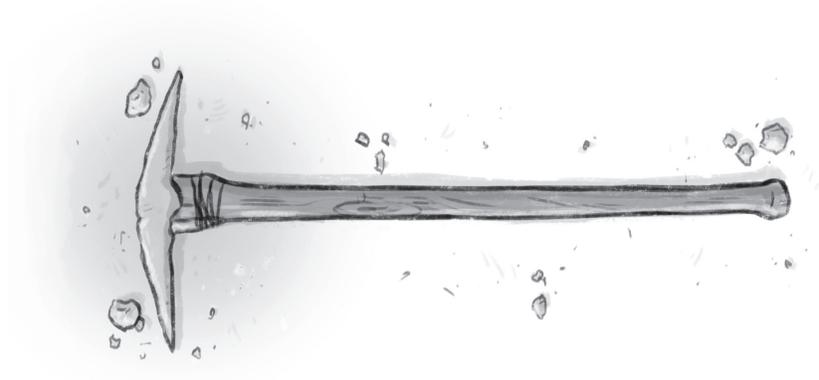


Adventures on the American Frontier

GOLD RUSH ADVENTURES

Part Two

Walter Colton's Gold Fever



A Royal Fireworks Production

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Royal Fireworks Press
P.O. Box 399
41 First Avenue
Unionville, NY 10988-0399
(845) 726-4444
fax: (845) 726-3824
email: mail@rfwp.com
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“Gold! You just bend over and pick it up! Kick a rock aside, and there it is, shining up at you!”

It was the year 1848, and stories of gold were spreading through California like dust on a high wind. Down in the capital city of Monterey, the governor, an American minister named Reverend Walter Colton, listened to the stories of gold finds. Like the citizens of Monterey, he, too, heard tales of nuggets that weighed ten pounds and made a man rich in a day.





When Reverend Colton went out on the streets of Monterey, there were fewer people every day. Almost everyone had



“gold fever” and had left to dig for it or was getting ready to go. In the harbor, empty ships rocked at anchor. The sailors had gone.

At last Reverend Colton could stand it no longer. “I’m going to the gold fields myself,” he said. “A governor should see for himself what is happening in his land.”

So on a day in September, he and two other men rode north on horseback. Ten days later they were in the mountains near the American River.

Reverend Colton looked ahead at the mountain walls, and to him they were like a high fence guarding a treasure. As his horse picked its way along a rocky trail, he shivered, for the walls seemed to frown down upon him, and the wind made wild music as it swept through the tall pines.

At last the men rode through a break in the mountain walls. A broad plain stretched out ahead, with mountains all around it. At the plain's end, the horses again had to pick their way up a trail and through a mountain



pass. Then they turned down into a valley with a stream running through it, and there, like a field dotted with mushrooms, lay a mass of white tents.

“The gold fields! We’re here at last!” said the reverend, and he jumped from his horse. He borrowed a pick from one of the men who was working with chunks of rock. He remembered the tales of fortunes lying under rocks, and he pushed one aside with the pick. He scratched around on the ground, and there was a shining nugget.