

Over the Alleghenies: Early Canals and Railroads of Pennsylvania

Robert J. Kapsch

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Between 1826 and 1858 the state of Pennsylvania built and operated the largest and most technologically advanced system of canals and railroads in North America-almost one thousand miles of transport that stretched from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh and beyond.

The construction of this ambitious transportation system was accompanied by great euphoria. It was widely believed that the revenue created from these canals and railroads would eliminate the need for all taxes on state citizens. Yet with the Panic of 1837, a financial crisis much like boom and bust cycle that ended in 2008, a deep recession fell across the country.

By 1858, Pennsylvania had sold all canals and railroads to private companies, often for pennies-on-thedollar.

Over the Alleghenies: Early Canals and Railroads of Pennsylvania is the definitive history of the state of Pennsylvania's incredible canal and railroad system. Although often condemned as a colossal failure, this construction effort remains an innovative, magnificent feat that ushered in modern transportation to Pennsylvania and the entire country. With extensive primary research, over one hundred illustrations, newspapers clippings, and charts and graphs, Over the Alleghenies examines and dissects the infrastructure project that bankrupted the wealthiest state in the Union.



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