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### FIRST DAY COVERS

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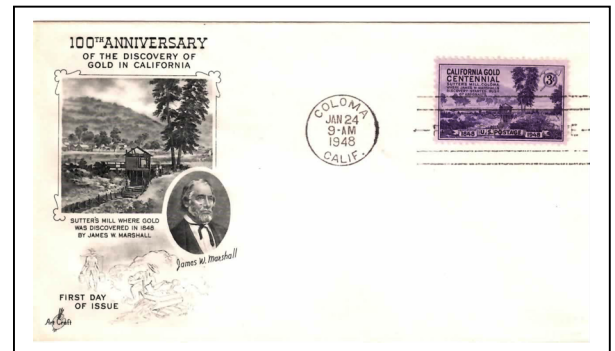
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### FIRST DAY COVERS AND THE GOLD RUSH

On January 24, 1948 the U.S. Post Office issued a stamp commemorating the anniversary of the discovery of gold by John Marshall, a foreman working at John Sutter's lumber mill on the American River near Coloma, California. Who are these individuals and how did this discovery impact the U.S.?

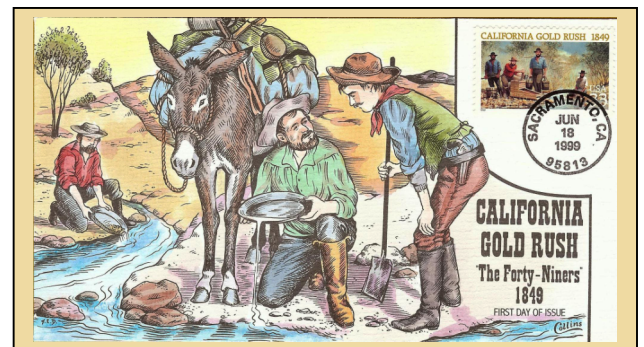
John Sutter was a Swiss immigrant who arrived in New York City in 1834 with a dream of living in Mexican owned California. He traveled west through St. Louis, Santa Fe, and Westport, Oregon before establishing Sutter's Fort in 1839 near the junction of the American and Sacramento Rivers. With a Mexican land grant of 48,000 acres, Sutter settled in this region to create an agricultural community.



(CLICK TO ENLARGE)

New Jersey born John Marshall migrated west starting in 1834, and established a farm near the Missouri River. In 1844, on doctor's orders to escape malaria, he traveled on the Oregon Trail to the Willamette Valley before heading south to Sutter's Fort. Sutter hired Marshall to oversee the building of a lumber mill north of the fort near Coloma, a remote outpost for the Southern Maidu tribe. To power the mill, water was diverted from the American River, which then washed away sand and dirt exposing the gold nuggets. Sutter wanted to keep the gold a secret in order to preserve his agricultural holdings, but that was impossible to do. The discovery was first announced in March in a San Francisco paper followed in August by a NYC paper and by President Polk in his address to Congress in December. With the passage of the Guadalupe-Hidalgo Treaty, the gold rush took place in California, U.S.A. and “as they say, the rest is history.”

By 1849 thousands of people - Americans, Mexicans, Chinese and Europeans came looking for gold. On September 9, 1850 California was admitted as a free state into the Union. Everything that Sutter had built was destroyed and even the Supreme Court in 1858 denied his land claim. Sutter moved back east to Pennsylvania where he died in 1880. John Marshall who died in 1885 also lost everything he had invested in California whether in land or gold mines.



(CLICK TO ENLARGE)

These two may have died penniless, but their names are synonymous with the California Gold Rush. The USPS issued another stamp on June 18, 1999 honoring the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the California Gold Rush. Show the images to students and ask them to generate a list of changes from political and economical to environmental and social, brought on by the gold rush. Has any other natural resource or phenomena caused such changes in U.S. history?

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