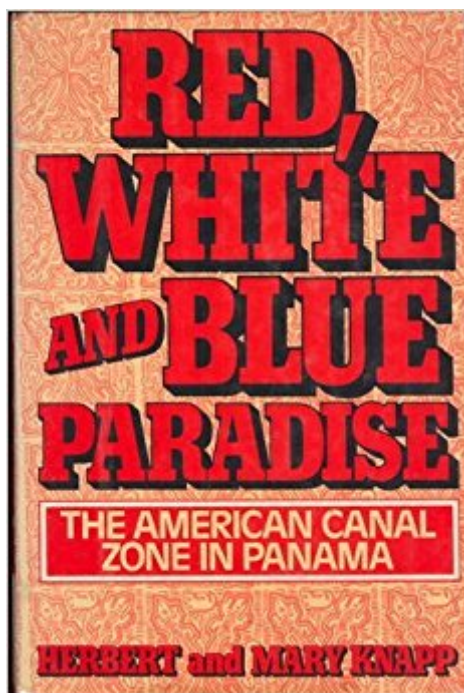


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Red, White, And Blue Paradise: The American Canal Zone In Panama



Synopsis

Here is an thorough and impassioned account of America's Canal adventure, beginning in 1904 with the arrival of the first American Roughnecks in the 'Panama graveyard' and ending the day the last vestige of American authority on the Canal Zone was abolished seventy five years later.

Book Information

Hardcover: 306 pages

Publisher: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich; 1st edition (1984)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0151761353

ISBN-13: 978-0151761357

Package Dimensions: 9 x 6.1 x 1.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.3 pounds

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars 5 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #1,413,083 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #60 in [Books > History > Americas > Central America > Panama](#)

Customer Reviews

Here is an thorough and impassioned account of America's Canal adventure, beginning in 1904 with the arrival of the first American Roughnecks in the 'Panama graveyard' and ending the day the last vestige of American authority on the Canal Zone was abolished seventy five years later.

The book brings back memories of my time in the Canal Zone. I spent time in the Zone in the mid 60's while serving in the military. It reminded of the well kept Zone compared to The Republic of Panama. I've read and saw pictures of how that has all changed. Now it looks run down and many spots are reclaimed by the jungle. What a shame.

Wanted this book to read as our family lived in Panama for 5 years. So many memories were renewed in its reading and the entire family truly enjoyed it greatly.

This is a well-written, thoughtful and historically sound book. It covers a slice of the American experiment in the former Panama Canal Zone. Noble at times and flawed at other times as are all human endeavors the experience served the world well. Human shortcomings should not detract from the bottom line. There were many success stories created by Americans, Panamanians and

others as they carved out an engineering masterpiece out of the veritable jungle. Much propaganda has been written about America's intent, mission and accomplishments in building the canal and maintaining it ever so effectively for nearly one-hundred years. Much of it is too critical and distorted. All in all, America's accomplishments are a proud and successful chapter in the history of the Americas. Indeed of the world. Some readers will cringe at what I just wrote because so much foolishness and so many falsehoods have been written that it is hard to know the truth. Luckily this book and others will serve as fodder when, in fifty years or such, the definitive books are written. The privately funded Panama Canal Zone Museum now housed at the University of Florida is collecting primary material that will help with the task of chronicling the myriad of amazing stories. Many events are planned for 2014, the 100th anniversary of opening the Canal. This book is sound and a good read.

I lived in the Canal Zone and moved away 14 years before I happened onto this book in a Nevada library. It is a jewel! Frank and Mary Knapp were two intellectuals from the Midwest who went to the Canal Zone in 1964, on the eve of the pivotal Flag Riots, to teach at storied Balboa High School on the Pacific side of the Zone. This book is at once an intellectual history of the Canal Zone and the its host Republic, and an account of the Knapps' own reluctant emergence from knee-jerk Liberal contempt for the Zonians. Like Isaac Singer's Yiddish ghetto, our extinct Canal Zone contains stories worth extracting. There are lessons paid up but yet to be learned. I think, for example, that the State Department's collaboration with a military dictator to discredit the Zone community, with the eager assistance of purportedly objective American journalists, was a precursor to the Justice Department's recent villification of anti-Castro Cuban-Americans in Miami. Frank and Mary Knapp are no crusaders, no polemicists. Their most important contribution may have been to re-introduce a meek objectivity and intellectual integrity to the scorched earth of Canal Zone literature. This book is not a magnum opus. But I hope it can serve as a re-orienting force, a compass, for authors of more ambitious future works about our communal Progressive experiment on the banks of the Canal that lasted almost exactly as long as the Soviet Union.

Mr. Stinson's review of this book is right-on! I've just finished reading the book and most of what I was planning to say is right in Mr. Stinson's review. Red, White and Blue Paradise should be in the library of every ex-Zonian who remembers the Canal Zone with fondness. It's an antidote to all the Marxist nonsense written about the Zone by the usual suspects. Herbert and Mary Knapp experienced the Zone, overcame their initial prejudices and wrote the truth about their time there.

This isn't just an intellectual/political history. Life in The Zone is described in great detail. The book brought back many fond memories - I spent two years at BHS in the late '50's and even then I thought of the Zone as a paradise. This book now joins The Path Between the Seas on my bookshelf. I highly recommend Red, White and Blue Paradise. Incidentally, although the book is out of print, the copy obtained for me was an ex-library copy in excellent shape. Marshall S Thomas

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