**Podcast A** (15 minutes)

**Podcast preceding Lesson 2**

Oh Susanna music in background…

Dear Molly,

No, dear sister! I just read your letter, and I must respond immediately because I know you are worried about me. As sure as I am writing this letter, I declare, I am not crazy! I am excited to go to the gold diggings with my husband, even if it does mean going to the mountains during the winter. I didn’t travel all the way from New England just to live alone in San Francisco. I want to have some adventures too! In answer to another of your questions, yes, I do realize that there are snow-covered peaks that block passes, and rain-flooded rivers that clog the valleys with mud. You are too concerned… only *some* people have starved! And, I don’t get lonely, and certainly, I am never bored! No, I am not concerned about being one of the only young women in a camp full of rowdy miners; I can take care of myself!

There are *still* so many people showing up each day to find gold. Did you know that over 100,000 prospectors have passed through San Francisco on their way to the gold mines since gold was discovered in 1848?

A man named James Marshall is the one who discovered a large nugget over at Sutter’s Mill.

(Children’s voices in the background as they enter)

Oh, hello children! I have seen you playing between our houses, but we have never met. Come on over; I would like to meet you and introduce myself. My name is Louisa Clapp. I was just writing a letter to my sister.

Sarah: We’ve seen you writing a lot on your porch, and Jack said we shouldn’t bother you.

Louisa: No bother, I write a lot. Your folks may have read some of my essays published in the newspaper the Herald, or maybe some of my poems. Of course, I don’t use my real name. I use my pen name, Dame Shirley. I was just writing a letter to my sister; she is so upset that I will soon be going off to the mountains to a mining camp with my husband. But that is enough about me! I am pleased to meet you; tell me your names.

Jack: I’m Jack, and I came here to San Francisco by ship from Boston with our butler Praiseworthy, who is now my Dad. Then my Aunt Arabella and my sisters Constance and Sarah showed up and surprised us.

Sarah and Constance: Hello Mrs. Clapp, nice to meet you.

Louisa: The pleasure is mine.

Thomas: Hi, my name is Thomas and I live just down the street from you. I’m friends with Jack...and his sisters too, of course! My mom, dad, baby sister Sally and I have been here for almost a year. Our owners brought us here clear from Logtown, Mississippi as their slaves. Smith is their name. We walked behind the wagon, and herded cattle for them all the way out here to California. In fact, Sally was born in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, along the trail. The Smith’s didn’t know that California is a free state and we didn’t either! But Praiseworthy, who is a lawyer, said he would help my Dad. He filed a petition for us with the court, and now we are free! Yessiree, the court heard our case and gave us our freedom!

Louisa: Well good for you and your family. It sure helps that California is a free state. But we still have many problems to solve out here in the wild, wild, west!

Constance: Well, things are not the same here as in New England. People look different to me. I just saw some Chinese people; they wear clothes I have never seen before and big wide hats. They don’t look like the other miners.

Jack: I think that is why people treat them so poorly, because they are different than the people they are used to seeing. The way the Chinese are treated, I don’t know why they would even want to be here.

Louisa: Well, we have lots of people from other countries here ~ they are called “immigrants”. It seems people all over the entire world are caught up with gold fever! This community is very diverse, that is for sure! We could learn from the Chinese and all the immigrants, and should treat them with respect.

Constance: But I have noticed that Mexicans and Indians are not treated well either.

Jack: Or African Americans!

Constance: Praiseworthy says that foreigners cannot even testify in court if something goes wrong!

Thomas: My dad says that people here used to get along with each other because they thought there was enough gold for everyone. But now it just seems to me that everyone is grouchy. The miners and the farmers fight a lot! Oh, there’s Praiseworthy!

Children: Hi Praiseworthy!

Jack: This is Mrs. Clapp, we were just introducing ourselves to her. After all, we are neighbors.

Praiseworthy: It’s an honor to make your acquaintance, Mrs. Clapp.

Louisa: Louisa Clapp, or I’m also known as Dame Shirley. The pleasure is mine, Praiseworthy. Shall I call you Mr. Praiseworthy?

Praiseworthy: Please, just call me Praiseworthy ~ I like the name just fine. Dame Shirley? You are the writer ~ I certainly have enjoyed your essays and poems about the Gold Rush and life around here.

Louisa: Thank you, I’m glad you have read my articles. Yes, the children and I were just talking about some of the challenges our community is experiencing. With the population explosion, there is a lot we need to get under control. You have very bright children ~ you must be educating them well.

Praiseworthy: Thank you kindly, Mrs. Clapp. Yes, Jack and I came earlier, just like the rest of the folks hoping to strike it rich. After the girls arrived I decided that the diggings could use some book law. If we were going to make this a place for women and children, a man had to think of making a future. We could see that people were taking the law into their own hands!

Louisa: Now that our state has become part of the United States, we have a state Constitution and a United States Constitution. Do you think this will help improve our situation?

Praiseworthy: Well, I think it will take some civic action before we see positive changes. I’ve told the children, and so has their mother and my wife Arabella ~who teaches them daily, that they must understand the political, social and economic problems we are experiencing before they know how to address them. They must also understand our new government. We are working on it.

In fact children, I want to give you an important challenge: You are to research the facts about some of the issues we are having here so we can figure out what we can do to solve them. I’m anxious to hear of your discoveries!

Jack: How do you mean, Praiseworthy?

Praiseworthy: Well, I will assign each one of you an issue and you will do some reading and research. For example, I want to know more about the routes people traveled to get here to the Gold Rush country, the treatment of minorities, and the effects of mining. Also we need more information about law and order. And, another topic most people don’t have any knowledge of at all: the contributions of women who have come out west.

All of the children: Whew! That’s a lot! Man alive….

Sarah: And I can’t read, yit, Praiseworthy!

Praiseworthy: “Yet”, Sarah! I know you can do it, but you will all need to work together.

Constance: I guess we will have to talk to lots of people, and read the newspapers to collect some facts. Hmm…Do you think everything in the newspaper is a “fact”? Hey, we already know you, Mrs. Clapp…*you* are a woman, and came out west! Do you have problems we can help you solve, Mrs. Clapp?

Louisa: (Laughs) I would be happy to talk with you about my life here in California, Constance! But right now, I had better let all of you get to work. It sounds like you will be busy for a while. Be sure to let me know what you find out! Bye now!

Children and Praiseworthy: Goodbye, Mrs. Clapp.

Louisa: Sarah, is something wrong?

Sarah: Well, I don’t know what “wesuch” is…and I don’t read yit, I mean yet.

Mrs. Clapp: You know, Sarah, I told all of you that I’m a writer. Writers are story tellers. Would you like me to tell you a story? It might be helpful for your research.

Sarah: Oh yes, Mrs. Clapp!

Louisa: Well, once upon a time…

 James Sutter, an immigrant from Europe came to California to make his fortune. At that time, there was no talk of gold. Mr. Sutter became rich very quickly because of his businesses. He owned a large and busy trading

post called Sutter’s Fort. People came to trade for grapes and

wheat that Mr. Sutter’s workers grew. He owned lots of cattle

too, so I suppose he must have been selling meat. I don’t shop

much at Sutter’s Fort.

Mr. Sutter decided to build a sawmill on the American River, just

John Sutter

north of Sacramento. A sawmill would make the logs people

needed to build cabins, and he could make his fort even larger.

A man named James Marshall needed a job. He was a carpenter hired by Mr. Sutter to build the sawmill.

A few years ago, in 1848, my, oh, my Sarah, you were hardly more than a baby! Something very exciting happened at the mill. James Marshall walked down through the clear water and he saw a big nugget that he thought might be gold! He didn’t tell anyone about this. He hurried as fast as his legs could carry him to find his boss, over at Sutter’s Fort.



John Sutter and James Marshall were not sure that this nugget was actually gold at first, so they tested it. Sure enough, they discovered it really was gold!

The workers at the sawmill who knew about Marshall finding the gold nuggets all promised Sutter and Marshall that they would keep this

discovery of gold a secret.

They must have known that others would want the gold if they found out about it.

Well Sarah, you might imagine what happened. When the word got out, in a matter of a few days, all of John Sutter’s workers left to search for gold. Like everyone else, they caught gold fever! Oh, a bad fever it was… people raced to Sutter’s Mill, and refused to leave, even though it wasn’t their property. These “squatters” were frantically trying to find gold! James Sutter and James Marshall could not run the sawmill it was so crowded! They were knee deep in trouble! And so, that’s the story of how the Gold Rush began.

Yes, secrets are hard to keep. Sarah, have you ever told your brother or sister a secret they didn’t keep, even though they promised they wouldn’t tell a soul? (no answer)

Sarah? Sarah? Oh my…I’ve put the child to sleep!

<http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/people/i_r/marshall.htm>

Oh Susanna, music