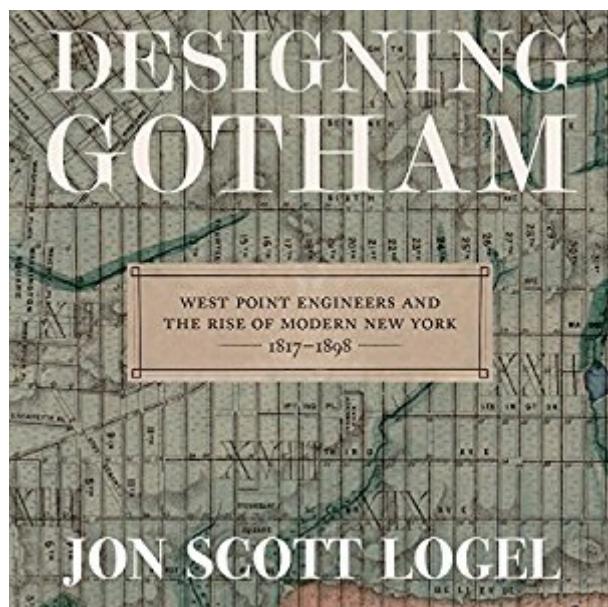


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Designing Gotham: West Point Engineers And The Rise Of Modern New York, 1817-1898



Synopsis

Between 1817 and 1898, New York City evolved from a vital Atlantic port of trade to the center of American commerce and culture. Although this important urban transformation is well documented, the critical role of select Union soldiers turned New York engineers has, until now, remained largely unexplored. In *Designing Gotham*, Jon Scott Logel examines the fascinating careers of George S. Greene, Egbert L. Viele, John Newton, Henry Warner Slocum, and Fitz John Porter, all of who studied engineering at West Point, served in the US Army during the Civil War, and later advanced their civilian careers and status through the creation of Victorian New York. After the war these industrious professionals leveraged their education and military experience to wield significant influence during New York's social, economic, and political transformation. Logel examines how each engineer's Civil War service shaped his contributions to postwar activities in the city, including the construction of the Croton Aqueduct, the creation of Central Park, and the building of the Brooklyn Bridge. Examining the West Pointers' experiences - as cadets, military officers during the war, and New Yorkers - Logel assesses how these men impacted the growing metropolis, the rise of professionalization, and the advent of Progressivism at the end of the century. The book is published by Louisiana State University Press.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 8 hours and 36 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: University Press Audiobooks

Audible.com Release Date: August 14, 2017

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B074QY3H75

Best Sellers Rank: #50 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Arts & Entertainment > Architecture
#640 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Science > Technology & Engineering #985
in Books > Arts & Photography > Architecture > Urban & Land Use Planning

Customer Reviews

A summary of the review on StrategyPage.Com'Although the story of how West Point provided the bulk of the engineers who built America in the nineteenth century is well known, Prof. Logel (Naval

War College), points out that their role in the rise of New York is not only far less celebrated, but is also perhaps their most important contribution to the new nation. Logel opens with a fairly detailed look at the West Point curriculum in the sciences and engineering, and how USMA-trained engineers not only built much of America's infrastructure, but were also the founders of engineering as a profession in the new nation. He then goes on to trace the influence of Academy graduates on New York; mapping the geological foundation, developing the now famous rigid street grid, the Erie Canal, the Croton water system, and so forth through the Brooklyn Bridge, improvements to navigation, and much more, and also following how some of these men brought their organizational skills to important administrative posts, such as Commissioner of Police or of Docks, along the way not only turning New York into the nation's economic power house, but also laying the basis for several professional organizations and learned societies. Logel points out that the officers involved, some famous (George B. McClellan, Henry Slocum, FitzJohn Porter) and some not (Egbert Viele, George Greene) went to the city for different reasons, some for the professional opportunities involved, while others, such as McClellan or Porter, for personal vindication. Logel touches on municipal politics, veterans affairs, Tammany Hall, immigration, and much more. Although technical details on some of the engineering feats are sparse, and the book could use some better maps, this is a good read for those interested in the history of West Point, the professional in American society, or the history of New York. For the full review, see [StrategyPage.Com](#)

One of the most interesting and thoroughly researched recap of the development of NYC. Great read!

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