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Henry J. Kaiser: Builder in the Modern American West (American Studies Series)

Mark S. Foster

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In the 1940s Henry J. Kaiser was a household name, as familiar then as Lee Iacocca and Donald Trump are now. Like a Horatio Alger hero, Kaiser rose from lower-middle-class origins to become an enormously wealthy entrepreneur, building roads, bridges, dams, and housing. He established giant businesses in cement, aluminum, chemicals, steel, health care, and tourism. During World War II, his companies built cargo planes and Liberty ships. After the war, he manufactured the Kaiser-Frazer automobiles. Along the way, he also became a major force in the development of the western United States, including Hawaii. Henry J. Kaiser: Builder in the Modern American West is the first biography of this remarkable man. Drawing on a wealth of archival material never before utilized, Mark Foster paints an evenhanded portrait of a man of driving ambition and integrity, perhaps the ultimate can-do capitalist. He covers Kaiser's entire life (1882-1967), emphasizing many business ventures. He demonstrates that Kaiser was the prototypical frontier entrepreneur who often used government and union support to tame the wilderness.

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