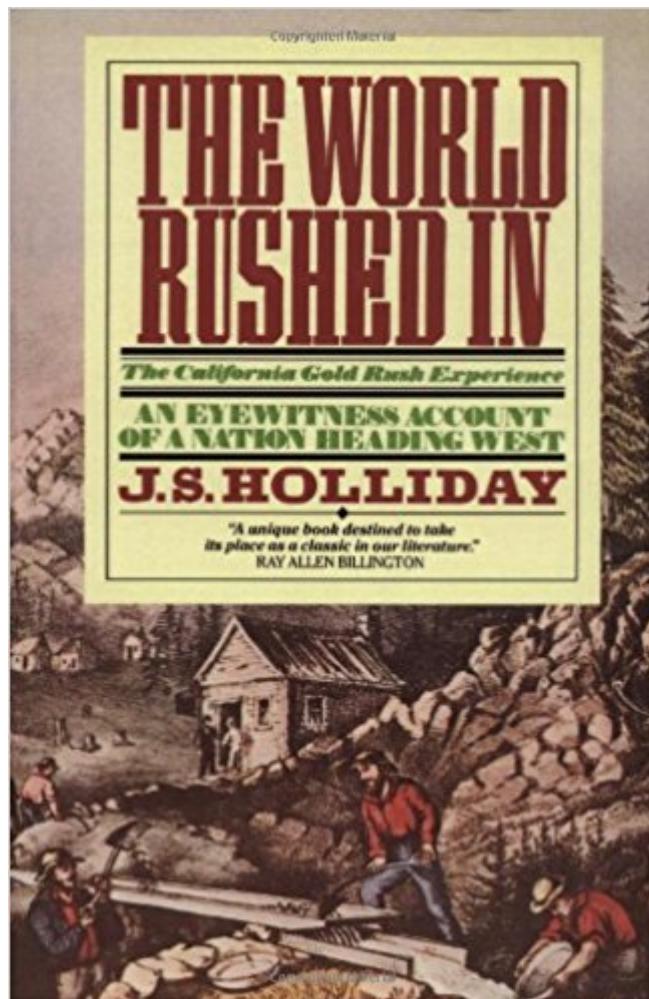


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World Rushed In



Synopsis

The World Rushed In is a pioneering achievement in historical writing, at once a personal, intimate story of one man's search for wealth and the definitive account of the California gold rush. Building upon the copious journals of gold seeker William Swain and enlarging upon his experiences through the imaginative interweaving of his diaries with the letters of hundreds of other '49ers, J. S. Holliday gives the reader a compelling opportunity to be part of one of America's most exciting and important adventures. Holliday captures the triumphs and tragedies of Swain and his compatriots in vivid, human terms, from the dangerous journey across the plains and mountains to the rugged mining camps of northern California. This is history at its very best.

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Customer Reviews

Howard Lamar Professor of History, Yale University A total, personal, vicarious experience...touching and powerful. -- Review

CHAPTER I A Migration of Strangers "Great talk about California gold region and I don't know hardly what to think of it. I have at times a mind to go...." In midsummer 1848 city and small-town newspapers in the United States told of political debate in Washington over a plan to prohibit the expansion of slavery into the West and specifically into the territories recently conquered from Mexico. Fearful of angering voters on both sides of the controversy, the candidates in the upcoming presidential election, Democrat Lewis Cass and Whig General Zachary Taylor, hero of the war with Mexico, avoided making any statements on the subject. In early August a more interesting story

began to appear. A St. Louis newspaper on the 8th printed part of an article brought overland from San Francisco, where it had appeared in the April 1 issue of the California Star. The news told of gold "collected at random and without any trouble" on the American River. A letter from California in the New York Herald, August 19, predicted "a Peruvian harvest of precious metals." Other major newspapers -- the Baltimore Sun, the New Orleans Daily Picayune -- printed similarly colorful letters and reports from "the gold regions." Editors across the country impatiently sought whatever news of California could be found. The New York Journal of Commerce ran a letter from the alcalde of Monterey which told of miners digging "eight to ten ounces a day." He concluded by characterizing the miners as "men who open a vein of gold just as coolly as you would a potato hill." On September 14 the Philadelphia North American printed another letter from the exuberant alcalde in which he boasted, "Your streams have minnows and ours are paved with gold." Across the country Americans read and talked of gold and felt increasingly envious of miners who could dig their fortunes in a matter of days or weeks. For farmers in Massachusetts or Kentucky and city folk in Cincinnati or Savannah discouraged by their prospects, for others restless after returning home from the war with Mexico, or those weary of marriage or fearful of growing debts, these first reports of gold and the resulting expectations of quick fortune might have been enough to send them on their way to El Dorado. But for most potential goldseekers in the thirty states, far more tangible evidence was needed to overcome doubts and scoffing neighbors -- evidence strong enough to justify to wives and creditors, parents and business partners the expense and the danger of the long journey to California. What the American people needed was an official endorsement of the California news. It came in December, directly from the two most trusted authorities in the nation: the President and the United States Army. Having received Colonel Mason's official report of the diggings, President James K. Polk was prepared to speak with authority and confidence about the astonishing events in California. Mason had sent dramatic evidence (the 230 ounces of gold) to back up his report, and he set forth his judgment of California: "I have no hesitation in saying there is more gold in the country drained by the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers than will pay the cost of the war with Mexico a hundred times over." Thus encouraged and more than willing to find additional justification for the recent war of conquest with Mexico, President Polk on December 5, 1848, delivered his message to the second session of the 30th Congress. Of the news from California, he stated: "The accounts of the abundance of gold in that territory are of such extraordinary character as would scarcely command belief were they not corroborated by authentic reports of officers in the public service." With this endorsement of the seemingly incredible, with the gold on display at the War Department, and with the full details of Mason's report published

throughout the nation, skepticism gave way to unrestrained enthusiasm. After December 5 and through the winter and spring of 1849, there appeared in literally every newspaper in the country continuing reports of the ever-increasing emigration to California. Whether in New York or Iowa, editors wrote of the national drama in florid phrases and excited tones, as if the wonder and impact of the news might not otherwise be fully appreciated. On January 11, 1849, the New York Herald trumpeted its judgment: "The spirit of emigration which is carrying off thousands to California so far from dying away increases and expands every day. All classes of our citizens seem to be under the influence of this extraordinary mania....If the government were under the necessity of making a levy of volunteers to the amount of two or three hundred thousand men for any purpose in California, the ranks would be filled in less than three months....What will this general and overwhelming spirit of emigration lead to? Will it be the beginning of a new empire in the West, a revolution in the commercial highways of the world, a depopulation of the old States for the new republic on the shores of the Pacific? "Look at the advertising columns of the Herald or any other journal, and you will find abundant evidence of the singular prevalence of this strange movement and agitation in favor of gold digging on the Sacramento. Every day men of property and means are advertising their possessions for sale, in order to furnish them with means to reach that golden land. Every city and town is forming societies either to cross the Isthmus or to double Cape Horn.... "Poets, philosophers, lawyers, brokers, bankers, merchants, farmers, clergymen -- all are feeling the impulse and are preparing to go and dig for gold and swell the number of adventurers to the new El Dorado. "The spirit which has been thus awakened in this country by the discovery of the gold mines in California and by the authentic facts published concerning them under the authority of the government in Washington exceeds everything in the history of commercial adventure that has occurred in many ages and can only be paralleled by that which sprang up in Spain and other parts of Europe by the discovery of the mineral wealth of Mexico and Peru by the expeditions of Cortez and Pizarro." More influential than such editorial fervor, what nurtured hopes on farms and in villages and challenged the faint-hearted were personal reports direct from California -- letters sent home by settlers who had become California's first gold miners. Eagerly sought by local newspapers and then reprinted again and again by dailies and weeklies in other states, these statements written in the language of neighbors told of digging for gold along rivers called the American, Feather, Yuba and Mokelumne, where in a matter of months young men using methods that sounded simple, even haphazard, gathered fortunes totaling thousands, tens of thousands of dollars. A letter from a man named McClellan written to his family in Jackson, Missouri, concluded: "You know Bryant, the carpenter who used to work for Ebenezer Dixon, well, he has dug more gold

in the last six months than a mule can pack." In family councils at day's end, in churchyards after the Sunday sermon, in country stores and city saloons, men used Bryant's triumph or similar reports to argue in favor of going to California. Week by week the news gathered force, more men believed and their families agreed that if they could get to California success would be assured, success that required no knowledge of mining and only a few months' work. As the frugality of generations gave way to a contagion of optimism and ambition, responsible family men found their jobs and prospects unrewarding when set against all that California could provide. They figured how much they could bring home after a year's sojourn in the gold fields and justified the cost of the journey and the length of their absence as an investment that would guarantee financial security. And it was not just ambitious men who dreamed. In January 1849 the wife of a struggling shopkeeper wrote to her parents: "Joseph has borrowed the money to go; but I am full of bright visions that never filled my mind before, because at the best of times I have never thought of much beyond a living; but now I feel confident of being well off." In East Coast ports, shipowners announced sailing dates for steamers, schooners, brigs and old whaling ships resurrected to meet the sudden demand. Newspaper advertising columns announced the sale of businesses by men "overtaken by the gold fever." Manufacturers of money belts, tents, India-rubber wading boots and clothing, medicines, and gold testing and smelting devices proclaimed their products essential to success in the land of gold. And inventors attested to the infallibility of their patented mining machinery, including a "hydro-centrifugal Chrysolyte or California Gold Finder" and an "Archimedes Gold Washing Machine." Equally imaginative entrepreneurs announced an "aerial locomotive" capable of carrying fifty to one hundred passengers from New York to California "pleasantly and safely" in three days at a cost of \$200 -- and they assured their readers that two hundred tickets had already been sold. Those more aware of the realities of geography and commerce knew that the journey would require many weeks -- even months -- of arduous, possibly dangerous travel by wilderness trails or ocean voyages. For those on the Atlantic Coast with seafaring traditions, the ocean routes seemed the only way to go. For forty years New England merchants and whalers had sent their ships around Cape Horn, an 18,000-mile voyage, to the coves and harbors of California, there to trade or obtain fresh food and water. This commercial tradition helped build confidence in the Cape route (despite the distance and four to six months on shipboard), so much so that all but twenty-two of the 124 gold-rush companies that organized in Massachusetts during 1849 sailed around the Horn, taking a total of 6,067 emigrants from that state alone. In contrast to the time that would be spent on board a ship sailing around South America, goldseekers could reach California in a matter of weeks by taking a steamer from New York to the town of Chagres on the Atlantic side of the Isthmus of

Panama. From there it took two or three days through dense jungle to reach the ancient Pacific port of Panama City, where another line of steamers tried to accommodate the ever-pressing demand for passage to San Francisco. If they sailed from New York to Panama in January, February or even March, they could be in the diggings before the first overland emigrants even set out from the western frontier. In all, about 6,500 emigrants took the Panama route in 1849; but disease, exorbitant costs, overcrowding and too few steamers on the Pacific route caused delays of weeks and sometimes months throughout that first year of the rush. For those who lived inland and had farming as a background, the ocean voyage seemed fearful, the overland trails practical, even familiar. The well-known history of travel from the Missouri frontier to Santa Fe and to Oregon increased their confidence. During the winter and early spring of 1849 tens of thousands of men throughout the United States prepared for the overland trek that would begin with the first good weather in April or May. In cities and country villages they organized joint-stock companies, each member paying an equal amount to provide funds for the company's purchase of wagons, teams and provisions. Organized as the Pittsburgh and California Enterprise Company, the Illinois and California Mining Company, the Sagamore and Sacramento Mining and Trading Company and many more, goldseekers joined together more as ambitious businessmen than as carefree adventurers. In Ithaca, New York, a company of fifty men, with a capital of \$25,000 and a credit of \$25,000 more at a local bank, planned to leave the western frontier in early April and reach the gold country in June. There, as the Ithaca Journal reported on March 21, 1849, "they will select a suitable location, erect cabins and proceed to rake in the dust." In addition to reporting the financial arrangements of the overland companies, the local newspapers often printed each company's membership lists and their lengthy constitutions, or "Rules of Regulation," which more often than not prohibited swearing, drinking and violation of the Sabbath. Some companies issued uniforms, elected officers with military titles and drilled their members. Some purchased ships which carried cargoes of supplies and trade goods around Cape Horn to San Francisco, there to await the members' arrival by overland trail. One company included in its equipage eleven "gold finders" and a machine for making gold coins. To raise money to join an overland company or to purchase a wagon, team and other "California fixings," goldseekers mortgaged or sold homes and farms, took out life savings, or borrowed from friends and fathers-in-law. The financial impact of this money raising caused concern in several states, with editors lamenting the loss of capital withdrawn from the local economy to support the sudden needs of men afflicted with gold fever. On March 27 a newspaper in Ann Arbor, Michigan, estimated that \$30,000 had been taken out of Washtenaw County alone, with each man spending an average of \$400 to pay for his outfit and transportation to

the frontier. Many had to find additional money to provide for their wives and children until their return. A man in Ann Arbor, father of six daughters, sold his home to his brother for \$1,200; a farmer on February 24, 1849, sold his acreage to his father-in-law for \$1,300. More often, such funds came from mortgages, but some would-be goldseekers found that a mortgage was not always enough -- they had to enter into a contract to share equally with the moneylender the gold that would be found in California. Such contracts suggest the contagion of optimism that spring of 1849. Ignorant of guns and camping life except for what they had heard or read in legend and literature, thousands of city and rural men studied John C. FrÃ©mont's famous Report of the Exploring Expedition to the Rocky Mountains in the Year 1842 and to Oregon and North California in the Years 1843-'44 and the accounts of other western travelers. In part motivated by such reading and by the traditional fear of Indians, these emigrants purchased a remarkable number of guns, an impulse encouraged by the U.S. War Department's February 1849 offer to sell pistols, rifles and ammunition at cost to California (and Oregon) emigrants. In further preparation for their long journey, they probably bought one of the several "emigrant guides" issued that spring to tell the greenhorns how to find their way through the vastness of mountains and deserts. These publications, along with newspaper articles describing "Travel in the Far West," gave the goldseekers advice on what equipment and food they should purchase, whether oxen or mules made the best teams, where the Indians would be most dangerous. There were even tables of distances which set down the specific mileages from point to point -- water sources, river crossings, major topographic features. All this information reflected the fact that the trails from the western frontier across the wilderness half of the continent had been explored and traveled for many years -- by fur trappers and traders to Santa Fe since 1822, and to Oregon since 1812. Exploration or trailblazing would not be necessary for the crowds of inexperienced goldseekers or Californians as they were often called. They had a choice of two primary routes: the Santa Fe Trail through territory newly acquired by conquest from Mexico, with various branches leading to southern California; or the far more publicized Oregon-California Trail, which since 1841 had been traveled by settlers headed for the Willamette or Sacramento valleys. Both of these well-established trails started at the major outfitting towns on the frontier, Independence and St. Joseph. The goldseekers came to the frontier from every state in the Union, even from East Coast cities where the sea routes would have a strong appeal and from southern states where the routes through Texas and Mexico were open year-round. In all, at least 30,000 men, with possibly 1,000 women, traveled to the Missouri frontier. Never before had this country, or any other, experienced such an exodus of civilians, all heavily armed or intending to purchase rifles and pistols, mostly young men on the road for the first time, many organized into formal companies,

others alone or with a few friends from their neighborhood. Impatient, curious, somewhat fearful of the uncertainties and dangers ahead, yet buoyed by their common expectations, they were not unlike a great volunteer army traveling from all parts of the nation to mobilize at the frontier. Many who lived on farms and in villages and cities in Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa and Missouri packed their gear in their wagons and rolled down the nearest road, headed for the Missouri river towns. Thousands from farther east began their journey on river steamers down the Ohio and Mississippi, with typical cost \$9 per man (including stateroom) for seven days from Pittsburgh to St. Louis. Others traveled west on the great Erie Canal across northern New York or across Pennsylvania on the Portage and Canal System. On Great Lakes steamers they often experienced their first bout of seasickness, while from East Coast cities they rode in crowded railroad cars to connect with river and canal transportation to the West. Along the way some of these men kept their promise to write home, and thus began a dynamic process by which the entire nation was emotionally involved in the rush to California. Scores of thousands of Americans who stayed home -- wives, parents, sweethearts, relatives, friends who doubted the California stories, business partners and bankers who had helped finance the enterprise -- received, shared, or read in local newspapers letters sent back by the goldseekers. The first of these letters reached homes in March and April; they continued to come from St. Louis, then from the frontier, and later from military posts in the Far West; some from the Mormons' embryo city at Salt Lake, and finally from California. For some families, the letters came for years from husbands and sons who could not give up their quest for gold. Through these letters (and after the men came home, through their diaries) America saw the great West -- Indians, buffalo, deserts, the Rocky Mountains -- for the first time through hometown eyes and vicariously experienced life in the Sierra mining camps and in the astonishing cities of Marysville, Sacramento, Sonora and San Francisco. One of the thousands who set out that spring of 1849 promising to write letters and to keep a diary was a man named William Swain, aged twenty-seven, from a farm near the village of Youngstown, New York, north of Niagara Falls. He had read of California's gold in the local newspapers. By February, California had become the focus of his future. Swain's past, his family history and his pre-gold-rush prospects were representative of a large class of Americans who lived a rural life as comfortable inheritors of their fathers' frontier enterprise. Swain's father, Isaac, born in England in 1759, emigrated to eastern Pennsylvania in 1794 and finally settled in western New York in 1805 with his first wife and children on eighty acres near a cluster of cabins later known as Youngstown. After serving two enlistments in the Army during the War of 1812, he returned in 1814 to find his farm had been burned and pillaged by British troops. With \$200 he received from the state of New York "for the relief of the late sufferers on the

western frontier," he built a cabin near the ruins of his old home, and there two sons were born to his second wife, Patience: George in 1819, and William in 1821. With summer help from his boys, Isaac slowly reestablished his farm, and in the spring of 1836 he hired two masons to help with the construction of a new home. Using cobblestones George and William had gathered and red clay from the shores of the Niagara River, the masons, sons and helping neighbors labored all summer under the supervision of Isaac, aged seventy-seven. With the two-story house completed before the first snow, Isaac imbedded in the hearth a relic found in the ashes of the first home he had built on this site -- the door to the Franklin stove that had warmed his first wife and children. In 1838 Isaac died, leaving the farm to Patience, George and William. In April 1840, William graduated from Lewiston Academy. Having given up his military ambitions, he studied for his teacher's certificate and spent his winters as a schoolmaster in Niagara County. At his school's spelling bee in the spring of 1846, he met Sabrina Barrett, dark-haired, slim, twenty years old. A seventh-generation American (her ancestors settled in Connecticut Colony in 1640), she had graduated from Leroy Academy in Theresa, New York, east of Youngstown. Through the summer of 46 William often left the work of the farm to George so that he could ride his horse to the village of Lewiston and up the ridge to the Barrett farm. There he courted Sabrina. Often they walked through her father's fields to a secluded place which commanded a sweeping view of the Niagara River Gorge and north across the valley to Youngstown? They talked of their future, and William told Sabrina of his and George's plans to enlarge the Swain farm, plant scores more peach trees and become major farmers in the valley. Married July 6, 1847, William and Sabrina moved into the cobblestone house with Patience and George; and there on June 18, 1848, Sabrina gave birth to Eliza Crandall Swain. Through the summer of 1848 William and George worked the farm, repairing fences around their fields and clearing part of the surrounding forest to enlarge their orchard. George's ambitions in Niagara County politics took him with increasing frequency to Buffalo and the towns of Niagara Falls and Lockport during the political campaign. He brought back the local newspapers and sometimes New York City papers, which were shared with neighbors when they came to the Swain home, a center for political discussion? Following the November elections, the newspapers and neighborhood talk returned to more mundane affairs. Then on December 5, 1848, President Polk delivered his endorsement of the report from California. The newspapers in Buffalo, Niagara Falls and Lockport carried the President's message. During the weeks thereafter they reprinted whatever the New York papers reported about California. On January 26, 1849, the Buffalo Morning Express published an editorial entitled "The Gold Excitement": "We are quite sure that it is the duty of newspapers to use all the means in their power to repress rather than stimulate the prevailing excitement on the subject

of gold in California. But we must publish all the authentic intelligence from that region and of what avail is sedate or sage or admonitory comment in the face of the glittering, dazzling news? According to the New York papers the inhabitants of that city are wild with excitement. The New York Express says 'We have seen in our day manias, fevers and excitements of all sorts, but it can easily be said never were people so worked up, so delirious as they were here and elsewhere yesterday when they read the gilded telegraphic dispatches from Washington chronicling the reception there of intelligence from El Dorado....The fact is, this last gold news has unsettled the minds of even the most cautious and careful among us.'" The January 30 issue of the New York Herald carried a dispatch datelined Liverpool, England: "The gold excitement here and in London exceeds anything ever before known or heard of. Nothing is heard or talked about but the new El Dorado. Companies are organizing in London in great numbers for the promised land. Fourteen vessels have already been chartered." Most eagerly awaited through the winter of 1849 were the astonishing reports direct from California. The Buffalo Morning Express, February 8, published a letter dated "Monterey, California, November 16, 1848" which explained that "gold is found pure in the native soil here and is worth more, just as it is taken from the ground, than an equal weight of coined gold from any mint. It occurs in the form of small leaves or irregular masses....The stratum of gold is unbroken and extends over a tract 120 miles in length and seventy miles in breadth." Such was the dazzling news that appeared in newspapers during January and February 1849. The Buffalo Daily Courier, February 7, ran a column with the heading "Ho! for California" which advised that "another company of emigrants to California started from our city on Thursday evening. We learn that several sober-minded citizens, businessmen not before 'suspected,' are also making preparations to start for the gold country." Day after day columns in the newspapers carried headings that read "Routes to California," "From the Gold Country," and "Gold Regions: Highly Important to Emigrants!" Here were discussed the best routes by land and sea, the proper equipage and the cost of a "California outfit." As well, there were reports of success direct from the gold fields. One such letter advised: "Many men who began last June [1848] to dig for gold with capital of \$50 can now show \$5,000 to \$15,000." In the stores and streets of Youngstown, Lewiston and other farming towns in western New York, as in cities and villages across the nation, passing conversation turned from the weather, farming or business problems to the thrilling subject of gold in the Sacramento Valley. At the Swain farm George and William came in from their chores and talked at dinner and later before the fire with Sabrina and their mother about the latest newspaper reports. Through George's political contacts and from salesmen and others arriving by the Erie Canal at Lockport, sixteen miles to the east, they kept informed of the latest reports and rumors from

Washington and New York City. News from western states, from the frontier and St. Louis, came with passengers on lake steamers that docked each day in Buffalo from Chicago. Given the Swain brothers' educational background and the fact that since student days they had read the novels of Sir Walter Scott and the poems of Wordsworth, had memorized long passages from Shakespeare and each Sunday had read from the Bible, it was natural for them to turn to books for further information about California and the West. One of the most widely circulated books of the time, *What I Saw in California* by Edwin Bryant, published in 1846, told in vivid detail what it was like to travel through the vast territory which most maps called "The Great American Desert." But more than any other account of trails and travel in the western wilderness, John C. FrÃƒÂ©mont's Report spoke to thousands of families about life in the West -- about the Platte River, Fort Laramie, South Pass and other places that a few months later would be seen by men whose reading of FrÃƒÂ©mont had helped them decide to go. The Swains owned a copy of FrÃƒÂ©mont, and they must have turned its pages many times during January and February. Their talk centered ever more sharply on William's growing determination to go to California on the overland trail. Sabrina pleaded with him to stay home -- reminded him of the needs and demands of Eliza, not yet one year old. She turned to Patience Swain for support. But the mother left the decision to her sons. George favored William's ambitions, and it was his willingness to take full responsibility for the family and the farm that freed William to plan his journey. With George he figured the costs of getting to California and the equipment that would be needed, and most important, they talked of who should accompany William on this dangerous expedition. As the older brother, a bachelor, a man of spirit and imagination, George would have been the ideal partner. But someone had to stay home to watch over Sabrina and her baby and their elderly mother and maintain the farm. In any case, George had hopes of a political appointment through his Democratic friends. First, William and George approached their friend Frederick Bailey, Youngstown resident, aged thirty, married and father of a young son. He was eager to join William. Then they met with their neighbors on River Road, Dr. Benjamin Root and his wife Elizabeth. They agreed that their son, John, nineteen and a bachelor, could go. A few days later a longtime friend, Michael Hutchinson, came to Youngstown for one of his periodic visits from his farm south of Buffalo. A widower without children, he would be the oldest of the group, forty-three. To reach the Missouri frontier, Swain and his three companions decided to take passage from Buffalo by lake steamer to Detroit, and then by rail and canal boat to connect with river steamers down the Illinois River and on to St. Louis. After considering the difficulties of taking their wagons and supplies from their homes, they concluded it would be far less expensive and much quicker to buy wagons, teams and necessary equipment and food at the frontier. The

newspapers encouraged this plan with reports that merchants in the frontier towns of Independence and St. Joseph had large stocks of tents, kettles, rifles, flour, rice, wagons, mules and oxen, and all other "California fixings." Swain and his family knew that when he left home he would be exposed to dangers that could cause sickness, injury or death. Of primary concern was the ubiquitous pestilence cholera. Little was known about the disease in 1849. Its cause was a mystery, its treatment a matter of choice. The suggested causes varied from "evening mists" to "a lack of electricity in the victim's system." The preventives were equally imaginative, including "Captain Paynter's Egyptian Cure for Asiatic Cholera" and "Dally's and Connell's Magic Pain Extractor." Of course cholera might attack Sabrina or George or Patience, even Eliza, while William traveled westward; but somehow the danger seemed greater for him, far from home, in a migration of strangers. And there was news of cholera on Mississippi River boats and in St. Louis. There were other dangers, more subtle, more ill-defined, but of great concern. William's moral health might be undermined during his absence by the influence of new companions, the snares and lures of sinful people and places. Without moral support and the elevating influence of his family and their religious commitment, without regular reading of the Bible, William might succumb to temptations of gambling, swearing, drinking, worse. Patience and Sabrina admonished him to read his Bible every day. To that end, his mother gave him a Bible with certain pages marked for his special attention. Of importance almost equal to Bible reading, William would keep a diary -- a daily record of his life and all that happened. This discipline would serve as a reminder of family obligations and shared values and would attest to his purpose to return home. When the diary was read by his family, his adventures would be relived through its pages. Meantime, there would be letters Swain promised to write to Sabrina, George and his mother, to be sent home during the journey to the frontier, and especially from St. Louis and Independence. Then once on the trail, he might be able to send letters from one of the military forts in the Indian Territory. Many thousands left home the spring of 1849 promising to keep diaries, write down each day what they had seen and what had happened. Setting out for the far side of the continent, they shared not only financial ambitions, but as well a sense of history in the making, a sense that they were part of an epochal event, with the whole nation looking on. Their diaries would record crossing the fabled Rocky Mountains, digging gold from the streams of the Sierra Nevada, and they would return home not only wealthy, but distinguished by their participation in an event that commanded everyone's attention and respect. Each man's diary would be a history of the whole story, to be shared by family and grandchildren. And yet once on their way, most soon gave up their assigned task. To find time and a quiet place to write at the end of each day became ever more difficult. Furthermore, as the weeks passed their

experiences seemed too big, too demanding, to be told in daily diary entries. Possibly this sense of frustration and inadequacy was best expressed by a doctor from Michigan who wrote to his wife in July, 1849: "It is impossible for me to give you an account of the interesting incidents that occur on this route, but when I have an opportunity I will give you enough to satisfy you that 1849 will ever be a memorable epoch in the history of our country. Neither the Crusades nor Alexander's expedition to India (all things considered) can equal this emigration to California." William Swain did persevere; he wrote each day in his diary and wrote letters home as well. Possibly his journalistic ambition came from his education, his reading of history. But most of all he was motivated by George. William felt a sense of obligation to his older brother, not only because he had agreed to stay home to protect the family and manage the farm, but also because William knew how much George would have enjoyed the adventure of journeying to California. So William had George in mind each day when he took time to write the record that would later give his brother a chance to share the great experience. And too, William wrote his diary for Sabrina, so that she would know how her husband, though absent for so long, had suffered and struggled for her well-being. As the newspapers through the winter had reported what was known of California, now in March and April they reported the news of thousands of men leaving cities, villages and farms all over the nation. Public attention focused on the Californians, who carried with them the hopes and ambitions of so many who would wait for their return. Like soldiers off to do their duty, with a sense of excitement and adventure, the gold-seekers left from train stations in Philadelphia and Baltimore, from docks in Boston and New Orleans, from river landings in Pittsburgh and Memphis, from barnyards in Michigan knew how much George would have enjoyed the adventure of journeying to California. So William had George in mind each day when he took time to write the record that would later give his brother a chance to share the great experience. And too, William wrote his diary for Sabrina, so that she would know how her husband, though absent for so long, had suffered and struggled for her well-being. As the newspapers through the winter had reported what was known of California, now in March and April they reported the news of thousands of men leaving cities, villages and farms all over the nation. Public attention focused on the Californians, who carried with them the hopes and ambitions of so many who would wait for their return. Like soldiers off to do their duty, with a sense of excitement and adventure, the gold-seekers left from train stations in Philadelphia and Baltimore, from docks in Boston and New Orleans, from river landings in Pittsburgh and Memphis, from barnyards in Michigan and Alabama. For many, especially those in organized companies setting out from cities, the goodbyes were eased by sounds and colors of pomp and circumstance -- flags waving, bands blaring and speeches and editorials that sent the boys west with hearty wishes for

their "success on the Pacific shores." Wednesday morning, April 11, William Swain embraced his mother and then Sabrina one last time, shook hands with George and climbed onto Dr. Root's wagon. Riding down the River Road, he looked back at his family standing in front of the cobblestone house; he passed the orchard he had helped plant as a boy; he rode away from his past in search of gold. John Root and Frederick Bailey rode with William as Dr. Root drove the two horses thirty-two miles to Buffalo where they would meet Michael Hutchinson. That night in a hotel room near the Buffalo waterfront William started to write in his diary, a task he would attend to almost daily until his plight in the Sierra Nevada would force him to give up the effort 203 days later.

April 11, 1849. All my things being ready last night, I rose early and commenced packing them in my trunk, preparatory to leaving home on my long journey, leaving for the first time my home and dear friends with the prospect of absence from them for many months and perhaps for years. Among these are an affectionate wife to whom I have been married less than two years, and an infant daughter ten months old, to both of whom I am passionately attached; an aged mother who from her great age -- seventy-one years -- much probability arises of never seeing again on this side of the grave, to which is added the painful reflection that she is now under the charge of the family physician from a sickness brought on by taking cold; and last but not least, an older brother to whom I am deeply attached, not only by the common ties of brotherhood alone, but also by a long course of years of common hardship, disappointment and neglect, and by a high moral and mental character, a manly and dignified deportment. Being two years older than myself, he has been my adviser and guardian from youth up, at once a father and a brother. All these complicated ties of affection were broken by the sad stroke of separation. I had fortified my mind by previous reflection to suppress my emotions, as is my custom in all cases where emotion is expected. But this morning I learned by experience that I am not master of my feelings in all cases. I parted from my family completely unable to restrain my emotions and left them all bathed in tears, even my brother, whose energy of mind I never saw fail before. I left home at eight o'clock with Mr. Bailey and the two Mr. Roots and arrived in Buffalo at half past four in the afternoon. We had bad roads and altogether a gloomy day of it, the thoughts of leaving home frequently filling my bosom with emotions which I was unable to suppress. This evening reason has assumed governing power, and I calm my feelings with the reflection that duty and the interest of my family call for this separation. I feel that I have left behind all that I hold dear, and henceforth the thought of those loved ones will call up pleasing reflections. Buffalo, April 11, 1849 Dear Sabrina, George, and Mother, I am now in my bedroom with John and Dr. Root at Huff's Hotel. We had a good but slow passage down here today, arriving at about half past four with time to do considerable looking around. We can get gold, plenty

of it, for 1 percent. I have bought a trunk for \$3 with two straps on it. I have priced all the rifles in town and find that I can get one that will answer for about \$15 and good revolvers at the same price. I have had my likeness taken and cased for \$2 and shall send it to Sabrina by Dr. Root, with a token of fond remembrance. My coats I have not looked after yet, it being darkish when I got through at the daguerrian rooms, but shall see to it probably before Dr. Root leaves for home. Mr. Hutchinson bought a double-barrel fowling piece for \$18 to take along. We intend to leave here for Detroit at ten o'clock tomorrow on the London, cabin passage \$5. ["About twenty steamers of the largest class run between Buffalo and Chicago, besides many others of less size to Detroit and the other intermediate ports on Lake Erie. There is a steamer for Chicago generally every evening at seven."] I have been in better spirits on our route today than I expected. After mastering my feelings, I have felt generally lighthearted, with the exception of now and then a sad thought. I have no concern of mind for myself, I shall get along finely. But I have much concern for Mother's health. I hope that when I get to Independence, I shall receive news of her recovery. Dear Sabrina, I am afraid that your feelings will be too severe upon you, unwell as you already are, and that you will be taken down altogether. But I hope that you will govern your feelings by reason and that I shall hear at Independence that you enjoy yourself tolerably well. Kiss Little Cub for Papa. Take care of yourself, my dear, for I am coming back again with a pocket full of rocks! Dear George, I think it quite necessary that you should feed the curly heifer a few messes of potatoes and turnips. Our company are in good spirits and expect a pleasant trip tomorrow. I hope to be seasick, as I think it would be good for me. I shall have a buckskin belt made in the morning in which to carry my "yellow boys." I will write from Detroit. Do not fail to write to me at Independence, and Sabrina must write too. You can write tomorrow and then every day until you think that your letters would not get there until the 4th or 5th of May, and then I can know all about home. Yours truly, William April 12. Last night stayed at Huff's Hotel, and this morning commenced completing my outfit. I was with the rest of the company busily engaged until twelve o'clock, when the outfit was completed. [Delayed by these activities, Swain and his companions missed their planned departure on the London.] At half past two o'clock we took passage for Detroit on the steamer Arrow. The lake is very smooth, and the boat shoots along like an arrow, and as she leaves far in the distance objects familiar to me and bears me on to those that are strange, I feel that she bears me and my destiny. April 13. This morning we are coasting along the banks of the lake in the state of Ohio. Stopped at Cleveland, Sandusky, and Toledo. Steamer Arrow, Lake Erie April 13, 1849 Dear George, Here we are going along among the numerous islands of the upper end of Lake Erie with a fine rolling billow, over which the steamer bounds like an Arrow. I have just been trying to make myself seasick, but cannot.

Our boat is the swiftest on the lake, passing those which left Buffalo six hours before we did. Our party are all well, none being seasick, although some on the boat are. We left Buffalo yesterday at three-thirty o'clock after finishing our outfits, which occupied us very busily through the forepart of the day. I obtained a good outfit, notwithstanding my money was as we supposed rather short. But I have plenty left, I think, for the journey, having \$250 in my pocket, which I intend to take particular care of as I am convinced that I can make better use of it than any common pickpocket. My outfit cost as follows: One trunk with two straps \$ 3.00 One good, heavy cloth frock coat \$ 6.00 One heavy pilot-cloth overcoat \$ 5.00 These coats I had at my own price, and it was a good bargain. Both are of middling-fine wool and well made, and could not have been bought in Niagara Falls for less than \$16. Percentage on \$250.00 in gold \$2.50 One rifle and two pair [bullet] molds \$16.00 One revolver, one steel rod, two pair molds, one large powder flask, and five boxes of caps \$14.00 Suit of oilcloth \$2.25 One pair of blankets \$3.50 One pair of gloves \$1.00 One cap \$.25 One quart of alcohol \$.18 Tavern bill \$1.00 Passage to Detroit, in the cabin \$3.00 I obtained laudanum and some other notions with the assistance of Mr. Hutchinson. Many articles which I neglected he" has in abundance.... We have touched at all ports. Cleveland has a fine harbor made at great expense by the government. The piers are made of large-cut stone, forming fine stone wharves with cast-iron spikes one foot in diameter.... We are now, at dusk, within five miles of Toledo. As it is dark, I shall not see much of the rest of the route as we shall be in Detroit by twelve o'clock where I shall mail this. Our passage up the lake has been very pleasant. We have all our things snugly packed in a trunk apiece; have nothing but my overcoat out of the trunk and have packed Mr. Hutchinson's double-barrel fowling piece in with my rifle. So we have nothing to trouble us, plenty of leisure time, live on the best, first-rate sport and fun. Our passage from Detroit to Chicago will be \$5. At Chicago I shall endeavor to see Dr. McArthur [family friend from Youngstown]. Mr. Bailey sends his love to his family and says he is well and in good spirits. And by the by, George, we are all true philosophers -- our polar star is ahead, saddening thoughts of home do none any good, but deprive us of enjoyment. Therefore, we take the world gaily and have our laughs and fun. We find many persons on the way to California, and the crowd at Independence may raise the prices there. I feel concern for Mother's health and am anxious to hear from her. Sabrina must take her comfort and have as much fun with little Eliza as possible. George, you must kiss Mother for me. And Sabrina must kiss Little Cub for me. And you must go and see Mrs. Bailey and Mrs. Root. If anything occurs between here and Detroit, I will note it before I mail this. I will write from Chicago. O! George -- kiss Harriet for me. John Root sends his love to his mother and says he is getting along well and will write from St. Louis or Independence. Your brother, William P.S. We are now at Toledo wharf. If

you can read this, "you'll do," as it is written in a blow. April 14. This morning we awoke and found ourselves in Detroit City. ["The dock is full of hotel runners with their cries....Almost the first thing that meets your eye is the black roof of the locomotive house...built of brick and about 600 feet long."] We left the Arrow early in the morning to take our passage on the [Michigan Central] railroad. But after learning that the fare to Niles, 180 miles to the west, was \$6; that we would have to travel from there by stage forty miles to New Buffalo and thence from there by steamboat to Chicago for \$6 more; that it would take three days on that route; and that the cars and boats did not run on Sunday, we concluded to take the lake route on account of its cheapness. The steamer Michigan was to leave at two o'clock and would carry us cabin passage for \$6 and complete the route in four days. We concluded that \$6 or \$8 saved in one day was better than gold-digging, and we took our passage on the steamer. While in Detroit I expended 91 cents for a compass and \$1 for a bottle of sarsaparilla. [As advertised, this remedy "purifies the blood and cures the scrofula, rheumatism, stubborn ulcers, dyspepsia...liver complaint...consumption, female complaints, loss of appetite, debility, etc."] We left Detroit at two o'clock, passed through the Detroit River, Lake St. Clair and part of the St. Clair River before dark. Today I took my first lesson in tailoring by putting a pocket in my vest. In the evening we spent our time conversing in the saloon. I retired rather early. April 15. This is Sabbath morning and we are in the St. Clair River, "wooding" [taking on fuel] on the Canadian side. We were soon on our way up the river, slowly passing numerous sawmills and some villages. The river is clear and has numerous flocks of ducks on it. At twelve o'clock we landed at Port Huron, which lies about two miles from the entrance to Lake Huron. Mr. Hutchinson and self went into the village and attended church and were nearly left by the boat. The captain, however, waited a few minutes for us and we put in our best licks and got on board, determined not to leave the boat again. We put out into Lake Huron which had a tremendous swell, making the boat hop and pitch like any "hoss." Our company spent the evening debating upon the moral binding force of conscience and in reading the Bible. Today I read the Bible presented to me by my wife upon leaving home and have read with attention the two parts marked by Mother and Sabrina. April 16. About sunrise we crossed the edge of Saginaw Bay, and we had a time of it: a rough sea and all on board were sick. Hutchinson and Bailey cast up old accounts. I ate hearty this morning and pitched out Jonah once, but not enough to do any good. John, the rogue, stood it like an old salty and was all the time making fun of us. All day we wallowed through it, and at bedtime it was still the same. Passed Thunderbay Island just at sunset. April 17. Last night our course was along the coast of some land [the south channel of the Straits of Mackinac] and it was not rough. I slept well all night, the first night's sleep since leaving home. I awoke at daybreak refreshed and found

the boat gliding smoothly over Mackinac Bay, and before I arose she was moored at the wharf. We breakfasted here. The waters of Lake Huron and the Straits are the clearest and most transparent waters I have ever seen. In the bay a sixpence can be distinctly seen at a depth of twenty feet. And the fish, which are here in great abundance, are as good as the waters are clear. This I know experimentally, for the steward bought a full barrel of fresh whitefish and trout -- large, fat, and sweet! We left at eight o'clock [A.M.] without being able to go to Fort Mackinaw, which, being on high ground, made a good appearance from the bay. We dodged the ice as well as possible and made our way into Lake Michigan through a heavy snowstorm, driving winds and big waves. We had fairly got out on the lake when the captain told us that a heavy blow was approaching, as his barometer told him, and that he would make for a small harbor in Beaver Island which we had just passed. So we aboutship, ran along the coast of the island about twelve miles and entered the best-shaped little harbor in the world. We cast anchor within a stone's throw of the shore, secure from everything but the falling snow. Here we lay the rest of the day and all night, living on whitefish and trout and good potatoes and plenty of other necessities. April 18. This morn we left our retreat about ten o'clock and resumed our course. In crossing the lake in the afternoon the sea was heavy, and the boat rolled and pitched until the tables, chairs, stands and settees all took to themselves legs and danced in great confusion around the room. It was with difficulty that we could keep our seats or feet by holding on to the posts and other parts of the boat. None seasick, however, and all took a hasty meal. This evening I am sad, having spent part of the evening in thinking upon my family at home. April 19. Today we coasted along the shores of Wisconsin between Sheboygan and Chicago. April 19, 1849 [On board the Michigan] Dear Sabrina, I wrote from Detroit, or rather mailed a letter from there, early in the morning on Saturday [April 14].... The Michigan is a large and good sea boat, but the slowest on the lakes. She has every convenience, staterooms in particular, one of which each of us has occupied. The captain, who is a very fine and prudent man, sets a first-rate table.... We have touched at Sheboygan, Milwaukee, Racine and Southport. We have had a heavy sea all the way and are heartily glad that our journey on the lake is so near ended, being as I write within forty-five miles of Chicago. We are all well and in good spirits and strong in the belief of the success of our expedition. [At this point the letter is temporarily concluded, to be resumed and completed on April 20.] April 20. This morning we are in the Chicago River where it is full of crafts. After dressing ourselves a little extra, we secured our passage on the Illinois Canal and moved our luggage on board the canal boat. We paid \$2.50 for our passage to Peru [a town on the Illinois River, 250 miles above St. Louis]. Mr. Hutchinson and I walked all over Chicago to view its location. It has many fine buildings, churches in particular, and a great business section. ["It is a large city of

some 20,000 inhabitants. There are several delightful residences, particularly along the beach of the lake. The river is full of shipping....There are some splendid public houses, among them the Sherman House, the City Hotel and the Tremont House....There are four daily papers, the Journal, Democrat, Advertiser and Tribune. Including daily, weekly and monthly papers, there are nineteen published in the city."] But it is most horribly located and the streets are literally slough holes.

[Continuation of the letter started the previous day] Chicago, April 20, 1849 We are just going to start down the canal. [The Illinois-Michigan Canal, one hundred miles in length, connected Chicago with steamboat navigation on the Illinois River and thus with the Mississippi.] We have met a company returning from Independence. Great crowds there, discouraged and selling out their outfits. Just what we want. I have not time to finish my letter as I had expected. I have only time to mail this before we leave. Kiss little Sister for me. Give my love to all. Tell Mother that I am very anxious about her and look for a letter from home at Independence. Farewell till I get to Independence. Yours affectionately, William [Evening, April 20.] We left the wharf at ten o'clock and I walked along on the tow path. As it led by Dr. McArthur's office, I called to see him and found him there. It was with a great deal of trouble that I could get off from staying with him until the next day. I had to go up to his house and see the family. I saw them all. He has grown old very fast, and Harriet [Mrs. McArthur] looks like an old woman, having been unwell ever since she was down at Youngstown. ["When I told him that I was going to California for gold, he laughed and asked me if I had enough money to get back with. He advised me -- and urged me -- to put the money I had into land in Chicago and go home again."] I left as soon as possible and overtook the boat and was soon out on the pleasant prairies, which were a new and pleasing sight to me. [Towed by teams of mules or horses, the canal boats moved slowly through the channel of the Chicago River from Lake Michigan to the first lock four miles south of the city where the canal itself started. Sixty feet wide, the canal was built with a tow path on one side, about ten feet wide, for the teams. Beyond the first lock the canal ran alongside the Des Plaines and Illinois rivers, often separated from the river by only a narrow embankment. [Passengers on board the canal boats "sleep, eat, and live" in a cabin "fifty feet in length, nine feet wide, and seven feet high....Baggage is secured on the roof of the boat and covered with canvas to screen it from the effects of the weather." In the evening the cabin "is transformed into a bedroom....No less than fifty sleeping places are rigged up in this small space, and twenty more are spread upon the floor....These sleeping places consist of shelves placed three d

Great book!

Really good book on traveling the Oregon/California Trail, Steamship travel by Panama back to United States, & gold rush. Enjoyed every bit of it.

The pages are tight and in very good shape, however the cover is quite worn. I would not have given this book a "very good" rating for it's condition.

This book tells the story of my wife's cousin, William Swain. Swain witnessed over a hundred cholera victims, alive a day earlier, now buried in the sand banks of the Mississippi River. Bodies strewn along the Nevada trail, he viewed the tragedy. Ships, valued in the millions, he viewed abandoned in San Francisco bay. As family members, we have John Holliday to thank. Moreover, I was thrilled with each page of Holliday's book. The 1849 Gold Rush extracted more from its participants, due to gold fever, than they got in return from the California mines. That's exactly what happened to William, who, in May of 1848, left his lovely wife, Sabrina, a newborn daughter, his brother George, and his farm residence in Youngstown, NY. William, in his heart, knew he would make it big in California country. At least he must try. And, Sabrina, not knowing the hardships and penniless outcome, gave her loving agreement. Along the way William witnessed death and deprivation, loneliness and hunger. He arrived hopeful in gold country, plied his efforts, and came away luckily with the skin on his back. He differed from most in one important way: William kept a journal. And, Sabrina and William wrote and saved their letters, from which Holliday made one of America's finest narratives. William, weighted with introspective highlight, wrote to George, "If you're thinking of coming out here, for [Gosh] sakes, do not!" William pleaded. Prospectors and miners everywhere, food scarce, prices high, California gold fields deluded nearly all. "And no one I know has gotten rich," William offered. William, beaten in his quest, longed to be with Sabrina and brother George. Ready to return, he had saved \$400. He longed to bring it all home, to hand to Sabrina. But, think of it, did you ever try to get from Sacramento to Niagara Falls in 1850, while tired and broke? Yikes. No train. William would have to walk the same way home he came, over that horrible trail. He couldn't face that prospect. So, William scraped his pockets clean, and purchased passage on a ship, via Panama. Just one catch: There was no Panama Canal. That happened 60 years later. William made his way to San Francisco bay. He boarded ship. He endured sea sickness. He ate crummy food. He arrived at Panama, shaken. Next, he and all passengers traversed the 50 mile overland eastward trek with a guide. Threatened with abandonment in the jungle, he paid double. Weak, he arrived at the east side of the Isthmus, broke. William struggled on board ship. It traveled

north, taking forever, to arrive at New York City. There, George, who knew to meet him from William's earlier letter, stood waiting at the gangplank. William, broke and sick, 25 pounds skinnier, staggered into his brother's arms. George helped William toward home, finally past beloved Niagara Falls, north to Youngstown. There, adoring, relieved, Sabrina faithfully nursed William back to health. Asked late in life if it was worth it, William avoided answering. He merely declared he loved his Youngstown. Can you read between the lines on that one? 'Nuff said.

Still enjoy re-reading this book even after 32 years. I had the privilege of enjoying a conversation and luncheon with J.S. at the Santa Barbara Writer's Conference in 1982. What an ebullient and vitality-filled man! He presented a wonderful preview of this book during the conference and had the entire 400-person audience in endless laughter over his description of finishing this book under a deadline after his family locked him in a dreary, windowless apartment in San Francisco and all he had to look at was a dead pigeon at the bottom of the air shaft. What a motivation to get the book done! During the lecture, J.S. read directly from Swain's diaries and described the ghastly details of the HARROWING venture of crossing the Isthmus of Panama (instead of the taking the longer journey around the Horn) to get to California. If you are interested in the history of California, this is a wonderful way to add to your knowledge. This book holds up incredibly well and you are good hands as you read these beautifully-written pages. I grew up in Carmel-by-the-Sea and was so saddened to read of this great historian's death in 2006 in Carmel.

"The World Rushed In" is a gold rush history must read. Holliday's approach to telling the 49ers tale was a seamless stitching together of William Swain's journal and letters home with other facts and general information surrounding the rush. It is a personal approach. It is an accurate approach to what being a 49er meant to those who chased the elephant. Holliday's interpretations and prose keep the story flowing, but do not add extraneous information. Nor does Holliday attempt to explain feelings or jump to conclusions. The ease with which this book flows and the personal feelings expressed by William and Sabrina Swain make this book hard to put down. The reader feels the fear of cholera and the aches at the end of the day. This book describes the rush mentality of the 49ers extremely well. These young, eager, adventurers truly believed they would easily find their fortunes and soon be back home. Swain himself, who was apparently better read and prepared for the trip than many, believed he would be home much sooner than he was. Unlike many others, his decision to return home from California was easier. He had a farm, a family and a life to return to that did not require any wealth. Many of the rushers had nothing to return east to. As a native

upstate New York farmer who has traveled along most of the major westward trails, albeit via car or railroad, I completely understood Swain's descriptions of praise or denigration of the land he passed through. I empathized with his homesickness. There was irony in the travails Swain survived and many of my own one hundred and fifty years later. We both went west to find our fortunes. We both adapted. He was able to return home in twenty- two months. Seven years later, I am still hoping. My favorite paragraph in the book is a journal entry describing the Black Rock Desert in Northern Nevada. The paragraph ends with "where the hell is California?" I have crisscrossed Nevada in every direction. It is desolate, harsh and will lead even the most proper person to exclaim, "Where the hell is anything!" I can't imagine crossing this state walking beside an ox team. Holliday artfully tells the big story of the emigration in conjunction with Swain's individual view. Swain had no idea how many people were ahead of or behind him. Swain mentions problems in other companies, but had no idea the extent of discontent among some of the trains. Holliday draws from other sources to compare Swain's adventures with the experiences of others. This approach gives a broader spectrum of the emigration. Swain's crossing was relatively uneventful and trouble free. He was taken ill a few times, but did not die from cholera as so many did. He was fortunate in selecting trustworthy traveling companions. He found decent passage home. Swain made it home. "The World Rushed In" is a must read for anyone interested in the human side of the gold rush. Other works contain all the facts, figures and dates one could want. This book reveals the personal and social side of 'going to see the elephant.'

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