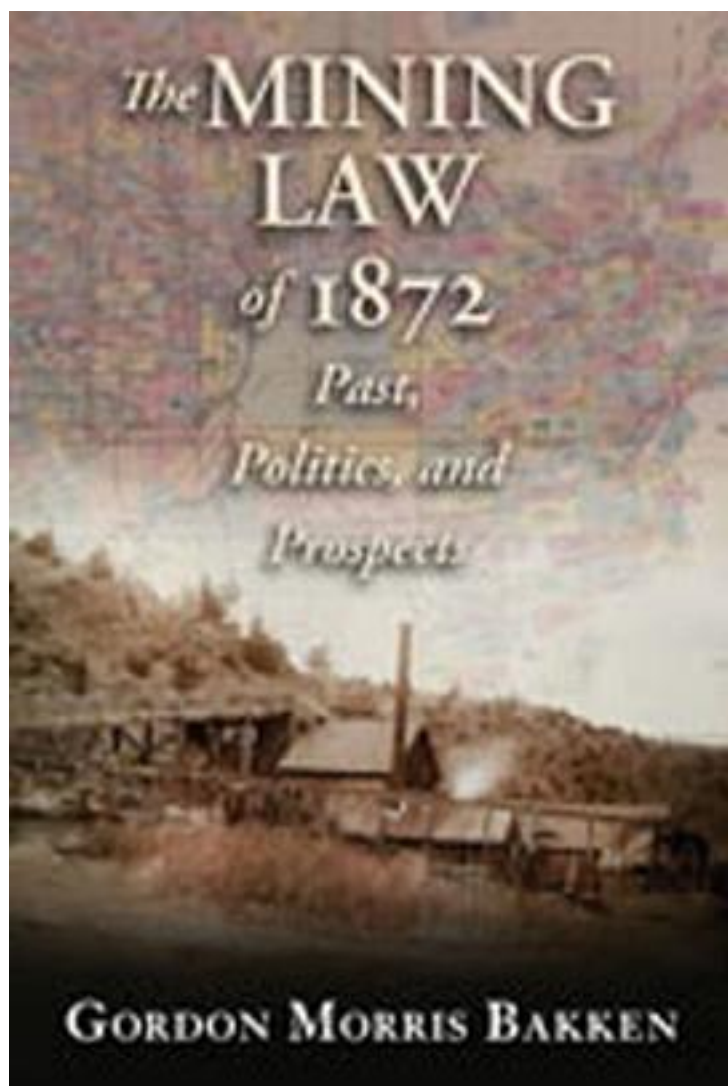


# The Mining Law of 1872



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History has left us a classic image of western mining in the grizzly forty-niner squatting by a clear stream sifting through gravel to reveal gold. What this slice of Western Americana does not reveal, however, is thousands of miners doing the same, their gravel washing downstream, causing the water to grow dark with debris while trout choke to death and wash ashore. Instead of the havoc wreaked upon the western landscape, we are told stories of American enterprise, ingenuity, and fortune. The General Mining Act of 1872, which declared all valuable mineral deposits on public lands to be free and open to exploration and purchase, has had a controversial impact on the western environment as, under the protection of federal law, various twentieth-century entrepreneurs have manipulated it in order to dump waste, cut timber, create resorts, and engage in a host of other activities damaging to the environment. In this in-depth analysis, legal historian Gordon Morris Bakken traces the roots of the mining law and details the way its unintended consequences have shaped western legal thought from Nome to Tombstone and how it has informed much of the lore of the settlement of the West.

作者介绍:

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