

The Associates



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One hundred forty years ago, four shopkeepers in Sacramento, California, rose to become the force behind the American transcontinental railroad, achieving along the way wealth beyond measure. To build influence and maintain power, they lied, bribed, and, when necessary, arranged for obstacles, both human and legal, to disappear. Their names were Collis Huntington, Leland Stanford, Charles Crocker, and Mark Hopkins, and they were known as "The Big Four" or "The Associates." Their drive for money-nothing more, nothing less-was epic. Their legacy is a university, public gardens, museums, mansions, banks, and libraries-and to a large degree, California itself. A captivating chronicle of a crucial period in American urban expansion, *The Associates* is a true-to-life tale of ruthless ambition, staggering greed, and the making of a nation.

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