



The Age of Gold: The California Gold Rush and the New American Dream

H.W. Brands

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“I have found it.” These words, uttered by the man who first discovered gold on the American River in 1848, triggered the most astonishing mass movement of peoples since the Crusades. California’s gold drew fortune-seekers from the ends of the earth. It accelerated America’s imperial expansion and exacerbated the tensions that exploded in the Civil War. And, as H. W. Brands makes clear in this spellbinding book, the Gold Rush inspired a new American dream—the “dream of instant wealth, won by audacity and good luck.” Brands tells his epic story from multiple perspectives: of adventurers John and Jessie Fremont, entrepreneur Leland Stanford, and the wry observer Samuel Clemens—side by side with prospectors, soldiers, and scoundrels. He imparts a visceral sense of the distances they traveled, the suffering they endured, and the fortunes they made and lost. Impressive in its scholarship and overflowing with life, **The Age of Gold** is history in the grand traditions of Stephen Ambrose and David McCullough.

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