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The following review appeared in the February 2014 issue of CHOICE:

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Curtis, Kent A. **Gambling on ore: the nature of metal mining in the United States, 1860-1910.** University Press of Colorado, 2013. 232p bibl index afp ISBN 9781607322344, \$39.95

This book's title is misleading. *Gambling on Ore* covers only gold, silver, and copper, and its focus is Montana, not the US as a whole. Nonetheless, Curtis (independent scholar) effectively uses Montana as representative of the broader American mining West. He describes, better than many historians of mining, how initial interest in gold led to silver mining and then to copper, each at a larger scale, and he effectively integrates this story with the concurrent growth of mining communities and institutions. He demonstrates how mining's inherent uncertainty drove the industry to steadily larger investment and, ultimately, to overproduction as mine investors sought greater certainty in an inherently uncertain industry. He contends that overproduction of copper drove electrification as much as the reverse. One of his overriding themes is that American society is, fundamentally, a mining society, i.e., that modern civilization is so dependent on patterns created by mining in the late-19th century that it has quietly tolerated mining's negative environmental impact. Aside from minor quibbles about such things as the title and the poor quality of the reproduction of the period map, this is a very well-written, well-argued, and thought-provoking book. **Summing Up:** Highly recommended. Upper-division undergraduates through professionals; general readers. -- *T. S. Reynolds, emeritus, Michigan Technological University*