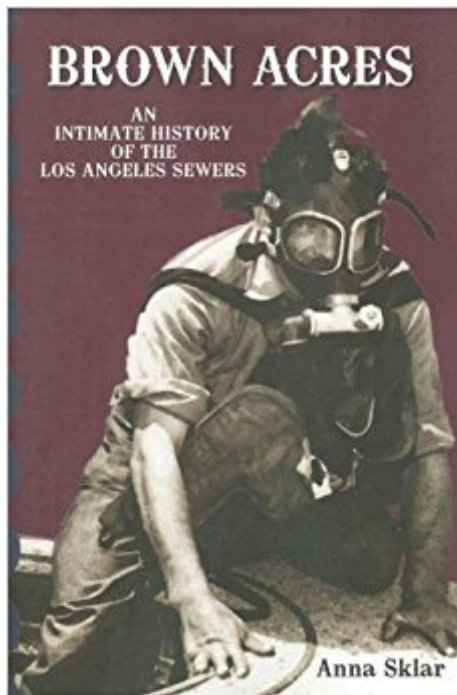




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Brown Acres: An Intimate History Of The Los Angeles Sewers



Synopsis

The complex and often alarming history of the Los Angeles city sewer system is captured for the first time in Anna Sklar's *Brown Acres: An Intimate History of the Los Angeles Sewers*. With more than fifty photographs, diagrams and maps, *Brown Acres* is the first historical narrative to detail any world-class city's sewer system complete with relationship between headstrong politicians and the reformers who sought to heal the bay after a century of pollution and contamination. *Brown Acres* provides a unique look at the underground history of Los Angeles.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I enjoyed reading this book. This is a story about an industry I work in and many of the names and some of the people in the story are familiar to me. Sklar tells the story in an interesting way, weaving in the technical facts as they evolve with the story of the people who strove to deal with them - politicians, engineers, bureaucrats and citizens alike. This is a unique and detailed book about the history of one city and its struggle to deal with its sewage. I'm sure a similar story could be told in many other places. I think it is also a harbinger of the future. Sklar ends her book saying that we are always behind the curve when it comes to spending money on sewers and sewage treatment and that the future of sewage disposal, treatment and reuse will depend on an informed citizenry, willing to accept the financial demands. I agree. Like others, I think the book would have benefitted from a few more illustrations and better integration of those provided.

Great book!

Brown Acres is a history of the sewer system in Los Angeles. That may not seem interesting at first glance, but following the story is much more adventurous than you might imagine. Nepotism, cronyism and just plain stinginess were responsible for a long series of bad decisions in Los Angeles leading to recurring problems of sewage flooding into the streets and backing up into toilets. Ms. Sklar has done her research and goes into appropriate detail on the history.

Understanding the technology used to move human waste around was enlightening. The idea that we used to dump raw sewage into the ocean is simply astounding. Also, I was surprised to see that voters of the past were as short sighted as today's voters when it comes to investment in public health issues. Repeatedly, the public rejected spending money to solve the sewage problems. Not until the sewage literally flowed in the streets did the money get approved to put in better sewer systems. Today, Los Angeles has a world class sanitation system in place, but I found the path to this point well worth the read. My only criticism would be a request for more diagrams of the sewer system over time to help keep track of all the changes and sewer paths.

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