Margaret Rau takes young readers on a thrilling journey through the California gold rush, from its dawning moment in 1848 in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada through the riotous days of its height, to the 1855 recession that signaled the end of an incredible era in American history. This account is illustrated with prints and photographs of the people, places, and events of the gold rush from the Wells Fargo Archives. Rau brings alive the prospectors' fervor as they left jobs and families to follow the lure of gold, arriving in surges by land and sea. In the ramshackle mining towns that sprung up across the foothills, some set up makeshift shops and saloons to support the other prospectors. But most followed their dreams to the diggings, spending backbreaking days searching the mountain streams for the fabled glimmer of gold. After long days panning for fortune, the forty-niners spent their nights carousing in the dirty, raucous boomtowns. But as illness, crime, and homesickness spread, they began longing for the comforts of home, and eventually some of their families did arrive, gradually tempering their unruly habits with new regimes and entertainment. But as more and more prospectors, from the United States and abroad, flooded into California, it became clear that reliable systems were needed to handle all the gold, mail, and cargo traveling back and forth across the country. Wells, Fargo and Company, as well as other banks and freight companies, rose to meet this demand, employing conscientious agents and speedy messengers to manage the valuable freight of the gold rush and escort it on its journey. As this fascinating account captures the exhilaration and hardship of the California gold rush, it also testifies to the timeless allure of wealth, and to the power of dreams. Founded in 1852 at the height of the Gold Rush Era, Wells Fargo brought banking services to the western frontier. With offices in every large town and mining camp in California, as well as overseas, Wells Fargo was able to cater to miners and entrepreneurs from the eastern United States and to immigrants from China, Europe, Mexico, and Canada. Wells Fargo is recognized as the Oldest Bank in the West and operates five museums.
and four museum stores, drawing over two million visitors annually. In 2002, Wells Fargo celebrates its one hundred and fiftieth anniversary.

My Personal Review:
Rau takes the reader on an intriguing journey through the California gold rush from its roots in 1949 to the 1855 recession which signaled its end. Prints and photos of the people and places from the Wells Fargo Archives illustrate the history and add color and insight.

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