



# The World Rushed In: The California Gold Rush Experience

*J. S. Holliday*

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When *The World Rushed In* was first published in 1981, the *Washington Post* predicted, “It seems unlikely that anyone will write a more comprehensive book about the Gold Rush.” Twenty years later, no one has emerged to contradict that judgment, and the book has gained recognition as a classic. As the *San Francisco Examiner* noted, “It is not often that a work of history can be said to supplant every book on the same subject that has gone before it.”

Through the diary and letters of William Swain--augmented by interpolations from more than five hundred other gold seekers and by letters sent to Swain from his wife and brother back home--the complete cycle of the gold rush is recreated: the overland migration of over thirty thousand men, the struggle to “strike it rich” in the mining camps of the Sierra Nevadas, and the return home through the jungles of the Isthmus of Panama.

In a new preface, the author reappraises our continuing fascination with the “gold rush experience” as a defining epoch in western--indeed, American--history.

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