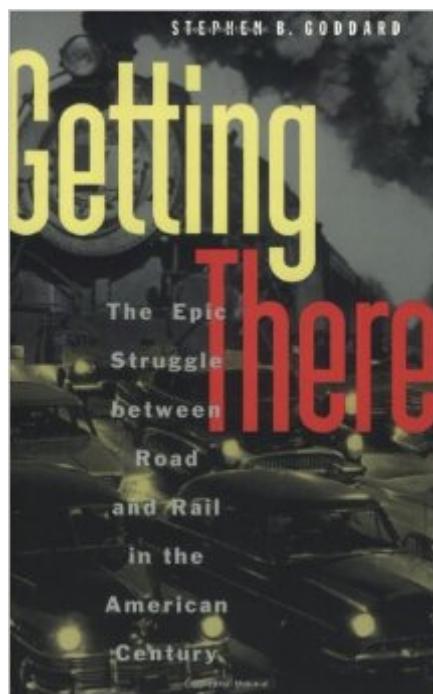


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Getting There: The Epic Struggle Between Road And Rail In The American Century



Synopsis

"A readable and concise overview of how U.S. transportation came to its present pass. . . . Goddard is at his best when recounting the complex and interesting history of what has come to be called 'the highway lobby.' . . . An excellent book for the general reader with an interest in getting around."â "Larry Fish, Philadelphia Inquirer" This is a riveting story: of mighty railroads hamstrung almost overnight by government bureaucrats; of road interests led by General Motors Corp. conspiring in city after city to destroy efficient trolley systems . . . and of freeways that are far from free."â "Bill Laitner, Detroit Free Press" The combination of forces and fates that turned America into a giant parking lot from sea to shining sea is the subject of Stephen B. Goddard's lively pop history. . . . As Mr. Goddard ably points out, road-building and the creation of car-dependent suburbs have become ends in themselves."â "James Howard Kunstler, Wall Street Journal" The strength of Goddard's book is that he understands the complexities of manipulating public opinion to influence legislatures."â "David Young, Chicago Tribune" [Goddard's] book is a deft and easily read history of how transportation has shaped the nation and its economy, and ultimately, how a federation of truck and car interests drastically tilted national policies. . . . For many reasons this is an exceptionally important work."â "Jim Dwyer, New York Newsday

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Customer Reviews

The USA was an odd country. Mostly depopulated by epidemics before the pilgrims ever got here. Brimming with resources of timber, topsoil, minerals, cod and lobster. Mostly settled, if you discount

the slave plantation states, in the most egalitarian redistribution of resources the world has ever seen. and so it was much easier for railroads to get started here when they finally arrived. A much lower population density, not encumbered by aristocrats and nobles who'd owned their land for dozens of generations. The railroaders succeeded in generating some great fortunes with their bequests of landgrants greater than the size of Texas. Somebody had to do it. The very nature of the technology or industry is monopolist, and the culture of attitudes between the customers and the industry as it would. It didn't help that the railroads conjured byzantine rate schedules based on the category of merchandise shipped, rather than merely how much it cost to ship the good. And so there was a public reaction to this, using what tools democracy managed to contrive. Later, the automobile was realized. It was difficult to know what to do with it at the time, for even then most roads were rutted dirt tracts prone to becoming rutted mud tracks as weather permitted. Fortunately, programs for improving roads had been gestating for a few decades. Initially, to make it easier for rural farmers to cart themselves to the towns with railroad stations. Its progress was slow as various organizations sprung up to do the necessary campaigning and lobbying for the legislation necessary, and engineers slowly accumulated. Finally the whole thing took off.

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