘I think there are good chances to make money here and I hope I may be able to take advantage of them.’ Hamilton arrived five months later, even more bright-eyed. The reality of El Dorado, he discovered, exceeded his expectations:

This is the most extraordinary place I ever was in and far surpasses in extent and beauty of its buildings anything I had imagined. There are miles of quays and wharfs and there are more ships lying in the bay I ever remember seeing in Liverpool at any one time. I have not yet sufficiently recovered my surprise at the place to be able to describe it for I can scarcely credit that three years ago there were but a few huts.

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14 He continued, ‘I am just thinking of buying in for winter use a large pair of boots reaching considerably above the knee so I don’t think I stand much in danger of getting wet feet’. John James Hamilton to his mother, 30 October 1851, San Francisco.
15 The Scotsman, 14 November 1849.
16 William Elder to Sarah Elder, 28 August 1850, San Francisco.
17 Ibid.
18 John James Hamilton to Anne Hamilton, 29 January 1851, San Francisco.
For the recent arrivals in San Francisco, anxieties about their new surroundings soon superseded the relief from reaching their destination. Despite the temptations of rich opportunities in the city and among the surrounding goldfields, newcomers first had to address immediate needs. Argonauts in search of accommodation confronted the reality that the cost of living came at an extraordinarily high price. In the summer of 1850, Elder observed that boarding prices ranged from fourteen to thirty dollars a week.\textsuperscript{19} Compared to back home on the East Coast, the weekly price of board averaged around two dollars.\textsuperscript{20} The accommodation in San Francisco was not particularly comfortable either. While Elder eventually settled at a boarding house for sixteen dollars a week, Hamilton paid the same rate and moved into a shared storehouse with two other men.\textsuperscript{21} Knowing that this was only a temporary measure, Argonauts modified their conception of comfort. Hamilton, used to his stately living quarters in Kirkcudbright, admitted to his sisters that his modest arrangements were ‘far from perfection’.\textsuperscript{22} His current living quarters, he explained, housed little more than a table, wooden crates, and a teapot. He embraced the situation however and intended to ‘live more in accordance with California life’. Even the more respectable men of the city, he observed, had lowered their living standards: ‘I have been in the houses of several of the first merchants here and they all live in a terribly huggerty-muggerty way.’\textsuperscript{23}

Fortunately, high-paying positions abounded in San Francisco to offset the exponential living costs. In August 1850, Elder reported a flurry of employment options in the city:

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{19} William Elder to Sarah Elder, 28 August 1850, San Francisco.
\textsuperscript{20} Clay et al, ‘Migrating to Riches?’, 1014.
\textsuperscript{21} William Elder to Sarah Elder, 28 August 1850, San Francisco; John James Hamilton to his sisters, 8 February 1850, San Francisco.
\textsuperscript{22} John James Hamilton to his sisters, 8 February 1850, San Francisco.
\textsuperscript{23} There is not much information on this term besides on an Edinburgh local history and archive website where huggerty-muggerty’ is defined as disheveled: ‘Edinburgh words and Dialect’, Edinphoto, http://www.edinphoto.org.uk/index.htm.
\end{flushright}
‘Mechanics here get $8 and $10 per day. Laborers about $5.00. If I had tools I would have tried to get employment as a carpenter.’

Comparatively, back in New York, mechanics ranged from $0.75 to $1.50 a day, carpenters around $1.38 a day, and labourers averaged $0.92 a day. Instead, Elder stuck to his trader roots and took up wholesaling items he brought from abroad or purchased at local auctions. Earning about ten dollars a day, he initially held strong against the temptation of mining and aimed to continue work in the urban centre: ‘I think however that I can probably do better than dig gold - time will try.’

For the majority of arrivals in San Francisco, they focused their sights on the distant goldfields. While some had the money to commence their overland journey immediately, others like Downie had to source temporary work in the city. During the summer of 1849, he found the demand for work ‘plentiful’ and earned eight to sixteen dollars a day ballasting ships in the harbour. In the meantime, he forwent rented accommodation and set up camp with his former crewmates in Hide Park. Named for its purpose as a staging area for the shipment of hides and horns, Downie lived amongst ‘bales and proper heaps’ of animal by-products for two weeks until he could afford transport to the mines. Notably, before he left San Francisco, he experienced the Fourth of July for the first time. The celebration, he recalled, left an ‘indelible impression’ upon him:

In ’49 the glorious Forth was ushered in by drinking to the constitution in bumpers, until the celebrants were half-seas over. Then began the fun. Instead of firecrackers, pistols were used, instead of sending up rockets, men would show their adroitness with the gun by shooting through windowpanes, hitting lighted lamps for candles and offering to shoot off buttons from their friends’ garments…An old Mexican, who had got somewhat mixed

24 William Elder to Sarah Elder, 28 August 1850, San Francisco.
26 William Elder to Sarah Elder, 28 August 1850, San Francisco.
27 Ibid.
28 Downie, Hunting for Gold, 11, 15.
in the political situation, hoisted his native flag, but this so annoyed the Americans that they forthwith pulled it down, and the old fellow in his disgust rolled himself up in his colours and went to sleep. 29

To observers in San Francisco, the Americans’ conduct during the Fourth of July demonstrated not only their dominant presence in California but their lack of tolerance for foreigners. If anything, this experience showed Downie how to conduct oneself in California while seeking one’s fortune: if your physical and cultural background allows, be and do as the Anglo-Americans.

Notably, both Elder and Hamilton commented on a feeling of solidarity with the Anglo-American population of California. By 1850, Anglo-Americans had made up seventy-five percent of the population in California. Those from Britain represented an additional four percent. 30 Identifying as Anglo-Saxon, Elder felt a racial comradery with the Anglo-Americans: ‘I seemed to feel quite at home among the good honest Saxon countenances that are everywhere to be seen.’ 31 In 1853, Hamilton made a similar comment after living in San Francisco for a few years. Local preparations for St. Patrick’s Day had reignited his disdain for the Irish:

The preliminary meeting nearly ended in a fight so that there is every prospect of such a thing actually taking place on the 17th. It is too bad if they cannot keep quiet even when they are so far from home but it seems they cannot help railing at the tireany [sic] and depression of England in such language will hardly be admired and the city we're at least one third of the inhabitants are British born and although perhaps American citizens have still an affection for the land of their fathers and will not hear it insulted with impurity. 32

Indeed, discrimination towards the Irish was another source of cohesion between Scots and Anglo-Americans in California. As Fernando Purcell argued, the Irish – like the Scottish – also made efforts to ally with the dominant hegemony in Gold Rush California. 33

29 Ibid., 13.
31 William Elder to Sarah Elder, 28 August 1850, San Francisco.
32 John James Hamilton to his mother, 15 March 1853, San Francisco.
33 Purcell, “‘Too Many Foreigners for My Taste’”, 38-9.
they rallied alongside the Anglo-Saxon divisions and directed their animosity towards the Latin American and Chinese population, ‘the great majority of the Irish in California’, Purcell claims, ‘remained in the lower positions of society.’

Despite their attempts, the Irish did not alter the existing racial stratifications in Gold Rush society to white versus non-white. A Celtic racial identity, which Purcell argues that the Irish embraced in California, was still seen as an inferior race by proponents of Anglo-Saxonism. Meanwhile, Scottish Argonauts in California were not passive benefactors of Anglo-American hegemony. In addition to sharing physical features with Anglo-Americans, British-born migrants like Elder and Hamilton also thought similarly in terms of their ideal society and its racial stratifications.

Both Anglo-Saxonism and anti-Catholicism in Britain originates from the Reformation during the sixteenth century. The motives, however, were much different from the modern conception of racial superiority and conquest. As Reginald Horsman observes, ‘the main use of the myth had been internal.’ To break clean from their religious ties with Rome, the initial advocates of Anglo-Saxonism were Reformers that desired a return to religious practices in England that existed before the Norman Conquest of the eleventh century. With time, concerns of Anglo-Saxon purity spread from England’s churches to its political and legal institutions. These motives were not racial in nature, Horsman continues, but restorative: ‘The Anglo-Saxons were viewed as a freedom-loving people, enjoying representative institutions and a flourishing primitive democracy.’

34 Ibid., 89.
35 Ibid., 256
Anglo-Saxonism into a racial ideology that became a pillar in the British national conscious. \(^{38}\) Meanwhile, the new ‘science of man’ gave proponents evidence of the superiority of the Caucasian race and their institutions. \(^{39}\) For the proponents of Anglo-Saxonism, destiny upheld that wherever these people stepped, they had a responsibility to ‘conquer, rule, and uplift other peoples all over the world.’ \(^{40}\) Scots too latched on to the racialised discourse during the nineteenth century. Medical and scientific research in Scotland explored and attested Scots’ identification as true Saxons, while literary figures argued that Scots had strong claims of Saxon origin. \(^{41}\) Among others, Thomas Carlyle (born in Dumfriesshire and educated at the University of Edinburgh), affirmed that ‘The largest soul of all the British lands came among us in the shape of a hard-handed Scottish Peasant.’ The poet Robert Burns, he continued, ‘was a piece of the right Saxon stuff.’ \(^{42}\) Elder’s personal identification of a ‘Saxon’ reflected the common Scottish identity in Victorian Scotland, particularly in the more densely populated lowlands. \(^{43}\) The Scottish national identity during this period was as complicated as it is now; however, a main difference in the nineteenth century was that Scottish nationalism largely upheld the Union of Great Britain. Chapter 5 takes a more in-depth look at the Scottish identity, but what is most relevant here is that Scots considered themselves British, as well as Scottish. \(^{44}\) Therefore, as


\(^{39}\) Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny*, 63.


\(^{43}\) Kidd dissects the Saxon, Gael, and Celtic identities in the Lowlands and Highlands in ‘Race, Empire, and the Limits of Nineteenth-Century Scottish Nationhood’, 883-887.

Britons, Scots actively engaged in the national conversation and supported the notion of a superior Anglo-Saxon race.

Naturally, these ideas crossed the Atlantic, and the American Republic adopted them as their own. In a similar progression to Great Britain, American Anglo-Saxonism took on a more racial and active role during the nineteenth century. Proponents believed that Providence had destined the Trans-Mississippi West to the Anglo-American race and that it was their duty to conquer the remaining untamed lands in North America and install free democracy.45 Later in 1845, a journalist of the Democratic Review encapsulated the ideas as ‘Manifest Destiny’ and politicians began using the term in their debates on American expansion.46 Meanwhile, Britain was in the midst of its ‘Imperial Century’ and continued to spread her Empire under much of the same pretences.47 Together, the Anglo-Saxons of Britain and America believed they were the chosen people on a similar mission.

The delusion of Anglo-Saxon superiority only intensified as the US increased in territorial power alongside Great Britain during the first half of the nineteenth century.48 The Louisiana Purchase (1803) and the subsequent migration and settlement of millions of American pioneers across the trans-Appalachian West, the annexation of Texas (1845), and victory in the Mexican American War (1846-1848) had meant that by the California Gold Rush, Manifest Destiny and its prejudicial tones had been solidified in American cultural ideology. Horsman argues that especially during the mid-nineteenth century, westward expansion was ‘less as a

45 Higham, Strangers in the Land, 10.
48 While Reginald Horsman incorrectly identifies Sir Walter Scott as an English romanticist, his study looks at the evolution of Anglo-Saxonism in the UK and includes other Scottish voices (such as Thomas Carlyle, the Edinburgh Review and Chamber’s Journal): ‘Origins of Racial Anglo-Saxonism in Great Britain before 1850’, 390, 393, 399.
victory for the principles of the free democratic republicanism than as evidence of the innate superiority of the American Anglo-Saxon branch of the Caucasian race.¹⁴⁹ As this thesis will continue to demonstrate, the Anglo-American Argonauts considered the British, at least the Scots, within their ranks in California. Although some Americans came to view themselves as a superior, separate Anglo-Saxon race, it seems that California’s ethnically diverse population was a further source of solidarity for Scots and their Anglo-American counterparts.⁵⁰ Notably, for some Anglo-Americans in California, they accepted British company to the extent that they deemed them fellow Americans. In the first comprehensive history of San Francisco in 1855, Frank Soulé wrote of the British population: 'Since the common language of the Americans and British is English, and their customs and habits of thought are generally the same, there seems no impropriety in calling them all in California simply Americans.' ⁵¹

More than racial prejudice occupied the American mindset at the time of the Gold Rush. Nationalistic prejudices, otherwise known as ‘nativism’, weighed on the American consciousness as well. In John Hingham’s study of American nativism, he defines nativism as ‘intense opposition to an internal minority on the ground of its foreign (i.e., “un-American”) connections.’ ⁵² Hingham, along with Ray Billington, have traced American nativism back to the Protestant Reformation in Europe which concluded in the seventeenth century. They demonstrated how, over the next two centuries, anti-Catholicism eventually morphed into an American animosity towards Europeans. From the American Revolution onwards, the connotations of nationalism snowballed as a growing distrust of European hegemony latched on

⁴⁹ Horsman, Race and Manifest Destiny, 219.
⁵⁰ See the chapter ‘A Confused Minority’ in Horsman, Race and Manifest Destiny, 249-271.
⁵² Higham, Strangers in the Land, 4.
to anti-Catholicism. Meanwhile, the American annexation of California coincided with the 1848 European revolutions. The word of political instability abroad reawakened and intensified American wariness towards foreign institutions and their radical aggressors.

As tens of thousands of Anglo-American Argonauts descended upon California with gold fever, they brought with them their cultural ideologies. By 1849, the influences of Anglo-Saxonism, Manifest Destiny, and nativism had permeated the territory, controlled the government, and largely directed the affairs of Gold Rush society. Two years later, in 1851 the *Alta California* illustrated the ‘miniature world’ found in San Francisco, but not without asserting the natural right of the Anglo-Americans:

Over all these various people floats the flag of our country, and the principles of our republican institutions and of our Christian faith they are rapidly acquiring –The discovery of the gold of California, and the immigration from all quarters of the globe consequent upon it, has done more for the spread of free, enlightened and Christian opinions than all the political speeches ever made or sermons ever preached.

As such, an Argonaut’s race, nationality, and gender influenced their arrival experience in California. Previous studies have highlighted that despite having white features, one’s nationality could affect both their living situation and finding employment during the Gold Rush. In 1850, for example, a French Argonaut recalled that San Francisco’s building workforce was

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56 *Alta California*, 29 June 1851.
reserved for ‘American immigrants’. Furthermore, arrivals from Australia found themselves stereotyped as criminals and later singled out by the committee of vigilance in 1851. Criminal or not, they funneled to Sydney Valley on Telegraph Hill, one of San Francisco’s first notorious neighbourhoods. Lastly, even though the Irish were marginally successful in California compared to their counterparts in the eastern states, they continued to encounter considerable resentment. California was not a fresh start for a new kind of cosmopolitan society, but rather another cradle for American Anglo-Saxonism, anti-Catholicism, and nativism.

While the above is only a brief overlook of the racial and nativist attitudes in early Gold Rush California, the purpose here is to demonstrate that Anglo-Argonauts like the Scots did not step into an atmosphere free of foreign resentment. As this thesis will continue to demonstrate, however, Scottish Argonauts were acceptable foreigners to the dominant Anglo-American hegemony. Elements of a shared cultural background allowed Scots to integrate with the Anglo-American community, as we have seen above. How Scottish Argonauts engaged with each other and their homeland also facilitated their integration into Gold Rush society. All the while, they also maintained strong links to their homeland. The question now turns to Scottish Argonauts’ strategies of adjustment in California, and how those strategies of adjustment implicated their relationship with the homeland and the diaspora.

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Settling into Argonaut Life

For recent arrivals, reality quickly set in that California was, as Rohrbough described, a ‘place of endless economic opportunity…a place of endless economic risk.’ While opportunities abounded, remaining financially stable in California’s urban centres was as much as a gamble of striking a claim in the goldfields. In 1851, the Scottish travel writer J.D. Borthwick observed the impact of the heightened unpredictability of supply and demand:

So great was the constant fluctuation in the prices of goods, and so rash and speculative was the usual style of business, that no great idea of stability could be attached to anything, and the ever-varying aspect of the streets, as the houses were being constantly pulled down and rebuilt, was emblematic of the equally varying fortunes of the inhabitants.

Despite acknowledging the chaos, Argonauts’ hopes in California remained high. Writing two weeks after his arrival, Hamilton updated his sisters on his affairs: ‘I have started in a very different sort of business from what I intended on leaving Great Britain.’ His initial idea of being a ‘gentleman merchant’, rather, acting as an agent for overseas commissions, did not suit San Francisco’s already inundated market. Instead, Hamilton kept positive and lined up work to erect houses around the city: ‘it seems very difficult to get the first operation however we have lots of promises and will I hope be fairly at work before the end of the month.’ Although he pursued a different path than he intended, Hamilton held faith in California’s prospects. A few months later he departed California to attend London’s Great Exhibition. Despite bearing witness to some of Britain’s most recent advancements, Hamilton started the long journey back to California in June; he still believed that California’s opportunities outweighed those in Britain. While the journey was by no means easy, as the previous chapter demonstrated,

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60 Rohrbough, Rush to Gold, 103.
61 Borthwick, Three Years in California, 50.
62 John James Hamilton to his sisters, 8 February 1850, San Francisco.
63 Ibid.
Hamilton’s case reminds us that movement from one location to another was a common element of the Scottish diaspora experience.

As a woman, Jessie Anderson faced different prospects in California than her male counterparts. Despite it being a few years since the initial rush, women were still a rarity when Anderson arrived in 1852. That year, the ratio of men to women in San Francisco was five to one.64 This discrepancy caused a shortage of services traditionally supplied by the female sphere. On the other hand, the male population with gold dust in their pockets were able and willing to pay. Anderson became aware of her desirability as soon as she stepped foot in San Francisco, and with it came a new sense of independence. On the day of her arrival, a boarding house offered her fifty dollars a month as a chambermaid. ‘But that is not the kind of work I would like’ she explained in a letter to her mother; and turned down the offer in hopes of better opportunity elsewhere.65 Two days later Anderson travelled with her brothers to Sacramento: ‘every body advises me to go up the river as far as Sacramento where females better payd and it being nearer the mines I will see Tom and have a chance of seeing Jessie [her niece] occasionally too.’66 While family ties had some influence on her decision to relocate, Anderson also felt the pull of the new freedoms offered by Gold Rush society.67 California, as Rohrbough argued, ‘had a dramatic openness’ in what people could pursue, at least for the Anglo-Argonaut population.68 Because the population was mostly transient, members of Gold Rush society placed less emphasis on eastern and European principles of class and privilege. In California, Scottish men and women found that they too had the liberty to shed their previous societal

64 Wood, ‘Fraud and the California State Census of 1852’, 40.
65 Jessie Anderson to Mrs Anderson, 10 May 1852, San Francisco.
66 Ibid.
67 Levy, They Saw the Elephant, 120.
68 Rohrbough, Days of Gold, 70.
expectations and start anew.\textsuperscript{69} Immediately after arriving in Sacramento Anderson accepted a job as a house servant. She worked for a judge’s family and earned seventy-five dollars a month. The pay, she admitted, was ‘pretty good for a beginning.’\textsuperscript{70} For Anderson, there were always other opportunities in California if her current one did not work out. In the meantime, she also had an open job offer from a French dressmaker in town: ‘If I find the work too heavy at the end of the month I will try the dressmaking which I can get plenty of.’\textsuperscript{71}

After a few weeks, Anderson found that being a servant was too much toil in the California heat. Now late July and employed as a dressmaker, she remained confident in her prospects two months after her arrival. In another letter home to her mother, Anderson relayed:

I am so thankful to be able to tell you that I have such good health. Never so much as had a headache since I came to SF... I have not saved much yet, but with health and the blessing of God I shall soon have plenty.\textsuperscript{72}

She was also due to re-join her previous employer in the coming month. The family had begged for her return, and Anderson accepted on the condition of less strenuous work than before. In the same letter, she stressed the impermanence of the position and asserted, ‘I do not intend to be a sert. long’.\textsuperscript{73} Besides, there was some promise that she would find what she was looking for in California: a husband.

As a single Anglophone woman in California, Anderson was of high social value. Indeed, not even a week since arriving she recounted: ‘I have had the offer of about half a dozen husbands’\textsuperscript{74} It is important to highlight that the racial and national prejudices of Anglo-American hegemony in Gold Rush society also encompassed gender. In addition to the

\textsuperscript{69} Levy, \textit{They Saw the Elephant}, 108-9.
\textsuperscript{70} Jessie Anderson to Mrs Anderson, 25 May 1852, San Francisco.
\textsuperscript{71} \textit{Ibid}.
\textsuperscript{72} Jessie Anderson to Mrs Anderson, 25 July 1852, Sacramento City.
\textsuperscript{73} \textit{Ibid}.
\textsuperscript{74} Jessie Anderson to Mrs Anderson, 12 May 1852, San Francisco.
widespread disdain of African American bodies, decades of frontier warfare ensured that men also held little regard for Hispanic and Native American women.\textsuperscript{75} As it was in the rest of the US and Great Britain, white features ruled the standards of beauty. In Gold Rush society, a woman’s accent and nationality could also designate their level of morality. For example, while men admitted their attraction to French women, the common belief dictated that they were prostitutes with loose morals.\textsuperscript{76} Women in Gold Rush society also faced double standards on what was considered ‘acceptable’ behaviour. Even though prostitution thrived in California, Nancy Taniguchi argues that the male population (albeit the beneficiaries of the service) still held unforgiving conceptions of how a woman should behave in a God-fearing Protestant society.\textsuperscript{77} While California did offer fresh opportunities for women, Albert Hurtado counters that: ‘For Anglo Americans, the centripetal forces of homogeneity, cultural conformity, and continuity mastered the weaker centrifugal forces of diversity and cultural change.’\textsuperscript{78} Women still had to contend with many of the same restraints they experienced back East if they wished to keep their respectability in Gold Rush society.

As California matured into a Protestant civilisation, so did the conditions for women to amalgamate. The dominant members of Gold Rush society dictated that only respectable and virtuous women, of a particular ethnic descent, could become Californians. With them, they brought the comforts of Anglo-American civilisation: matrimony, domesticity, and procreation. Despite not being Anglo-American herself, Anderson’s multiple suitors hint that she embodied what Gold Rush society envisioned as the ideal woman. Ultimately, her ethnicity certainly did

\textsuperscript{75} Rohrbough, \textit{Days of Gold}, 97-99.
\textsuperscript{76} Hurtado, ‘Sex, Gender, Culture, and a Great Event’, 9.
\textsuperscript{78} Hurtado, ‘Sex, Gender, Culture, and a Great Event’, 18.
not inhibit her from her own conception of a California fortune: making a living for herself, finding a husband, and eventually starting her own family.

Even though Scottish Argonauts seemed to adjust pretty well to Gold Rush society, California was still a strange place that lacked the comforts of home. William Benemann, in his study of Gold Rush correspondence, argues that letters from home acted as a lifeline for familiarity and ‘became more precious than gold.’

This was certainly so for the Scottish Argonauts in this study who maintained a sense of ‘transnational rootedness’ with personal correspondence, especially when they first arrived in California. Correspondence allowed one’s involvement in local and domestic matters from abroad and gave Argonauts transnational agency in their lives back home. For those who left families behind, such as Elder, letters not only maintained their intimate connections in the private realm but also sustained spousal and parental roles from far away. Women like Anderson gained another level of comfort from home correspondence. The discourse between female relatives and friends gave Argonaut women an outlet to voice feminine concerns and sentiments, something they lacked in California’s masculine environment. Shortly after arriving in Sacramento, Anderson voiced her frustrations about the disregard of female comforts in the California weather. She assigned much of the blame on her brother George who gave ill advice for what clothes to pack. Nothing she brought was suitable. As soon as she received her first wages, she bought material to make appropriate dresses for the climate:

I got some money to day and went out and bought cloth for 2 gowns...it was very cruel of George to bring me here with hardly a rag to wear and then have me to fend for myself but I have never let down my skin.

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79 William Benemann, *A Year of Mud and Gold: San Francisco in Letters and Diaries, 1849-1850* (University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 36.
81 Jessie Anderson to Mrs Anderson, 25 May 1852, Sacramento City.
All of the letter collections in this study, whether authored by men or women, contained a fair amount of interest in local affairs back at home. Jane Errington, in her study of British and Irish emigration to Upper Canada during the nineteenth century, noted a similar commonality in her study, where correspondence ‘recreated and was an extension of the familiar relationships of village life.’ Furthermore, from the angle of a sojourner, this active yet transnational involvement in local gossip also facilitated the eventual return home and reintegration into Scottish society. Despite all the new distractions around them in Gold Rush society, Scottish Argonauts in their letters showed a clear desire to remain a part of the local communities they left behind.

Notably, the San Francisco Post Office distributed letters in such a way that further suggests the inclusion of Anglo-Saxons in Gold Rush society. Once every fortnight, coinciding with the arrival of the mail steamer, about half a dozen lines of hopeful recipients formed in front of the Post Office. Most of the queues represented one’s position in the alphabet, while one other, observed Borthwick in 1851, was ‘devoted exclusively to the use of foreigners, among whom English were not included’. By ‘English’, Borthwick most likely meant British Anglophones as he described a ‘polyglot individual’ in charge of the foreign window. Nevertheless, even the mail sorting and distribution in San Francisco made a clear distinction between Anglo-Argonauts and the other. Britons queuing with Anglo-Americans, rather than with other foreigners, could just as well be another indication of an Anglo-Saxon alliance in Gold Rush society.

82 E.J. Errington, Emigrant Worlds and Transatlantic Communities: Migration to Upper Canada in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007), 8, 143. Bueltmann observed the same of Scots in New Zealand in Bueltmann, Scottish Ethnicity and the Making of New Zealand Society, 58.
83 Borthwick, Three Years in California, 86.
No matter their nationality, all Argonauts harboured anxiety about receiving word from home. For those from overseas, such as the Scots, communication lines were particularly delicate because correspondence required a longer journey and had more risk of loss or displacement.  

In 1850, Elder gravely lost his trust in the postal service when he arrived in California and found nothing at the post office. He grew increasingly anxious the following week when the mail steamer brought further disappointment. In what was at least his third letter home since he departed, his anxieties about a dependable lifeline are evident:

> It is now more than three months since we parted and I have not heard a word from home since that time. I have no doubt that you have repeatedly written…still I have received nothing you have better write as often as once a fortnight as there may not be more than half the number received.

Even after they had more or less found their footing in California, Scottish Argonauts continued to value correspondence as a link to their home in Scotland or elsewhere. The level of importance that Scottish Argonauts ascribed to kinship ties can be seen in their reactions to lengths of silence from home. James Thomson, writing in February 1851, had not heard from his father in twelve months and believed himself forgotten by his friends and family back home:

> If I could only receive intelligence of your being all well I could rest satisfied and put up with the inconvenience of this new country for some time longer…it is needless to remind you that a letter is anxiously looked for by the exile of Scotia.

Similarly, throughout his eight years in California, Hamilton worried about his tentative connection back home and harboured a feeling that he was losing touch. After another lapse of silence in 1854, he wrote home in frustration:

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84 During the initial years of the Gold Rush mail between California and Scotland took about the same amount of time that the migrants themselves travelled in the previous chapter, anywhere from three to six months. As the decade progressed, transit time improved to around two months.

85 William Elder to Sarah Elder, 28 August 1850, San Francisco.

86 James Thomson to Alexander Thomson [and family], 22 February 1851, Nevada City, in Thomson, *For Friends at Home*, 140-43.
It would seem that you have all given up writing to me either because you are too busy or that on account of my long absence and consequent silence you fancy that I am lost and that it is too much trouble to write letters which may never be received. Neither from Kirkcudbright Liverpool or Edinburgh have I received any letters for three mails so I do not know anything about what you are about.\textsuperscript{87}

Despite the knowledge that Scottish Argonauts successfully integrated with the Anglo-American community in California, it is clear that many associated their sense of belonging with the place they left behind. As Fitzpatrick argues, ‘The sense of belonging to a place was likewise central to the emigrant’s identity.’\textsuperscript{88} That Elder, Thomson, and Hamilton each expressed grave anxieties about feeling disconnected and forgotten shows that even migrants accepted by their host communities still craved a sense of belonging that only their kinship could provide.

In addition to regular correspondence, Scottish Argonauts also requested Scottish newspapers as a means to connect with the homeland. Although months out of date by the time they arrived in California, local newspapers from home not only allowed migrants to reinsert themselves in the Scottish public sphere, but also served as a physical reminder of home. Among others, Anderson, Beith, and Hamilton requested Scottish newspapers in their letters home to friends and family.\textsuperscript{89} Shortly after his arrival, Hamilton checked in with his sisters and chased up a previous request: ‘I hope mamma has not forgot to subscribe to one of the Dumfries papers for me.’\textsuperscript{90} A year later and now several Scottish periodicals in hand, Hamilton voiced how much they meant to him: ‘I get the newspapers you send much more regularly now and they are highly prized.’\textsuperscript{91} While not mentioned in any of the letters in this study, Scottish Argonauts in

\textsuperscript{87} John James Hamilton to Mrs Hamilton, 31 July 1854, San Francisco.
\textsuperscript{88} Fitzpatrick, \textit{Oceans of Consolation}, 617.
\textsuperscript{89} Jessie Anderson to Mrs Anderson, 10 May 1852, San Francisco; James Beith, 1 September 1854, James Beith Letter Book, 7.
\textsuperscript{90} John James Hamilton to his sisters, 8 February 1851, San Francisco.
\textsuperscript{91} John James Hamilton to Mrs Hamilton, 29 January 1852, San Francisco.
California could also access British magazines such as the *Edinburgh Review* and *Blackwood’s Magazine*. From 1851, The *Alta California, Sacramento Transcript*, and *Marysville Herald* notified readers that these magazines were available through a redistributor in New York or in select shops in California.⁹² Like newspapers, Scottish publications such as magazines provided a means to connect with the homeland.

For Scottish Argonauts, correspondence, and to a lesser extent, newspapers and magazines, provided a vital connection back home that had little impact on their integration with dominant Anglo-American community. As this thesis will continue to demonstrate, for as long as Scottish Argonauts saw California as a place of sojourn instead of a place to call home, they focused more on sustaining their kinship ties overseas than forming new ethnic communities. Although they did not show their foreign attachments in the public sphere to the extent of other migrant groups in California, Scottish Argonauts still placed a great emphasis on maintaining homeland connections – a key competent of a diaspora. Meanwhile, because Scots largely maintained their foreign attachments in the private sphere, this strategy of adjustment facilitated their adoption into the nativist Anglo-American community.

**Urbanites**

One cannot fully comprehend the Scottish Gold Rush experience without considering the urbanites as well as the miners. City dwellers were integral to the Gold Rush experience as they converted mineral wealth into capital and cemented California’s role in the global economy.

While the first chapter investigated the demographics and occupational patterns of Scots in San

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⁹² Examples include *Alta California*, 7 May 1851; *Sacramento Transcript*, 15 January 1851; *Marysville Herald*, 8 March 1851.
Francisco and Sacramento, the following accounts provide further insights on the Scots who focused their attentions on California’s growing urban opportunities instead of mining for gold.

In November 1849, Elder agreed to a business partnership after a few months on his own in San Francisco. ‘Mr. Crum’, as Elder referred his new partner, was a 55-year-old ‘gentlemen’ who recently left a position at the Brooklyn Navy Yard. The two had met on their way to California and had talked of a potential business partnership during their travels. In one of his letters home, Elder hinted that a Scottish stereotype might have influenced Crum’s eagerness to partner: ‘he had sufficient Capital but thought he had not skill and he imagined that I had… he thinks my knowledge will balance his additional Capital’.

Earlier that year in a segment entitled ‘Our Population’, the Alta California voiced an American stereotype of the Scottish: ‘a long-headed chiel, who takes care of the pennies—the bonnie, merrie Scot.’ If the newspaper mirrored the sentiment of its readers – indeed this was a prevalent stereotype of the Scots in the nineteenth century – this furthers the case that the Anglo American population of California viewed Scottish migrants in a non-threatening light. Correct or not, the Alta California’s characterisation of the Scottish Argonaut illustrated a respected and welcomed individual in Gold Rush society.

With Crum’s pocketbook and Elder’s knowledge combining forces, the two purchased $2000 worth of dry goods and followed an inkling to open shop in Grass Valley. Elder had

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93 In autumn 1850, Elder travelled 350 miles throughout the mining districts to find his brother. Eventually, he located him outside Marysville. Over the next two weeks, while catching up and weighing options about partnering up, Elder decided that mining was not for him: ‘I helped the company one day which was the extent of my mining… I did not think it prudent to to [sic] do anything at mining.’ William Elder to Sarah Elder, 19 October 1850, San Francisco.
94 William Elder to Sarah Elder, 30 November 1850, San Francisco.
95 Daily Alta California, 8 March 1850.
96 Devine, To the Ends of the Earth, 149-150.
97 William Elder to Sarah Elder, 30 November 1850, San Francisco.
passed through Grass Valley a month before and chose the growing town for its commercial opportunity. In a later letter to his wife, he described Grass Valley as a ‘village’ with about 150 houses and 500 inhabitants. Only a small presence of families resided there, but the number was growing.  

By New Year’s the partners had settled into their new business arrangement. In the meantime, Elder kept his wife updated with the state of affairs:

> our business is improving and we think offers very fair. Mr Crum and I board ourselves and we get along first rate… With regard to making money here the chance is good. although fortunes are not easily made the time is past for very extravagant profits.

Although a more stable way of making money was to mine the miners instead of following the masses to the goldfields, Elder was not alone. In Grass Valley in 1850, for example, there was one trader for every four miners. Individuals often altered between the two occupations, and it was common for a trader to own a small stock so that they could easily shift between mining and selling goods.  

Elder and his partner ran a similar operation and alternated handling the shop while the other worked a small claim a short distance away. For the time being, business was steady at the shop, and the claim netted them an additional five dollars a day. Now, five months after his arrival, Elder was sure he made the right decision to come to California: ‘I have not regretted coming to California I hope and believe it will be for the best.’

Around the same time Elder reached San Francisco by steamship, James Thomson arrived at Hangtown with his overland team, ready to pan for gold. The atmosphere at the mining town was not what Thomson expected, however. Instead of a sparsely populated landscape with untouched potential, he observed the opposite: ‘from the large number of

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98 William Elder to Sarah Elder, 8 January 1851, Centreville or Grass Valley.
100 Mann, ‘The Decade after the Gold Rush’, 491.
101 William Elder to Sarah Elder, 8 January 1851, Centreville or Grass Valley.
emigrants arriving daily the best diggings were occupied.’  

In the company of two others (a Canadian of Scottish descent from his overland team and an Iowan he befriended in Hangtown), Thomson trekked sixty miles north to the developing mining town of Nevada City. Here, they noticed ‘a great deal of building in the city’, traded the prospect of gold flakes for sawdust, and started a lumber business.

Thomson was in an occupational minority as a lumberman in Nevada City. In productive mining towns, the majority of the population tended to be miners. In 1850 in Nevada City, for instance, miners comprised eight out of every ten males in the population. As a result, the smaller proportion of skilled and unskilled workers reaped higher wages and a steadier income than their gold-panning counterparts. As well as mineral resources, an abundance of lumber surrounded Nevada City. Thomson wrote to his father in October that ‘It would almost astonish even a Glen tanner man to see the trees that grow in this country many of them upwards of 300 feet high.’ The letter continued with encouraging news. Only two weeks since starting his new business venture each partner had already netted $150. While not Thomson’s original plans for California, things looked promising:

We work in the woods half a mile from town having built ourselves a small cabin. We do our own cooking. Our board costs us about nine dollars a week each. By making a good article of lumber we can sell at the tree as many as we can make at sixty dollars per thousand. We three can easily get out 800 boards per day.

102 James Thomson to Alexander and Helen Thomson, 6 October 1850, Nevada City, in For Friends at Home, 136.
103 Ibid., 136-137; James Thomson to Helen and Alexander Thomson, 27 July 1851, Nevada City, in Ibid., 14.
104 James Thomson to Alexander and Helen Thomson, 6 October 1850, Nevada City, in Ibid., 137.
105 Mann, ‘Social Structure in Grass Valley and Nevada City’, 491.
106 James Thomson to Alexander and Helen Thomson, 6 October 1850, Nevada City, in For Friends at Home, 137.
107 Ibid.
Exactly a year later, in San Francisco, Hamilton admitted to his mother that he was not having much luck. Upon his return to California in August, he found his office building burnt to rubble and learned that his so-called business partners had moved on. Faced with the realisation that it would take much longer to make his California fortune, he had little choice but to open up about his circumstances to his family:

The Golden dreams which I thought were almost realised when I was last at home and which have ere now been realised by many in a worse situation than I was when I left this country have vanished for the present and it will take a few years longer than I anticipated to call them back again although in the long run, if life and health remain, they are sure to come.\textsuperscript{108}

The next few years Hamilton tried various ways to make money in and outwith San Francisco. First, he tried to rebuild his shipping agency but was unsuccessful. Then, he had a quick stint as an engineer for the city’s water supply, but that too fell through. Afterwards, he expanded his options outside city limits and travelled the countryside for other prospects. In some instances, he scavenged shipwrecks for valuables, while in others he investigated quicksilver mines for investment opportunities. Unfortunately, each venture only added to his growing debt. At one point, Hamilton even blamed his countrymen for his failures:

I am sorry to say that I have received more unkindness from been offended cheated and been shown more in gratitude buy my own countrymen then by any others of the residents in California, I have not however Lost all faith in Scotchman but I'm rather disbursed to consider those whom I have met here as exceptions to the general rule and character of my compatriots.\textsuperscript{109}

But this is not to say that Scots in California actively avoided their countrymen and women in business pursuits. In other Scottish diaspora destinations, Scots showed a preference for conducting business affairs with other Scots. Alan Karras, for example, demonstrated that eighteenth-century Scottish sojourners in the Caribbean and Chesapeake made an obvious effort

\textsuperscript{108}John James Hamilton to Mrs Hamilton, 18 October 1851, San Francisco.
\textsuperscript{109}John James Hamilton to Rose Hamilton, 4 May 1853, San Francisco.
to make personal and business connections with other Scots abroad.\footnote{Karras, \textit{Sojourners in the Sun}, 118-69.} So far, in this chapter, the majority of Scots’ business partners have been Anglo-American. Indeed, partnerships with Anglo-Americans in California could assist one’s level of integration into the dominant society. Some had especially useful connections. For example, Robert Brownlee’s partner later became sheriff of Agua Fria and oversaw the collection of the foreign miner’s tax.\footnote{Brownlee, \textit{An American Odyssey}, 128-129.} Brownlee himself never mentioned anything about having to pay. In another instance, the first commission merchants in San Francisco, Cross, Hobson, & Co., comprised of a Scottish merchant named Alexander Cross and a US consul named William Hobson.\footnote{Delgado, \textit{Gold Rush Port}, 96.}

While personal accounts present a fuller picture of how Scottish Argonauts struck up business relations, the question remains whether there were Scottish business networks in California. Census records and city directories provide some insight into business partnerships and employment trends. During the formative years of the Gold Rush, business partners often shared a common household.\footnote{Rohrbough, \textit{Days of Gold}, 75-80.} Therefore, those sharing a household with similar occupations were most likely in business with one another. Because the 1850 enumerations for San Francisco are non-existent, we will consider the data from California’s ‘Second City’, Sacramento.\footnote{In 1850, Sacramento was the second biggest urban centre in California after San Francisco with 9,087 residents; \textit{The Seventh Census of the United States}, 122.}

Altogether, Sacramento’s enumeration data suggests thirty-nine separate business establishments with Scottish occupants (Appendix 4.1). Of these, seventeen were Scottish-American, five were exclusively British, two were British-Irish, and only three were exclusively Scottish. This suggests that Scots, at least in Sacramento, did not actively pursue partnerships with other Scots and instead were more inclined to live and work in the company of Anglo-Americans and other...
Anglo-Saxons. Furthermore, the range of occupations and nationalities varied in each household, and there was no apparent pattern between them. For example, of the two Scottish merchants in the city, one partnered with an American merchant from New York and the other with an English merchant.\textsuperscript{115} Meanwhile, the Scottish clerks worked with a variety of nationalities: three worked for American merchants, one worked for French merchants, and another with Polish merchants.

Of note is one of the British-Irish establishments, the Bull’s Head Saloon on the intersection of 5th and K Street. Owned by two Irishmen (Charles McReau and Edward Feeny) and a Scot (William Hay), the saloon served as a restaurant, polling location, boarding house, and horse stable.\textsuperscript{116} Some of its staff or potential boarders also came from Britain, including a baker from Scotland and a clerk from England.\textsuperscript{117} Contemporary sources note that a bull’s skull decorated the premises, and the name of the saloon was most likely a nod to the British public drinking house.\textsuperscript{118} During his tour of San Francisco, Borthwick reported several ‘second-rate English drinking-shops, where John Bull could smoke his pipe and swig his ale coolly and calmly’. These types of pubs provided a familiar drinking experience for British Argonauts that American saloons failed to provide. Importantly, Borthwick added, these establishments nurtured an atmosphere where one could enjoy his drink ‘without having to gulp it down and make way for others.’\textsuperscript{119}

While Sacramento’s 1850 enumeration only suggests three Scottish business partnerships, cross-referencing San Francisco’s census data and city directory from 1852 alludes

\begin{footnotes}
\item[115] Households 43 and 605, see appendix 4.1.
\item[117] Household 502, see appendix 4.1.
\item[118] Scott, \textit{Sacramento's Gold Rush Saloons}.
\item[119] Borthwick, \textit{Three Years in California}, 74.
\end{footnotes}
to more Scottish establishments. Furthermore, because the 1852 Census noted an individual’s last place of residence, there is an indication that many of these Scottish partnerships came from previous engagements or familial ties. On Pacific Avenue, for example, the Leggest brothers from Edinburgh ran a grocery.\textsuperscript{120} A few blocks down the road, Neil McCloud and Peter Miller operated an inn called the Waverly House.\textsuperscript{121} Both Scotsmen had Sydney, Australia listed as their previous residence and lived together with McCloud’s Irish wife and their three children. Meanwhile, on the street corner of Montgomery and Sacramento, merchant brothers Donald and John Davidson operated Davidson, Brothers & Co.\textsuperscript{122} The next street up, on Commercial Street, another pair of Scottish merchants ran their enterprise, Daniel Gibb and Co.\textsuperscript{123} The brothers, Daniel and William Gibb, were from a merchant family in Scotland that had offices in Glasgow and Valparaiso.\textsuperscript{124} In 1849, they started their own branch of the family business in San Francisco and went on to operate a successful global commission enterprise throughout the Gold Rush decade. Moreover, there was an obvious Scottish influence on some of their imports. In 1855, one of their advertisements in the \textit{Alta California} listed: 180 hogsheads and 91 barrels of Tennent’s Double Strong Ale and 5,000 pounds of ‘Scotch oatmeal’.\textsuperscript{125}

Even with evidence of Scottish business relations, there is little indication that Scottish Argonauts in California actively sought out other Scots to do business with. Rather than striking up new partnerships simply because of a shared nationality, Scottish Argonauts more likely entered business relations with one another through existing personal connections – be it through

\textsuperscript{120} Charles P. Kimball, \textit{The San Francisco City Directory} (San Francisco, 1850), 71.
\textsuperscript{121} James M Parker, \textit{The San Francisco Directory for the Year 1852-53} (San Francisco, 1852), 78.
\textsuperscript{122} \textit{Ibid.}, 26.
\textsuperscript{123} \textit{Ibid.}, 57.
\textsuperscript{125} \textit{Daily Alta California}, 12 December 1855.
family members or acquaintances from Scotland or elsewhere. Douglas McCalla noted a similar trend with Scottish sojourners in Canada, where Scottish partnerships in business were the result of family networks or personal connections. ‘And even those who began in modest circumstances’, McCalla observed ‘came with valuable assets, such as contacts with or an initial position within established commercial networks.’ On the same line, the fact that many Scots came from previous residences in the US probably has something to do with their tendency of working with other Americans in California. While there is no evidence of an internal Scottish community that provided support and job opportunities for their fellow Scots in California, there is a strong suggestion that preestablished networks in Scotland and across the diaspora facilitated the development of Scottish business relations in California.

**Scots in the Mining Regions**

When Robert Brownlee arrived at the Agua Fria mining camp in November 1849, the settlement numbered under 20 people and a meagre collection of tents. Although he initially chose the location for its mining prospects, he soon realised that there was another opportunity to make money. At present, the local miners suffered from a desperate lack of provisions and supplies. While shipments from San Francisco came freely to Sacramento and Stockton through

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127 See Table 1.7
128 Other groups in California facilitated local networks which helped provide job opportunities for members of their ethnic community. While German businessmen in Sacramento conducted business with their American neighbours, their first concern, argues Carole Terry, was ‘the welfare of their fellow German-born.’ Terry, ‘German Immigrants in Sacramento’, 81. Furthermore, one of the roles of the various immigrant benevolent societies in San Francisco, such as the Irish Hibernian Society founded in 1852, was to help secure employment for their respective countrymen and women. Burchell, *The San Francisco Irish*, 96; Lotchin, *San Francisco*, 334.
California’s river system, an insufficient trading network failed to service much of the mining territory that was further inland. Within a week of concluding his overland journey, Brownlee harnessed his mule team and started for Stockton, 100 miles away. When he returned a month later with a convoy train of vital provisions, the miners bought off his whole supply. Sensing he was on to something, Brownlee left again for Stockton the next day: ‘we started with $800 for another load of different stuff, more costly, consisting of boots, shovels, picks, with a variety of liquors, as they were in demand, tobacco, cards, in fact, we had a general assortment.’

While Brownlee was away picking up the second round of supplies, an overland companion named John Clarke began constructing Agua Fria’s first store:

The size, I think, was sixty feet by forty. We split logs and set them on end so as to make the inner walls eight feet high, chinked the cracks with mud, built a good chimney, and covered the building with drilling.

From overland messmates to partners in business, both Brownlee and Clarke would play a key role in turning the small mining camp into a society of familiar comforts. As the population increased over the next year, they added gambling tables in the store, erected an eating house, a 10-pin bowling alley, and the first local liquor dispensary. All the while, they also continued to supply freight services to and from Agua Fria. In a sense, Brownlee had embraced the spirit of Anglo-Saxonism by fostering an Anglo presence in what was considered a previously untamed territory.

Meanwhile, to the north, Thomson and his partners had abandoned the lumber trade for the mines. Having resided in a mining town where miners used gold as a currency, it was incredibly hard for locals to resist the temptation of mining. In a letter to his father dated February 1851, Thomson explained that in December they had handed over $1000 for a 30 by

\[\text{Ibid.}, 117.\]

\[\text{Ibid.}, 118.\]
90-foot claim two miles outside Nevada City.\textsuperscript{132} By February, despite it being the dry season, they managed to clear a third of the claim. So far, they had washed out $1,200 worth of gold, but between the three of them, it only worked out to about an ounce per day.\textsuperscript{133} Thomson’s report home hinted that he was growing weary for his big break: ‘I cannot give a very favourable report of my success, although the star of hope is still in the ascendant.’\textsuperscript{134}

While Thomson’s claim continued to produce fair wages throughout the spring, his father in Scotland responded that he worried about his son’s toiling in the mines.\textsuperscript{135} Thomson wrote back in April in defence, claiming that he preferred mining to the work he had known back home:

\begin{quote}
We do not work so hard as I did ten or twelve years ago in Aberdeen. We take breakfast about sun rise go to work between seven and eight take an hour at noon for dinner and work till five or six as we feel inclined. In the evenings we bake bread, clean our gold and weigh it and make a dividend Saturday nights after paying our provision bills out of company purse.\textsuperscript{136}
\end{quote}

In a later letter home in July, Thomson spoke of America’s exceptionality. He explained that in America, one could break the ties that they were born to: ‘I am aware that giving up one calling and adopting another is much more common and much less thought of in America, than in Scotland.’\textsuperscript{137} Thomson had left a baker’s life when he set sail across the Atlantic in 1844. Yet while he embraced the change in America, he was adamant that his time there was only temporary. His accommodation reflected the nature of his stay: ‘We have our cabin or boothy fitted up with berths like a passenger ship and we sleep on the soft side of a pine board, with an

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{132} James Thomson to Alexander Thomson [and family], 22 February 1851, Nevada City, in \textit{For Friends at Home}, 141.  \\
\textsuperscript{133} Ibid., 141-142.  \\
\textsuperscript{134} Ibid.  \\
\textsuperscript{135} James Thomson to Alexander Thomson, 11 April 1851, Nevada City, in \textit{Ibid.}, 151.  \\
\textsuperscript{136} Ibid., 152.  \\
\textsuperscript{137} James Thomson to Helen and Alexander Thomson, 27 July 1851, Nevada City, in \textit{Ibid.}, 155.
\end{flushright}
old blanket and sometimes a little hay between us and it.'\(^{138}\) The discomforts in the diggings only reminded Argonauts of what they lacked: the comforts of home.\(^{139}\) As well as missing the company of his family, Thomson yearned for his comfort food, porridge: ‘I can’t get any oat meal or I would treat myself to Potage and milk some night notwithstanding the big price [of milk].’\(^{140}\) However, as Rohrbough has highlighted, ‘The challenges and opportunities of gold rush California would separate those who could pay the price in time and arduous labor from those who would turn tail and return to the comforts of warm feather beds’.\(^{141}\) While the intention to return home grew stronger as more time passed in the mines, many Argonauts felt that their journey back could not commence until they found their California fortune.

For Thomson, his California fortune was to earn enough to visit Scotland before he returned to Canada to rebuild his new conception of home. His ‘highest ambition,’ he wrote to his family in July 1851, was to start a farm in Edwardsburg, Ontario: ‘There I have many kind friends and it seems more like home than any other place.’\(^{142}\) Persistence in California would not only secure Thomson’s future in Canada, but allow him the opportunity to see his native land again: ‘If fortune only smiles upon me and I make enough in California to enable me to visit the land of my nativity, depend on it I will embrace the earliest opportunity to do so.’\(^{143}\) Although Thomson had his sights set on Ontario, the prospect of returning to Scotland remained a primary aspiration during his time as an Argonaut.

\(^{138}\) James Thomson to Alexander Thomson, 11 April 1851, Nevada City, in \textit{Ibid}, 149.
\(^{139}\) Rohrbough, “‘When a Person Gits to California It Is Hard to Say or Tell When He Gets Away:’ Why the Forty-Niners Were Reluctant to Come Home to the Families They Loved”, \textit{Montana: The Magazine of Western History} 49, no. 3 (1999): 30-31.
\(^{140}\) \textit{Ibid}.
\(^{141}\) \textit{Ibid.}, 36.
\(^{142}\) James Thomson to Helen and Alexander Thomson, 27 July 1851, Nevada City, in \textit{For Friends at Home}, 155.
\(^{143}\) James Thomson to Alexander Thomson, 11 April 1851, Nevada City, in \textit{Ibid.}, 150.
As seen in the second chapter, letters from Scottish Argonauts shared an assortment of experiences in Gold Rush California. While some struck it lucky, the average majority only earned just enough to get by. As time progressed and more prospectors funnelled into California’s mining districts, the chances of making a fortune diminished. But despite weeks or months of meagre returns, miners held on to the chance that their luck could change the next day.\textsuperscript{144} In early 1851, the \textit{John o’ Groat Journal} printed a letter from an Aberdonian who informed his father that he would spend one more year in the mines. Knowing the delay would cause upset, the writer promised his return to Scotland in time to welcome the new year. While he had lost faith in his California fortune, the gold still held some allure:

\begin{quote}
although I have given over the idea of ever getting a fortune, I flatter myself—that is, if the Fates don’t turn against me altogether—I will reach Aberdeen with as much in my pocket as if I had stopped in it all the time.\textsuperscript{145}
\end{quote}

For Argonauts and sojourners alike, the prospect of returning home with little or nothing to show for their pursuits was a source of shame and embarrassment.\textsuperscript{146} Instead of returning home within their intended timeframe, those yet to realise their fortunes often extended their stay. While some Argonauts kept on in the diggings, others lost their faith in mining and tried to make their California fortune another way. In February 1853, the \textit{Glasgow Herald} printed a letter from a Scottish Argonaut who had acknowledged his ‘hallucination of acquiring a small fortune in a brief time.’\textsuperscript{147} In 1852, he had followed countless others who abandoned the mines and returned to San Francisco to find work.\textsuperscript{148} But ‘Madame Fortune’, he claimed, continued to tease him in

\begin{footnotes}
\item[144] Rohrbough, \textit{Rush to Gold}, 117.
\item[145] \textit{John o’ Groat Journal}, 17 January 1851.
\item[146] Rohrbough, “‘When a Person Gits to California It Is Hard to Say or Tell When He Gets Away:’ Why the Forty-Niners Were Reluctant to Come Home to the Families They Loved,” \textit{Montana: The Magazine of Western History} 49, no. 3 (1999).
\item[147] \textit{Glasgow Herald}, 25 February 1853.
\end{footnotes}
the urban realm. Over the next year, the writer moved from job to job, and the bouts of unemployment in between drove him deeper into debt. By the time he penned his letter home, the Scot had found himself imprisoned by the very thing that lured him to California in the first place – money:

Well, my dear Mother, what do you think now of the good luck of your “Mhae Mhor;” has he not travelled far and spent plenty, so as to learn the delightful professions of a miner, sailor, butcher and woodcutter? I think he could have learned them at a cheaper rate at home; however, this is peculiar to California, for many thousands have been worse off than me.149

Around the same time in Nevada City, Thomson and his partner had since bought into an American bakery. Now working as a baker again, Thomson was aware of the irony when he updated his father: ‘You will think me a strange fellow when I inform you that I am again a baker. Such however is the case.’150 Meanwhile, his partner persisted mining while they shared the profits between the bakery and their claim:

We paid eleven hundred dollars for our half of the bakery. Up to this time we have got back the money we paid out and pretty good wages for my time besides, and the establishment is worth as much as it was when we bought in.151

For a little over a year, Thomson continued at the bakery and bought into several more claims with his partner. Writing in January in 1853, he informed his father that business was good and he still intended to make it home by the summer. Thomson continued to channel images and memories of Scotland in his letters home: ‘I want to know if you still climb the Cairn or cross Bulg and wade the water of Bervie when visiting the How o’ Mearns.’152 Andrew MacKillop observed similar sentiments of longing in letters from Scottish sojourners in India, the rhetoric echoing that typically associated with exiles. Letters with sentiments of longing, argues

149 Glasgow Herald, 25 February 1853.
150 James Thomson to Alexander Thomson, 26 March 1852, Nevada Cal, in For Friends at Home, 164.
151 Ibid.
152 James Thomson to Alexander Thomson, 20 January 1853, Nevada City Cal, in Ibid, 171.
MacKillop, ‘reveal a highly personalized psychological process whereby the emotional bond with Scotland and with family was re-imagined and reaffirmed by sojourners’. 153 Even though Scottish Argonauts did not outwardly display their Scottishness the public realm, their connection to the homeland could be just as vigorous as those who publicly celebrated and maintained their Scottish identity. As he promised in his letters, Thomson soon left San Francisco and made it back to Scotland where he spent the summer catching up with friends and family. His hard work in California not only afforded him the mobility to visit his homeland, but to return to Canada where he purchased 150 acres of farmland in Edwardsburgh for £500. 154 In Thompson’s case, becoming an Argonaut had granted him his fortune of finally settling down in a new place to call home.

Back in San Francisco, Hamilton became more homesick as he realised it would take much more time to make his own fortune – and not in the way he intended. If only he could go home for a visit in the meantime:

If they would though complete the invention of these aerial carrriages which they have been talking about so long one might have a chance coming Home for a day or two without wasting much time…you will be laughing at me for being ‘sae homesick’. 155

Fitzpatrick has argued that admitting loneliness ‘served to highlight the gulf between newcomers and settlers, so reinforcing the emigrant’s bond’ with the missed place. 156 Bueltmann also observed a similar need of familiar personal encounters in Scottish-authored letters from New Zealand. Although letters served an important function of maintaining kinship connections, their ‘consolatory function’ could not compare to that of personal encounters and being back in a

154 James Thomson to Alexander Thomson, 11 April 1854, Edwardsburgh, in Ibid., 164.
155 John James Hamilton to Rose Hamilton, 4 May 1852, Off the Island of [illegible].
156 Fitzpatrick, Oceans of Consolation, 615.
familiar place. As Hamilton became more uncertain regarding the length of his stay in California, in addition to his fate as an Argonaut, his longing grew for the comfort of his homeland.

After three years of finding little opportunity and incurring debts, Hamilton moved to Grass Valley in 1855 and turned to mining as a last-ditch effort. By that time in California, the occupational opportunities in mining had begun to diversify. Over the Gold Rush decade, advanced machinery came to replace the manual method of pan and shovel. Instead of panning rivers or shovelling gravel into rockers, it became more commonplace to use high-pressure water nozzles and hydraulic crushing machines. Prospectors also switched their attentions from the riverbeds to the gold-laden quartz lodes underground. As a result, a totem pole of new positions in the mining realm replaced the independent gold digger.

In May 1856, Hamilton flaunted his new position as ‘Mining Engineer’ in a letter home to his sister. Earlier that year he had bought into the Rocky Bar Co. with some Americans. That April, Hamilton finally struck some luck:

If fortune will but favor me for the future as it has been doing for the past two months I will ere long be in a favorable position for making money as ever I have been since I came to California. the only want I feel is want of capital and that will soon remedy itself for I cannot have cleared less than $1000 (200 pounds) during the last six weeks.

Inspired with a taste of success, Hamilton expanded his mining investments the following year but rarely made more than expenses. In July 1857, he invested the remainder of his finances and

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158 With high pressure water nozzles, miners directed water at rockfaces and washed the resulting debris through a sluice system. Meanwhile, crushing machines pulverised the gold-bearing quartz in hard rock mining.
159 Paul, *California Gold*; Jung, ‘Capitalism Comes to the Diggings’; Daniel Cornford, “‘We All Live More Like Brutes Than Humans:’ Labor and Capital in the Gold Rush’.
160 John James Hamilton to Rose Hamilton, 18 May 1856, Grass Valley.
the last of his hope in a downtrodden lead and quartz mill outside of Eureka. Fortune did not continue in his favour as the start of winter brought a hard freeze and halted work for the remainder of the season. On Christmas Day, Hamilton sat alone in his snow-logged cabin and wrote to his family in dismay:

I am heartily homesick and especially tired of California which I am determined to leave before another year rolls over. I wrote to Robert my last mail asking what the chances were of something to do in Liverpool. If any I will come home. If none then some British or Spanish country for I am sick of Americans and their habits...it is the amount of debts that I owe that frighten me. I see no prospect of realizing enough to pay them in this or any exclusively gold country for it seems as if it were the merest chance getting anything good here. The most industrious, plodding and hardworking may continue so all their lives and never get more than a livelihood while the most idle drunken reprobates will stumble on the richest claims time after time while spending all the money they make in gambling and such like.\textsuperscript{162}

To make things worse, just after New Year’s Day an avalanche caved in on the mine. Soon after, travellers set Hamilton’s cabin on fire which destroyed all his winter provisions.\textsuperscript{163} Although he managed to bounce back and recover his losses during the spring, Hamilton’s only aim was to settle his debts so that he could return home. With no desire to remain in America and seek his fortune, he began to lament being a foreigner in California:

in this free and enlightened country a foreigner who will not be citizenised labors under considerable difficulties for having no political power…I cannot say I at all like to be in a country where I am debarred from any position to whom I may choose to aspire.\textsuperscript{164}

More than seven years since writing his first letter from California, this was the first time Hamilton complained about his foreign identity being a hinderance. More likely, Hamilton considered his failures outwith his control, rather than take responsibility for risky investments and his decision to migrate to California. David Gerber has observed that when some migrants were struck with hard times in the United States, a growing aversion towards American people

\textsuperscript{162} John James Hamilton to George Hamilton, 25 December 1857, Eureka.  
\textsuperscript{163} John James Hamilton to Robert Hamilton, 20 February 1858, Eureka.  
\textsuperscript{164} John James Hamilton to George Hamilton, 2 May 1858, Snow Point.
and culture matched their assertions of Scottishness and belonging to Scotland. As Hamilton’s circumstances sunk him further into despair, his aversion towards California and the people around became more and more apparent in his letters home. Meanwhile, Hamilton’s correspondence, with increasing confessions of homesickness and nostalgic longing, was emblematic of the notion that letters operated as a transnational lifeline.

In early August 1858, after eight years in California, Hamilton put a stop to his mining operations and walked away with $150. As fate would have it, the day before Hamilton started his journey for San Francisco, someone robbed him of what little remained of his California fortune. Later that month, Hamilton wrote his last letter from California and advised his family that he would be returning on a borrowed passage home:

In any case you may expect to see me in Liverpool sometime in October and in a regular barbarous condition, all my clothes having been burned up this spring and not having had any razors for the last four years. Within the last fortnight I have tracked over 200 miles and have been considerably bothered and annoyed at my want of success so in not much in the humor for writing a long letter.

Like the majority of those who went to California to seek their fortune, Hamilton left worse for wear and years after his intended return.

In the end, Hamilton blamed his failure in California on being a foreigner. In actuality, Hamilton’s bad luck mirrored many other Anglo-American Argonauts who invested in the evolving mining industry. Indeed, as Rohrbough has shown, many of the share-owned mining operations failed in California. Nevertheless, in lieu of Hamilton’s experience, the question arises whether Scottish Argonauts successfully navigated the evolving mining industry in the

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166 John James Hamilton to Robert Hamilton, 19 August 1858, Sacramento.  
168 Rohrbough, Days of Gold, 267.
latter half of the Gold Rush decade. While the first chapter highlighted some Scottish miners in California who appeared successful in 1860, Robert Watt’s story demonstrates that a Scottish identity did nothing to deter his success in California’s corporate mining industry. Introduced in the previous chapter, Watt was the Newtongrange native who worked his passage to California in 1850. Unlike Hamilton, he did not hesitate to dirty his hands as soon as he arrived and immediately joined his brothers in the mining districts. Decades later, he reminisced about his Gold Rush experience and attributed his background to his success:

My first gold mining venture was in gravel mining and the training I had got as a boy on the farm fitted me to handle the shovel and other implements we used in washing. As I progressed and got into deep quartz mining requiring the erection of machinery. My mechanical training told and there was hardly any sort of mechanical work I could not do. The technical education I acquired at night school when an apprentice, with a little brushing up, fitted me to do the surveying in the mines, so on the whole I got just the sort of training to make a good all round man, barring the accomplishments of course.169

Through the 1850s the Watt brothers came to own several hard-rock mining operations in Grass Valley, Massachusetts Hill, and Eureka (the Grass Valley mine was their most successful and reportedly worth 2.5 million dollars).170 Contrary to Hamilton’s statement, Watt achieved a high level of financial success in California as a foreigner. Although he eventually naturalised, he did not become a US citizen until 1868.171

169 Robert Watt to his daughter Elizabeth, 19 January 1892, Oakland, CA, Private Collection of Mark Miller.
171 Watt’s efforts during the Gold Rush directly paved his future in California as a man of influence. After retiring from mining in 1867, he then went on to occupy various roles in politics, business, and banking; including but not limited to: partner and president of a wholesale drug firm, vice-president at the San Francisco Gas & Electric Co, vice-president of the Union Trust company, director of the Marin County Water Works and vice-president and principal enterpriser of the San Francisco & San Joaquin Valley Railroad Company. Bailey Millard, History of the San Francisco Bay Region: History and Biography, 3 vols. (Chicago: The American Historical Society, 1924), 108; Mel Scott, The San Francisco Bay Area: A Metropolis in Perspective (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 8.
Interactions in the Diggings

Even though the diggings lacked a semblance of home, many Scottish Argonauts still felt a sense of belonging. Rather than detract attention from the minority Argonauts who faced adversity, a closer look at the Scottish experience allows for a better understanding of the intricate social structure in the diggings. Furthermore, a Scottish focus also sheds additional light on how nativist sentiment evolved in California’s mining realms, especially as some foreigners – like the Scots – positioned themselves on the advantageous side.

Nativism in California, argues Leonard Pitt, ‘was born in the months of 1849 and early 1850 when mining enterprise was most individualistic, government most ineffectual, and immigration most rapid.’ Indeed, during the first mining season of 1848, and even into 1849, the various nationalities in the diggings worked in relative peace. Nativism was simply not a contending factor because Anglo-Americans were in the minority and mining claims were abundant. Historians estimate that when Marshall discovered gold in California, the state’s population consisted of around 150,000 Native Americans and an additional 15,000 non-Natives. The latter predominantly consisted of Californios (original Spanish settlers and their descendants), Anglo-Americans, and a variety of other foreigners including the aforementioned Scots who came during California’s Hispanic era. As news of gold began to spread, a further 6,000 individuals arrived in California by the year’s end. Of this number, Anglo-Americans represented less than half, while those from the Pacific Islands and Latin America made up the majority.

174 Chan, ‘A People of Exceptional Character’, 51.
Accordingly, nativism manifested into action in California alongside the massive influx of Anglo-American prospectors in 1849. The increasing number of miners, both American and foreign-born, compounded the competition for claims in California. Miners numbered 50,000 by the end of 1849, had doubled to 100,000 in 1850, and grew to 125,000 at the end of 1851. In an attempt to minimise their competition in the diggings, Anglo-Americans claimed they had rightful ownership of any gold found on American territory.

As early as April 1849, the *Alta California* reported a growing sentiment in the mining districts to push out anyone not considered an American citizen: ‘The feeling is very general among the Americans and Californians that foreigners should not be allowed to dig for gold. They think that they alone should be entitled to the advantages of the mines’. Around the same time whilst searching for claims, Downie encountered a rowdy group of men touting similar sentiments. The leader brandished a handkerchief-sized replica of the Stars and Stripes, and his followers were armed to the teeth. Downie bravely approached them and asked their purpose:

In reply I was told in tip-top Tipperary brogue, that the expedition had set out for the purpose of exploring the river thirty miles up and down with a view to driving away all “foreigners.” The crowd was a motley one, and as to nationality, someone mixed. Irishmen were marching to drive off the Kanakas…They were joined by Dutchmen and Germans, who could not speak a word of English, but were jabbering together in their own harsh jargon, while none of them had ever been in the United States. Then there were a few New Yorkers, who really went out for the purpose of looking after a good claim, already opened, but all had joined hands in the alleged common interest of protecting the native soil (for that was really the only native feature about it), against the invasion of “foreigners.”

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176 *Alta California*, 26 April 1849.
In hindsight of the encounter, Downie stipulated, ‘What was implied by the term “foreigners” was not exactly clear to me at the time, and it would be hard for me to explain it even now.’\textsuperscript{178} Especially during the initial years of the Gold Rush, the meaning of ‘foreigner’ in Gold Rush California was highly convoluted. Downie’s own lack of clarity was a product of the time. However, there was no question who received the initial brunt of discrimination in the mining territories. For the Anglo-Americans under the sway of Manifest Destiny, the obvious targets were the Latin and Native American populations.\textsuperscript{179}

As the population makeup diversified and Anglo-American hegemony came to dominate, other foreigners found themselves in a grey area and began to pick sides. For example, the French allied with the Latin Americans because they shared a Catholic heritage and were reluctant to learn English.\textsuperscript{180} Meanwhile, because Latin and Native Americans were the primary targets of the Anglo-Americans in the mines, other groups like the Germans, Irish, and the British allied themselves with the Anglo-Americans.\textsuperscript{181} Such was the case with Downie’s motley encounter in 1849.

Scots too shared nativist sentiments as the competition increased in the mining regions. For Brownlee, the peaceful relations in California had ended in 1850:

\begin{quote}
In 1849 none but the better class of citizens could manage to raise funds to get here – the wealthy man or the preacher’s son. The slums of Australia had not yet sent her convicts, and the Evil world from the East had not arrived…Miners could leave their wallets of dust in their tents under their blankets and they would be safe.\textsuperscript{144}
\end{quote}

While he could have misremembered the year, the fact that Brownlee did not mention the hostilities towards the Latino population is significant. In 1849 Anglo-American threats and their

\textsuperscript{178} Ibid., 21.
\textsuperscript{180} Rohrbough, \textit{Rush to Gold}.
\textsuperscript{181} Chan, ‘A People of Exceptional Character’, 60.
hostile treatment of foreigners were well underway by the time he arrived in autumn.\footnote{Norbert Finzch, ‘Anti-Mexican ‘Nativism’ in the California Gold Mines, 1848-1856’, \textit{Jahrbuch für Geschichte Lateinamerikas –/Anuario de Historia de America Latina} 21, no. 1 (1984).} This oversight suggests Brownlee’s disassociation from concerning himself in the initial conflict. Furthermore, his language reflected certain nativist stereotypes that became prevalent among the Anglo-American population during the Gold Rush. In July 1850, for instance, the mining town of Sonora ordered all foreigners to leave within 15 days, except those ‘engaged in permanent business and of respectable character.’ The perpetrators, they claimed, were the ‘Peons of Mexico, the renegades of South America, and the convicts of the British Empire’.\footnote{Sacramento Transcript, 29 July 1850.} By 1852, foreign resentment in California had adapted to include the growing Chinese population. In September, a miners’ convention in Tuolumne county platformed for a ban on the naturalisation of the ‘motly races of foreigners from Asia, Polynesia and South America.’ The state of California, they continued, had to address the concern that ‘hordes of degraded, dark colored and worthless laborers, of mongrel race and barbarous education, are allowed, and even invited to come hither merely to rob the rightful owner of his dearly bought heritage.’\footnote{Sacramento Daily Union, 1 October 1852.}

In 1850, the state of California passed a foreign miner’s tax which required foreigners to pay twenty dollars a month for the right to mine.\footnote{‘An Act for the better regulation of the Mines, and the government of Foreign Miners’, Chapter 97, \textit{Statutes of California} (1850): 221-23.} The author of the legislation, Thomas Green, stipulated that the tax paid for a foreigner's privilege of ’taking from our country the vast treasure to which they have no right.’\footnote{\textit{Journal of the Senate of the State of California}, Volume of 1850 (San Jose: 1850), 494.} While the limited scholarship on the Miner’s Tax is at odds with one another, the most simplistic argument seems the most valid: the tax intended to
exclude and deter a foreign, specifically Latin American, presence in the mines. Ultimately, the state-wide tax meant that law now backed Anglo-American nativism.

The subjective enforcement of the Miner’s Tax was also unclear. The act itself mandated that ‘No person who is not native or natural born citizen of the United States, or who may not have become a citizen under the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo’ was permitted to mine without a licence. However, as the authorities went to collect their dues, the Governor received a complaint from a group of Mexican and Chilean miners – while they were coerced to pay, their English, Irish, and German neighbours were left alone. Officially, Scots too fell under the classification as foreigners. Nevertheless, the Scottish reception of the 1850 foreign miner’s tax illustrates a slight uncertainty of their place in Gold Rush society. Scots rarely talked about having to pay a foreign miner’s tax in their letters and diaries. What they did voice, however, was uncertainty whether collectors would approach them. Early in 1850, a Dundonian man shared his worries in a letter home:

> When we came up here, we understood that all foreigners were to be taxed at the rate of twenty dollars per month for getting leave to dig in the mines, but as yet no one has ever come to collect it, and they may just as well let it alone, for if they do come, they will have to go to the Bank for it – that is, the bank of the river—and dig it out for themselves before they get payment. If they think we are such spooneys as to pay them they are very much mistaken, and I can just tell them they will have to go somewhere else.


The act also declared that ‘native California Indians’ were subject to the tax. ‘An Act for the better regulation of the Mines, and the government of Foreign Miners’, Chapter 97, *Statutes of California* (1850): 221-23.


*Dundee Courier*, 2 April 1851.
Purcell further argues that the tax ‘was both a legal form of imposing selective discrimination and an encouragement for immigrants to develop different strategies in order to facilitate their incorporation into California society.’

Although Scots were uncertain of where they stood regarding the enforcement of the tax, they were certain of which side they belonged on – with the Anglo-Americans.

When the government reinstated the tax in 1852 (uproar over the tax in 1850 induced the Governor in 1851 to repeal it), updated language stated that those eligible to become US citizens were excluded. What the language really specified, however, was that the tax addressed the recent influx of Chinese immigrants. According to a 1790 Federal law, only free white men could naturalise as US citizens. With this, Scots now had legislation that confirmed their status as acceptable foreigners.

However, with the above in mind, social divisions in the diggings were not strictly black and white. In July 1852, for example, the *Alta California* reported on rising hostilities in Mariposa county with no clear divisions: ‘We are informed that there were foreigners speaking English among the Americans, and native Californians and other naturalized citizens among the Spaniards.’ While cultural influences of nativism and Anglo-Saxonism swayed alliances, sometimes there were other deciding factors at play. Multinational and multi-ethnic clusters

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191 Purcell, “‘Too Many Foreigners for My Taste’”, 132.
194 *Ibid.*, 82
195 *Daily Alta California*, 3 July 1852.
were present throughout California’s mining territories. In fact, Downie often appears in Gold Rush literature to illustrate the diversity of mining camp – his initial mining team in 1849 included several African Americans, an Anglo-American, an Irishman, a Pacific Islander, and a Native American.\(^{196}\) Indeed, Downie’s party is significant, but he is more of an exception in terms of Scottish integration in the mining realm.

For the most part, Scottish Argonauts followed the majority of the mining community and clustered with familiar backgrounds.\(^{197}\) Referring back to the personal accounts of Brownlee, Elder, Thomson, and Hamilton, all of them mined in company with Anglo-Americans, Anglo-Saxons, or both. The households of Scottish miners in the 1850 census more or less validate the same pattern. In the popular mining settlement of Placerville, for example, 58 Scots resided in 54 separate households (Appendix 4.2). As expected, the vast majority of Scots were miners (there were also two physicians and their families, some traders, a joiner, a barkeeper, a teamster, and a baker). Scottish miners in Placerville shared camp with Americans, other Scots, English, Irish and the odd French, German or Swede. Even in the southern mines, which Susan Johnson has shown to be more multicultural than the northern mining districts, Scots grouped in similar patterns.\(^{198}\) The 1850 enumeration data for Mariposa county listed 38 Scots in 29 separate households (Appendix 4.3). Again, the majority of Scottish-occupied households included Anglo-Americans or other Anglo-Saxons. The only difference, which upholds Johnson’s argument, was that a wider variety of nationalities lived alongside them: Hungarians, Swiss, Swedes, Mexicans, and a Prussian. Overall, the living arrangements of Scots in the diggings demonstrate that Scots banded together in ethnic solidarity as Anglo-Saxons.

\(^{196}\) Downie, *Hunting for Gold*, 34-35.  
\(^{197}\) Chan, ‘A People of Exceptional Character’, 54; Rohrbough, *Days of Gold*, 86-87.  
\(^{198}\) Johnson, *Roaring Camp*.  

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Instead of unifying under a Scottish cause, Scottish Argonauts in the mining districts largely integrated with Anglo-Americans and other acceptable foreigners. In doing so, they slid into the ranks of the dominant Anglo-American society, much like their urban counterparts.

Conclusion

Despite being foreigners in California, Scottish Argonauts assumed more of the advantages of Anglo-Americans than the disadvantages of being a foreigner. Unlike other foreign groups in early California, Scottish Argonauts largely maintained their foreign attachments in the private sphere. Coupled with the fact that the majority of Scots were Protestant Anglo-Saxons that integrated with the Anglo-American community, Scottish Argonauts played the part of acceptable foreigners and assumed a level playing ground in California’s Anglo-American hegemony. Because of their integration in Gold Rush society, the accounts of Scottish Argonauts in California’s mining regions and towns broadly align with those of their Anglo-American counterparts. While this may seem unexceptional, a more in-depth investigation revealed that Scottish Argonauts engaged in a variety of diasporic actions while they adapted to their surrogate Anglo-American communities in California.

The association of Argonauts as sojourners had a direct effect on the delayed growth of the Scottish community in California. Because they intended to return home, there was little sense in building a surrogate community in a place where the dominant society had already accepted them. Meanwhile, their conception of an ethnic community was largely still overseas in Scotland where they meant to return, not in California. As this chapter has shown, Scottish Argonauts attached great significance to maintaining homeland connections as they navigated Gold Rush society. Personal correspondence, especially, served as a vehicle of ethnic solidarity.
for Scottish Argonauts and their friends and family back home. Traditionally, the existence of a diaspora in a host society is defined on the basis of collective manifestations of a distinctive culture. This chapter has demonstrated that on an individual level, Scottish Argonauts remained orientated towards the homeland. In doing so, they constructed and maintained transnational networks and continued to engage with the homeland as diasporic agents – all essential components of what makes a diaspora. As the remainder of this thesis will demonstrate, how Scots abroad engaged with the diaspora and their Scottishness depended on what and where they called home, as well as the circumstances of the society they found themselves in.

Over the Gold Rush decade, signs of society increased in number and permanence. In accordance, some Scottish Argonauts decided to settle in California. In their own time, Beith, Anderson, Elder, and Brownlee, eventually decided it was time to send for their families or start their own. Their stories as Californians, and how they navigated their Scottish identities throughout the rest of the Gold Rush, continues in the final chapter. As will be revealed, Scots were more willing to express their distinctiveness – or Scottishness – after they established themselves and committed to staying in California and calling it home.

The majority of Scots in Gold Rush California, however, were like the rest of the Argonauts, and either returning home like Hamilton or moving on elsewhere to pursue other opportunities.\(^{199}\) William Downie, meanwhile, the Glaswegian who worked his passage to California, became the truest Argonaut of them all. Amidst his prospecting in 1849, he discovered a rich claim on the North Fork of the Yuba River. While continuing to mine the area he played a large role in civilising it, and by the spring of 1850, the settlement adopted the name of Downieville.\(^{200}\) Throughout the Gold Rush decade, even though Downie’s original claim

\(^{200}\) Downie, *Hunting for Gold*, 63.
continued to produce a healthy yield, other mining opportunities around California lured him from one place to another.²⁰¹ He embodied the romanticised independent prospector, a symbol of California history that was already set in stone by 1855:

So long as they remained in California, they were not closely attached to any one gold-bearing district, however rich it might be. More often, they were incessantly moving about and prospecting, hoping and looking for new and richer claims…The gold miner, like the man in abstract, “never is, but always to be blest.”²⁰²

Chapter 5

*The Scottish Identity in Gold Rush California*

During the early morning hours on the first of December 1850, dancing light illuminated the windows of a San Francisco auction house. Inside, despite the coming dawn of a new day, members of the St. Andrew’s Society continued their celebration in the name of their patron saint. Earlier, attendants had feasted on a lavish banquet. The *Alta California* reported that the culinary display had yet to be matched in California: ‘Every kind of fish, flesh and fowl, fruits and the choicest wines; our limited ideas of high living had never conceived of such a table.’

The attendees, about fifty in number, were of equally high standards: ‘our most substantial citizens - merchants, lawyers and judges’.

After plates were cleared, a succession of toasts wrapped up dinner formalities. Speakers, both Scottish and American-born, took the floor and heralded Scotland, Great Britain, and the United States. Then, in unison, members sang *Sweet Home* in memory of Scotland, *God Save the Queen* in observance of their monarch, and the *Star-Spangled Banner* and *Yankee Doodle* in devotion to their adopted country. Featuring an array of national allegiances, these dedications indicated that the members of the St. Andrew’s Society had a complicated and multifaceted identity in Gold Rush California.

This would be the most prominent display of the San Francisco St. Andrew’s Society for over a decade. After a few short years, the Society disappeared from the public eye because of a lack of interest. In truth, the wider Scottish Argonaut population was not concerned about ethnic associational culture in California. To help them succeed in their temporary venture as Argonauts

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1 *Daily Alta California*, 1 December 1850.
2 The article did not indicate if any women were in attendance. That was most likely the case, given the prevailing patterns at social functions including St. Andrew’s dinners. For a discussion on women’s involvement in Scottish ethnic associationism see Bueltmann, *Clubbing Together*, 193-201.
and return home, Scottish Argonauts played the part of ‘acceptable’ Anglo-Saxon allies and blended in with the dominant Anglo-American community. But while Scots blended in with the latter, they also nurtured aspects of their Scottish identity in the private realm and in plain sight. Crucially, the traditional customs Scottish Argonauts chose to embrace in the public realm also reflected those of the United States. As this chapter will reveal, a history of shared cultural traditions between Scotland, Britain, and the US meant that Scots could nurture aspects of their cultural identity in Anglo-American institutions. Meanwhile, intent on returning to their ethnic communities back home, Scottish Argonauts continued to engage with their more distinctive or foreign attachments in the private realm, primarily through correspondence. Crucially, the ways in which Scottish Argonauts expressed their identity during the Gold Rush lent to their acceptance by the nativist Anglo-American society in California.

The context of the California Gold Rush provides a useful lens to investigate the ways in which Scots abroad fostered their Scottish identity according to what they sought in their destinations. Over the course of the Gold Rush, there was a shift in what some Scottish migrants sought in California – they originally migrated on the premise that it was a temporary land of opportunity and eventually came to see it as a permanent home. This final chapter explores how Scottish Argonauts and Californians (meaning those who decided to settle in California) adapted and fostered their identity during the Gold Rush. It argues that Scots in California expressed a multifaceted identity that was affirmed and reshaped by homeland connections, fluctuating conditions of Gold Rush society, and changing conceptions of ‘home’.

Significantly, how Scots in California expressed their Scottishness and engaged with their diaspora changed over the course of the Gold Rush. As the rush to California was underway, Scottish Argonauts joined Anglo-American social circles in Gold Rush society and demonstrated
a level of restraint in unpacking their distinctive cultural baggage in the public realm. In the private realm, Scots maintained their allegiance to home through correspondence and financial contributions, found familiar comfort in regional food and dialect, and reminisced about the symbols and images of Scotland that they left behind. Over the years, Argonauts witnessed society change before them as the duration of their stay extended beyond that of their original intentions. The Gold Rush population had transformed much of the area into a place of settlement rather than a place of sojourn. Surrounded by a growing presence of community institutions, many Scots revised their outlook on California and decided to remain instead of return home. Now Californians, they began to focus on rebuilding their Scottish communities in their new homes.

This chapter also considers how local circumstances in California affected how Scots expressed and engaged with their ethnic identity. As such, this chapter’s structure is organised by California’s emerging community institutions: churches, schools, immigrant societies and fraternal clubs, and political affiliations. Traditionally, these associations can also exist as ‘boundaries of presentation’ for immigrant and ethnic groups in their host societies.³ As discussed in the introduction, ethnic enclaves and collective boundaries are one of the defining characteristics of a diaspora. As this thesis has demonstrated thus far, the Scottish diaspora in California, at least during the Gold Rush, was not exclusive to collective boundaries. Rather, the Scottish diaspora in California was initially born from the individual diasporic actions of Scots who established and maintained active connections between Scotland, the new host society, and across the diaspora.

In each institution discussed in this chapter, Scottish Argonauts and Californians paid homage to their Scottish identity in various capacities while they intermixed with the Anglo-American community. There were no Scottish churches or schools in California because Scots could pursue their traditional values in the comfort of American spaces. Meanwhile, in mixed company with Anglo-Americans, Scots in Gold Rush society pursued a variety of cultural interests in literary clubs, fraternal organisations, and benevolence societies. While some of the latter were short-lived Scottish ethnic associations, they catered to a hybrid Scottish-American identity that hung on a delicate balance. The resultant identity, argues Sarah McCaslin ‘combined the priorities and political imperatives of America with the culture of Scotland.’

Finally, in politics, being Scottish did not dictate political affiliation. With alliances to the Whigs, Democrats, and possibly the Know-Nothing Party, Scots were as politically stratified and actively engaged in the American political system as the Americans themselves.

The various demonstrations of identity in this chapter raises the question to what degree Scots in Gold Rush California considered themselves Scottish. As Bueltmann et al. have explained:

> The diasporan experience is defined not by being pure, but by recognising and managing imprecise connections with the host society – by dealing with “hybridity and heterogeneity” in Stuart Hall’s emphasis, the hyphenated, partial, and contradictory reality of identities that are never zero-sum.

How Scottish Argonauts and Californians expressed and reshaped their identities during the Gold Rush demonstrates that, while they could identify as Anglo-Saxons, British, and even American citizens, they continued to uphold distinctive aspects of their Scottish identity at the same time.

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4 Sarah Elizabeth McCaslin, “‘Great Gathering of the Clans:’ Scottish Clubs and Scottish Identity in Scotland and America, C.1750-1832’ (The University of Edinburgh, 2015), 189.
5 Tanja Bueltmann et al, The Scottish Diaspora, 28.
What is more, as this chapter reveals, these various identities could complement and reinforce a Scottish identity abroad, further strengthening the feeling of connection with the homeland.

**Church and Religion**

As Marjory Harper has observed, ‘In many emigrant communities priority was given to the early establishment of a church and a school, institutions frequently perceived — at home and abroad — as the key symbols of Scottish identity.’ After a full year of living a bachelor’s life in California, William Elder gave the go-ahead for his family to join him in the summer of 1851. He had been uncertain about their well-being in the developing mining town of Grass Valley, but the coming presence of two different institutions assured him that local society was improving:

> I have about made up my mind to send for you all … Life and property is just about as secure here as anywhere. We have as yet neither church nor school in the village but we will soon have both. We are now raising funds for a church and ere have meetings almost every Sabbath...We have children enough also to justify a School.

It is no surprise that Elder, a Protestant-abiding Scot, required a church and school for his family’s settlement. Church and education were intrinsically tied to the nineteenth-century Scottish mindset and a significant part of the cultural baggage that emigrants took with them from Scotland.

In Britain, the influence of Presbyterianism remained specific to Scottish culture. After the Union of 1707, Scotland retained control of its civil society which included the Presbyterian Church and its parish school system. By the mid-nineteenth century, even though the national

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7 William Elder to Alexander Elder, 22 June 1851, Centreville Grass Valley.
8 Devine, *To the Ends of the Earth*, 170.
Church of Scotland had experienced a large drop in members (mainly due to the Disruption of 1843), Presbyterianism still influenced much of Scottish life. While it is impossible to calculate an exact figure of religious devotees, the religious census of 1851 indicated that Presbyterians made up 85 percent of the church-goers in Scotland.\(^\text{11}\) For those that worshipped outside the national Church, the majority conformed to other offshoots of Scottish Presbyterian such as the United Presbyterian Church and the Free Church. A lesser majority of Scots were still Protestant but identified, among others, as Episcopalian, Congregationalist, Baptist, Methodist, and Quaker.\(^\text{12}\) The growing influence of Roman Catholicism in Scotland is also important to note. From 1845 onwards, floods of Roman Catholics from Ireland resettled in Scotland as a direct consequence of the Great Famine. Including the already established community of Catholics in the Scottish Highlands and Islands, the number of Catholics in Scotland grew to around 150,000 by 1850.\(^\text{13}\) The influx of the ‘other’ in Scotland and Britain, especially in its urban centres, reignited bitter sectarian tensions between the Protestant and Catholic populations. As this chapter further demonstrates, Scots in California held on to and reassigned their sectarian sentiments in American society.

No matter their religious affiliations, Scottish Argonauts brought and sustained their religious traditions in California. William Fisk argues that immigrants embraced religion in their new lands because it was a natural and inescapable tendency: ‘Loneliness, the romanticization of memories, and the search for identity in a world of strangers all began as soon as the emigrants

\(^{11}\) In 1851, a religious census calculated that a third of the Scottish population attended morning services, and a fifth attended afternoon services. There is no way of telling whether the numbers included regular attendees or those who went to services more than twice a day. Smout, *A Century of the Scottish People*, 201; Stewart Brown, ‘Religion and Society to c.1900’, in *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Scottish History*, eds. T. M. Devine and Jenny Wormald (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 94.

\(^{12}\) Rounding up the religious minorities in Scotland, were Jews, other religious forms, and non-believers. *Ibid.*, 116.

\(^{13}\) *Ibid.*, 132-133.
left home. Thus, they turned to theology to ease the longings for the past and the current crises of
the spirit.\footnote{William L. Fisk, ‘The Seceders: The Scottish High Church Tradition in America’, \textit{Journal of
Presbyterian History (1962-1985)} 62, no. 4 (1984): 292.} Especially considering the turbulent atmosphere of the Gold Rush, it is no surprise
that newcomers in California found comfort in their various faiths.\footnote{Steven M. Avella, ‘Phelan’s Cemetery: Religion in the Urbanizing West, 1850-1869, in Los Angeles,
San Francisco, and Sacramento’, \textit{California History} 79, no. 2 (2000): 261.} As such, the influx of
Argonauts from all over the world brought a plethora of religious institutions. When Elder first
came to San Francisco in 1850, he was impressed with the variety of denominations already in
the city: ‘With regard to religious matters in San Fr. there is a Presbyterian Church said to be 2
Catholic 2 Congregational 2 Methodist and one Baptist’.\footnote{William Elder to Sarah Elder, 28 August 1850, San Francisco.}

The limited number of historians who have tackled California’s religious landscape
during the Gold Rush generally agree that the era accommodated a ‘denominational liberation’
of sorts.\footnote{For a discussion on the historiography on religion during the Gold Rush see Avella, ‘Religion in the
Urbanizing West’, 252-254.} Although California’s Christian roots began with Hispanic Catholicism, Argonauts
from the Americas, Europe, and Pacific territories carved out their own niches of worship during
the Gold Rush. By 1856 in San Francisco, for example, Jews sought ethnic solidarity in
synagogues, the Chinese maintained their own traditions and constructed their respective
temples, while the Irish, German, and French attended a variety of Catholic parishes throughout
the city. Roger Lotchin, in his study of the development of San Francisco, argues that the city’s
churches were significant ‘in defending the immigrant’s heritage’.\footnote{Lotchin, \textit{San Francisco}, 326. Soulé, \textit{The Annals of San Francisco}, 699.} Particularly for ethnic
groups in California, religious expression was also a form of cultural expression. Nevertheless,
as various nationalities carved out spaces for their religious institutions throughout Gold Rush
California (even the Welsh, who were less in number than the Scots), there is no evidence of any Scottish attempts to do the same.\textsuperscript{19}

Scholars of the Scottish diaspora frequently cite the importance of religion for Scottish emigrants. For instance, Marjory Harper argues that all over the world, ‘Pulpit and pew have consistently provided uprooted Scots with a crucial reminder of their collective identity and a practical support mechanism in a challenging new environment.’\textsuperscript{20} In Australia, Malcolm Prentis deemed the Presbyterian Church ‘the main institutional expression of Scottish nationhood’.\textsuperscript{21} By the mid-nineteenth century, most colonies in Australia had at least the three main branches of Scottish Presbyterianism – the Church of Scotland, the Free Church, and the United Presbyterian Church.\textsuperscript{22} The Scottish diaspora in Australia is a useful comparison to refine the understanding of the Scottish experience and Scottish ethnic expression in Gold Rush California. In the mid-nineteenth century, both Pacific territories had been fundamentally transformed by the discovery of gold and rapid influx of people. In his comparison study of the Irish in California and eastern Australia, Malcom Campbell found that ‘the societies on the two Pacific coasts shared a range of common characteristics – demographic, economic, and social – that contributed to very similar receptions and opportunities for Irish immigrants in both locations.’\textsuperscript{23} While the majority of Irish in California and Australia worshipped under the direction of Irish Catholic priests, the corresponding Scottish populations were markedly different from one another. When Scottish

\textsuperscript{19} In the San Francisco city directories between 1850 and 1860, there is no evidence of a Presbyterian Church in California that observed ‘Scotch High Churchism’. However, the 1856 directory listed a Welsh Presbyterian Church.
\textsuperscript{21} Prentis, The Scots in Australia, 196.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid., 177.
Argonauts attended church in California, their congregations did not embody a collective Scottish association. Instead of initiating one of the Scottish Presbyterian denominations, such as the Church of Scotland, many Scottish Argonauts attended American-run Presbyterian services in California and worshipped with the Anglo-American community.

While several Presbyterian denominations in America claimed Scottish roots, their doctrines and traditions had diverged considerably from their respective churches in Scotland.\textsuperscript{24} As Russell E. Hall has demonstrated, the genealogy of American Presbyterianism is complex.\textsuperscript{25} As for its Scottish origins, Scottish immigrants in colonial America directly contributed to two distinct pathways. In 1706 in Philadelphia, Scottish members of the Church of Scotland united with English and Irish Presbyterians to establish the Presbyterian Church.\textsuperscript{26} In the decades that followed, dissenters of the Church of Scotland formed separate Presbyteries in America that each claimed to subscribe to ‘Scotch High Churchism’.\textsuperscript{27} By 1848, three main denominations in the US traced their origins to Scotland’s ‘Seceder’ groups: The Associate Reformed Church, the Reformed Presbyterians, and the Associate Synod. Therefore, when Scottish Argonauts arrived in California, the various interpretations of Presbyterianism in the US had evolved alongside American concerns (such as social reform and slavery) over the past century.

Despite the differences between Presbyterianism in Scotland and the US, religion was an aspect of Scots’ cultural baggage that was easily accessible and adaptable in American Society. As a result, their pursuit of religion in California was less of an ethnic identifier and more of an avenue into the dominant Anglo-American society. For Scottish Argonauts, especially those with

\textsuperscript{24} Ibid., 294-304.  
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., 101.  
\textsuperscript{27} For an in-depth look at the ongoing Scottish influence on Presbyterianism in nineteenth-century America see Fisk, ‘The Seceders: The Scottish High Church Tradition in America.’
intentions to return home, their religious worship did not extend to creating or sustaining a Scottish community in California. Instead, Scottish Argonauts attended Anglo-American churches individually in California as a means to anchor themselves among like-minded people.

Many Scottish Argonauts sought out some form of communal worship as soon as they arrived in California. Jessie Anderson, for example, wasted no time in finding a suitable substitute for her kirk back at home. In Sacramento, she too spoke of the variety of churches but naturally gravitated to the Presbyterian church: ‘there [are] several Churches Here. I have not been to any but the Presbyterian’. As Anderson found, however, Presbyterian worship in California did not come without adjustments: ‘there is an Organ and a band and the sermons are very unlike Mr. McLeods, but I believe quite quite [sic] suitable for a Californian audience’. To her surprise, instead of reciting psalms in the traditional call and response format, the whole congregation stood and sang in chorus to lively instrumental melodies. Back in Scotland, typical services required the congregation to sit whilst singing Psalms and rise during praying. Instrumental music during a service was also new. Compared to churches in America, Presbyterian churches in Scotland only started to adapt instrumental music during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Although not what Anderson expected, the Presbyterian congregation in Sacramento provided a suitable place for her to worship and thus foster her Scottish Presbyterian identity. Crucially, even though Scots worshipped alongside the Anglo-American community, they believed that American Presbyterianism was an appropriate outlet that allowed them to adhere to their religious traditions. Personally, they fostered their Scottish identity. Visibly, they blended into an Anglo-American space.

28 Jessie Anderson to her mother, 25 July 1852, Sacramento.
29 Ibid.
Elder also sought a place of worship soon after his arrival. In 1850, San Francisco’s
cityscape had a relative lack of church steeples compared to the variety of congregations that
worshipped in the city.31 Elder found that San Francisco’s Presbyterian Church, still the only
Presbyterian congregation in the city, ran proceedings in the courthouse. A little more than a year
ago, a handful of Presbyterians and Congregationalists had united under a Presbyterian reverend
from New Jersey.32 By the time Elder joined the congregation, it had grown from its original six
members and included some familiar faces from his previous residence in New York. Elder
wrote to his wife and explained how he almost felt at home despite his location: ‘were it not for
your absence I could feel quite at home there on Sabbath...The congregation always orderly and
attentive as any could be apparently It made me think of the pleasant Sabbath we enjoyed in
Schenectady’.33 While religion for Scottish Argonauts was not a means of Scottish solidarity, the
social aspect was crucial for establishing a sense of belonging in their temporary community. For
transmigrants like Elder, they had already adjusted to the American styles of worship. Indeed, his
encounter with former acquaintances also spoke of his level of integration on the East Coast.
Nevertheless, in seeking a Presbyterian congregation, Elder demonstrated that he continued to
acknowledge his background and foster aspects of his Scottish identity.

Of course, not all Scottish Argonauts were Presbyterian. John James Hamilton, for
instance, considered himself an Episcopalian. In fact, he even considered becoming a minister at
the Church of England before California tempted him abroad.34 Once in San Francisco, Hamilton
too looked for a suitable place of worship as soon as he arrived. But unlike Elder, he was not as
lucky with his first pick:

32 Ibid., 690.
33 William Elder to Sarah Elder, 28 August 1850, San Francisco.
34 John James Hamilton to George Hamilton, 28 January 1850, Liverpool.
I was so much disgusted about six weeks ago with the High Escopilian Church here, the cowings and burial ceremonies being repeated so often and pushed forward as seemingly all essential, more so I ever saw in England, that since then I have on Sunday gone to church at an independent Methodist chapel where the service is conducted with more severe simplicity than even the Presbyterian and where the minister seems to be a most sincere pious Christian.35

While Hamilton was not part of the majority of Scots who identified as Presbyterian, his Protestant faith and Anglo-Saxon background still ensured his inclusion in California’s American congregations. Again, the presence of cultural links between Britain and the US ensured that the majority of British migrants would find an appropriate interpretation of their religion in an Anglo-American space. Importantly, this also worked for the benefit of their integration in Gold Rush society.

Catholic Scots, individuals that would have encountered a different religious adjustment in California, have failed to materialise in research efforts.36 Nevertheless, this does not confirm their total absence during the Gold Rush. If they were indeed present, California’s Catholic spaces most likely welcomed Scottish Catholics. In San Francisco, especially during the city’s formative years, Catholics of all nationalities worshipped together in the same space. By 1854, there were three Catholic Churches in the city: St. Patrick’s, St. Francis, and Mission de Dolores.37 While the church names were suggestive of where the Irish and Latinos attended Mass, it would be another few years when ethnic groups established their respective Catholic churches in San Francisco. Until then, St. Patrick’s, St. Francis, and Mission de Dolores each delivered their morning services in English, French, and Spanish.38 This level of inclusion suggests that if any Scottish Catholics found themselves in Gold Rush California, they too were

35 John James Hamilton to his Mother, 18 October 1851, San Francisco.
36 In the 1852 California State Census, a few Scots listed their last place of residence as the Western Isles.
38 Lecount & Strong’s San Francisco City Directory for the Year 1854 (San Francisco, 1854), 238.
able to practice their religious beliefs. As for their acceptance by the dominant Anglo-American society, this can only be speculated. Indeed, Anglo-American nativism during the Gold Rush carried strong sentiments of anti-Catholicism, but without first-hand accounts of Scottish Catholics in California, there is no way to know if and how their Catholic identity complicated their level of societal integration and relationship with the Scottish diaspora.

Meanwhile, for the Protestant Scottish Argonauts that eventually decided to stay, they did not build Scottish churches in California when it was clear that they were no longer returning to their kirks. Instead, they remained in their Anglo-American religious communities and even contributed to building their churches. When Elder moved to Grass Valley in 1851, its community development was not as advanced as San Francisco. Every Sunday, a former clergyman who had traded his church for the mines returned to his roots and preached in the open air. But as of yet, there was no organised congregation in Grass Valley or a church to hold it. Elder, a man of faith, worried about how his children might be affected in a place that he thought lacked God’s guidance. As for as his own circumstances, Elder assured his wife that he remained in respectable, god-fearing company:

I have not that pressing anxiety that I am afraid you feel and really society is in some respects very good here as far as intellect and intelligence in concerned there is as much here as anywhere there are a great many professional well educated men working in the mines our next door neighbors in our village is a Mr Austin formerly a wholesale Merchant in N. York and a Dr. Schaeffer from Baltimore opposite us is a Dr Carruthers from Ohio (a Scotchman) all fine men and first rate company they spend about every evening in our store they are good singers and we often spend an hour in singing some of our good old songs such as “oft in the stilly nigh” “The last Rose of summer” “Sweet home” & kindred ones. On Sabbath evenings we meet and sing hymns.\(^{39}\)

\(^{39}\) William Elder to Sarah Elder, 4 March 1851, San Francisco.
Although Elder seemed very much assimilated to Anglo-American society, his letters home to his wife often hinted at his lingering connections and loyalties to his homeland: whether through singling out and keeping the company of other Scots, or his strict observance of the Sabbath day.

The following June, Elder wrote to his wife and made it known that he and some local townspeople were laying the pillars of society. Now with intentions to make Grass Valley his home, Elder contributed funds for the construction of a church in time for his family’s arrival.\textsuperscript{40} Six months later, Sarah Elder and the children arrived in Grass Valley much earlier than her husband anticipated. Taken by surprise, Elder never received word of their departure, and the house he had promised them was nowhere near completion. Yet despite commencing her new life in a boarding house, Sarah Elder was pleased to find Grass Valley a little more pious than her husband had last described. Owing in part to Elder’s efforts, she wrote to her relatives that two churches now stood in the town, a Presbyterian and a Methodist.\textsuperscript{41} Finally, the Elder family was together again, but now as Californians in their new home.

Undeniably, religion played a significant role in instilling a sense of community in developing urban centres.\textsuperscript{42} As such, the presence of churches in California grew in tandem with the number of Argonauts who decided to settle there.\textsuperscript{43} Unlike other ethnic groups in California, Scots did not encounter adversary in their religious pursuits and saw little need to form Scottish churches for purposes of refuge and solidarity. By the time Scots decided to become Californians, they had already integrated into their respective Anglo-American religious communities as Argonauts. As Californians, they carried on worshipping in the same sphere.

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{41} Sarah and Alexander Elder to James Elder, 28 February 1852, San Francisco.
\textsuperscript{43} Avella, ‘Religion in the Urbanizing West’, 255.
Notably, how the Scottish community worshipped in California was markedly different from other Scottish diaspora locations where Scots rebuilt their religious institutions. Initially, Scottish Argonauts’ sojourner status and acceptance by the Anglo-American religious community were the most likely reasons why there were no Scottish churches and congregations in Gold Rush California. However, their continued presence in these Anglo-American religious communities after they decided to settle in California also suggests that Scots generally accepted the American interpretation of Presbyterianism as being close enough to home. From Argonauts to Californians, Scots’ religious identity was reaffirmed and reshaped by American institutions in California.

**School and Education**

Alongside the church, the school is one of the ‘main vehicles’ that migrants in the Scottish diaspora used to demonstrate and reinforce their Scottishness.\(^4\)\(^4\) The significance of education in Scottish culture stems from Scotland’s traditional parish school system. After the Reformation, religious leaders in Scotland made education a national priority and advocated that each parish in Scotland should have a school. This undertaking largely originated from a Calvinist tenet that advocated that its followers should be able to read the Bible.\(^4\)\(^5\) The Education Act, passed by the Scottish Parliament in 1696, enshrined the parish school system in law and appointed the Church to supervise educational affairs.\(^4\)\(^6\) Scotland’s subsequent union with Britain in 1707 doubled national efforts to fulfil the Act’s requirement of a school and schoolmaster in each parish. This, as R.D. Anderson argues, was mainly an effort to ensure

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\(^6\) *Ibid.*, 3-6, 296.
Scotland’s religious authority and cultural individuality: 'education was one of the sources of Scottish national identity, and that its internal cohesion and distinctive features needed to be preserved if Scotland was to retain its cultural independence within a political union which was itself fully accepted.'

By the mid-nineteenth century, although the school system in Scotland had secularised, the original educational legislation had remained in place. As such, the traditional parish schoolhouse was still a ubiquitous feature of the Scottish landscape. The Scots who would later settle in California were familiar with having at least one school in their vicinity. Regardless whether one pursued an education, R.D. Anderson argues that the presence of schools throughout Scotland reinforced a national educational habit.

By the time of the California Gold Rush, Scottish tradition upheld the ideal of the parish school system and the view that education was a fundamental civil right. As a result, when Scots packed up their belongings for California, education filled a compartment of their cultural baggage. The vast majority, however, would not unpack it until they decided to make California their new home.

Elsewhere in the Scottish diaspora, Scots aboard were quick to reintegrate their parish schools in their new societies. In the Canadian colonies in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, Roderick MacLeod observed that Scottish families appeared to arrive ‘with the expectation that their children would go to school.’ In Lower Canada, for example, the Scottish settler population established schools long before they built their churches, showing how much

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48 Anderson states, ‘as one minister put it, the parish school “keeps alive a sense of education in the country.”’ Ibid., 8.
49 Ibid., 100, 298; Smout, A Century of the Scottish People, 210.
50 Roderick MacLeod, “‘In the Hallowed Name of Religion:’ Scot and Public Education in Nineteenth-Century Montreal’, in A Kingdom of the Mind, 228.
significance Scottish immigrants placed on continuing their tradition of education.\textsuperscript{51} This pattern was also apparent in the Australian colonies in the nineteenth century, where Scots essentially rebuilt the parish school system and laid the early foundations of Australia’s educational institutions. By 1852, New South Wales housed 42 parish schools, the majority run by Scottish teachers.\textsuperscript{52} In comparison, owing to the nature of migration to Gold Rush California – where the migrant population was largely transient with only a small presence of families – schools were not a top priority for Argonauts. While Australia too experienced its own gold rushes in the 1850s and 60s, the pre-establishment of its Scottish community meant that its kirks and parish school systems were already in place.

Meanwhile, the ideas of the Scottish Enlightenment (which flourished during the latter half of the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth) had crossed the Atlantic and embedded into the fabric of American education.\textsuperscript{53} Thus, when California became a state in 1850, the national opinion had already shifted in support of an egalitarian, or state-sponsored school system.\textsuperscript{54} While the initial rush to gold did not attract a population in need of education for their children (many of them thousands of miles away, or non-existent), the authors of California’s constitution in 1849 recognised a future requirement for a system of public schools and instituted a superintendent of public instruction.\textsuperscript{55} By the time Scottish-Argonauts-turned-Californians decided to pursue their tradition of education, they looked to their Anglo-American communities.

\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., 228.
\textsuperscript{52} Prentis, The Scots in Australia. 154-73.
\textsuperscript{53} Harper, Adventurers and Exiles, 354. The most comprehensive study on American education and the Scottish influence behind it is Lawrence A. Cremin, American Education, the National Experience, 1783-1876, (New York: Harper and Row, 1980).
\textsuperscript{55} Constitution of the State of California, Article IX, sections 1-4.
Like their shared religious traditions, Scots could uphold their educational standards in American-led schools in California.

As expected, public education in Gold Rush California was slow to materialise – even in San Francisco. In December 1849, a schoolteacher from Massachusetts named John Pelton began the city’s first public school out of the Baptist Church. Initially, a grand total of three pupils enrolled. By 1851, the situation had dramatically improved: San Francisco now had four public schools, each with 60 to 160 students in attendance. Nevertheless, the public education system in California lacked adequate financial support from the government. Although the state constitution mandated that the latter would come from federal land profits, public outcry challenged the resulting land tax and restricted educational funding. Instead, private subscribers predominantly funded California’s public school sector during the Gold Rush. Because the majority of the population still focused their attention on instant wealth and a temporary stay, philanthropy for the benefit of the future generation was especially rare. Unsurprisingly, at least one Scot in San Francisco was part of this minority. Daniel Gibb, the Scottish merchant introduced in the previous chapter, was a subscriber of the Pelton School during the 1850s. He had no children of his own at the time, but his Scottish upbringing may have influenced his investment in California’s public education. Indeed, especially for those of Scottish background, the school was an essential pillar of the community. As this chapter further reveals, a Scot’s level

58 Ibid., 229, 232.
of financial success and stability during the Gold Rush also affected how they expressed their Scottishness in California. Especially during the former years of the Gold Rush when most Scots were Argonauts and intent on returning home, the Scots of the upper classes fostered their Scottish identity differently because they could afford to do so – both socially and financially.

Meanwhile, throughout the rest of Gold Rush California, the educational infrastructure lagged considerably behind.\textsuperscript{60} The Scottish Californians who had since settled and found themselves with school-aged children struggled to source the education that they deemed essential for their development. In 1852 in Grass Valley, Elder’s insistence that his children continued their education had put his family in a financial bind. At that point, Grass Valley had yet to have a public school and the Elders could not afford the private tuition for both of their children. Instead, they felt it most prudent to enrol their youngest son, James, at the day school provided by the local Presbyterian Church (with a weekly two-dollar tuition).\textsuperscript{61} Meanwhile, their eldest son, Alex, now a young teenager, started work at the family business. His parents hoped that he would at least continue his education in the form of bookkeeping at the store.

Two years later, in 1854, Grass Valley’s educational sector had seen little improvement. In a letter to his brother, Elder expressed his lingering concern about Alex’s absence from the classroom and the poor availability of education:

\begin{quote}
I am anxious that Alexander and Jamie should go to School and tuition for Alex is so high here and the bustle of Cal life is so unfavorable to study and application that I have always regarded his going to school here as of little consequence.\textsuperscript{62}
\end{quote}

In 1854, the number of public schools in California increased to 47, with just over 4,000 pupils in attendance throughout the state.\textsuperscript{63} Yet despite the marked improvement, the state’s

\textsuperscript{60} Hendrick, ‘Educating Children in Early California’, 230
\textsuperscript{61} Sarah and Alexander Elder to James Elder, 28 February 1852, San Francisco.
\textsuperscript{62} William and Sarah Elder to James Elder, 31 July 1854, Grass Valley.
\textsuperscript{63} Hendrick, ‘Educating Children in Early California’, 231.
Superintendent of Education, Paul Hubbs, stressed that it was not enough. Three-fourths of the children in California, he claimed, were not able to read and write, nor given the facilities to do so.\(^{64}\)

In addition to the lack of public schools, Scots like Elder also worried about the effectiveness of formal education in California. Particularly during the Gold Rush, the largely transient and self-absorbed society held little concern for fostering education.\(^{65}\) Scottish Californians were apprehensive about how the cultural shift would affect their children’s education, something so normalised in Scottish society. Later in 1857, James Beith shared these concerns about his younger siblings, especially his brother who neared his teenage years. His father, who still grieved over his late wife, seemed to make matters worse:

> Elizabeth and Connel make little or no progress at school, every opportunity the boy has he plays the truant, and plays upon the marsh either with his boat or gun, it looks singular, I have no Doubt to you, I am sure it does to me, why should a boy be allowed a gun, But father furnishes him with a gun, and as a matter of course powder and shot.\(^{66}\)

Scots raising a family during the Gold Rush, particularly in mining towns, feared that their tradition of education would not survive in the California landscape. In 1858, Anderson still felt the lingering absence of a schoolhouse in her small settlement of Volcano. Now with three children and the eldest nearing school age, a school was of prime importance to her. Writing to her mother in March, Anderson questioned her present options: ‘In a year or two we will have to get a school up here the nearest one is 4 miles from here’.\(^{67}\) For Elder, Beith, and Anderson, an apparent anxiety came from the poor educational prospects for their children. Undeniably, their

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\(^{64}\) Ibid., 232.

\(^{65}\) Hendrick, ‘Educating Children in Early California’, 231.


\(^{67}\) Jessie Anderson Cameron to her mother and friends, 7 March 1858, Mount Pleasant.
Scottish background had an impact on how much they valued the institution of education in their new homes.

While the personal accounts can only reveal so much, census data suggests that the vast majority of Scottish migrants with children in California sent their children to schools. The 1860 Federal census recorded whether an individual attended school the previous year. Between San Francisco and Sacramento, seventy-nine percent of school-aged children (from four to eighteen years old) with at least one Scottish parent attended school. This figure is notably higher than the state average of forty-eight percent. To be sure, families in urban centres like San Francisco and Sacramento had greater access to education compared to those in the more rural areas. As Irving Hendrick observed in his study of education in early California, the development of education in San Francisco ‘was in a class by itself.’ In 1851, the city council enacted a Free School Ordinance which oversaw the creation and regulation of tuition-free schools for children. Over the decade, support for free and affordable education options in the city flourished. This is reflected by San Francisco’s enrolment figures for 1859: just under eighty percent of the city’s children attended school. The corresponding figure for children in the city with Scottish parents was a smidge higher at eighty percent. With such a meagre difference, there is not much else to say other than the fact that Scots in San Francisco probably felt at home.

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68 In San Francisco, approximately 205 out of 256 school-aged children with at least one Scottish parent attended school in 1859. In the city of Sacramento, approximately 26 out of 37 school-aged children with at least one Scottish parent attended school in 1859.
70 Ibid., 230.
71 By 1859, the government-funded schools in San Francisco were more or less secular. Earlier, Catholic and Protestant schools split the local and state educational funds. But disputes over funding and attempts to ‘Protestantize’ public schools by Know-Nothing supporters ‘led to repeated calls for an abolition of all traces of sectarianism, whether Protestant Bibles or Catholic Sisters.’ In 1855, a compromise between the school board, as Lotchin claimed, ‘banned sectarianism’ in the public school system while Catholic schools no longer received tax support. Lotchin, *San Francisco*, 316-318.
with the educational options available to their children. The city-wide figures for Sacramento, however, stood in stark contrast at only fifty-two percent. Meanwhile, the respective Scottish figure was seventy percent. This indicates that even with the limited options in the more rural areas, Scottish parents disproportionately sent their children to schools.

Once Scots committed to stay in California – whether they sent for their families like Elder and Beith, or began to start their own like Anderson – they demonstrated a strong concern about maintaining their tradition of education in their new homes. Similar to their religious pursuits, Scots did not revolutionise the educational sphere in California. Instead, the Scottish tradition of egalitarian education was already a component of the American educational system. As a result, it was not the Scottish Argonauts who brought the conception of public schooling to California, but the natural progress of the new state government. Scots merely continued their tradition of valuing education in California through financing the early institutions, expressing fears about the shortfalls, and later by enrolling their children in disproportionately high numbers. Unlike other Scottish diaspora locations such as Canada and Australia where the parish school system was essentially rebuilt, Scots in California kept their educational traditions alive through Anglo-American institutions.

**Scottish Benevolent Societies and Clubs**

During the Gold Rush, the rapid population influx in California’s population triggered a host of social problems. The benevolent society, argues Mary Ann Irwin, was the characteristic

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nineteenth-century solution. Not only did the societies aid those in need, but they also provided an ethnic community for migrants in the absence of family and homeland. Bradford Luckingham further argues that these societies and organisations were ‘Born out of a group consciousness’ and founded on mutual aid for fellow countrymen. Indeed, several nationalities established societies that became linchpins in their respective Gold Rush communities. For example, among others, the 1852 San Francisco directory listed the French Benevolent Society, Hibernian Society, and the German Club. Meanwhile, in regard to Scottish associations, there is a complete absence of them in every single San Francisco directory during the Gold Rush decade.

As mentioned previously, associationalism has been a prime identifier for the existence of Scottish diasporas. Yet as this thesis has argued thus far, a migrant group can still be diasporic even with a lack of ethnic clubs and associations. Nevertheless, Gold Rush California did witness some short-lived formations of Scottish clubs and associations that bear analytical weight in this study. As Bueltmann has observed, ‘Scottish associationalism was not uniform across the diaspora; the types of Scottish associations, their structures, and objectives varied between the Scots’ place of settlement.’ Recent work by Bueltmann, Sarah McCaslin, and others has demonstrated the importance of local circumstances in the development of Scottish associational scenes abroad. In North America, for example, Scottish benevolence societies were first

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75 Ibid.
77 Bueltmann, *Scottish Ethnicity and the Making of New Zealand Society*, 65. Different trends and localities are explored in Graeme Morton et al., *Ties of Bluid, Kin and Countrie*.
established in colonial America and Canada to address Scots in need and the later influx of poor Scottish migrants. While in Australia and New Zealand, Scottish associationalism followed slightly different trajectories. In Australia, Scottish ethnic associations emerged in the 1830s alongside the increase in migration from Britain. But much like in California, the initial attempts of Scottish associationalism did not take hold until Australia’s own gold rushes subsided. Meanwhile, in New Zealand, Bueltmann has argued that its Scottish associational culture was ‘born on the sports ground’, citing the surge in popularity of Caledonian societies and Highland Games in the 1860s, and a ‘virtual absence’ of benevolence societies. Bueltmann attributed this divergence to the types of migrants New Zealand attracted, compared to North America and Australia: ‘the migrants who arrived there were not primarily seeking to escape industrial grime nor famine. Instead, occupational upward mobility was a real possibility, with benevolence much less in need.’ Thus, the following section seeks to understand how this rise and fall of early Scottish associationalism in California was a product of its environment. Due to their comparable timelines and gold discoveries, both Australia and New Zealand will continue to inform the analysis of the development (or lack of) of Scottish associational culture in Gold Rush California.

Scottish associationalism in the diaspora can trace its roots to colonial America. The Scots Charitable Society of Boston, founded by members in 1657 to aid their destitute countrymen, was not only the first Scottish society abroad, but allegedly the first ethnic society of its kind. In the decades that followed, similar societies cropped up in other major American

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79 Bueltmann, *Clubbing Together*, 105-06.
80 Ibid., 70.
82 Ibid.
83 Bueltmann, *Clubbing Together*, 16.
seaports to aid Scottish immigrants and migrants in need.\textsuperscript{84} These societies’ singular purpose as an ethnic charity, however, was not long-lived. This had much to do with British influences where benevolent societies had taken on a particular form of membership. In Britain, membership in a charitable society, says R.J. Morris, ‘provided an expression of social power for those endowed with increasing social and economic authority’.\textsuperscript{85} Therefore, as members, middle-class elites believed they could form their version of an ‘ideal’ society by addressing the immoralities of the lower classes.\textsuperscript{86} Benevolent societies in the US followed suit during the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{87} As such, societies like St. Andrew’s increasingly became a place where immigrants and descendants of immigrants could confirm their elite standing through philanthropic means.\textsuperscript{88} ‘This is not to say however that the ethnic dynamic of societies had been diminished. From its inception to modern day, associationalism, argues Buelttman, ‘was intrinsically linked to a strong sense of Scottish identity, and became the principal vehicle for those keen on maintaining it actively.’\textsuperscript{89} As will be revealed, the identity fostered by the clubs and societies, while intrinsically Scottish, was also shaped by local circumstances in the host society.

During the nineteenth century, Scottish societies in the US were undergoing a significant shift in identity. As Sarah McCaslin has argued, Scottish societies in the new republic carefully tailored their identity to fit within America’s social and political constructs.\textsuperscript{90} In her PhD thesis, McCaslin demonstrated that societies made efforts ‘to shape their performance of identity in

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\textsuperscript{84} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{86} Ibid, 114.
\textsuperscript{87} Morton et al., eds., \textit{Ties of Bluid, Kin and Countrie}, 5.
\textsuperscript{88} Harper, \textit{Adventurers and Exiles}, 356.
\textsuperscript{89} Buelttmann, \textit{Clubbing Together}, 5.
\textsuperscript{90} McCaslin, ‘‘Great Gathering of the Clans’’, 199.
order to proclaim their loyalty and support for the United States, maintain a cultural link with Scotland, and assert that the two expressions of identity and allegiance were not mutually exclusive.\textsuperscript{91} The resulting hybrid identity, argues McCaslin, was enough alleviate the nativist fears of American population, yet allowed society members to continue to aid their destitute countrymen and maintain a connection with their homeland. While the source material is sparse for Scottish associationalism during the California Gold Rush, there is a clear indication that the short-lived clubs and societies catered to a carefully fashioned Scottish-American identity.

The early history of Scottish societies in California is patchy. On 3 November 1850, the \textit{Alta California} announced plans for the formation of a St. Andrew’s Society: ‘A meeting has been called for next Wednesday evening by the natives of “Old Scotia,” residents of this city, for the purpose of forming a St. Andrews Society. We look upon this movement with pleasure.’ This announcement, printed in a newspaper that claimed to be non-partisan and advance the ‘interests of California’, provides some insight on the Anglo-American opinion on Scottish associationism.\textsuperscript{92} In Gold Rush society, the unison of Scots and their Anglo-American descendants was something to ‘look upon’ with ‘pleasure’ because the Scottish identity was compatible with the larger Anglo-American identity in California. This compatibility is demonstrated shortly through the Society’s membership, toasts, and political involvement. Furthermore, unlike the majority of societies in the US and in Canada, there is little evidence that suggests that Scottish Argonauts formed the St. Andrew’s Society to address destitute Scots in San Francisco. Remember, in the first chapter, Scots in San Francisco were disproportionately

\textsuperscript{91} \textit{Ibid.}, 170.
employed and seemingly self-sufficient. Rather, the first formation of the St. Andrew’s Society of San Francisco catered to a specific representation of Scottish and Anglo-American Argonauts.

Newspaper content surrounding the St. Andrew’s Day celebration in 1850 sheds some light on the founding members of the Society. Before the event, the Society advised interested parties to register with their treasurer, J.F. Spence. His office resided in Daniel Gibbs’s building, who was also a member. Both Spence and Gibbs were prominent Scottish merchants in San Francisco and fit the Victorian archetype of a benevolent society member. Later, the Alta California’s coverage of the celebration reported that Theodore Payne, a native of New York, had hosted the event at his auction house. Two more American members featured in the list of honorary speakers: Judge Hugh Murray and Judge Solomon Hydenfelt (who was also Jewish). The newspaper’s lavish description of the event, as well as the inclusion of high-ranking Scottish and Anglo-American individuals, indicate that San Francisco’s St. Andrew’s Society emulated those on the East Coast where ‘the values of philanthropy, self-help, thrift, industriousness, civics, and elite group formation were the means and the aim.’ Therefore, while this San Francisco chapter was formed on the basis of a shared Scottish identity, it also existed as a familiar realm where members of the elite middle-class could re-solidify their class identities in California. With this in mind, it is important to emphasise that these elite middle-class members

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93 Daily Alta California, 30 November 1850.
94 The Jackson House, as it was formerly known, was occupied by Theodore Payne & Co., real estate and stock auctioneers. Soulé, The Annals of San Francisco, 799-804.
95 The prominent native American membership in San Francisco’s St. Andrew’s society conflicts with Berthoff’s assertion that ‘In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Scottish-American ethnicity was almost wholly confined to people born in Scotland...Charitable societies, usually named for the national patron Saint Andrew, looked after destitute countrymen and their own good repute.’ Berthoff, ‘Under the Kilt: Variations on the Scottish-American Ground’, Journal of American Ethnic History 1, no. 2 (1982): 7.
of the St. Andrew’s Society did not represent the whole Scottish community in Gold Rush California. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, instead of establishing new Scottish connections in California, Scottish Argonauts were more likely to maintain homeland connections through personal correspondence as a way to preserve old ties they hoped to return to. Conversely, it makes sense that upper-class Scottish Argonauts, with the privilege of financial stability and social capital, were the loudest in expressing their connection to Scotland. Similarly, Bueltmann observed a strong link between associational membership and success with Scots in colonial New Zealand. For those with the network and the means, Bueltmann argued, ‘formalised group structures allowed Scots to make the most of their ethnic origins’. In this sense, ethnicity could serve ‘as a tool for self-promotion and a mode of entry to a collective in which other benefits could be cultivated’. Although the founding members of San Francisco’s St. Andrew’s Society only represent a minority of the Scottish Argonauts in California, their case further illustrates how class differences affected the ways in which Scots utilised and expressed their Scottishness abroad.

The order of service for San Francisco’s first St. Andrew’s Day Celebration warrants further attention, specifically the toasts. The speeches, some followed by a national anthem or a patriotic tune, further the point that the Scottish identity was multifaceted and could observe multiple loyalties:

1.-The Day we celebrate.
2.-The Land o’ Cakes.-Sweet Home.
3.-The Land of our Adoption.-Star Spangled Banner.
4.-The Health of the First Lady in the World, the Queen of England.-God Save the Queen.
5.-The President of the United States.-Yankee Doodle.
6.-May care and trouble never fash, but mirth and joy be wi’ ye a’.

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97 Bueltmann, Scottish Ethnicity and the Making of New Zealand Society, 205.
98 Ibid.
99 Daily Alta California, 1 December 1850.
While this structure was typical in St. Andrew’s celebrations across the Scottish diaspora, it is particularly revealing in California’s Gold Rush environment. As was customary, celebrants reminisced about their motherland, demonstrated loyalty to the British Crown and Empire, and upheld some sort of allegiance to their host country. Notably, in a public space where Americans interpreted split loyalties as a threat to the American Republic, both Americans and Scotsmen heralded Scotland, the British monarch, and the United States. While this may have sparked nativist anxieties towards other foreign groups, the newspaper coverage of the event indicates that this particular expression of a Scottish identity was acceptable in an American context. As McCaslin has made clear, ‘Americans, in particular, were not keen to drink toasts with which they did not agree. As such, each toast during a single evening’s gathering (which often numbered twenty or more) needed to represent the beliefs and sentiments of everyone present.’ Thus, the members of Society had constructed a Scottish identity that existed peacefully within the context of American nativism, yet legitimised their community as having distinctive ethnic boundaries.

Throughout the remainder of the Gold Rush decade, the presence of the St Andrew’s Society in the public eye ceased to exist. As well as its absence in the city’s directories, the Society has no mention in Frank Soule’s exhaustive survey of San Francisco in 1855. This absence suggests that the Scottish society was nowhere near as prominent or as influential as the Irish or German organizations in San Francisco, whose involvements are well-documented in primary sources. In fact, the only trace of this St. Andrew’s Society appeared in local

103 See Luckingham’s study, ‘Benevolence in Emergent San Francisco’.
newspapers, and even that was sparse. Outside a few general meeting announcements between 1850 and 1851, the Society’s last known appearances in print are in 1852. In February that year, members representing the St. Andrew’s Society took part in San Francisco’s Grand Celebration of Washington’s Birthday. The following August, the members continued to demonstrate their allegiance to their adopted country and marched at Henry Clay’s funeral procession. Afterwards, the St. Andrew’s Society reconvened at the Thistle Inn to pay ‘a last tribute of respect to the memory of Henry Clay’. It should be noted that the Society’s public support of political leaders, especially Clay (the Whig senator largely responsible for the Compromise of 1850), was ‘not to cause political strife’, argues McCaslin, ‘but to underscore Scottish-American societies’ participation in American civic culture.’ By engaging with partisan politics and city celebrations, the St. Andrew’s Society of San Francisco aimed to present themselves as functioning members of Anglo-American society in California. Nevertheless, this was the last public trace of the Society for the remainder of the decade.

There are some suspected parallels between the initial failures of the St Andrew’s societies in California and Australia. Two St. Andrew’s Societies were formed in Australia in the 1840s, one in Melbourne in 1842, and the other in Adelaide in 1847. Unlike the founding aims of San Francisco St. Andrew’s Society, those of the Australian societies had clear intentions to aid the Scottish poor and encourage immigration to Australia. These differences speak of the locational influences on each society. While each of the societies were cohorts of the middle-

104 *Alta California*, 8 December 1850; *Alta California*, 26 November 1851.
105 At Washington’s Grand Procession, the French, German, and Hebrew Clubs also took part. *Alta California*, 22 February 1852; *Alta California*, 4 August 1852.
106 *Alta California*, 6 August 1852.
107 McCaslin, “‘Great Gathering of the Clans’”, 189.
109 Ibid.
class elite, the societies in Australia were founded in mind of the territory’s growing popularity as a settlement for Scottish emigrants. But like the case in California, both societies in Australia folded shortly after their formation with no traceable explanations for their demise. Prentis attributed the initial failure of Scottish associationalism in Australia to the gold rushes and transient nature of the population.\textsuperscript{110} Bueltmann, who also investigated Scottish associational culture in Australia, further suspects that incompetent leadership may have also been to blame. While there is even less information on the San Francisco Society, the available evidence suggests a similar conclusion for its demise: the transient and unpredictable nature of Gold Rush society.

Briefly, for further perspective, it is worth covering the progression of Scottish associational culture in New Zealand during its own gold rush. As Bueltmann has observed, the influx of goldseekers had an opposite effect on New Zealand’s Scottish associationalism. Calling the gold rush ‘a critical motor for the establishment of associations’, Bueltmann explains how it drove the existing Scottish population to retain a sense of community cohesion:

the first formalized association, the Caledonian Society of Otago set up in Dunedin in 1862, was established primarily as a direct response of existing settlers to the arrival of a large number of gold seekers in the city. Scots resident in Dunedin sought to consolidate their position in the wake of the significant population increase triggered by the gold rush, and viewed associational structures as a suitable means to do so, hoping ‘to support the weakened social fabric’ in their new home ‘through the promotion of organized ethnicity.’\textsuperscript{111}

Compared to Gold Rush California, New Zealand was home to an established population of Scots when its own gold rush kicked off. Scottish Argonauts represented the first large body of Scots in California. Coupled with the fact that the vast majority were not intent on staying and settling in California, there was no existing Scottish community that saw their way of living

\textsuperscript{110} Prentis, \textit{The Scots in Australia}, 198.
\textsuperscript{111} Bueltmann, \textit{Clubbing Together}, 80.
threatened by a multitude of newcomers. Instead, the dust from the Gold Rush had to settle before enough Scots started to call California home. It was only then when Scottish Californians begun to form lasting ethnic associations in California.

Similar to the St. Andrew’s Society, the Burns Club that appeared in San Francisco during the Gold Rush was well-intended but short-lived. On 25 January 1853, otherwise known as Burns Night, the Thistle Inn on Broadway Street hosted a gathering for ‘A few of the friends and admirers of Robert Burns, the Scottish Bard’. Five days later, the attendees announced the formation of the city’s very own Burns Club in the *Alta California*. The following week, the club publicised the names of its newly elected officials. The group, a mix of Scotsmen and Americans, indicated that membership was not exclusive to Scots. Similar to the St. Andrew’s Society, the Burns Club of San Francisco accommodated Anglo-American interests while celebrating an inherent Scottish symbol. From the early nineteenth century, honouring the Scottish poet became an important cultural tradition in Scotland and throughout its diaspora. In the face of a modernising society, Burns ‘represented the uncompromised version of Scotland and its rural past that many Scots hoped to safeguard.’ Yet while distinctively Scottish, Bueltmann argues, the poet ‘was also of more universal significance, representing humanity and

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112 *Alta California*, 30 January 1853.
113 Ibid.
114 *Alta California*, 4 February 1853; Robert Baird Torrance, the president, appears in the California Great Registrar as Scottish-born. Vice President Alexander Pierson is listed as a Saloon owner and born in Scotland in the 1852 Census. Treasurer James Johnston and secretary James Payne were most likely American. There are not any Scots with those names in the census records, directories, or Great Registrar.
115 See Andrew Hook’s literary study on the evolving cultural relationship between Scotland and the US. Into the nineteenth century, Hook argued, Americans went from perceiving Scotland as the ‘land of Rationalism’, which contributed ideas to the founding of the US, to the ‘land of Romance’, which was home to captivating mythology and romanticism. Andrew Hook, *Scotland and America: A Study of Cultural Relations, 1750-1835* (Glasgow: Blackie, 1975); Also see Bernard Aspinwall, *Portable Utopia: Glasgow and the United States 1820-1920* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1984).
mankind.’ Burns, a champion of self-advancement and democracy, naturally translated well to the American sphere.

For at least the next two years, the Burns Club of San Francisco continued to meet at the Thistle Inn. However, outside one gathering publicised in April 1853, it is uncertain how many times the club convened. Unfortunately, little record of the Burns Club survives, and it is difficult to determine what became of it. The last newspaper mention occurred in 1855, stating that the club had donated seventy dollars ‘to the fund in aid of the families of the British soldiers killed in the Crimea’. Nevertheless, this trace of evidence is useful because it provides a snippet of how Scottish Argonauts engaged with their British identity. As discussed in chapter 4, British and Scottish identities, particularly in the mid-nineteenth century, were intrinsically linked. ‘Loyalty to Britain’, Devine argues, ‘proved to be complementary to the maintenance of a robust Scottish national identity.’ As Rowland Berthoff and subsequent historians have demonstrated, particularly when British affairs dominated the headlines, British migrants abroad made efforts to show support of the British Crown. Berthoff observed that Brits abroad were ‘sure to answer the cries of British soldiers’. Such was the case of the Burns Club members in San Francisco who rallied to support their British comrades in need. Yet other than this occasion, given the available evidence, Scottish Argonauts in the public realm expressed their Scottishness in relation to American interests rather than those of the British Empire. This relates back to the

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117 Ibid., 162.
119 Alta California, 4 April 1853.
120 Alta California, 13 February 1855.
121 Devine, To the Ends of the Earth, 168.
122 Berthoff, British Immigrants in Industrial America, 165, 179, 183.
123 Berthoff, British Immigrants in Industrial America, 139.
influences of the local environment, in this case Anglo-American nativism, on public displays of Scottishness and Scottish associational culture.

Finally, place is important in associational culture. Although the latter was relatively weak for Scots during the Gold Rush, the Thistle Inn seems to have hosted the majority of San Francisco’s Scottish affairs. The owners, John and Catherine Branks, were a couple in their late thirties from St. Andrews. According to the ages and birthplaces of their children in the 1852 Census, they had lived in New Zealand for around ten years before relocating to San Francisco in 1849. From the name of their establishment to their hosting of Scottish holidays, clubs, and society meetings (John Branks was also the president of the St. Andrew’s Society in 1852), the couple made a clear effort to recreate a sense of Scottish community in California. The Thistle Inn’s reputation as the Scottish epicentre of San Francisco did not last long, however. In June 1853, after four years of running the inn, the couple put it up for sale, ‘wishing to retire to the country’. Interestingly, save for the soldier fund contribution by the Burns Club, newspaper mentions of Scottish associations in San Francisco diminished after the inn’s sale advertisement. As for the Branks, at the ripe ages of forty and thirty-three, they had made their California fortune. Assuming that the advertisement spoke the truth of the inn ‘doing good business since its first establishment, (four years since)’, the Branks provide further indication that financial stability and intent to make California their home could be relative to one’s expression of their Scottish identity in Gold Rush society.

124 *Alta California*, 4 August 1852.
125 *Alta California*, 20 June 1853.
Politics

Scottish Argonauts were, without a doubt, part of California’s voting population. Many transmigrant Scots, such as Elder, had earned their right to vote through naturalisation obtained in their previous residences.\textsuperscript{127} Other Scottish Argonauts applied for citizenship in California during the 1850s, which is backdated by the state’s first register of voters in 1866 (officially called the Great Registrar).\textsuperscript{128} Naturalisation adds an interesting component to immigrant identity, however, with limited statistics and few personal accounts from Scottish Argonauts on this matter, there is an inadequate source base to form a comprehensive discussion on how gaining US citizenship in California affected the Scottish Gold Rush experience and vice versa. One thing is certain, however. For the majority of Scottish Argonauts that chose to stay in California, the decision to naturalise came slowly. Charlotte Erickson observed a similar trend with British immigrants who naturalised in the US during the nineteenth century. ‘While most of them did eventually become American citizens,’ Erickson argued, ‘they did not rush into it. The oath abjuring monarchy made some hesitate. As landowners and taxpayers, they eventually decided that it was in their interest to become citizens and have a vote.’\textsuperscript{129} In California, a more

\textsuperscript{127} Naturalisation in the United States during the mid-nineteenth century is complicated. The Naturalization Act of 1802 set the requirements for naturalisation: naturalisation required a five-year residency in the United States (with a declaration of intent two years in), a declaration of abjuring foreign allegiance, an oath to uphold the Constitution, and proof of good behaviour and character. The Federal government ruled that only white, free men could apply for citizenship. Furthermore, the state government also administered naturalisations and often placed further limitations on whom they would register. Therefore, the naturalisation process could vary from one state to another, see James Kettner, \textit{The Development of American Citizenship 1608-1870} (Chapel Hill: 1978), 246, 250-251. For more recent scholarship on naturalization see H. Hirota, \textit{Expelling the Poor: Atlantic Seaboard States and the Nineteenth-Century Origins of American Immigration Policy} (Oxford University Press, 2016); Erika Lee, \textit{America for Americans: A History of Xenophobia in the United States} (New York: Basic Books, 2019).

\textsuperscript{128} In 1866, the California State legislature passed an act to establish a register of California citizens, namely voters, see ‘Chapter CCLXV - An Act to provide for the registration of the citizens of this State, and for the enrolment in the several election districts of all the legal voters thereof, and for the prevention and punishment of frauds affecting the elective franchise’, \textit{The Statutes of California, Passed at the Sixteenth Session of the Legislature, 1865-6} (Sacramento: 1866), 288-301.

\textsuperscript{129} Erickson, \textit{Invisible Immigrants}, 75.
significant proportion of Scots naturalised in the 1860s compared to the previous decade. After cross-referencing with census and directory data, many of those who gained US citizenship in the 1860s had been in California since the early 50s.130 Beith, who sent for his family in 1852, did not naturalise until 1866. Interestingly, however, he talks of voting in the California and US elections during the 1850s.

As Alex Keyssar demonstrated in his comprehensive study on voting in the US, several rural states passed laws during the mid-nineteenth century that granted suffrage to noncitizens.131 Among others, delegates in Wisconsin, Michigan, Oregon, and Washington adopted alien suffrage laws as a way to encourage settlement.132 Yet in California, its state constitution said otherwise. The Constitution of the State of California, adopted in late 1849, stated that ‘white male citizens’ of the United States, and white male citizens of Mexico who agreed to US citizenship under the 1848 peace treaty, were eligible to vote. Further, eligible voters had to be over twenty-one years old, a resident of the state for six months before the election, and present in their voting district for at least 30 days.133 However, thanks to lenient voting enforcement, many foreigners retained a political say in California after it gained statehood in 1850. Especially in the mining areas, voting carried on as it had done before; governance acted on a very local and democratic level where every miner, including foreigners, had a say in affairs.134 As such, in the state’s first election of 1851, free democracy in the mining territories continued at full display. In

130 The Scots in the Great Registrar can be seen in the online database: https://edin.ac/3faIRPk.
132 Keyssar, ‘Democracy Ascendant’, chapter in Ibid.
133 Constitution of the State of California, Article II, Section 1 (1849).
134 Ralph Mann, ‘National Party Fortunes and Local Political Structure the Case of Two California Mining Towns, 1850-1870’, Southern California Quarterly 57, no. 3 (1975): 272-73. Also refer to Shinn, Mining Camps.
Nevada County, for instance, Bean’s History recounted that hundreds of unnaturalised foreigners cast ballots during the election. ²³⁵

Several Scottish Argonauts talked about their involvement in political affairs in California, despite Erickson’s assertion that ‘Few immigrants commented at all on American politics’. Even if they did, she continued, ‘most of their political comments were made as uncommitted outsiders.’ ²³⁶ On the contrary, Scottish Argonauts actively expressed their political standing and voted, whether formally through naturalisation or informally through California’s lax voter enforcement. Despite limited information on voter demographics, personal accounts shed some revealing light on the political affiliations of Scottish Argonauts. Unlike the Irish, Scots in California did not represent themselves politically as a national group. ²³⁷ Rather, their presence in the political realm was as stratified as their Anglo-American counterparts. A foreign, immigrant, or Scottish identity did not necessarily dictate their political standing. Instead, this focus on political institutions reveals that Scottish Argonauts were politically acclimated and deeply engrained in the US political divide of the 1850s.

The Scots who cast a ballot in California during the 1850s faced a tumultuous political era. As the slavery debate took centre stage, the traditional party alignments of the Whigs and Democrats fell to disarray. Other issues of contention, such as nativism and temperance, further splintered party allegiances. In an attempt to foster solidarity on key issues, third party organisations came into contention such as the Free-soil Party and The Know-Nothing movement. ²³⁸ Meanwhile, as waves of disenchanted voters crossed party lines, others remained

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²³⁵ Edwin F. Bean, Bean’s History and Directory of Nevada County, California. (Nevada County, 1867), 33-34.
²³⁶ Erickson, Invisible Immigrants, 259.
²³⁸ Foner, Free Soil, 124-128
loyal to their traditional party affiliations. Immigrants, specifically the Irish and Germans, stood firmly behind the Democratic party. With nativism a central issue in the current political climate, the Democrats welcomed the strength of the immigrant voting population and stood against nativist efforts to change naturalisation laws.\textsuperscript{139} Meanwhile, the Whig Party, aptly summed up by Foner, embraced ‘the hopes and fears of northern native-born Protestants’.\textsuperscript{140} The Whigs absorbed nativism into their political rhetoric, and their platform reflected a distrust of radicalism, Catholicism, and the foreign population.\textsuperscript{141}

William Elder and his family identified as Whigs, a telling association considering what the party advocated in California. Having resided in Grass Valley since 1850, Elder was not ignorant of the party’s local sentiments towards foreigners. During the Gold Rush, the town had experienced a fair share of political hostility. In 1851, local tensions came to a head when Democrats gained the majority in the state election. Reportedly, the results sparked a riot between the town’s Anglo-American and foreign voters.\textsuperscript{142} Even though the Whig party’s factional divisions were clearly at fault, supporters blamed their loss of momentum on the increasing presence of foreigners. In turn, following a similar progression to the national party, the Whigs of Grass Valley latched on to more nativist prejudices.\textsuperscript{143}

Despite the Whig party’s blatant distrust of foreigners, Elder continued to identify with the party platform and ran for Grass Valley Postmaster in the 1851 election. He was one of the few Whigs that year to secure a seat.\textsuperscript{144} Ralph Mann, in his study of Grass Valley’s political

\textsuperscript{140} Foner, \textit{Free Soil}, 226-227.
\textsuperscript{141} \textit{Ibid}.
\textsuperscript{142} Mann, ‘The Decade after the Gold Rush’, 497.
\textsuperscript{143} Foner, \textit{Free Soil}, 196.
\textsuperscript{144} Elder is listed as the Grass Valley Postmaster a year later in the \textit{Sacramento Daily Union}, 23 October 1852.
landscape, argues that because the majority of the area’s inhabitants were concerned with mining, its political crop from 1850-1853 represented a ‘tiny groups of lawyers and merchants’. Merchants such as Elder held sway over the voting miner population who often marked their ballots for the suppliers of their goods and equipment. This is probably why Elder managed to secure the position in 1851, despite the Democrats’ growing influence. The following year, political and nativist tensions continued to stir in Grass Valley. The reinstatement of the Foreign Miner’s Tax reignited clashes between the town’s nativists and foreign inhabitants. In early May, hoping for government intervention, representatives of Grass Valley unsuccessfully petitioned the state legislator to bar foreign miners from their town. In the meantime, Elder would be up for district re-election in the coming weeks. More disorder came on election day when Grass Valley’s American and foreign residents held separate elections that culminated in a deadly fight. In the end, Elder managed to secure his re-election, yet his days as a Postmaster were numbered.

The year after, in 1853, the Irish presence in Grass Valley had grown enough to warrant the construction of a Catholic Church. With another election looming, Elder’s affiliation with the Whig party placed him in a precarious position. Although he had struck a balance between his general store and Postmaster duties, Elder sensed that his time in Grass Valley was coming to an end. In July, his son shared his family’s concern over their stability and the mounting influence of the Democrats:

145 Mann, ‘National Party Fortunes’, 273
146 Mann, After the Gold Rush, 22.
147 Ibid., 54-55.
149 Mann, After the Gold Rush, 55.
150 Mann, ‘The Decade after the Gold Rush’, 496.
Pa is expecting a removal before long as there is a great many been removed in California we don’t know what day we may be removed the Democrats are so hungry even in this far off Land for Office that it don’t give us Whigs any Chance at all.¹⁵¹

Their suspicions were confirmed two months later with the election results. Elder defeated, he announced the impending closure of his store in the local newspaper and decided to relocate to Petaluma.¹⁵² Undoubtedly, the recent influx of the Irish presence in Grass Valley also influenced his decision to move. First implied in his letters from Panama, Elder held an obvious disdain for Irish Catholics. A Protestant Scot, his previous adjustment to American religious and political spheres in New York would only reinforce his anti-Catholicism. Although an immigrant himself, Elder’s association as a Whig in Grass Valley spoke of his connection to current American affairs and anxieties.

In the run-up to the 1855 election, Elder’s ailing California Whig Party saw much of its membership transfer to the Know-Nothing Party.¹⁵³ The Know-Nothing Party, or American Party, began as a secret organisation that grew in numbers across the US. Nativist and Anti-Catholic fears defined their platform, and a neutral stance on the slavery question provided a new affiliation for conservative Whigs who feared association with the more radical abolitionists among their ranks.¹⁵⁴ In 1855, California followed the national tide, and the Know-Nothing Party saw a sweeping victory against the Democrats in California.¹⁵⁵ Whether Elder and his family followed the majority of the Whigs to the sanction of the Know-Nothings is unknown. However,

¹⁵¹ Alexander and Sarah Elder to James Elder, 21 July 1853, Grass Valley.
¹⁵² Grass Valley Telegraph, 6 October 1853.
¹⁵³ The Whigs did not hold a convention in California for the 1855 election. Before the election, the Alta California stipulated that previous Whig leaders had endorsed the Know-Nothing ticket in a secret circular. In fact, the former president of the California Whig convention in 1854, John Neely Nelson, was on the 1855 Know-Nothing ticket for governor. Peyton Hurt, ‘The Rise and Fall of the ‘Know Nothings’ in California’, California Historical Society Quarterly 9, no. 1 (1930): 44.
¹⁵⁵ Foner, Free Soil, 237-238.
it is not unlikely. Protestant Scots from a sectarian and Anglo-Saxon background would have found much to agree with on the Know-Nothing platform.

Besides Elder, there are some strong suggestions that Scots in California were supportive of the short-lived Know-Nothing movement. Take, for example, Thomas Gardiner, who at the time was the publisher for the *Sacramento Union*. Previously, the *Union* firmly backed the California Whig Party.\footnote{Dorothy Gile Firebaugh, ‘The Sacramento Union: Voice of California, 1851-75’, *Journalism Quarterly* 30, no. 3 (1953).} As the Know-Nothing movement gained traction, the newspaper spoke favourably of its cause and published anti-foreigner propaganda.\footnote{For example, in a November 1855 issue, the *Union* criticised the members of Anti-Know Nothing members as ‘savage’. In another segment, they welcomed a new newspaper called *The Citizen* as ‘Our Know Nothing contemporary’; *Sacramento Daily Union*, 17 November 1855.} In 1856, one article outlined the nationality of Sacramento’s convicted criminals as ‘A Case in Point’ to those in opposition of the American Party. Of the 475 arrests made in San Francisco in July, stated the *Union*, ‘all but 130 of the entire number of arrests for the month were foreigners…And yet there are those priding themselves on being considered native citizens, who are deadly opposed to those of their brethren desirous that “Americans should rule America.”’\footnote{The *Union* counted 148 Irish, 60 French, 58 English, 31 German, 22 Mexican, 11 Chinese, 7 Scottish, 3 Spanish, 2 Swedish, 1 Italian, and 1 Russian. *Sacramento Daily Union*, 3 August 1855.} Of particular note, two years earlier the newspaper reprinted a segment from the Know-Nothing *New York Express* which had linked Scotland to the origins of the movement. One could speculate Gardiner’s hand in including the quip:

> The secret is out at last! We know all about the “Know-Nothings.” They had their origin in Scotland, and must have immigrated from there: else why does Shakespeare put these words into the mouth of Lord Rosse, in his tragedy of “Macbeth”? “Alas, poor country! almost afraid to know itself, It cannot be called our mother, but our grave: Where nothing but who Knows Nothing is seen to Smile. The “Know-Nothings,” it is inferred from this, stood A No. 1 in those days. Only they were seen to smile.\footnote{Sacramento *Union*, 4 September 1854.}
As for the Scottish involvement in California’s Know-Nothings movement, the group’s initial secrecy and short reign in California make it impossible to track their members. While the organisation stated that those born outside of the US were not allowed membership, their opponents had reason to question the regulation. In March 1855, the Bute Record (Oroville, California) reported the presence of British individuals in Know-Nothing ranks on the East Coast:

There are three papers in this State which are particularly down on foreigners of all kinds...strange to say, the leading men of these papers are of foreign extraction. Lacy, one of the proprietors of the Register, was born in England. Mann, of the Rochester American, was born in Scotland, and until he was fourteen years of age peddled itch ointment round Edinburgh. Parmelee, of the Buffalo Commercial – the man with the “twenty-five dollar character”– was an English soldier...These are the men who are now “rallying round the constitution,” and who insist that foreign influence will yet undermine the liberties of the nation.\footnote{Weekly Butte Record, 24 March 1855.}

Following the excerpt, the Record, 'not sufficiently posted to undertake the job’ called on the Know-Nothing Marysville Herald to expose a similar trend in California.\footnote{Kemble et al, A History of California Newspapers, 1846-1858, 89.} Unsurprisingly, the investigation never materialised. If undertaken, however, investigators would have uncovered the same paradox in Sacramento. In the 1855-56 Sacramento directory, Gardiner appears as a newsman with an address adjacent to the Union headquarters. Then in 1857, he reappears in the State Treasurer’s annual statement as the representative for the Union.\footnote{Sacramento Directory for the Year 1853-1854, 35; Journal of the Ninth Session of the Senate of the State of California, (Sacramento, 1858), 79.} These findings strongly suggest Gardiner’s allegiance to the Union during the Know-Nothing reign in California.

Whether or not he was an official ‘Brother’ of the organisation, it is certain that Gardiner at least agreed and identified with the anti-foreign sentiments in the Union, a paper he personally published.
Other Scots in California voted in mind of their foreign identity. Beith steered clear of the Know-Nothing movement and pledged allegiance to the similarly short-lived Free Soil Party. This faction split from the Democrats in 1848 over the party’s refusal to support the Wilmot Proviso. With the issue of slavery dividing both major parties, the Free-Soil Party hoped to rally the anti-slavery factions into one political following. The party gained momentum in the early 1850s but faltered during the short reign of the Know-Nothing movement. Because the Know-Nothings redirected much of the political conversation on foreigners’ rights in the US, Beith’s identity as a foreigner ultimately decided his vote in the 1856 election:

My sentiments politically, are like myself flat footed and square toed, being nothing more nor less than a freesoil Democrat in other words a nonextentionist on the Slavery question. I voted for Buchanan on principal. he, I think being the only Conservative man in the feild, John C Fremont was an Abolitionist and an Ultra, hence not a good man for the Chair. Fillmore, whom I honestly consider the best man of the three, was led off the path by the Know nothings or American Party. The main Plank in his Platform, being the introduction of stringent measures in the Alien Act. That party blew up entirely, And he went with the general explosion, The party has not left an ember of their past fire, Their great feature was animosity to foreigners, And it became evident by some of their moves, that they had a desire to check emigration. If not that, to take away the right of sufrage from the Alien untill he should have resided in the country 21 years, such being it narrow minded and niggardly policy embraced in Secret, for they held their conclaves in the night and no admittance to outsiders, As soon it was known, the evil was nipped in the bud.

Scots’ span of political affiliations, especially those who identified as Whigs or Know-Nothing supporters, indicates that they could politically detach from their foreign identity. This greatly contrasts with the experience of groups like the Irish and Germans whose party

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164 Foner, Free Soil, 124-128.

allegiances during the 1840s and 1850s in the US merged with their ethnic identity. While some Scots, such as Beith, aligned their foreign identity with their vote, others, like Elder, completely disregarded it. Scots did not have to act through politics in solidarity to help their incorporation into society. Rather, the variety of political stances reflects how much the Scottish population and identity had engrained itself into the American political debate, particularly in California.

**From Argonauts to Californians**

Like the unpredictability of landing a fortune during the Gold Rush, Scots became Californians at different points throughout the decade and, in many instances, unexpectedly. Furthermore, each individual had different experiences that led them to their decision to settle and their own requirements for putting down roots. When they ultimately decided to settle, many of our Argonauts – now Californians – started to reconstruct their own versions of Scotland in their new home. Thus, in their California home, the final institution in this chapter, Scots finally started to unpack the rest of their cultural baggage.

Arriving during the Gold Rush as a single Anglophone woman, Anderson had improved chances of realising her own fortune: first finding stability through her own means, and later securing a husband. It was only six months later, in December 1852, when her marriage marked her transformation from Argonaut to Californian. Indicating a feeling of separation from matters in Scotland, Anderson waited until after her wedding to advise her family of her new husband: ‘I was so far away from you all I thought that I had better give Duncan Cameron a legal right to

166 ‘From Discrimination to Domination: Immigrant Political Participation’ in Regina Donlon, German and Irish Immigrants in the Midwestern United States, 1850-1900 (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).
take care of me, as I know he did care for me at least I thought so’.\textsuperscript{167} Anderson had met Cameron, who was Scottish-Canadian, only seven months earlier on board her ship from New York. Immediately after their wedding in Sacramento, the couple journeyed five days to reach their new home in the small town of Volcano. Cameron, who was a farmer by trade, had invested in a three-hundred-acre farm named Mount Pleasant. Anderson, now seeing her future in California as a wife and soon to be mother, reported to her family in Scotland that she had ‘every earthly prospect of happiness’. From then on, she signed off as Mrs. Cameron and altered the nature of her farewells in her letters home. Instead of promising to return she insisted: ‘we are coming to pay you a long visit after we have made a little money.’\textsuperscript{168}

On the surface, Anderson blended in seamlessly with mining town society in Volcano. She kept busy and helped her husband run the settlement’s only store out of their farmhouse. Until at least 1855, save the presence of her niece, the closest female resided 4 miles away.\textsuperscript{169} Even so, Anderson found enjoyment with her own company and took advantage of their three-hundred-acre space:

\begin{quote}
I have got a horse of my own and have great fun trotting about the grounds. I have been practicing shooting with the bow and arrow to so you see although we have no neighbors we do not want for amusement.\textsuperscript{170}
\end{quote}

Despite her apparent adjustment to life on a California farm, a desire to connect to Scotland carried on in her letters home. She longed to see, taste, and hear things from her homeland. In one letter she enquired for a local recipe: ‘Will you ask Margaret to send me a receipt for making treacle Pan for I think it would be so good here in the hot weather’.\textsuperscript{171} Graeme Morton suggests

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{167} Jessie Anderson Cameron to her mother, 26 December 1852, Mount Pleasant.
\item \textsuperscript{168} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{169} Jessie Anderson Cameron to her mother and sisters, 2 April 1855, Mount Pleasant.
\item \textsuperscript{170} Jessie Anderson Cameron to Anna Anderson, 2 January 1853, Mount Pleasant.
\item \textsuperscript{171} Anderson was most likely referring to a type of confectionary that is formed by boiling a treacle mixture and leaving it to harden in a pan. Her husband’s ice supply (among other pursuits he
that food and drink, like religion and music, were aspects of a ‘symbolic identity’. When immigrants consumed traditional dishes or sang national songs, the process was a form of allegiance to their home country. 172 In the same letter, Anderson also voiced her frustration at the Americans for not understanding her local dialect: ‘have you been to any roups lately, roup is a word that puzzled the Americans terribly’.173 The ‘peculiarity of the Scottish language’, argues Angela McCarthy, was another prime identifier of one’s Scottishness.174 Elder too remarked about the distinctiveness of his language in a letter home to his wife: ‘I will enclose a couple of specimens such as we get from the Quartz Rock they have been beaten flat. we get them all sorts of shapes many of them looking like Ettercaps this word will test your Scotch.175 For Anderson, correspondence and a steady supply of local newspapers from home served aspects of her Scottish identity that she found lacking in California. Harper argues that just as much as securing a new livelihood abroad, ‘Equally important to many was planting ethnic anchors that bridged the gap between the Old world and the New and allowed them to integrate memories of home into an unfamiliar environment.’176

Over the decade, as Anderson’s family grew in number and her duties increased at the farm, she mentioned visiting Scotland less and less. While her husband worked the land and

173 A ‘roup’ is an Aberdonian term for an auction, usually for farm stock. Scottish National Dictionary (1700–), Dictionary of The Scots Language, s.v. ‘Pan’, https://dsl.ac.uk/. Jessie Anderson to her Mother, 4 April 1853, Mount Pleasant.
stock, she ran a small boarding house for travellers out of the family home. Now, with no intention of moving back to Scotland, Anderson’s circumstances dictated that it was time to finish unpacking her cultural baggage. As a woman, she could not explore her Scottish identity much outside the private realm. Naturally, she channelled her Scottish background within her sphere of influence, that of the home. The latest letter in the Anderson collection is dated 19 September 1858. By then, Anderson was a mother of three, her youngest an eight-month-old daughter. In the letter, her lifelines to Scotland were still present. She wrote how she longed for the company and hometown gossip of her sister, and also notified her mother that fifty dollars was on its way. Five years since her arrival in California, sending money home after such a duration expressed a strong devotion to maintaining a transatlantic connection and identity. John Bodnar claims that immigrants who continued to send money home were ‘closely tied to family responsibilities and homeland priorities.’ Nevertheless, in Anderson’s California home, a Scottish presence was always near – be it through the company of her Scottish husband, niece, and older brother, or the consumption of Scottish traditions and materials. Surrounding herself with familiar accents, sights, and tastes, Anderson recreated a Scottish home on her California farm.

Beith, after a terrible first year in California prospecting for gold, eventually landed near Humboldt Bay with one hundred and sixty acres of his own farmland. In the interim, he had joined a volunteer army formed in order to, in his own words, ‘exterminate a bad tribe of Indians’. The farmland, which he started cultivating in 1851, had been a grant from the state government for his services. The following year, his widowed father and three brothers and

177 Bodnar, *The Transplanted*, 52.
178 James Beith, 1 September 1854, James Beith Letter Book, 6, 10-11.
sisters left Scotland for California. Reflecting on his situation in 1854, Beith seemed comfortable and much at home:

How I ever made up my mind to stay that length of time, in any one place I will not pretend to account for, unless it must have been the pleasant society amongst I have been thrown...have been working at my Trade since I came down here I had a pretty good job upon a Grist mill joinery, the Joiner work staying down home at present hunting and shooting, The Best thing I have struck many a day.\(^{179}\)

Yet despite seeming settled, Beith struggled to fully consider California his home. Throughout the Gold Rush decade and into the 1860s, Beith never found his big break and most of the time barely scraped by. In the private realm, he attempted to recreate a home away from home. Yet despite the presence of his father and siblings presumably acting as ethnic anchors in California, he wrote in 1857 that he was not settled in California, but stuck. Having his family with him also proved to be a double-edged sword: ‘As for myself I am older, croser, Uglier, poorer and closer confined to any one particular soil than ever was at any period of my life before.’\(^{180}\) Indeed, much of what he missed of Scotland was the actual place.

Several years later in 1862, Beith drafted a letter in his journal and wallowed in nostalgia for his homeland. Long after he hung up his pan and shovel, Beith had kept in touch with his former mining partners. In this particular instance, he wrote to a fellow Scot who had since relocated to Vancouver Island. Beith confided to him why he valued their friendship:

you are intensely Scottish, is my answer. You it was, that first spoke to me of my country; your chimes ring congenial with mine own, & however much, I may have wished to show, I had always concealed it. You spoke to me of our common country, & I spoke to you of her poetry, which is the essence of my very soul.\(^{181}\)

Crucially, here is evidence that Beith limited the ways in which he unpacked his cultural baggage during the Gold Rush in California. What is more, after Beith and his family relocated to

\(^{179}\) Ibid., 6.
\(^{180}\) James Beith to J. Daly, 6 December 1857, James Beith Letter Book, 19-20.
\(^{181}\) James Beith to Dick Deighton, 5 June 1862, Victoria, VI, James Beith Letter Book, 134.
California, the ways in which he connected to his old homeland changed. Now that his immediate family surrounded him in California, Beith reached out to extended family and friends to maintain his connection to Scotland, making it clear that the close proximity of kin did not always satisfy nostalgic longings for the homeland. As David Gerber has observed, even as migrants became more rooted in their new societies, they continued to rely on transnational networks of correspondence with the homeland to define themselves in relation to their evolving identities abroad: ‘In writing letters to their homelands, international migrants were propelled backward in time and continually reacquainted with their pasts, even as they built new lives and made plans for the future.’ Now a Californian, Beith had reconciled his permanent separation from Scotland and engaged more widely with his diaspora, also maintaining ties with other Scots abroad he befriended along his journey. The networks across the Scottish diaspora continuously adapted as Scots moved abroad from one place to another, as sojourners became permanent immigrants, and as chain migration shifted the responsibilities of who became the homeland connection.

On the other end of the spectrum, Elder and Brownlee seemed to fully integrate into Anglo-American society in California. Elder’s letter collection ends in 1854, but local history serves to continue his story. After resettling in Petaluma with his family, he opened another dry goods store and resumed his interests in municipal government. Because of much of his involvement, Petaluma expanded from being a small settlement to a thriving town. Before the decade was over, he became the town’s first mayor and later a chairman on the board of trustees. Into the 1860s, his civic involvement continued when he served as president on the district’s

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182 Gerber, ‘Personal Friendship and Scottish Identification in the Correspondence of Mary Ann Archbald and Margaret Woodrow, 1807-1840’, in *A Global Clan*, 117-118.
board of education and helped establish the Congregational Church of Petaluma. Elder’s switch further points to the complexity of the religious landscape across the Scottish diaspora. While we lack the necessary evidence to assess to what extent Elder maintained his Scottishness in the private realm, it is clear that he persisted with his homeland traditions in the public realm through religion and education. Despite this, however, Elder’s Scottish roots are obscured by their similarities with American traditions – so much so that the esteemed Gold Rush historian Malcolm Rohrbough presented Elder as an American Argonaut in *Days of Gold*. As this thesis has demonstrated, a Scottish context has brought a greater level of understanding to Elder’s Gold Rush experience, showing the ways in which his Scottish background influenced his perceptions of Gold Rush California.

Brownlee, after two years of moderate success in Agua Fria, decided to settle in California in 1852. That year, he returned to his previous home in Little Rock to settle affairs. While there he asked his brother’s sister-in-law, who was also Scottish, to take his hand in marriage. He also convinced his brother Thomas and his wife to accompany him with their small family back to California. Yet before they started for California, Brownlee fulfilled a promise to visit Scotland one last time. He stayed for two months and by the end, forged another link on his migration chain. His nephew, John, joined him on his return voyage to California. A running trend in these personal accounts of Scottish Argonauts is the influence of chain migration – be it through friends or relatives that they followed to California, or the Argonaut beginning the chain themselves. Both Anderson and Watt followed their brothers from Scotland; Elder also followed his brother to California and later continued his own chain with the later addition of his wife and

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184 Rohrbough, *Days of Gold*, 49, 61, 129.  
children; and Beith started a new chain by eventually sending for his father and siblings.\textsuperscript{186} As more Scottish Argonauts became Californians, the enduring pull of Scots to California was not gold, but a permanent family home.

Brownlee, with family members and a new wife in tow, returned to California by the end of the year. To his surprise, he found himself the owner of an eighty-acre dairy farm. During his absence, he had entrusted a friend with money to purchase property in the promising town of Vallejo. Located on the north-east side of the San Francisco Bay, Vallejo was to become the state capital. Unbeknownst to him, the plans for the capital building fell through, and the legislature had adjourned to the nearby town of Benicia.\textsuperscript{187} Brownlee returned expecting to find a bustling capital city, but to his disappointment, he found something that resembled a ghost town. To make matters worse, his entrusted friend had mismanaged and depleted his funds, and the only recompense he could offer Brownlee was his dairy farm. Seeing no other alternative, the Scotsman had to accept: ‘I was converted into a California farmer without the least knowledge of managing, or how it should be done...I was forced to adopt what plan seemed best and to go ahead.’\textsuperscript{188} As Brownlee added ‘dairy farmer’ to his assortment of identities, he continued embracing his identity as an American citizen. The following Fourth of July, he celebrated as any American. He and several others took to the streets, burned barrels of tar, and spent the night delivering patriotic speeches. ‘It was thought grand by us,’ he remembered, ‘although a stranger might have felt differently.’\textsuperscript{189}

\textsuperscript{186} John Brownlie accompanied Robert Brownlee back to California from Scotland in 1852. John’s brother, James, would later follow him from Scotland in 1858. Brownlee, \textit{An American Odyssey}, 156.
\textsuperscript{187} \textit{Ibid.}, 165.
\textsuperscript{188} \textit{Ibid.}, 167-168.
\textsuperscript{189} \textit{Ibid.}, 168.
While in Vallejo, Brownlee took an active interest in the town’s growth. In 1855, for example, he financially contributed to the building of a wharf in Vallejo and helped organise a National Ball. In 1857, Brownlee relocated to Napa County and in the decades that followed, he continued to embrace his belonging in Anglo-American society. Between 1872 and 1875 he represented the Republican Party and served two terms as the District Supervisor of Napa County. His involvement in politics as a Republican reaffirms the level in which Scottish migrants engrained themselves in the American political divide.

Like Elder, Brownlee is remembered as an American citizen. In the History of Napa and Lake Counties, California, published in 1881, his biography stated: ‘A more genial companion, a better citizen, or hospitable host does not exist than Robert Brownlee.’ However, regardless of how California history remembers him, Brownlee did not lose sight of the Scottish facet of his identity and his connection to Scotland. In addition to residing with his Scottish wife and living close to his brother’s family, the process of chain migration saw the addition of his wife’s parents and brother from Scotland in 1858. Indeed, this is what Brownlee had been used to growing up in North Lanarkshire, surrounded by his extended family who all lived and worked together. Now a Californian, Brownlee had rebuilt a sense of an ethnic Scottish community in his new permanent home.

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190 Ibid., 185.
191 Ibid., 187.
192 History of Napa and Lake Counties, California (San Francisco, 1881), 406.
194 Ibid., 187.
Conclusion

What then was the character of Scottish Argonauts’ identity in Gold Rush California? During the Gold Rush, the process of adaption to Argonaut life complicated how, and to what extent, Scots expressed their identity in California. For the average Scottish Argonaut intent on returning home, to be a Scottish in California meant sustaining homeland connections through personal correspondence and unpacking certain aspects of their cultural baggage which were already engrained in Anglo-American society – namely religion. Throughout this process, Scots presented a hybrid identity and fostered their Scottishness within the confines of Anglo-American priorities. Although only representing a small number of the Scottish Argonaut population, the identities promoted by the short-lived Scottish associations in San Francisco provide an example of how the Scottish identity could overlap and compliment Anglo-American and British identities in California. Their subsequent failure does not denote an incompatibility of these layers of identity, but rather the importance of the environment in the shaping and sustaining of Scottish association culture. In California, the Gold Rush had a direct effect on the delayed development of Scottish associational culture. Coupled with the fact that there was not a previously established Scottish population before the influx of gold seekers, like in New Zealand, the highly transient nature and makeup of the Gold Rush population hindered the growth of Scottish ethnic societies and clubs in California.

As this chapter has demonstrated, the ways in which Scots expressed their Scottishness during the Gold Rush were reflective of their migrant status (whether temporary sojourners or permanent settlers) and their level of success and stability in California. After they decided to make California their permanent home, Scots paid more heed to rebuilding their Scottish communities in California. As such, their homeland connections and networks altered when they
became Californians. Through the process of chain migration, and later ethnic associationism in the 1860s, Scottish Californians began to engage with their diaspora more locally in addition to sustaining their transnational networks between California and Scotland. Significantly, their relationship with the host society did not change – as Scottish Californians expanded their local diaspora in California, they continued to assert a hybrid identity that facilitated their integration into Anglo-American society. The Scottish identities in California, whether Argonaut or Californian, were never static and were reshaped by the various processes of sojourning and settlement. Throughout this entire progression, as we have seen throughout this study, a strong sense of Scottishness could coexist alongside the various identities that Scots adopted during their California Gold Rush experience.
Conclusion

In order to situate the Scottish presence in Gold Rush California among the Scottish diaspora, this thesis presented three main goals: to identify the Scottish Argonauts and the circumstances from which they came, to explore their strategies of adjustment as they journeyed to and arrived in California, and to assess how the Scottish identity and Scottish diaspora intertwined with Gold Rush California.

A distinguishing aspect of the Scottish Argonaut population in California is that it was a coming together of the Scottish diaspora from places far apart. While Scottish diaspora scholarship is steadily growing, no study thus far has uncovered a Scottish diaspora destination with such a wide representation of transmigrants from around the world. In Rebecca Lenihan’s demographic study on New Zealand, which also had a noticeable number of Scottish transmigrants, the latter only represented about 12 percent of her database.\(^1\) The figures for Gold Rush California stand in stark contrast, with 87 percent of Scottish Argonauts coming from previous residences outside of Scotland. Among the Scottish population in Gold Rush California, Scottish Argonauts had previously resided in over twenty countries across 5 continents.\(^2\) This geographic span not only confirms the extensive global presence of Scots in the nineteenth century, but emphasises their capacity for movement from one faraway place to another. While the context of the Gold Rush California has shed further light on the nature of movement across the diaspora, studies on the mobility of Scottish transmigrants would be a fruitful area of further research. If possible, following migrants’ intercontinental journeys would

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\(^1\) Rebecca Lenihan, *From Alba to Aotearoa*, 54-59.
\(^2\) See Figure 1.7
provide further insights into their motives from one place to another, as well better understanding the implications of the journey, or movement, on the migrant experience. As such, a focus on their movement from one place to another, instead of just the destination, would add considerable insight to the current understanding of Scottish migration, and migration studies more generally. Indeed, as this study has shown, the significance of emigrants’ movements and journeys to their new destinations cannot be understated in the context of diaspora. In addition to diasporic actions taking place on the journey itself, where Scots implemented and maintained networks with the Old World, the movement of Scots across various landscapes in time and space comprises an actual example of the nature of diaspora – an active network of people scattering from their homeland to a wide-range of destinations.

Scots also proceeded to scatter out of California. Just as they flocked into Gold Rush California by the thousands, most Argonauts moved on to other destinations elsewhere as the chances of instant wealth in the Golden State diminished. This leads to the next point of significance. Although most Scottish Argonauts arrived and left California as sojourners, or temporary migrants, they engaged in diasporic actions throughout their Gold Rush experience. This study has shown that actions undertaken by individuals to maintain homeland connections were as equally diasporic as those associated with the more visible ethnic groups and communities abroad. As demonstrated in chapter 2, for example, Argonaut letters intended for circulation among friends and family or newspaper print helped facilitate a transnational social space where writers and their audiences could engage with one another. As Bueltmann reminds us, ‘diaspora is not a passive entity, but represents a matrix of relationships that links the old homeland with these diverse new worlds through its members.’

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letters not only created a transnational space where migrants abroad could reconnect with their
countrymen and women at home, but a space for those in Scotland to learn about the experiences
of Scots in the far corners of the world. Further research should be undertaken to explore the role
of published emigrant correspondence in Scotland and among its diaspora. While a complex
source, migrant letters published in the press could raise important questions about the function
and significance of emigrant voices in the Scottish public realm.

The role of private correspondence in the Scottish diaspora should not be understated
either. For individual migrants, personal correspondence was the central mechanism of their
diasporic actions. Scottish Argonauts used letters as transnational agents to sustain ties with
family, friends, and their homeland. On the journey to and while in California, letters home
served a variety of purposes for Argonauts: whether as a means for maintaining affairs from
abroad, existing as a constant anchor of familiarity in unfamiliar places, or as a sentimental outlet
to express homesickness and a desire for ethnic solidarity. As this thesis has demonstrated,
homeland connections through correspondence both affirmed and shaped Scottish Argonauts’
ethnic identities and experiences abroad. Taken together, the various networks and homeland
connections explored in this thesis emphasise the individual’s experience and their role in the
diaspora. This study has shown that individual Scottish Argonauts were not separated from an
ethnonational group consciousness in California – another key component of what makes a
diaspora. Through the use of correspondence they too, from a distance, could continue to engage
with their ethnic and homeland communities.

The theme of movement in this thesis also encompassed the shift in what individual
migrants sought from their intended destinations. The context of the California Gold Rush
provided an opportunity to observe the process of that shift from sojourner to permanent
immigrant. The nature of the Gold Rush attracted vast numbers of temporary migrants with
intentions to return home or eventually follow other opportunities elsewhere. Overtime, as we observed of some of our Argonauts, promises to return home to Scotland or their previous residences abroad changed to an assurance of a future visit. What caused California to shift from a temporary land of opportunity to a permanent home was ultimately driven by the individual migrant’s personal circumstances. Jessie Anderson, for example, ceased to be a sojourner and rooted herself to California when a new relationship she formed abroad eventually led to marriage. Meanwhile, Robert Brownlee and William Elder, both transmigrants, decided to transplant their families in California as they observed California’s transformation from a settler society to a land of familiar comforts. This study serves as an important reminder that a migrant’s search for a home was not linear, but rather a complex process where ‘home’ could be thousands of miles away, ambiguous, or exist in multiple locations.

The focus on the California Gold Rush as a Scottish diaspora destination also provided a useful context to explore the ways in which both sojourners and permanent immigrants fostered their identities and interacted with the wider diaspora. This thesis upholds the findings of other Scottish sojourner studies like Andrew Mackillop’s which observed sojourners in India as far less demonstrative of outward symbols of Scottishness compared to other Scottish communities abroad. Indeed, the fact that most Scots in California during the Gold Rush intended to return home meant that they more likely invested in maintaining those connections abroad over rebuilding their ethnic communities in California. Coupled with their integration into Anglo-American society, as well as the absence of a pre-established Scottish community before the Gold Rush (unlike in New Zealand), there simply was not enough interest to sustain Scottish associational culture in Gold Rush California. By integrating a comparative dimension in this

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study, primarily using Scottish diaspora studies in Australia and New Zealand, the significance of locational influences on shaping Scottish associational culture abroad – which Tanja Bueltmann has argued for in her own work – are further underscored. Further research on other Scottish diaspora destinations, specifically those which did not display robust demonstrations of Scottish associational culture, will provide further insights on the locational influences on Scottish associationalism and constructions of Scottishness abroad.

While Scottish Argonauts largely fostered their homeland connections on an individual basis, Scottish Californians were more likely to observe their Scottishness and engage with their diaspora collectively, whether in their small ethnic bubble in the home, or later in ethnic associations. Over the Gold Rush decade, as more Scots committed to staying, they had more interest and means to rebuild their Scottish communities in California. When the Gold Rush subsided during the 1860s, a distinctive Scottish community materialised in California through a collective interest in ethnic associationalism.

The St. Andrew’s Society of San Francisco states that the society was formally organised in 1863. Reportedly, 80 members attended the first organisational meeting. From the late 1860s, when California’s focus turned away from gold and the distractions of the Civil War, Scottish associational culture in the Golden State proliferated. In 1866, members of the St. Andrew’s Society organised the Caledonian Club and put on the first annual Caledonian Games in California. The following year, the club expanded the games on a grand scale, opening the

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6 Scottish Societies that formed in the latter half of the 19th century in California include The Scottish Thistle Club (organised 1882), The Caledonian Club (founded as an independent organisation in 1886 but first organised as a part of the St. Andrew’s Society in 1867), The Scottish Hall Association (organised 1884), and The Order of Scottish Clans (instituted 1878).
event to the public. Days before the event, which was to be held on Thanksgiving Day, the *Alta California* reminded its readers of the occasion:

> There will be present many of the sons and daughters of “Auld Scotia,” who for a while indulging in accents and idioms, seeming to this not to the manner born, broad and peculiar, will fancy themselves back again on the old hills and braes of their native land.  

On the 28th of November, the St. Andrew’s Society and Caledonian Club members transformed a field beside the Market Street railroad station into their own conception of Scotland. Scots in kilts played what the *Alta California* described as ‘peculiar Scottish sports’, pipers played for the bragging right of the best piper, and dancers danced the Highland fling before captivated spectators.  

During the mid-nineteenth century, the United States witnessed a phenomenon where the running of Highland Games spread across the country. Now with a population of Scottish Californians that far outnumbered its Argonauts, California had finally joined in on the collective celebration of Scottish culture.

This story is a story of diaspora from start to finish: from the journey, to the Argonaut experience in California, to the return back home, remigration elsewhere, or eventual settlement. Although Scottish Argonauts and Californians integrated into Anglo-American society, assuming a hybrid identity that was reshaped by the various processes of sojourning and settlement, this multifaceted identity was yet another signifier of diaspora. As Bueltmann et al have argued, ‘The diasporan experience is defined not by being pure, but by recognising and managing imprecise connections with the host society – by dealing with…the hyphenated, partial and contradictory reality of identities that are never zero-sum.’

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7 *Alta California*, 24 November 1867.
8 *Alta California*, 14 November 1867.
9 Berthoff, 'Under the Kilt’, 8.
10 The annual Caledonian Games of San Francisco still continue to this day.
connection to the homeland remained. The context of the California Gold Rush shows that no matter where Scots came from, despite the various influences from their previous places of settlement, they banded together again in a collective celebration of their old homeland in the new.
Appendix

4.1
Sacramento Households sharing related occupations with Scottish inhabitants
(Miners not included)

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</tr>
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<td>US</td>
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<td>121,18</td>
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<td>US</td>
</tr>
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<td>125,15</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>125,16</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page</td>
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<td>Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>130,6</td>
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<td>Ireland</td>
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<td>130,16</td>
<td>Scotland</td>
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<tr>
<td>133,10</td>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>Germany</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total number of Scots in Placerville</th>
<th>Total number of households with Scottish occupants</th>
<th>Total inhabitants in Placerville</th>
<th>Total households in Placerville</th>
<th>Total houses in Placerville</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>58</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>6841 (Scottish population 0.8%)</td>
<td>3462</td>
<td>297</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The enumerator did not provide consecutive household numbers, only by page, so this includes page numbers.
Source: *1850 United States Census*
### 4.3
1850 Mariposa County, Households with Scottish Occupants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Number in Census</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Scotland, Scotland, US</td>
<td>Miner, Miner, Miner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Birth Place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>345</td>
<td>England</td>
<td>US</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93</td>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>US</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94</td>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>US</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>115</td>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>US</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>144</td>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>155</td>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>US</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>222</td>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>US</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>244</td>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>Miner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>293</td>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>US</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>296</td>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>England</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Scotland</td>
<td>US</td>
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<tr>
<td>328</td>
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<td>US</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>329</td>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>US</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Name 1</td>
<td>Name 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>235</td>
<td>Scotland US US US US</td>
<td>Miner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>352</td>
<td>Scotland England</td>
<td>Miner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>354</td>
<td>England Scotland</td>
<td>Miner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>366</td>
<td>Scotland Scotland Scotland</td>
<td>Trader Miner Housekeeper (F) Child (2 y.o. F) Carpenter Carpenter Miner Merchant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>374</td>
<td>Scotland US US US Mexico</td>
<td>Miner None Miner Miner Miner Miner Cook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>375</td>
<td>Scotland US US England</td>
<td>Miner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>412</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>482</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>494</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>498</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>631</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>824</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of Scots in Mariposa</td>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total number of households with Scottish occupants</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total inhabitants in Mariposa County</strong></td>
<td>4383 (Scottish population 0.9%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total households in Mariposa County</strong></td>
<td>885</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: *1850 United States Census*
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