



Canals For A Nation: The Canal Era in the United States, 1790-1860

Ronald E. Shaw

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All but forgotten except as a part of nostalgic lore, American canals during the first half of the nineteenth century provided a transportation network that was vital to the development of the new nation. They lowered transportation costs, carried a vast grain trade from western farms to eastern ports, delivered Pennsylvania coal to New York, and carried thousands of passengers at what seemed effortless speed. Along their courses sprang up new towns and cities and with them new economic growth.

Canals for a Nation brings together in one volume a survey of all the major American canals. Here are accounts of innovative engineering, of near heroic figures who devoted their lives to canals, and of canal projects that triumphed over all the uncertainties of the political process.

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