ing images of the industry and community life, black-and-white maps interspersed throughout the chapters, and three nifty colored foldout maps showing the non-metallic, energy, and metalliferous resources of Utah.

Several authors discuss the relations between agrarian Mormons and resource-extracting gentiles, the obvious fault line in Utah's territorial history. Brigham Young's famous proscription of precious-metals mining, which he feared would foster greed and disharmony, did not apply to other materials that might help the colony, such as iron, coal, and salt. Church members dominated salt harvesting from the Great Salt Lake into the twentieth century, both for the territory's own uses and for export. (Much coarse salt went to Butte, Montana, for use in chlorination.)

Sometimes the two groups cooperated to mutual benefit, with Mormon farming towns supplying gentile mining communities within Utah and in the surrounding region. In other cases, such as Connor's disputes with the Church hierarchy, Mormon and gentile values clashed overtly. This division over mining began to dissolve with the arrival of the transcontinental railroad, which brought the outside world to the isolated Deseret in 1869.

Closer editing of *From the Ground Up* would have caught a few unfortunate errors—"International Workers of the World" and the U.S. "Defense Department" in World War II, to cite two—and a stronger editor's voice could have made the work more cohesive. The editor offers a brief introduction, but without transitions or a summation the book reads as a series of independent articles. The same problem reoccurs visually. About half of the chapters on regions have a very handy little outline map of Utah at the beginning showing the location under discussion; the rest, inexplicably, do not. These criticisms aside, this is a laudable and, one hopes, exemplary publication. Every mining state should have one.

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Michael J. Makley. ***The Infamous King of the Comstock: William Sharon and the Gilded Age in the West***. Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2006; 291 pp., b&w illus., bib., ind., cloth, $34.95. ISBN: 0874176301.

William Sharon died a decade before populist reformers and muckraking journalists launched a national crusade against "malefactors of great wealth." Though little-known nationally until one of his cast-off mistresses filed an embarrassing suit for divorce while he was a U.S. senator, Sharon could well have served as the prototype for the "robber baron" image. This lively biography of the lusty but little-known western financier tries to steer clear of stereotypes, but what emerges is one of the more egregious examples of insatiable avarice in the formative years of American capitalism.

Like more famous business moguls of the Gilded Age, Sharon's character was complex and somewhat contradictory. He gave alms to the poor and dressed like a preacher, but was as clever as a card shark and full of deceit. Rising from rags to riches in San Francisco before arriving in Nevada in 1864 as branch manager for the Bank of California, he was unscrupulous and manipulative, arrogant and vindictive, greedy for wealth and seemingly indifferent to the pain his sharp business practices caused others. Yet when forced to intercede after the Bank's failure in 1875, his organizational skills helped bring order out of financial chaos, and journalists hailed him as a hero.

Mining historians will appreciate the book's clear exposition of Sharon's part in building the Bank Ring in Virginia City, and his battles with Adolph Sutro and the Bonanza Kings. The author attributes the growth of Sharon's predatory milling, mining, and transportation empire to careful planning, shrewd management, and insider trading, along with cynical disdain for the public interest, but luck played a role in timing his risky speculations to match the success or failure of

uncertain developments underground.

Although placing Sharon in context is one of the book's goals, the author only hints at one obvious question: considering the impact of Social Darwinism on the business ethics of the Gilded Age, was Sharon's behavior an exception or the rule? With only a couple of paragraphs devoted to the larger perspective, readers are left to wonder how his career compares to those of more illustrious—and notorious—contemporaries.

From the evidence presented, the conclusion seems unequivocal that Sharon's greed was enormous and his ego unaffected by sympathy for the underdog. Even Jay Fisk gave generously to the poor, and Commodore Vanderbilt left sizeable charitable bequests. Sharon's will kept his wealth in the family. With newspapers, legal records and government documents the only primary sources available, perhaps the question remains unanswerable. After all, much of Sharon's reputation as an evil genius derives from journalistic hyperbole—as does the legacy of the Big Four and other celebrated "robber barons." The author attempts to show that Sharon was not all bad, but without adequate raw material for a balanced historical assessment, his true character remains elusive.

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Albert L. Hurtado. ***John Sutter: A Life on the North American Frontier***. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006; 412 pp., 21 b&w ill., 3 maps, notes, bib., ind., cloth, $34.95. ISBN: 080613772X

One name stands out in connection with the discovery of gold in a mill race on the south fork of the American River on 24 January 1848. That name is John Sutter. Forever after, Sutter's mill would become part of American folklore and history, as the greatest gold rush in American—and world—history overran northern California.

Albert Hurtado, Professor of Modern American History at the University of Oklahoma, has brought Sutter's entire career alive, not just that one defining moment. *John Sutter: A Life on the North American Frontier* reads like a Greek tragedy. Sutter never really benefitted from the discovery, nor from many of his other adventures following his arrival in California.

After leaving Switzerland and his family behind in 1934, Sutter eventually appeared in Mexican California in 1839. In due course, he built his fort where Sacramento sprawls now, and turned to developing an "empire" in the Sacramento Valley. He hoped to become a western entrepreneur, like many of his contemporaries, but that fateful January day changed his fortunes forever.

Sutter, as Hurtado's well-researched and comprehensive biography points out, was in many ways a con man. He lived, worked, and schemed with faith and a bit of his own funds, but he used many others' money. Nothing unusual about that in those years, he just became more famous. For all his efforts, it is debatable if he would ever have succeeded in building his empire, even if it had never been overrun by forty-niners.

The reader will probably end feeling sorry for Sutter, as his dreams fade, his downfall becomes obvious, and alcoholism takes over. As Hurtado wrote: "Drunk or sober, he was not up to the task. John Sutter, the lord of New Helvetia, would go wrong at nearly every turn (124)." Despite this, he apparently ended quite happily in his final years in Lititz, Pennsylvania.

This is a well-documented, researched, and admirably-written biography of a many-faceted man and his fascinating era. In this intriguing story, chapters six to eight are the key to the less-known earlier years and to the man himself, before fame interceded. But the classic story of his ruin comes in the later chapters. *John Sutter* is highly recommended.

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