

The California Gold Rush



Of the thousands of people who flocked to California during the few years of its Gold Rush, only relatively few made their fortunes there. "Seeing the elephant" was a common expression. It meant undergoing an unparalleled, risky, fantastic experience, while encountering harrowing misfortunes. "And behold I've seen the elephant, yea, verily, I saw him," wrote unlucky miner James Hutchings in "The Miner's Ten Commandments," his 1853 satirical article, "and bear witness, that from the key of his trunk to the end of his tail, his whole body hath passed before me."

1. Before the discovery of gold in California in 1848, the U.S. state that had produced more gold than any other was:
 - Pennsylvania
 - Virginia
 - North Carolina
 - Georgia
2. How many gold-seekers, or "Argonauts," as they were sometimes fancifully called, came to California during the Gold Rush?
 - 49,000
 - 100,000
 - 300,000
 - 1,000,000
3. How much gold was found in the first five years of the California Gold Rush?
 - 18 tons
 - 63 tons
 - 370 tons
 - 1012 tons
4. When James Marshall discovered gold at Sutter's Mill in January 1848, what political status did California have?
 - It was a part of Mexico, but under U.S. military occupation, awaiting the signing of the treaty that would end the Mexican-American War.
 - It was a U.S. Territory, functioning under a territorial governor.
 - It was an independent republic.
 - It was a U.S. State.

Sources:

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