



# **JIM C'S QUIZ OF THE WEEK**

## **MONDAY – 01/22/2007**

**On January 24, 1848, James W. Marshall discovered gold on the property of Johann A. Sutter near Coloma, CA.**

### **HOW DID THE TERM “FORTY-NINERS” ORIGINATE?**

**Definition:** “One who took part in the 1849 California gold rush.”

**Origin:** James Marshall, a foreman overseeing construction of a saw mill on the American River, brought what he found to Sutter. Sutter wanted to keep the news quiet because he feared it would destroy his plans for an agricultural empire. Even after rumors spread to the East Coast, Marshall's find was met with a great deal of skepticism. However, President James Polk endorsed the discovery in December 1848, and the gold rush began. Prospectors heading to California the following year were dubbed “*forty-niners*.”

**Clarification:** Approximately 40,000 “forty-niners” came to the area in 1849 and 1850, which had a significant impact on all of California. The tiny hamlets of tents blossomed into boomtowns, which in turn led to roads, churches, and schools. You might even say that the “forty-niners” helped start the system of laws and a government, which to the admission of California as a state in 1850.

**Conventional Wisdom:** Forty-niners = California Gold Rush

**Moment of Zen:** Speculators rush in where angels fear to tread