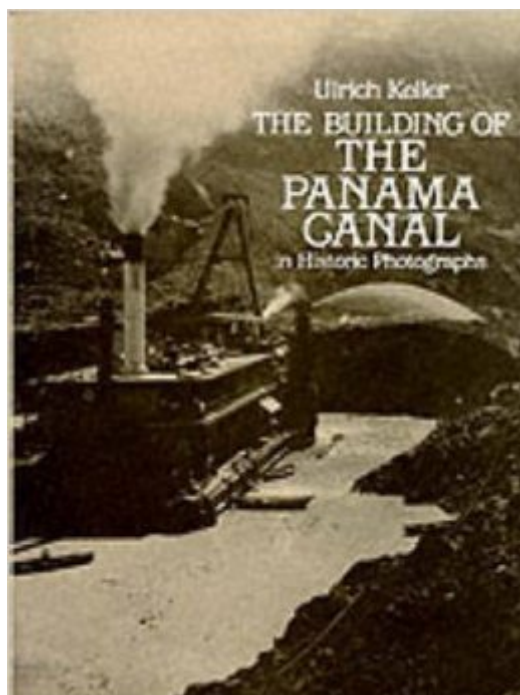


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The Building Of The Panama Canal In Historic Photographs



Synopsis

In 1889 the Compagnie Universelle du Canal Interocéanique declared bankruptcy. The French firm's optimistic and ill-planned attempt to construct a canal across the Isthmus of Panama had resulted in the death of 22,000 workers (most from yellow fever, typhoid fever, and malaria); the complete loss of one and a half billion francs for the company's 800,000 shareholders; and the bitter failure of Chief Engineer Ferdinand de Lesseps — the man responsible for the Suez Canal. On August 15, 1914, the S.S. Ancon took nine hours and forty minutes to traverse the lock-and-lake waterway linking the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. What occurred in the quarter century between 1889 and 1914 is a larger-than-life true story of adventure, revolution, ordeal, and accomplishment: the building of the Panama Canal — perhaps the greatest engineering marvel of the early twentieth century. In 164 magnificent historic photographs and a well-researched text, noted photohistorian Ulrich Keller tells the compelling story of this hitherto unparalleled technological achievement. Selected from an archive of over 10,000 images amassed by Ernest Hallen (Official Photographer of the Isthmian Canal Commission), these historic prints document the Canal's construction and its way of life: 450 miles of railroad; housing for 60,000 based on a caste system; the exotic settings; tremendous hardships and health risks; leisure activities; the Canal Zone's internal government, administration and policing; dredging operations, including spectacular movements of earth and water; unheard-of engineering feats and disastrous failures; and finally, victory! Photographers, historians, engineers, and students of industry and technology will immediately recognize this volume as an important primary source of industrial archaeology. Photography enthusiasts and lovers of true adventure will delight in the vibrant, you-are-there sensation imparted by the photos and Ulrich Keller's exceptionally informed text and meticulous captions. The Building of the Panama Canal in Historic Photographs takes the reader back to a different era, and one of the proudest episodes in what the author calls "the 'heroic' age of industry."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I lived in Panama for 17 years and have written 3 books on Panama. How how I wish I had this beautifully spectacular book years ago. What an inspiration it would have been during those dreary hours of research and writing. Each of these magnificent pictures are indeed worth a thousand words -- and there are so many pictures in this book! The United States "helped" Panama separate from Colombia in 1903; it had tried to do so over 80 times before then. But that's a different story. In 1904 the task to build the canal began. It would take 10 difficult years. The great task, which had defeated the French, was a monumental feat which changed the world forever. The rare photographs in this book document those years. How wonderful that they have been saved and are now offered to another generation! The Panama Canal Museum -- now at the University of Florida -- has an excellent collection of artifacts, documents and recollections for those seeking more information. Much of it is being digitized and is available on the Internet.

Wealth of information! This book eloquently navigates through Panama's Canal history; merging dynamic cultural and socio-political elements that contributed to this technological marvel. As a lifetime resident of the Canal Zone I taught I knew the definitive version of the Canals creation, however these photographs of the mundane to the sublime still concedes a wealth of information.

The Building of the Panama Canal in Historic Photographs by Ulrich Keller is a most fascinating compilation of photographs recording man's greatest engineering achievement in construction during the 20th Century. The photographs are even more special to me because it shows scenes that my Barbadian grandfather and uncle would have seen during their laboring to construct the Panama Canal. That uncle died of malaria at the Canal and is buried, alongside the many others who sacrificed their lives, in the cemetery shown in one of the photographs. This book ranks in the top 3 that I have ever read during my over 70 years of reading. Herbert A. Hutchinson

We bought this book to inform ourselves for an upcoming trip through the Panama Canal. It was of

immense help once we were sailing through the Canal, listening to the Ship's Commentator. We could now understand why and because so many hurdles were to overcome with the building of this beautiful passage between 2 seas.

Book was very meaningful, as I only recently fulfilled a long-held dream of making the full transit. This is an excellent collection of photos showing canal construction, as well as everyday life for those involved.. Politics aside, I feel great respect and appreciation for those visionaries, including Teddy Roosevelt, as well as those who toiled under difficult conditions, to make it all happen. A personal note: Enjoyed a delightful cruise feature, in the person of a talented actor who maintained TR's persona, both on and off stage. I think he compared quite favorably to Hal Holbrook's magnificent Mark Twain.

Spectacularly clear and detailed pictures of a civil engineering endeavor that for obvious reasons ought not to have been possible to construct. We are demonstratively shown how the combined power of machinery and man's determination can achieve. To a mechanical engineer it's a manifested proof of the power of steam. It should be shown at the very first start of engineering classes in all universities.

The reproduction of photographs in this book could have been better. Still, it is remarkable to see more images of this amazing feat of engineering. Overall, for Panama Canal reading, I recommend "The Path Between the Seas: The Creation of the Panama Canal.

With a transit cruise coming in December of 2011, I wanted to read on the history and building of the Panama Canal. This book provides over 150 great black and white photos showing the building of the Canal and the human support efforts required for this massive task. I think this book is a great historical reference.

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