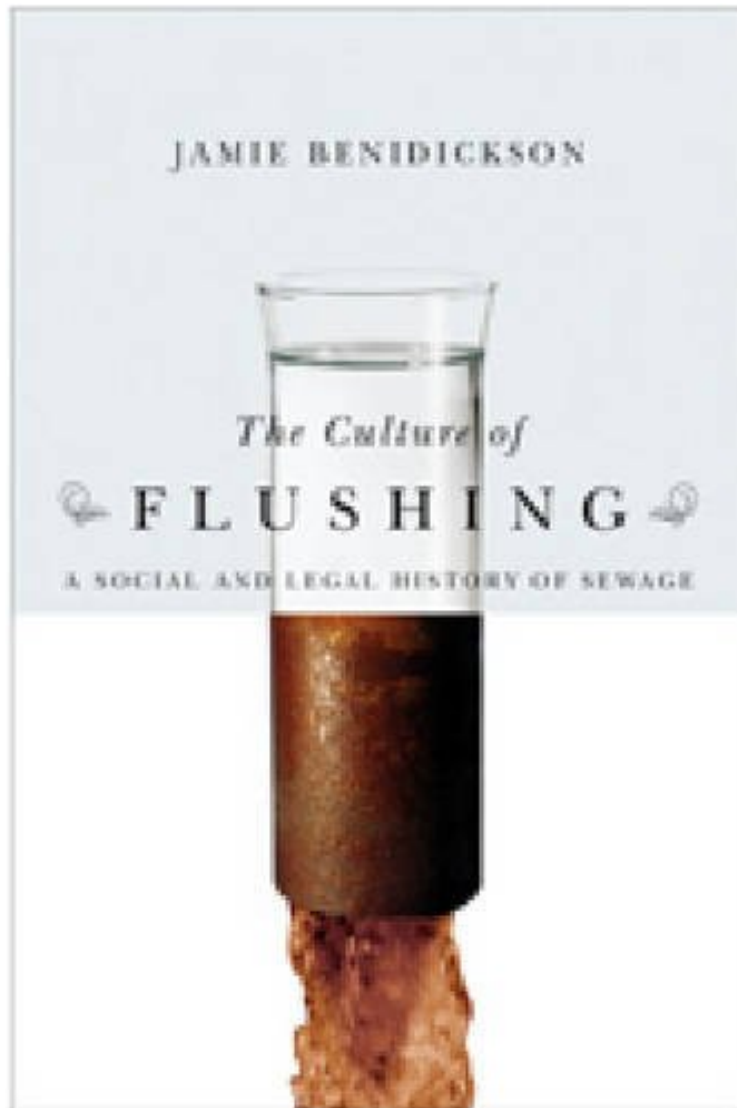


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The Culture of Flushing: A Social and Legal History of Sewage (Nature | History | Society)

Jamie Benidickson

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before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Culture of
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2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A Beautiful Review, Useful for an Environmental Science or Civil
Engineering CourseBy Greg TouchtonI rather enjoy it. My only criticism is that the book concludes with a request for

more public attention. I certainly hope that the author will go on a book tour in order to help with this attention. This book would be appropriate material for a civil engineering history class.

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>

"*The Culture of Flushing* does a fine job of comparing issues across national borders, and is one of only a very few studies that integrates English, American, and Canadian experiences. This is a very good synthesis of an important topic that should be of interest to scholars in many fields and to people in many walks of life." Martin V. Melosi, professor of history, University of Houston, and author of *Effluent America* and *The Sanitary City*.
About the Author: Jamie Benidickson teaches at the Faculty of Law, University of Ottawa. He is the author of *Idleness, Water, and a Canoe: Reflections on Paddling for Pleasure* and other publications on the environment, water law, and social history.