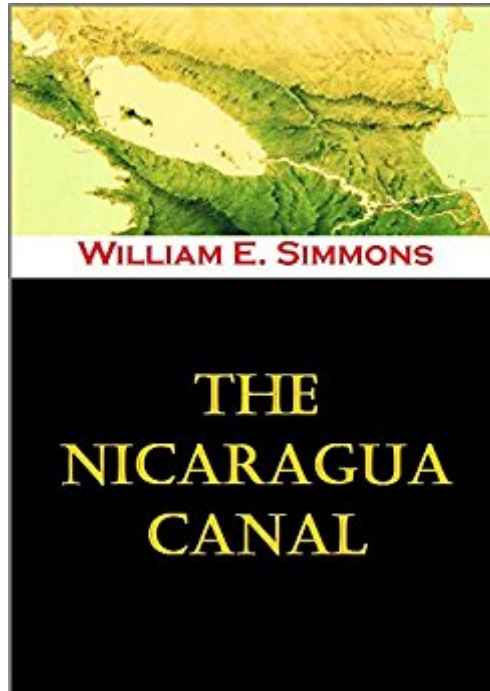




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The Nicaragua Canal (1900)



Synopsis

This work by William E. Simmons covers the events surrounding the canal that almost was in 1897, the newly named United States Nicaraguan Canal Commission proposed the idea of building the canal, as did the subsequent Isthmian Canal Commission in 1899. The Nicaraguan Canal Commission carried out the most thorough hydrological survey yet of the San Juan River and its watershed, and in 1899 concluded that an interoceanic project was feasible at a total cost of US\$138 million. At the same time, the Geological Society of America published the "Physiography and Geology of Region Adjacent to the Nicaragua Canal Route" in its Bulletin in May 1899, which remains one of the most detailed geological surveys of the San Juan River region. In the late 19th century, the United States government negotiated with President Jos  Santos Zelaya to lease the land to build a canal through Nicaragua. Luis Felipe Corea, the Nicaraguan minister in Washington, wrote to United States Secretary of State John Hay expressing the Zelaya government's support for such a canal. Cromwell arranged for leaflets with stamps featuring Momotombo to be sent to every Senator as "proof" of the volcanic activity in Nicaragua. An eruption in May 1902 on the island of Martinique resulted in 30,000 human fatalities. This catastrophe persuaded most of the United States Congress to vote in favor of constructing the canal in Panama, leaving only eight votes in favor of Nicaragua. The decision to build the Panama Canal passed by four votes.

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Publication Date: February 28, 2015

Sold by:Â Digital Services LLC

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ASIN: B00U4XPOCC

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