

**A TREATISE ON ROADS,  
THEIR  
HISTORY, CHARACTER  
AND UTILITY, PP. 1-225**

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A Treatise on Roads, Their History, Character and Utility, pp. 1-225 by S. De Witt Bloodgood

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**TREATISE ON ROADS,**  
**THEIR**  
**HISTORY, CHARACTER AND UTILITY;**  
**BEING THE**  
**SUBSTANCE OF TWO LECTURES**  
**DELIVERED BEFORE THE**  
**YOUNG MEN'S ASSOCIATION OF THE CITY OF ALBANY.**

BY S. DE WITT BLOODGOOD.



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**INSCRIBED**  
**TO THE YOUNG MEN'S ASSOCIATION**  
**OF THE CITY OF ALBANY.**



## INTRODUCTION.

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The writer of this, having been struck with the importance of giving that class of internal improvements, called *ROADS*, a due share of public consideration, at a time when so many projects are on foot, some of them addressed to the cupidity of speculation, others to advance the common welfare, recently attempted to investigate the subject, and to form some general opinions of its history, and characteristics.

No where could this information be obtained in the desired shape. And it was only after long and laborious researches that the scanty facts were obtained which form the groundwork of this little treatise.

Modern engineers have rather embodied their own experience in works relating to



particular projects under their charge, than discussed the general tendency of the system. Sir Henry Parnell, of the Institution of Civil Engineers, in London, has given us the most valuable work we possess of a general character, but he has not attempted to enter into those details which were found interesting enough, in our opinion, to justify their collection in the following pages.

If a general view of the subject, if its literary as well as mechanical history is worthy of being rescued from the dust of centuries, the writer hopes that his humble efforts will not be entirely in vain.

*Albany, October, 1838.*

## TREATISE ON ROADS.

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It is conceded that no age of the world was ever marked by a greater regard for the useful than that in which we live. The monuments of antiquity, grand and impressive even in their ruins, seem as often to have been erected through caprice as for utility. The pyramids survive triumphantly the ravages of time, but why such a vast expense was incurred of labor and of money, is one of the problems yet to be solved, and one that overtasks the most willing antiquarian. In our own time all popular pursuits appear to be influenced, if not directed, by a regard for the human condition and the desire of making it more in accordance with the true objects of life. The projector who cannot (apparently at least) demonstrate this to be the purpose of his schemes, is sure to be without patronage, and almost without hear-

ers. Even those articles of fancy and taste, once the exclusive property of the rich and great, but now obtained and enjoyed by the community at large, make their appeal to some principle of utility as their chief recommendation.

It is from this tendency of the age, that so much investigation, so much research, so much talent, has been displayed in popular forms, and sought each its reward in the practical advantages it conferred through a new medium on a new auditory. And it is from the consciousness of the truth of this feature of our times, that we venture to pass over more amusing themes, for one which is intimately connected with the comfort of individuals and the prosperity of nations.

The history of roads, those means of land communication, indispensable to civilization; without which mankind, and even those of the same country, would live strangers to each other; the absence of which is a sure evidence of barbarism, and whose maintenance and preservation are infallible tests of national prosperity, is a field vast enough for the ambition of the most successful writer. As at intervals these researches were prosecuted, they grew in interest and magnitude, and it is regretted after all that