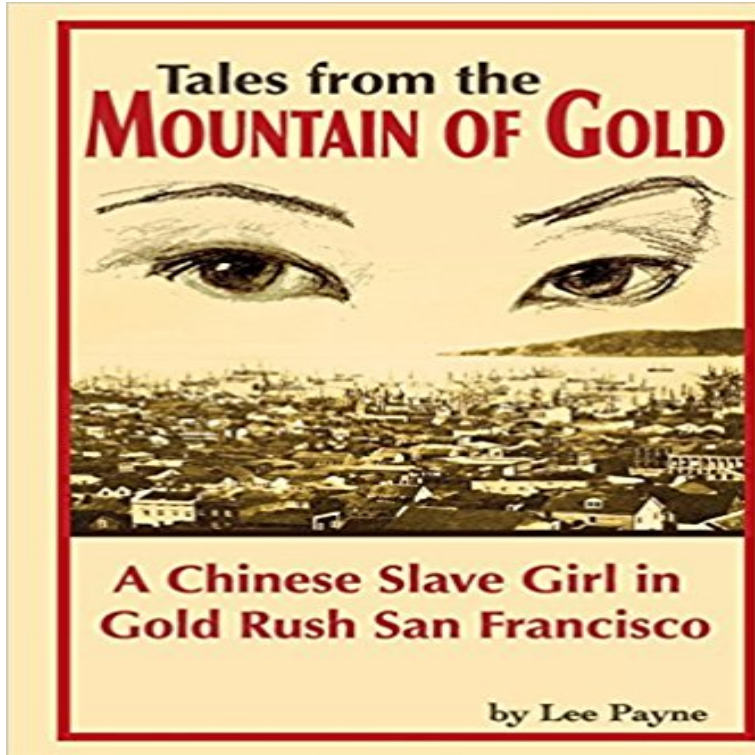


Tales from the Mountain of Gold: A Chinese Slave Girl in Gold Rush San Francisco



This is a novel of gold rush San Francisco, a place and time so far out of the ordinary that, even in its day, it could scarcely be believed by those who weren't there. Banker and future Union Army general William Tecumseh Sherman said he would sooner throw candy among school children and expect its return than he would lend money to San Franciscans. Supported by the city's lawyers and escaped Australian convicts, he would have directed cannon fire into the Vigilante headquarters at the corner of California and Sacramento Streets except that Admiral Farragut would not lend him his sloop-of-war. Lillie Coit began her career as a fire-obsessed eight-year-old who ran with the volunteer firemen, translated Civil War dispatches for Emperor Louis Napoleon and finally donated \$100,000 for Coit Tower that stands above the city today. Be advised, this is not the gold rush of your school texts. This is a city with a thousand men for every woman, the kind of unbalanced society only unsupervised men can create. This tour goes from Belle Ryans, the finest brothel on the Pacific Slope to the mean cribs and slave auction in Chinatown. And your tour guide? The first of 6,000 teenage Chinese sex slaves imported into the city between 1852 and 1873. A further warning--you will encounter a number of politicians. Like ours, they were famous in their day and are now blessedly forgotten, though some deserve revisiting. William Gwin was a Congressman from Mississippi who joined the gold rush specifically to protect slavery by being sent to the U.S. Senate from what he suspected would become a new state. He achieved his goal in seven months! Opposing him was David Broderick, a former New York City fireman and anti-slavery Democrat. A third politician was Edward Baker, Lincoln's former law partner, the finest orator on the Pacific Coast and Oregon's first Republican Senator. It was a combination that led to

gunfire and death. Finally, what's a gold rush without the gold? Travel to Nevada where, a quarter mile beneath Virginia City, our heroine faces the biggest chunk of it ever, the 50-story tall Big Bonanza. She meets the four Irishmen who own it and is seduced by Slippery Jim Fair, the richest man ever to die unloved in San Francisco. The lines that Uncle Jimmy Fair used to get the numerous ladies into his bed have not been recorded. I had to make them up. But we do have General Sherman's letters, Lillie Coits' diaries and all the lurid details from dozens of San Francisco newspapers. What they report is a tale made even more unbelievable for being pretty much exactly true. Invest \$25.95 to take the R-rated tour--maybe NC-17--it is a love story but there are several hangings.

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