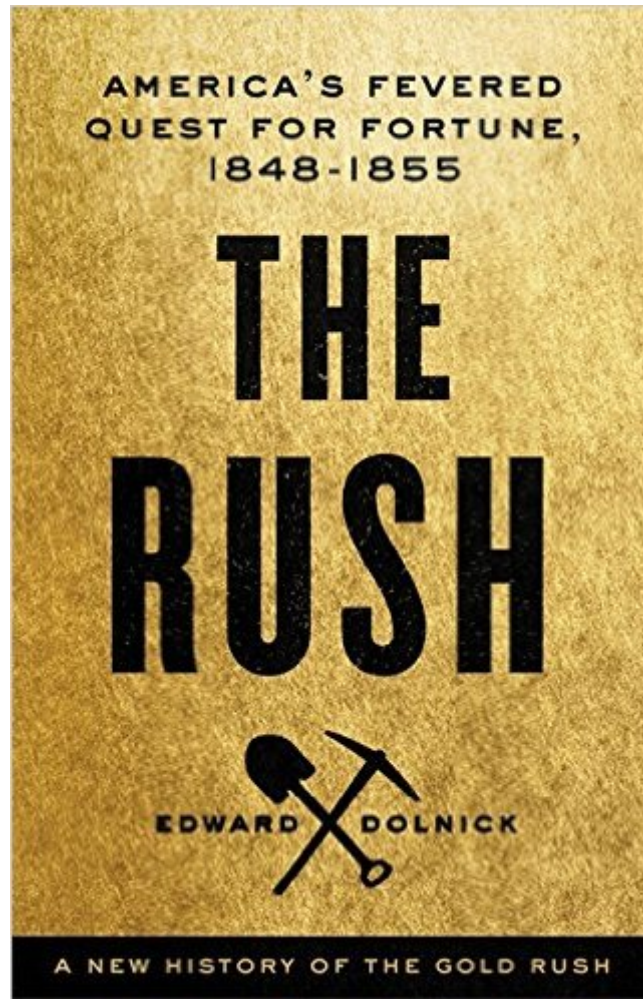


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The Rush: America's Fevered Quest For Fortune, 1848-1853



Synopsis

A riveting portrait of the Gold Rush, by the award-winning author of *Down the Great Unknown* and *The Forger's Spell*. In the spring of 1848, rumors began to spread that gold had been discovered in a remote spot in the Sacramento Valley. A year later, newspaper headlines declared "Gold Fever!" as hundreds of thousands of men and women borrowed money, quit their jobs, and allowed themselves- for the first time ever-to imagine a future of ease and splendor. In *THE RUSH*, Edward Dolnick brilliantly recounts their treacherous westward journeys by wagon and on foot, and takes us to the frenzied gold fields and the rowdy cities that sprang from nothing to jam-packed chaos. With an enthralling cast of characters and scenes of unimaginable wealth and desperate ruin, *THE RUSH* is a fascinating-and rollicking-account of the greatest treasure hunt the world has ever seen.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

While subtitled "A new history of the Gold Rush," this might more accurately be termed a modern rewriting of classic Gold Rush literature--it isn't in the vein of several revisionist histories addressing the social norms of the day, the genocide of California Indians, or the economics of the Gold Rush (all of which are well addressed in the series of books Orsi coedited from UC Press in late 1990s). This very much follows in the vein of *The World Rushed In*, integrating numerous diaries and letters to convey the arc of travels to and in California along the two primary routes used by American argonauts, the overland California Trail and the sea route across the Isthmus of Panama to the end of the main period of placer mining, taken here as 1853. If you've read extensively of this literature

before, you may find little new here (cholera: check, graves on the trail: check, malaria and sea sickness: check and check, didn't get much gold: check), but for those only somewhat familiar or unfamiliar with this event, this is a fine introduction to a period of American history usually lost to modern schoolchildren as history classes emphasize the march to the Civil War and the Industrial Revolution over the 1850s. A key for any author attempting a volume like this is to key on the diarists and letter writers who can provide the most compelling stories, and Dolnick chooses well. He uses the well-known diaries of Israel (aka Isaac) Lord and Joseph Bruff and complements them with the writings of Alonzo Delano, Jennie Meguir and Luzena Wilson. Arguably the greatest pleasure in reading this book is to follow the two women within what was overwhelmingly a male flood; this probably is what most distinguishes this book from others of its ilk.

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