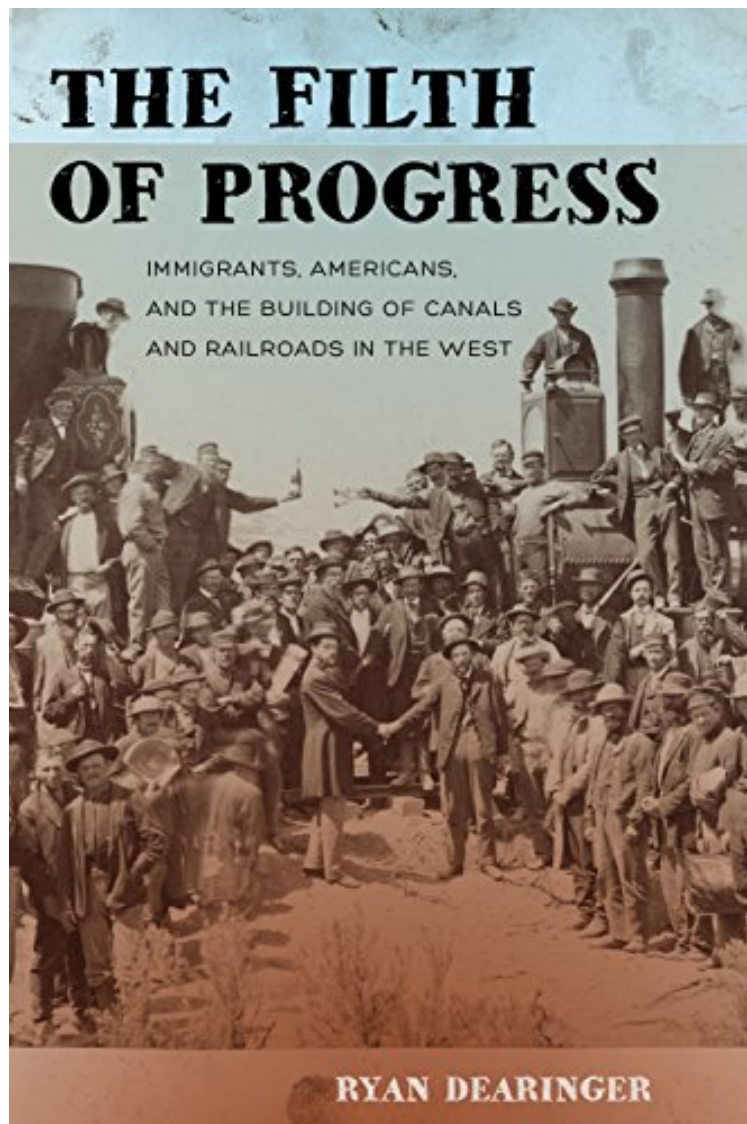


(Mobile pdf) The Filth of Progress: Immigrants, Americans, and the Building of Canals and Railroads in the West

The Filth of Progress: Immigrants, Americans, and the Building of Canals and Railroads in the West

Ryan Dearinger

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Ryan Dearinger : The Filth of Progress: Immigrants, Americans, and the Building of Canals and Railroads in the West before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Filth of Progress: Immigrants, Americans, and the Building of Canals and Railroads in the West:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. This book is an excellent look into how progress was shaped by those who ...By Erin Soderberg This book is an excellent look into how progress was shaped by those who were not

considered American. While we glorify progress made in railroads, dams, and canals the actual people building these were not glorified or accepted into American culture. This idea of "melting pot" is misunderstood and Dearinger does an excellent job distilling these misconceptions and analyzing how these events affected progress. This is a comprehensive book that is a must read for those interested in U.S. progression, manifest destiny, and modernization of the west. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Thoroughly worthwhile book to read and think about. By Johnny This is an extremely interesting and well written book by Ryan Dearinger. The author successfully engages the reader and encourages them to contemplate the meaning of American progress in the 19th century. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars. By Customer Very Interesting read, keeps you engaged. Well written. History beyond the history books.

The Filth of Progress explores the untold side of a well-known American story. For more than a century, accounts of progress in the West foregrounded the technological feats performed while canals and railroads were built; and lionized the capitalists who financed the projects. This book salvages stories often omitted from the triumphant narrative of progress by focusing on the suffering and survival of the workers who were treated as outsiders. Ryan Dearinger examines the moving frontiers of canal and railroad construction workers in the tumultuous years of American expansion, from the completion of the Erie Canal in 1825 to the joining of the Central Pacific and Union Pacific railroads in 1869. He tells the story of the immigrants and Americans—the Irish, Chinese, Mormons, and native-born citizens—whose labor created the West's infrastructure and turned the nation's dreams of a continental empire into a reality. Dearinger reveals that canals and railroads were not static monuments to progress but moving spaces of conflict and contestation.

From the Inside Flap "The Filth of Progress persuasively outlines the dark underbelly of the much-celebrated 'progress' that transportation improvements wrought between the 1820s and 1870s. Dearinger skillfully brings together the histories of Irish immigrants, Mormons, and Chinese workers. This compact, vividly written book will be of benefit to students and scholars of U.S. labor history, U.S. immigration history, and the history of the American West." —Thomas G. Andrews, Associate Professor of History at the University of Colorado and author of *Killing for Coal: America's Deadliest Labor War* and *Coyote Valley: Deep History in the High Rockies* "The Filth of Progress unmask[s] the strangely neglected work and self-advocacy of immigrant and Mormon transportation workers in the building of the American West. Dearinger's clear and polished prose reveals the commonalities and differences in how diverse workers tried to better their lives and conditions. This book will appeal to western historians, cultural historians of nineteenth-century American 'improvement' and 'progress,' labor historians, and historians of immigration." —Katherine Benton-Cohen, Associate Professor of History at Georgetown University and author of *Borderline Americans: Racial Division and Labor War in the Arizona Borderlands* "Just twenty years ago Peter Way introduced American historians to the harrowing lives of the 'navvies' working on New York's Erie Canal. Now Ryan Dearinger offers a rich, new, up-to-date study of the hard-working armies of laborers who dug the canals and spiked the rails that eventually knit together a transcontinental United States. The Filth of Progress deftly links the cultural enthusiasm for technology and development with the enormous suffering wrung from the hands and backs of thousands of marginalized persons from the opening of the Erie through the celebratory Golden Spike nearly half a century later. Irish immigrants, Mormons, and contract Chinese laborers—each group held in some degree of contempt by 'free' and 'white' Americans—greased the skids of progress with their sweat and blood. Familiar racial and ethnic hostilities, rank exploitation, and shameless manipulations ornament the story; but lest we forgive the principles for the 'standards of the day,' Dearinger displays one after another the outrageous fictions concocted to fix blame on the victims after the fact. Americans not only did not build their greatest achievement themselves, they lied aggressively to rob those who did of any scrap of credit or dignity. Not an uplifting story, Dearinger's account helps to balance scales too long tipped in the direction of bloodless triumph and Yankee ingenuity. Read, and weep." —John Lauritz Larson, Professor of History at Purdue University and author of *The Market Revolution in America: Liberty, Ambition, and the Eclipse of the Common Good*