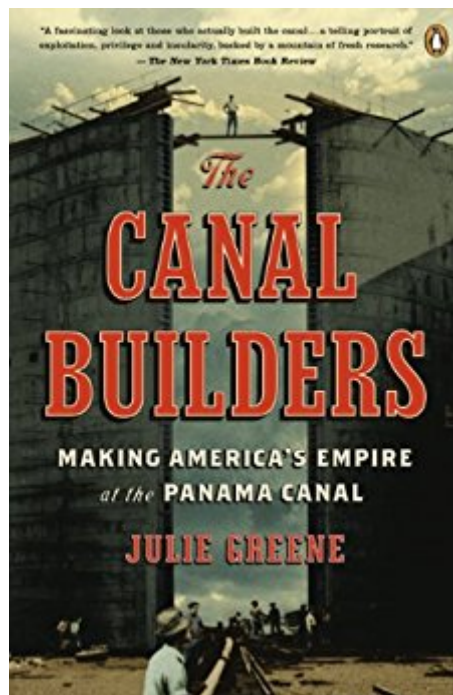




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The Canal Builders: Making America's Empire At The Panama Canal (Penguin History Of American Life)



Synopsis

A revelatory look at a momentous undertaking-from the workers' point of view The Panama Canal has long been celebrated as a triumph of American engineering and ingenuity. In *The Canal Builders*, Julie Greene reveals that this emphasis has obscured a far more remarkable element of the historic enterprise: the tens of thousands of workingmen and workingwomen who traveled from all around the world to build it. Greene looks past the mythology surrounding the canal to expose the difficult working conditions and discriminatory policies involved in its construction. Drawing extensively on letters, memoirs, and government documents, the book chronicles both the struggles and the triumphs of the workers and their families. Prodigiously researched and vividly told, *The Canal Builders* explores the human dimensions of one of the world's greatest labor mobilizations, and reveals how it launched America's twentieth-century empire.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Author Greene is obviously a left-wing, liberal author, and she describes the imperialist, racist and political motivation behind Teddy Roosevelt's building of the canal. A much more balanced account,

including the previous massive (and failed) attempt to build the canal by the French, is given in McCullough's magisterial book, "The Path Between the Seas". But reading each book is important in order to get both sides of this most important story. Liberals have "heart", and the superior moral view of history and politics. The "conservatives" are more cerebral, and understand that wealth and character are necessary to social reform, which is expensive. Both books should be read by anyone interested in this most important period in American development.

This book gave insight to some of the customs and cultural expression my parents and grandparents relayed to us over the years (born in Panama and lived on the Canal Zone). It explained the source of the antagonism between the different racial and ethnic groups and how it was fostered and encouraged by the racial attitudes and world view the United States exported to Panama (condescending towards those of Spanish ancestry and dismissive of the intelligence, skill and work ethic of those, confusingly for a post slavery US, African West Indians). Beyond that it also illustrated the hardships ALL workers faced and consequently the pride of my ancestors (West Indian) felt when they proclaimed: "We built this ditch". I always wondered about the contrast and differences in the quality of housing and amenities between the "Yankee" parts of the Canal Zone and the "Panamanian" parts and why no Panamanian born could have certain jobs. Yet living on the Canal Zone provided our extended families those little extras only Zonians could purchase (food and medicine especially and money) that was more difficult or expensive to obtain for most Panamanian workers. Great book!!!

Painful but necessary reading. I never knew until reading this book of the contributions made by my own ancestors in building the Panama Canal. I always heard we had distant family in Panama, now I see why/how. Nearly half of the men in Barbados left to work building "the ditch".... many died. I now am planning to go to Panama, it will have much more meaning to me now.

What we needed

Excellent service and product and was exactly as described.

Lovely.

Interesting new perspective

Great book !

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