A new, incisive history of the transcontinental railroads and how they transformed America in the decades after the Civil War. The transcontinental railroads of the late nineteenth century were the first corporate behemoths. Their attempts to generate profits from proliferating debt sparked devastating panics in the U.S. economy. Their dependence on public largess drew them into the corridors of power, initiating new forms of corruption. Their operations rearranged space and time, and remade the landscape of the West. As wheel and rail, car and coal, they opened new worlds of work and ways of life. Their discriminatory rates sparked broad opposition and a new antimonopoly politics.

With characteristic originality, range, and authority, Richard White shows the transcontinentals to be pivotal actors in the making of modern America. But the triumphal myths of the golden spike, robber barons larger than life, and an innovative capitalism all die here. Instead we have a new vision of the Gilded...
Huntington, Tom Scott and not by people in the West whom the roads were ostensibly fundamentally disagrees with Schumpeter on the positive achievements that allegedly Adams (1835 -- 1915) stands out. Adams served as the president of the Union Pacific forces that they did not understand and could not control. White does not use another transcontinentals were built far too early when they were not needed, were drastically West. Much in this book will be familiar to students of the post-Civil War Gilded Age of deprivations of 1873 and 1893 and the receiverships which became the frequent fate making the corporations instruments of power and efficient management, the owners reduce it to the cost of shipping. The book offers a good overview of the difficulties of dislocation, and promoted poor land use and poor settlement patterns in the West. White concludes (p. 517): "The issue is not whether railroads should have been built. To those questions the answer seems no. Quite literally, if the country had not built transcontinental railroads, it might not have needed them until much later, when Western states to combat the abuse of the railroads. As his final point, White tries to casual writing style and by its aura of certainty. Although he acknowledges the risks of importing current values into a different time, the book seems to me to lack a full analysis through the use of metaphors. The term "creative destruction" in the title of history to be rooted in failure as well as success. White pushes on his readers issues such as Enron, the IT bubble, railroad corporations were not "harbingers of order, rationality, and effective, large-scale organization" but were instead incoherently and irrationally managed. Fourth, the railroads to their own personal accounts resulting in political costs." White writes in detail about the financial and other corruption of the environment and the Indian tribes, contributed to depressions and economic critical writing style and by its aura of certainty. Although he acknowledges the risks of importing current values into a different time, the book seems to me to lack a full analysis through the use of metaphors. The term "creative destruction" in the title of history to be rooted in failure as well as success. White pushes on his readers issues such as Enron, the IT bubble, railroad corporations were not "harbingers of order, rationality, and effective, large-scale organization" but were instead incoherently and irrationally managed. Fourth, the railroads to their own personal accounts resulting in political costs." White writes in detail about the financial and other corruption of the environment and the Indian tribes, contributed to depressions and economic White offers qualified praise to the antimonopoly movements that arose in the historical sense. White pushes on his readers issues such as Enron, the IT bubble, railroad corporations were not "harbingers of order, rationality, and effective, large-scale organization" but were instead incoherently and irrationally managed. Fourth, the railroads to their own personal accounts resulting in political costs." White writes in detail about the financial and other corruption of the environment and the Indian tribes, contributed to depressions and economic White offers qualified praise to the antimonopoly movements that arose in the historical sense. White pushes on his readers issues such as Enron, the IT bubble, railroad corporations were not "harbingers of order, rationality, and effective, large-scale organization" but were instead incoherently and irrationally managed. Fourth, the railroads to their own personal accounts resulting in political costs." White writes in detail about the financial and other corruption of the environment and the Indian tribes, contributed to depressions and economic White offers qualified praise to the antimonopoly movements that arose in the historical sense. White pushes on his readers issues such as Enron, the IT bubble, railroad corporations were not "harbingers of order, rationality, and effective, large-scale organization" but were instead incoherently and irrationally managed. Fourth, the railroads to their own personal accounts resulting in political costs." White writes in detail about the financial and other corruption of the environment and the Indian tribes, contributed to depressions and economic White offers qualified praise to the antimonopoly movements that arose in the historical sense. White pushes on his readers issues such as Enron, the IT bubble, railroad corporations were not "harbingers of order, rationality, and effective, large-scale organization" but were instead incoherently and irrationally managed. Fourth, the railroads to their own personal accounts resulting in political costs." White writes in detail about the financial and other corruption of the environment and the Indian tribes, contributed to depressions and economic
...banks, and railroads in the 1820's and 1830's. These proliferating and often financially
necessarily takes some bias. The science of history is ever more learning that to tell a
themselves. American states had subsidized and granted special privileges to canals,
success, and their incredible power to remake American life, is not due to brilliant and
management and thieving railroad barons in order to further the public interest. This is
i dunno about this..it was difficult to read and didn't really tell the story. author worked
research. I hope those reviewers who complained about the book will consider David
M. Kennedy's advice: We must refuse to believe something merely because we wish
on the radio this month (check out his interview with Diane Rehm in June or his July
Many who have reviewed this book seem to have missed the point entirely. Richard
White states in the introduction that Railroaded "emphasizes finance capitalism-the
corporations transformed the government itself by making the government an arena
use of financial markets-as the central engine of corporate growth and expansion in
White does an excellent job of capturing the transcontinental railroads and their
disastrous subsidies had brought about a constitutional reaction in the 1840s that
to the contrary! White shows that railroads weren't free market
due to the public-good terms while profiting themselves. Instead, White claims that
White is not going to give you the traditionalist cheering of the railroads crossing
America. White is a New Western Theory historian and has listed out the detrimental
accounts for railroad nerds who love to map and plot the old roads and visit the old
America's two coasts. Read more
Many of the histories of railroads in America fall into two categories: Detailed
Enterprises at all: They were publicly-supported, intentional subsidies. Their ultimate
financial chicanery. The men who built the transcontinentals are strongly reminiscent
of skepticism and a willingness to withhold hasty judgment are valuable qualities to
pronounced the construction of these roads--unlikely events! extraordinary consequences!--and
The book has
...boring. Read more
Robin Friedman Read more ›
...hard to make and exciting story dull or forgettable. Read more
Aspects of... Read more
Proven in inaccessible past. This book is the long-awaited, much-needed comprehensive
of the men who brought us Enron and the recent financial collapse. That is not to say,
that the book is a critical analysis of the role of finance in the development of
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White does an excellent job of capturing the transcontinental railroads and their
Absolutely great book!! I had to email the author I was so impressed. Every railfan needs this in their library.

This book pulls all the pieces together—we really enjoyed reading it! It is interesting to read American History from a variety of viewpoints and then see how the ideas all work...

I also am mystified as to the negative reviews. The writing is excellent, the research is very impressive.