



American Road: The Story of an Epic Transcontinental Journey at the Dawn of the Motor Age

Pete Davies

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A fascinating account of the greatest road trip in American history.

On July 7, 1919, an extraordinary cavalcade of sixty-nine military motor vehicles set off from the White House on an epic journey. Their goal was California, and ahead of them lay 3,250 miles of dirt, mud, rock, and sand. Sixty-two days later they arrived in San Francisco, having averaged just five miles an hour. Known as the First Transcontinental Motor Train, this trip was an adventure, a circus, a public relations coup, and a war game all rolled into one. As road conditions worsened, it also became a daily battle of sweat and labor, of guts and determination.

American Road is the story of this incredible journey. Pete Davies takes us from east to west, bringing to life the men on the trip, their trials with uncooperative equipment and weather, and the punishing landscape they encountered. Ironically one of the participants was a young soldier named Dwight Eisenhower, who, four decades later, as President, launched the building of the interstate highway system. Davies also provides a colorful history of transcontinental car travel in this country, including the first cross-country trips and the building of the Lincoln Highway. This richly detailed book offers a slice of Americana, a piece of history unknown to many, and a celebration of our love affair with the road.

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