

# Sacramento Book Review



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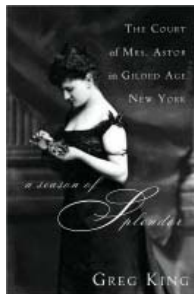
Below is a clipping of your book review that appeared in the January 09 issue of the *Sacramento Book Review*. Thank you for sending us the book.

## **A Season of Splendor**

By *Greg King*

Wiley, \$35.00, 528 pages

“The Gilded Age” was a term coined by Mark Twain to describe that period of time when conspicuous consumption was assumed, and the rich spent fortunes outdoing each other. Beginning in the years after the Civil War, it was a period of unrest in the upper social circles of New York as the old money families found themselves pressed by the new money made in manufacturing, shipping, and stock trading. The names became synonymous with wealth, high society and excess - Astor, Vanderbilt, Belmont, Carnegie, and Rockefeller. The center of this wealth and influence was New York City; the queen of it all, Caroline Astor, and her court the



400 Families. *A Season of Splendor* is more than just a survey of the people and personalities, but also the societal costs resulting from just how conspicuous that consumption was, one easy result being the Federal Income tax: highly graduated against the wealthy. King has put some excellent scholarship into this book, and his notes, bibliography, and index are almost 50 pages, provid-

ing anyone interested in further research plenty of sources. As we again have a period of excessive growth in millionaires, newly minted rubbing elbows with the new-old money, and excess being celebrated on many “reality” TV shows, one can see some of the cautionary parallels in this new “Gilded Age.”

(See also *Gilden Mansions*, page 32)