

Name _____

Date _____



California Gold Rush

Dear Charlotte,

There's gold fever in California.

I'm almost there. Promise I'll bring back something for you.

It's 1848, time for a change.

I'm going to strike it big. Did you hear about the gold they
Found at Sutter's Mill last year in a river?

Ever since then I've had my mind on a mission.

Loaded up the covered wagon and I hit the open road.

Men are coming in from many miles, even some on boats!

My darling Charlotte,

I miss you more than ever, please tell me how you've been.

Finally made it to the river—boy, the journey was intense.

Many died along the way, and I'm thankful that I'm here.

There are thousands all around; we've been named for the year.

They call us forty-niners, and we live in camps around the area.

White, Black, Brown, Asian people, every heritage.

Ever heard of placers? That's what we search in.

Those are mineral deposits along the river bend.

Panning for gold, swirling soil all day.

An ax or a shovel are other tools of the trade.

I hear the first prospectors came here and got rich,

But I'm starting to doubt that I will see any of it.

The camp is dangerous, life is tough and expensive.

All I find are reminders of our home—oh, I miss it!

Out in California looking for the gold.

Life's so hard, but I gotta hold on.

I miss my home, miss everything that I've ever known,

But I gotta hold on.
Any day now I'll strike it rich.
Any day now I'll hit it big.
Bring home something real nice for the wife and the kids,
So I gotta hold on.
Darling,
Hope this letter finds you well.
California is a state now,
And more miners are here.
We've got more than 80,000.
That number kind of scares me.
Haven't found much, just a couple dollars, barely.
Many say the foreigners are taking it all away,
But now the Foreign Miners Tax makes it hard for them to stay.
They say miners from Latin America and China are getting greedy.
The tension is heating, things are getting violent.
Fights all over the place. Spread to Native American land and drove them away.
I'm trying to keep hope, but I wonder if there's any gold left.
I'm trying to do what's best.
Out in California looking for the gold.
Life's so hard, but I gotta hold on.
I miss my home, miss everything that I've ever known,
But I gotta hold on.
Any day now I'll strike it rich.
Any day now I'll hit it big.
Bring home something real nice for the wife and the kids,
So I gotta hold on.
Charlotte,
I've done all I can.
Seven years later, still not a rich man.
The gold rush is done, and I'm coming back home
With my tail between my legs. Where did I go wrong?

Few got rich, and some gambled it away.
The ones that made the most sold us food every day,
And clothes and equipment. I bought pickaxes;
I should have sold those! Why was I thinking backwards?
When I arrived, San Francisco was a village of 1,000,
But now it's a city with over 300,000. It's astounding!
People from China and Latin America live here.
Native Americans? There aren't many left here.
Many were wiped out from disease and starvation.
Violence from white settlers hurt their populations.
I will be home in just six months,
Unless I hear about some gold and I feel the same rush.
You know I'm not the type to give up.
Aw man, I'll just pack my things up.