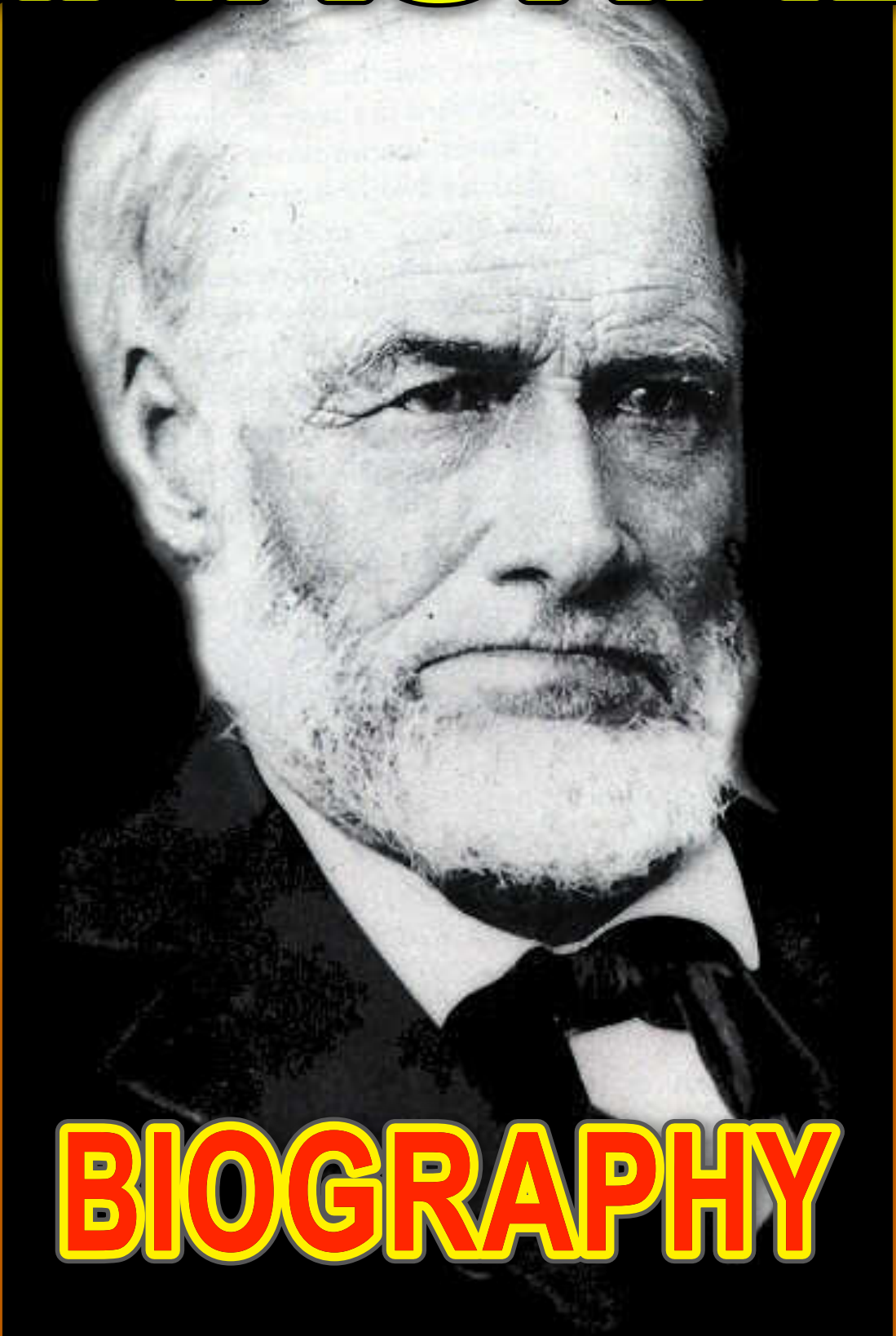


JAMES MARSHALL



BIOGRAPHY

JAMES MARSHALL

James Marshall had not set out to find gold when he began working in Coloma, California. Marshall was building a sawmill for his business partner, John Sutter, when he found tiny pieces of gold by accident. It happened on January 24 1848, when Marshall was inspecting a water channel near the mill. Below is how he later described the discovery. Remember that it is written in the language of the time, and some words might look unfamiliar at first.

"I picked up one or two pieces and examined them attentively; and having some general knowledge of minerals, I could not call to mind more than two which in any way resembled this: sulpheret of iron, very bright and brittle; and gold, bright yet malleable.

I then tried it between two rocks, and found that it could be beaten into a different shape, but not broken. I then collected four or five pieces and went up to Mr. Scott (who was working at the carpenters' bench making the mill wheel) with the pieces in my hand and said, 'I have found it.'

'What is it?' inquired Scott.
'Gold,' I answered.
'Oh! no,' replied Scott, 'that can't be.'

I said, 'I know it to be nothing else.' "

Understanding words

Before we can understand a story we have to know what all of the words mean. Let's try one...

a Write the sentence in which you found the word 'attentively'.

b From that sentence, suggest what 'attentively' means.

c Write a new sentence using the word 'attentively'.

d Use a dictionary to find words with a similar meaning (synonyms) to 'attentively'.

e Draw a small picture showing what you think 'attentively' means.

Try this for other words, too. 2

Finding key words

Next, we need to find the key words that tell us what the story is about...

Read the story and underline the key words. Write the most important of these key words in a list like the one below. Write next to it a word that means a similar thing (a synonym). You don't have to use all the spaces, but you should not use more.

Key word	Synonym (similar word)
Example: examined	inspected

Sequencing

Sequencing means getting the events in the right order. Write these sentences in the correct order, so they make sense.

It looked like the pieces of rock were either sulphuret of iron, or gold.

Marshall picked up the pieces of rock and looked at them closely.

The rock pieces changed shape when hammered, but did not break up.

One day Marshall was inspecting a water channel, and some shiny pieces of rock caught his eye.

Marshall knew from his test that he had found gold.

He tested the rock pieces to find out what they were by hammering them with a large rock.

Marshall was in California because he was building a sawmill for his business partner.

Get to the facts

1 What did James Marshall have knowledge of?

2 Which two minerals could the pieces be?

3 Who did James Marshall go up to?

4 What was Mr Scott doing?

5 What had James Marshall found?

Make a story...

When you read a description it often gives you ideas about how the event might be described differently.

Mr Scott

Imagine you are Mr Scott. You are working hard at the carpenters' bench when James Marshall comes over and shows you some shiny pieces of rock. He claims it is gold... (now complete the story)

Below is a plain text version for printing:

Understanding words:

- a Write the sentence in which you found the word 'attentively'.
- b From that sentence, suggest what 'attentively' means.
- c Write a new sentence using the word 'attentively'.
- d Use a dictionary to find words with a similar meaning (synonyms) to 'attentively'.
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Finding key words:

Read the story and underline the key words. Write the most important of these key words in a list. Write next to it a word that means a similar thing (a synonym).

For example:

Key word – examined

Synonym – inspected

Sequencing:

Write these sentences in the correct order, so they make sense:

It looked like the pieces of rock were either sulphur or iron, or gold.

Marshall picked up the pieces of rock and looked at them closely.

The rock pieces changed shape when hammered, but did not break up.

One day Marshall was inspecting a water channel, and some shiny pieces of rock caught his eye.

Marshall knew from his test that he had found gold.

He tested the rock pieces to find out what they were by hammering them with a large rock.

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Make a story...

Mr Scott

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Finding gold

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