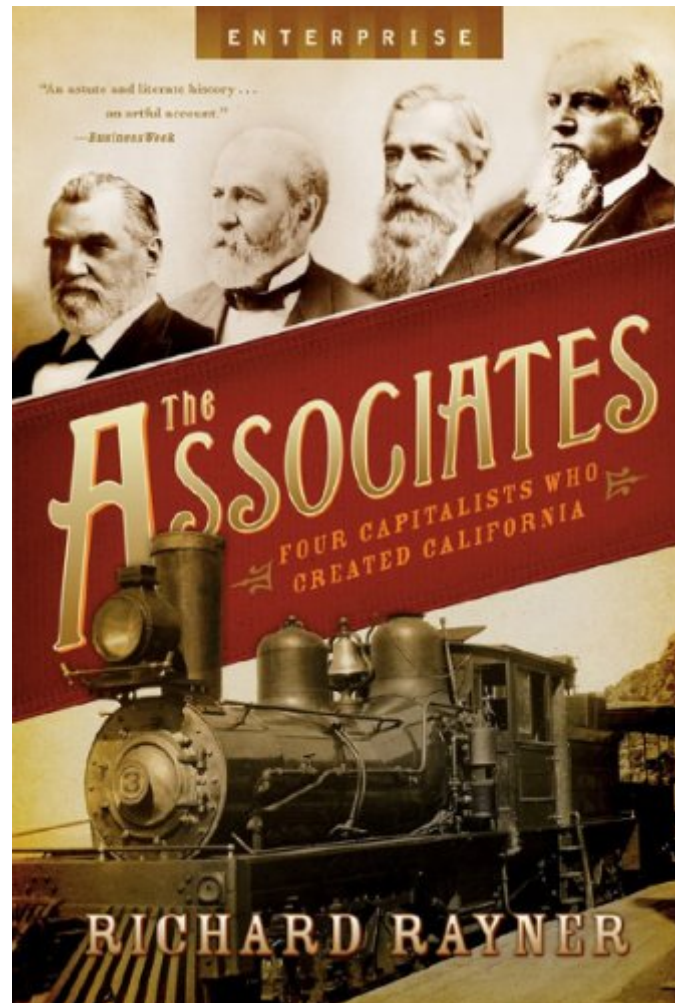




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The Associates: Four Capitalists Who Created California (Enterprise)



Synopsis

"A first-rate look at the little-known story behind the creation of America's first continental railroad. ... Entertaining and well written." —Publishers Weekly

One hundred forty years ago, four shopkeepers in Sacramento, California, rose to become the force behind the American transcontinental railroad, achieving along the way wealth beyond measure. To build influence and maintain power, they lied, bribed, and, when necessary, arranged for obstacles, both human and legal, to disappear. Their names were Collis Huntington, Leland Stanford, Charles Crocker, and Mark Hopkins, and they were known as "The Big Four" or "The Associates." Their drive for money — nothing more, nothing less — was epic. Their legacy is a university, public gardens, museums, mansions, banks, and libraries — and to a large degree, California itself. A captivating chronicle of a crucial period in American urban expansion, *The Associates* is a true-to-life tale of ruthless ambition, staggering greed, and the making of a nation.

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Customer Reviews

I have lived in Northern California for forty years and knew the Big Four - Crocker, Hopkins, Huntington, and Hopkins - were instrumental in creating the transcontinental railroad and all became

fabulously wealthy in the process. But like many who live here, I knew very little about the nature of their involvement and the true source of their wealth. Since Silicon Valley was not around in the latter half of the 1800s, I knew their wealth creation story had to be different than what we see today. Author Richard Rayner in his "The Associates: Four Capitalists Who Created California" does a masterful job in chronicling the story of "the building of the railroad, the creation of a state, and the invention of big business" and how these four became "as fabulously wealthy as anybody in American history." This is a story of about bent laws, broken rivals, the bribery of government officials (local, state, and federal), and sanctioned murder. Collis Huntington, the eventual ring-leader, Charles Crocker, Mark Hopkins, and Leland Stanford all met while running successful retail and wholesale businesses in Sacramento. They were drawn into the idea of building a transcontinental railroad by Theodore Judah who was the visionary but desperately needed money. They provided the initial stake then assumed control after Judah, attempting to find capital to buy out his financial partners, died unexpectedly. Rayner's well researched story then focuses on the building of the first transcontinental railroad - "a legendary story, a central part of the American West's creation myth"...a triumph of will, guts, the American can-do spirit, murder, fraud, and corruption "over unimaginable difficulty and danger"...

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