



## Seeds of Hope: The Gold Rush Diary of Susanna Fairchild, California Territory 1849 (Dear America Series)

*By Kristiana Gregory*

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Susanna Fairchild and her family are on board a ship sailing from New York to the West, where they plan to start a new life in Oregon. But tragedy strikes when Susanna's mother is lost to the sea. Hearing stories of great wealth, Susanna's physician father decides he wants to join the hordes of men rushing to California to mine for gold.

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## **Editorial Review**

From School Library Journal

Grade 5-8-Fourteen-year-old Susanna Fairchild and her family embark on a journey that they hope will bring them good fortune. Boarding a ship sailing from New York to the West, the Fairchilds set out for Oregon where they plan to start a new life. Tragedy strikes when Susanna's mother is lost at sea, and they must continue on without her. Hearing stories of enormous wealth, Susanna's physician father decides to join the hordes of men rushing to California to mine for gold. The trials and tribulations encountered by the many men who risked their lives for the chance to become rich are wonderfully envisioned by the author. The uncharted West with its many hazards is descriptively brought to life through the diary writings of Susanna, who proves to be up to the task of surviving the rugged lifestyle her father has chosen for them. A strong female voice takes readers on an adventure filled with sorrow for the loss of her mother, love for her father and sister, and a determination to make a home amid the wilderness. Secondary characters are nicely interspersed throughout the story. Historical notes, drawings, a recipe for "Miner's Griddle Cakes," and a map of the gold-mining region provide a fitting conclusion to an interesting story.

*Janet Gillen, Great Neck Public Library, NY*

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From [Booklist](#)

Gr. 4-8. Aboard a side-wheel steamer, 14-year-old Susanna Fairchild begins her account of her family's journey to Oregon from New York. It is New Year's Day, 1849, when she takes up the journal begun by her mother, who was tragically lost at sea. Susanna anticipates reuniting with family and friends in Oregon, but when the steamer docks in San Francisco, her father is affected by gold fever and takes his daughters into the wilds of California to find gold. The daily struggles, dangers, and lawlessness of the mining camps are richly detailed in Susanna's vivid entries, as are episodes of frontier justice and prejudice (especially toward Chinese and Peruvian miners) and cruel treatment of wild animals, which were used for the miners' entertainment. In spite of her difficult life, Susanna still takes time to ponder such basic questions as Why do thieves and murderers sometimes run free while good people suffer? It's clear that real wealth lies not in gold or luck, but in strength of character. A gripping, realistic fictional glimpse of history, in the Dear America series. *Ellen Mandel*

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### **About the Author**

Kristiana Gregory has published more than 30 children's books with Scholastic, Harcourt and Holiday House, and has now ventured into self-publishing with her memoir "Longhand: The Rise and Fall and Rise of My Career as a Children's Book Author." She grew up in Manhattan Beach, California, two blocks from the beach and she always loved to make up stories. Her first rejection letter at age eleven was for a poem she wrote in class when she was supposed to be doing a math assignment. She's had a myriad of odd jobs: telephone operator, lifeguard, camp counselor, reporter, book reviewer & columnist for the LA Times. Kristiana and her husband live in Idaho with their golden retriever, Poppy. Their two adult sons visit often. In her spare time she loves to swim, hike, watch clouds, do yoga, read & hang out with friends. For all her titles, please visit her website: [www.kristianagregory.com](http://www.kristianagregory.com)

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

**Ilene Venne:**

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