



# **The Roar and the Silence: A History of Virginia City and the Comstock Lode (Shepperson Series in History Humanities)**

*Ronald M. James*

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Nevada's Comstock Mining District has been the focus of legend since it first burst into international prominence in the late 1850s, and its principal settlement, Virginia City, endures in the popular mind as the West's quintessential mining camp. But the authentic history of the Comstock is far more complex and interesting than its colorful image. Contrary to legend, Virginia City spent only its first few years as a ramshackle mining camp. The mining boom quickly turned it into a thriving urban center, at its peak one of the largest cities west of the Mississippi, replete with most of the amenities of any large city of its time.

The lure of the area's fabulous wealth attracted a remarkably heterogenous population from around the world and offered employment to dozens of trades and thousands of people, both men and women, representing every one of the region's diverse ethnic groups.

Ronald James's brilliant account of the Comstock's long and eventful history—the first comprehensive study of the subject in over a century—examines every aspect of the region and employs information gleaned from hundreds of written sources, interviews, archeological research, computer analysis, folklore, gender studies, physical geography, and architectural and art history, as well as over fifty rare photographs, many of them previously unpublished.

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