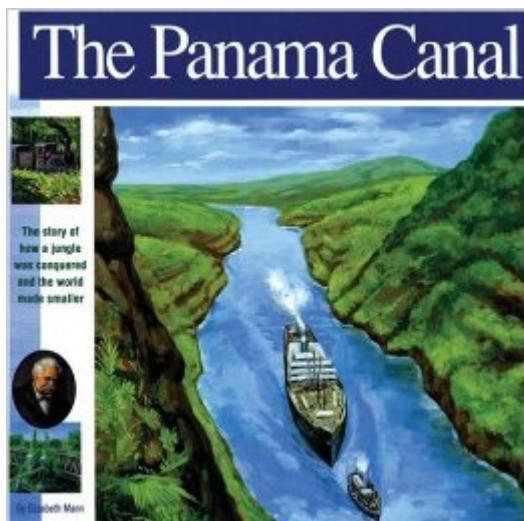


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The Panama Canal: The Story Of How A Jungle Was Conquered And The World Made Smaller (Wonders Of The World Book)



Synopsis

Panama was less than 50 miles wide, yet difficult to bridge by canal -- its swamps were disease-ridden, its mountainous rain forest challenged the most brilliant engineers, and its oppressive heat exhausted the hardiest workers. Engineers found ways to cut through the forest, medical visionaries conquered the diseases, and workers endured the jungle. Yet there were also broken treaties, political tyranny, and the tragedy of thousands of West Indian workers forced to live in awful, segregated conditions. *Wonders of the World* series The winner of numerous awards, this series is renowned for Elizabeth Mann's ability to convey adventure and excitement while revealing technical information in engaging and easily understood language. The illustrations are lavishly realistic and accurate in detail but do not ignore the human element. Outstanding in the genre, these books are sure to bring even the most indifferent young reader into the worlds of history, geography, and architecture. "One of the ten best non-fiction series for young readers." - Booklist

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 1010 (What's this?)

Series: *Wonders of the World* Book

Paperback: 48 pages

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Average Customer Review: 3.5 out of 5 starsÂ See all reviewsÂ (11 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #525,113 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #36 inÂ Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > History > Central & South America #55 inÂ Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > History > Modern #351 inÂ Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > History > United States > 1900s

Age Range: 9 - 13 years

Grade Level: 4 - 8

Customer Reviews

The Panama Canal is not the first book in the *Wonders of the World* series we've purchased. Thus I was dumbfounded to find the inaccuracies and outright bias with which The Panama Canal ends. I

am a trained medical scientist, a member of the American Chemical Society's medicinal and analytical divisions - one with a lifetime love of history. Thus, when I read "Black Caribbeans suffered a higher rate of death from accidents and disease than any other group in the Canal Zone" I want to see the supporting evidence for that claim, especially as the author blames this disparity on official US government policy of segregation. The eradication of yellow fever and control of malaria in the Panama Canal Zone under the lead of William Gorgas is one of the finest accomplishments of the United States Public Health Service, one for which we remain grateful even today. One recent report from Harvard University's Contagion program states: "Gorgas's success in Panama was as dramatic as in Cuba: by 1906, he eradicated yellow fever and contained malaria during the canal's 10-year construction period. Gorgas's sanitary workers drained, or covered with kerosene, all sources of standing water to prevent mosquitoes from laying their eggs and larvae from developing; fumigated areas infested with adult mosquitoes; isolated disease-stricken patients with screening and netting; and constructed quarantine facilities. In major urban centers, new domestic water systems provided running water to residents, thereby eliminating the need for collecting rain water in barrels, which had provided perfect breeding sites for mosquitoes carrying yellow fever. The US government's \$20 million investment in the sanitation program also provided free medical care and burial services to thousands of employees. In addition, Gorgas's sanitation department dispensed approximately one ton of prophylactic quinine each year at 21 dispensaries along the Panama Canal route and added hospital cars to trains that crossed the Isthmus. Each year, hospitals treated approximately 32,000 workers, and 6,000 were treated in sick camps." [...] I have no doubt that more blacks suffered accidents & illness while working on the Panama Canal than did whites. Most of the lower paid jobs were filled by minorities from all over the world - Indians, Chinese and yes, Caribbeans. Most of the engineers were from the United States and white. There were very few black engineers anywhere in the world in 1903. But to describe that higher accident and illness rate as a result of racism is a total fallacy. More importantly, I have found no reliable statistics that bear out Mann's assertion that Caribbean workers suffered any higher rates of injury/illness than Indian workers or other ethnic groups. In 1903 - the same year the US took over construction of the Panama Canal - a group of people in North Pownal, Vermont, suffered a much higher rate of accident and illness than their neighbors. Their children received a poor education and were often forced into dangerous work by age 10. These people were mostly immigrants and many did not speak English. They lived in substandard housing. They had little hope of ever leaving their dead end jobs or earning much more than they were making. You can read their story in *Counting on Grace*. Make no mistake, this is a story that was repeated in virtually every town and city in New

England in 1903. And it is not a story about racism or disparate treatment because of color. It is a story about poverty, low pay and lack of rights for workers. That, too, is a story that is with us even today. I was further dumbfounded to read that in Mann's estimation the building of the Panama Canal provided no military advantage to the US. Certainly the US Navy would disagree with her assessment. The Panama Canal was vital to US and Allied interests during WWII and made a response to the destruction of the US Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor possible months earlier than would have otherwise occurred. Nothing pains me more than to see the rewriting of history taught to children in order to push some "politically correct" agenda. We've plenty of incidents of real bias that none need be invented. This is one Wonders of the World book that will not be used in my classroom. And I'll be very cautious about buying any others in the series. Not recommended.

The illustrations in this book are so good that I have offered it to my husband as a "ready made diary" of our trip to the Panama canal. The pictures capture all the beauty and the technological marvel of the canal. The book is an excellent visit in an armchair.

What a shame that a book aimed at children should be so historically inaccurate. Please do not include political agendas, especially if they are inaccurate, in so called history books. To say that the canal had no military significance betrays great ignorance. Please! The illustrations are lovely but the author's knowledge of the workers who built the canal and the times they lived is woefully inadequate and frankly wrong. Much of the world was a sad reality in 1903. Panama was not that different. And those, all of them, who built the canal made it a better isthmus and a better world. Why didn't you emphasize the magnificent engineering feats and the amazing health improvements? True marvels benefiting thousands to this very day! Who am I? I studied in Panama for over 15 years and have written 3 books on Panama.

I purchased this book as part of the preparation for taking my 6yo and 9yo on a cruise with a full Canal transit. The reading level is appropriate for older elementary children and the illustrations are quite beautiful. This is definitely a children's book, albeit one aimed at older kids. I agree with previous reviewers that there is a definitive slant to the history provided by the author. Were this the only resource we were using to learn about the Canal, I would have felt compelled to tweak it to remove some of the author's bias. Instead, we are opting to explore several resources about the Canal, comparing and contrasting as we go. So far our two favorites are this book and the Nova special narrated by Path Between the Seas author David McCullough: *NOVA: A Man, a Plan, a*

Canal - PanamaBottom line: I recommend this as a Panama Canal resource for children, with the caveat that parents should be mindful of bias if this is the only resource they will be using.

We used this book for our second grade son's home schooling project on the Panama Canal while we transited the canal in our sailboat. We were happy with the information in the book and the presentation style, which helped him make sense of what he was seeing. He then went on to write quite a detailed report on the Panama Canal with this book as one of his sources.- Nadine Slavinski, author of Lesson Plans Ahoy

The Panama Canal (49 pages) by Elizabeth Mann is a well written book containing the very basic information about the canal. My disappointment is that the book was set in oversized type and every other page was an illustration. It was interesting and very easy reading. The book would be best suited for a pre-high school student.

Written for a 6th -8th grade audience, I really enjoyed it as a not too detailed story of how the canal came to be. I added in my own photos, and my grandkids have a great journal of my story and the canal's story.

The book was awful. It read like a bad 6th grade book report. I threw it in the garbage the same day it arrived. It sure doesn't make me want to buy another book. Maybe I'll throw your credit card in the garbage too - I can't believe you sell crap like that.

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