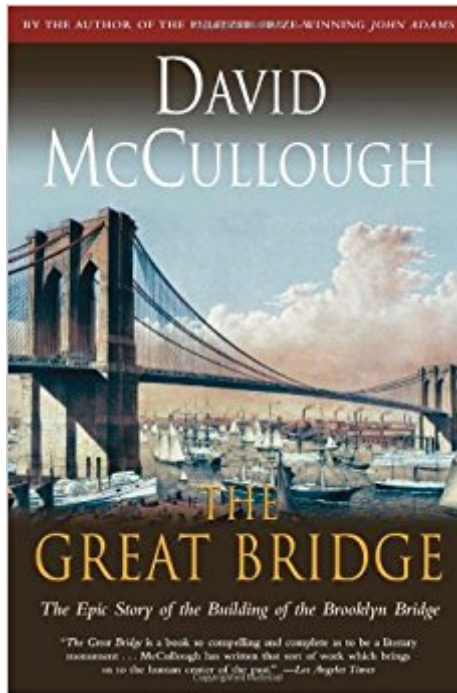




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The Great Bridge: The Epic Story Of The Building Of The Brooklyn Bridge



Synopsis

The dramatic and enthralling story of the building of the Brooklyn Bridge, the world's longest suspension bridge at the time, a tale of greed, corruption, and obstruction but also of optimism, heroism, and determination, told by master historian David McCullough. This monumental book is the enthralling story of one of the greatest events in our nation's history, during the Age of Optimism—a period when Americans were convinced in their hearts that all things were possible. In the years around 1870, when the project was first undertaken, the concept of building an unprecedented bridge to span the East River between the great cities of Manhattan and Brooklyn required a vision and determination comparable to that which went into the building of the great cathedrals. Throughout the fourteen years of its construction, the odds against the successful completion of the bridge seemed staggering. Bodies were crushed and broken, lives lost, political empires fell, and surges of public emotion constantly threatened the project. But this is not merely the saga of an engineering miracle; it is a sweeping narrative of the social climate of the time and of the heroes and rascals who had a hand in either constructing or exploiting the surpassing enterprise.

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Customer Reviews

In the 19th century, the Brooklyn Bridge was viewed as the greatest engineering feat of mankind. The Roeblings--father and son--toiled for decades, fighting competitors, corrupt politicians, and the laws of nature to fabricate a bridge which, after 100 years, still provides one of the major avenues of

access to one of the world's busiest cities--as compared to many bridges built at the same time which collapsed within decades or even years. It is refreshing to read such a magnificent story of real architecture and engineering in an era where these words refer to tiny bits and bytes that inspire awe only in their abstract consequences, and not in their tangible physical magnificence.

This outstanding audio adaptation brings to life the Herculean struggles behind the creation of one of this country's most recognizable and enduring landmarks. Herrmann's rich, expressive voice perfectly complements McCullough's stately language, and the combination of their talentsâ "coupled with the impressiveness of the engineering marvel that is the Brooklyn Bridgeâ "makes this a compulsive listen. Subtle changes in Herrmann's tone clearly set off quotations without interrupting the flow, and though this audiobook is abridged, the deleted segments are briefly summarized by an unobtrusive second narrator so that listeners never feel as if they're missing part of the story. While there are some descriptions of the 13-year construction process that would have benefited from illustrations, the production as a whole is superb. Listeners cannot help being moved by the grandeur of the structure and by the spectacular risks taken by the men who worked on it, particularly chief engineer Washington Roebling, who remained the driving force behind the bridge despite being crippled by the bends and bedridden for many years. Drama of every kind can be found here: political scandals, intense rivalries, extreme loyalty, a charming love story, heroism, spectacular near-disasters, death, illness and war. Once called the eighth wonder of the world, the Brooklyn Bridge still inspires artists and photographers, tourists and natives alike, and it is the only stone-towered, steel-cabled bridge in the world. In this excellent production, listeners will be inspired anew. Copyright Â© Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I absolutely liked this book. Took me two years to read it. I have it on my Kindle. I could underline what was interesting and look up words. Look people up. Totally fantastic. One of my favorite books. I even went to the library and checked out the hard copy to see the pictures. Lot's of footnotes. You won't regret reading this book. I put book down a few times to read other books. I even checked books about the Roblings, Boss Tweed, and then some including the Presidents when the bridge was built. or other political figures back then. I figured my great great grandfather John probably worked on the bridge at one time or other. My family is from NYC. I have walked over this bridge.

I have lived in Cincinnati for several years, so was very aware of the Robling bridge there. It was

great fun to read about the beginnings of Robblings' bridges and his life. Reading about how Mr. Robling sold New York on his plan for the Brooklyn Bridge and his ingenious methods of building it, and his persuasive ways to get the bridge built in the first place, provide an excellent read! I thoroughly enjoy this read! One of McCulloughs' fascinating reads!

This book was fascinating. You felt as if you knew the players. You could appreciate the great science and engineering feat that enabled the bridge to be built. The one thing I am confused about is this. How can some people cheat and knowingly use subpar materials when it might mean the death of hundreds of people. I just can't get my mind around it. I also enjoyed learning of the historical figures that were living at that time.

Great story overall and very well researched, with the author's usual flair for personal stories. As often though with McCullough, the book is longer than it should (the same was true of his book on the Panama Canal and the youth of Theodore Roosevelt). A good editor would have cut out a hundred pages or so, which would have made for a truly great read.

Having just read McCullough's far breezier "The Wright Brothers" and being at a year's distance from his wonderful book about John Adams, I had to make a few adjustments in my head to get into the rhythm and level of detail contained in "The Great Bridge." I often wonder how Mr. McCullough has the wherewithal to track down the seemingly endless details about his subject matter and then turn everything into a compelling story. Whatever his process, he succeeds magnificently in writing about the Brooklyn Bridge. Every politician, crook (is that redundant?), engineer, onlooker and more are woven together into a tale almost as expansive and astounding as the physical bridge itself. They didn't have electronic design tools back then but oh how people like John Roebling and his son Washington and Washington's wife Emily (come to think of it, were there any like them?) could envision a massive structure that would not only change the flow of commerce forever but create a lasting piece of mega-art. McCullough is a national treasure on a par with any of the grand subjects he trains his attention on. My only criticism is that given all the technical details provided, the reader would be better served by a fuller set of drawings of the bridge and its major components. A little too much is left to the reader to try to visualize. That said, the photos are wonderful and if one has the time to devote to absorbing as opposed to merely reading this book, it will pay off for a lifetime. As an aside, the last chapter ("The People's Day") and the epilogue are stunning, well worth on their own the price of the book and investment of the reader's time.

An excellent historical account of the building of what at the time was the longest suspension bridge in the world. The author goes into a great deal of detail also concerning the unscrupulous politicians of the day such as Boss Tweed and his cronies who maneuvered in every way possible to enrich themselves at the expense of the tax payers. The hero of the day, however, is the much maligned and misunderstood Washington Roebling, the chief engineer of the building project. There is a lot of detail given concerning the materials used and the methods of construction in the building of this massive structure, and the author makes every bit of it interesting by the way he presents it. Mr. Roebling, and his father, who drew up the original plans for the bridge, were obviously engineering geniuses. The book is an impressive testimony not only to their talents, but also to their character and dedication. I would highly recommend this book.

Lots of detail. It's like 2 books in one. I'm reading the biography of the designer and builder now. It's also a lesson in engineering as the detail is so minute.

I walked the Brooklyn Bridge one summer and was eager to learn more about its construction. This book, however, has done nothing to help me learn about it. I'm six chapters into this 27-hour behemoth and so far I have learned nothing about the bridge. I have learned all about the designer's seances with his dead wife, all about the uniform his son wore to school and all about the Cardiff Giant hoax, but after six hours of listening, not one stone has been laid. Mr. McCullough needed an editor to chop this monstrosity down into edibility.

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