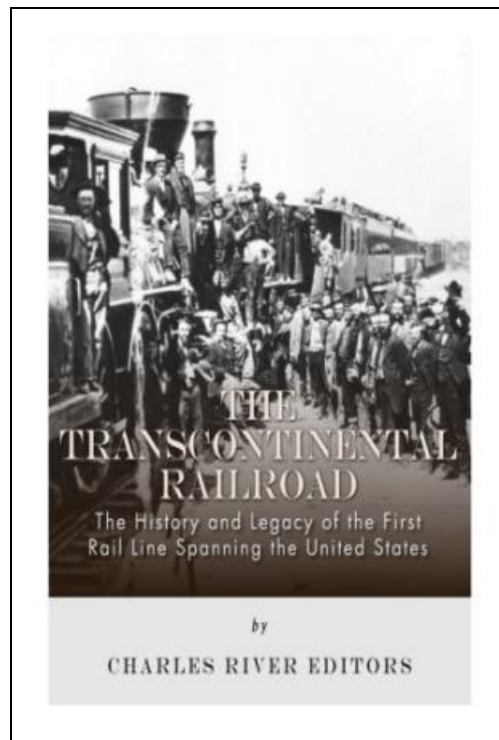


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Createspace, United States, 2014. Paperback. Book Condition: New. 229 x 152 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book ***** Print on Demand *****.*Includes pictures *Includes accounts written by newspapers, railroad workers and executives *Includes a bibliography for further reading *Includes a table of contents The necessity that now exists for constructing lines of railroad and telegraphic communication between the Atlantic and Pacific coasts of this continent is no longer a question of argument; it is conceded by every one. In order to maintain our present position on the Pacific, we must have some more speedy and direct means of intercourse than is at present afforded by the route through the possessions of a foreign power. - 1856 report made by the Select Committee on the Pacific Railroad and Telegraph of the U.S. House of Representatives 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. As settlers pushed west and the Gold Rush brought an influx of Americans to California, the need for something like the Transcontinental Railroad was apparent to the government in the 1850s, and with the help of private companies, government officials conducted...



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