



The Culture of Flushing: A Social and Legal History of Sewage (Nature | History | Society)

Jamie Benidickson

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To most, the flush of a toilet seems a routine motion to banish waste and ensure cleanliness: safe, efficient, necessary, nonpolitical, and utterly unremarkable. However, Jamie Benidickson's examination of the social and legal history of sewage in Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom demonstrates that the uncontroversial reputation of flushing is deceptive. In a time when community water quality can no longer be taken for granted, this book is particularly relevant, as it delves into and clarifies the murky issues surrounding the evolution of the culture of flushing.

Drawing upon the experience of urban centres, including Toronto, Chicago, New York, and London, *The Culture of Flushing* carefully analyzes more than two hundred years of history to describe how we conveniently came to view streams as nature's sewers, and how water, one of our planet's most precious resources, became an acceptable medium for the disposal of urban and industrial waste. Informed by the evolution of legal doctrine, contemporary understanding of the chemical and biological characteristics of water, changing theories of disease, and the influence of professionals in such fields as public health, engineering, and economics, this book pushes the reader to seriously reconsider our casual habit of flushing it all away.

Unique, comprehensive, and accessible, *The Culture of Flushing* will appeal to everyone from specialists in environmental history, environmental law, public health, engineering, and public policy to the general reader concerned with protecting water quality and the environment.

See a review of *The Culture of Flushing* in American Scientist:
<http://www.americanscientist.org/bookshelf/pub/deep-doo-doo>

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