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Createspace Independent Publishing Platform, 2017. Paperback. Condition: New. Large Print. Language: English . Brand New Book ***** Print on Demand *****.Includes pictures *Includes accounts of the projects construction *Includes online resources and a bibliography for further reading The Transcontinental Railroad, laid across the United States during the 1860s, remains the very epitome of contradiction. On the one hand, it was a triumph of engineering skills over thousands of miles of rough terrain, but on the other hand, it drained the natural resources in those places nearly dry. It civilized the American West by making it easier for women and children to travel there, but it dispossessed Native American civilizations that had lived there for generations. It made the careers of many men and destroyed the lives from many others. It was bold and careless, ingenious and cruel, gentle and violent, and it enriched some and bankrupted others. In short, it was the best and worst of 19th century America in action. Of course, even once a route was chosen, the backbreaking work itself had to be done to connect railroad lines across the span of nearly 2,000 miles. This required an incredible amount of manpower, often consisting of unskilled laborers engaging in dangerous work, and the financial resources poured into it were also extreme. In a world where few natural rivers carved out over eons of time have reached a length of more than 50 miles, the idea that a group of men could carve a canal of that length seemed impossible. In fact, many thought it could not be done. On the other hand, there was a tremendous motivation to try, because if a canal could be successfully cut across Central America to connect the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, it would cut weeks off the time necessary to carry...



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