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William Mulholland And The Rise Of Los Angeles



Synopsis

William Mulholland presided over the creation of a water system that forever changed the course of southern California's history. Mulholland, a self-taught engineer, was the chief architect of the Owens Valley Aqueduct—a project ranking in magnitude and daring with the Panama Canal—that brought water to semi-arid Los Angeles from the lush Owens Valley. The story of Los Angeles's quest for water is both famous and notorious: it has been the subject of the classic yet historically distorted movie Chinatown, as well as many other accounts. This first full-length biography of Mulholland challenges many of the prevailing versions of his life story and sheds new light on the history of Los Angeles and its relationship with its most prized resource: water. Catherine Mulholland, the engineer's granddaughter, provides insights into this story that family familiarity affords, and adds to our historical understanding with extensive primary research in sources such as Mulholland's recently uncovered office files, newspapers, and Department of Water and Power archives. She scrutinizes Mulholland's life—from his childhood in Ireland to his triumphant completion of the Owens Valley Aqueduct to the tragedy that ended his career. This vivid portrait of a rich chapter in the history of Los Angeles is enhanced with a generous selection of previously unpublished photographs. Los Angeles Times Best Nonfiction Book of 2000

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Customer Reviews

This is a very dull, technical read although no doubt it is accurate. I prefer the fictionalized Chinatown contortion of the story. I am sure William Mulholland's true story is fascinating, but this book has more in it about the passing of regulations and ordinances and so on, than the real drama of his story, and seems to be pretty short of depicting the real characters at work in the creation of LA.

Too much intricate detail of all the water companies in and around L.A. before Mulholland worked on the great Owens Valley Aqueduct project bogged me down. That's when I stopped reading.

One of the best quotes ever. Orange groves, Olive orchards, Sheep. A huge part of So. Cal's history, and of Los Angeles' as well. Wm. Mulholland was a remarkable man, his story is remarkable as well. Highly recommended for any History buff!

An outstanding biography of a controversial figure, but an individual who changed the course of history for the City of Los Angeles.

Ms. Mulholland is a finely skilled researcher and writer. I supposed in this she has to be. No stone unturned. Well done.

Great book about a great man

Perfect!

Fantastic research.

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