

# **Building the Panama Canal (Monumental Milestones: Great Events of Modern Times)**

Russell Roberts



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**Building the Panama Canal (Monumental Milestones: Great Events of Modern Times)** Russell Roberts The building of the Panama Canal was one of the great engineering feats of the twentieth century. For hundreds of years, mankind had dreamed about cutting through the Isthmus of Panama to build a canal, but the jungle, insects, and the damp, humid conditions had always combined to defeat any and all attempts to construct the waterway. It took the discovery of the mosquito as a disease carrier, the tenacity of the workmen, and the single-minded stubbornness of Theodore Roosevelt to make the canal dream a reality. But if the canal made some men great, it also destroyed the lives of others. That was the sad fate of Count Ferdinand de Lesseps of France, a national hero who had done the impossible by building the Suez Canal, then failed in Panama. The fate of de Lesseps is as much the story of the Panama Canal as is the success of Roosevelt.

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