



Water for Hartford: The Story of the Hartford Water Works and the Metropolitan District Commission (Garnet Books)

Kevin Murphy

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As good health is inextricably wedded to pure drinking water—and this particular concern looms larger every day—understanding delivery systems is almost as important as the water itself. Water for Hartford chronicles the century-long effort, beginning in the 1850s, to construct a viable, efficient water system. The story of Hartford's water works is a fascinating one, for it recalls the hard work, great sacrifice, and extraordinary engineering feats necessary to deliver wholesome drinking water to a growing urban center. It also illuminates the ever-changing social, political, and economic milieu in which it was built.

The story of its construction is also the story of three men—Hiram Bissell, Ezra Clark, and Caleb Saville. Readers are transported back in time and given a firsthand glimpse of what these champions of a water system faced on a daily basis: unforgiving geography, venal politicians, and an often-indifferent public. The book culminates in the exhilaration of having built a water works from scratch to deliver clean, safe drinking water to the masses. Water for Hartford is a human story, peopled by men of vision and achievement, who understood that their decisions and actions would affect millions of people for decades to come.

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