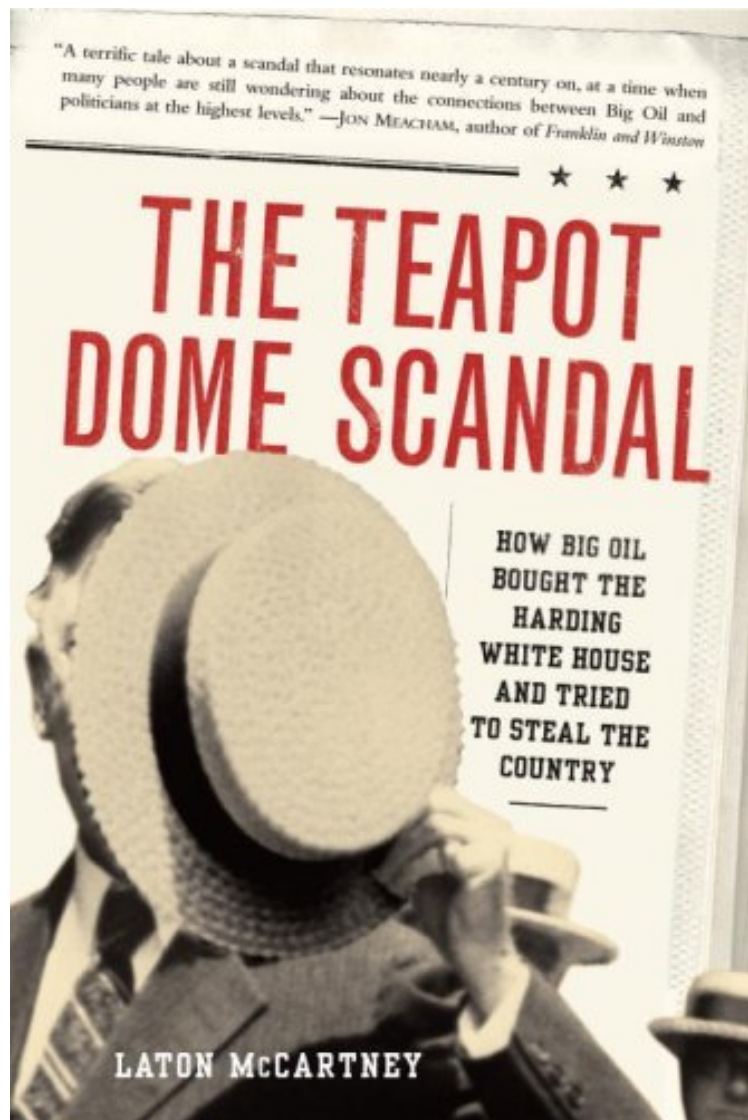


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The Teapot Dome Scandal: How Big Oil Bought the Harding White House and Tried to Steal the Country

Laton McCartney

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Laton McCartney : The Teapot Dome Scandal: How Big Oil Bought the Harding White House and Tried to Steal the Country before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Teapot Dome Scandal: How Big Oil Bought the Harding White House and Tried to Steal the Country:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Excellent Study of Harding and Teapot Dome teaches us all a lessonBy Samuel W. CoulbournTeapot Dome is the code name in American history for graft and corruption at the

highest level of our government. For the first two decades of the Twentieth century, demand for oil crept up gradually as more and more cars appeared on dirt roads, powered by gasoline. Along came Henry Ford, and ownership of an automobile began to be a possibility even for middle class people. Better roads got built, more cars got sold, people started to create motor courts for people to stay while travelinghellip;. More filling stations got built. More people were making more money than ever before. Some far-seeing men had been exploring for oil fields and putting in drills all over. Some of these men were not only far-seeing, but dedicated to getting rich, at the expense of anyone and everyone. The U.S. Navy was converting ships from coal to oil, and in order to ensure a source of oil the U.S. government created oil reserves in the western United States. Laton McCartney begins his story with Jake Hamon, "The Oil King of Oklahomardquo;. Jake is a man worthy of the spotlight. For years he had been a big frog in a small pond, as a wildcatter in Oklahoma and environs, figuring ways to steal oil rights from Indians on their reservations, or anyone else. He had left his wife and two children for flashy Clara, 18 years his junior. In order to travel with her in those days when there was public disapproval of unmarried couples sharing a hotel room, he paid his nephew \$10,000 to "marryrdquo; Clara, and then she had the Hamon name, and they could live together. Jake decided he was going to go for the big prize, and borrowed a million dollars to bet on a long shot in the 1920 Presidential election. He picked a former newspaper publisher, Senator Warren G. Harding, an empty suit from Marion, Ohio. Harding was a handsome, statesmanlike man, who was quite comfortable being a United States Senator. But the little men around him, and his wife, Florence, knew he could be more. Hamonrsquo;s million dollars turned out to be the ingredient that propelled Harding onward, as the Republican candidate for President. Harding ran against James M. Cox, also a newspaper publisher; the Democratic running mate was Franklin D. Roosevelt. To a nation fed up with World War I and President Woodrow Wilson, a Democrat, Harding won in a landslide. Hamon had intended to buy himself into the Harding cabinet as Secretary of the Interior, where he could pillage oil reserves at will. However, the party apparatus said that he had to "loserdquo; Clara, since she was not his wife. Clara heard about this and shot him, which ended Hamonrsquo;s part in the scheme. However, there was no shortage of other scheming, greedy men, eager to join Harding in Washington. When you read about greed and corruption in Congo, or Nigeria, or Iraq or anywhere else in the world, here was the textbook plan for ripping off a country. Lucky for us, there is an opposing party which is only too eager to expose such skullduggery and stop it. McCartney takes us to the 1920 Republican convention, and introduces us to Harry Micajah Daugherty, a fleshy, balding, partially blind Scottish Irishman with one blue eye and one brown eye. He was a shrewd operator, and it was he who parlayed Hamonrsquo;s million dollars into a victory for his candidate, Harding. Daugherty was a wheeler-dealer from Ohio, and he did his magic to get Harding elected, then got himself named attorney general. Daugherty, even as Attorney General, headed up the "Ohio Gangrdquo; which was a group close to the President and the Attorney General, who carried millions of dollars in cash and Liberty bonds back to deposit in Ohio, and to launder in various schemes. They had a house for their meetings, and nightly poker parties, in the District of Columbia, called "the little green house on K Street.rdqquo; Poker was a marvelous way for millionaire oil men to "loserdquo; and pay off bribes. Albert B. Fall, Secretary of the InteriorThe smell of oil brought in Harry Sinclair and Edward Doheny, two very rich oil men. Since Jake Hamon was murdered, Albert Fall, the Republican Senator from New Mexico, was named to be the Secretary of the Interior. As soon as he was in office he finagled with the Secretary of the Navy, a willing dimwit, it appears, because the Navy secretary willingly gave Fall control of the oil reserves at Teapot Dome. As soon as Fall had control, he allowed his rich oil buddies to lease these rich oil reserves, worth many hundreds of millions of 1920 dollars. Fall owned a ranch in New Mexico and after he became Interior Secretary he started receiving money to make tremendous improvements in his ranch,Now, even though Warren G. Harding was "an empty suitrdquo;, he was a very amorous man. He had been carrying on an affair for years behind the back of his loving wife, whom the press called "The Duchessrdquo;. His affair with Nan Britton produced a child, and all this was fairly well known. The President had his Secret Service arrange for Nan to be smuggled into the White House for assignments. This whole sordid story had one brilliant hero, and he was Thomas Walsh, Democratic Senator from Montana, who took on the task of conducting an investigation into Teapot Dome and all of the shenanigans associated with it. For years he labored to bring these crooks to justice. Harding died while he and the Duchess and their entourage were on a trip of the west, which included the first presidential trip to Alaska. Then Calvin Coolidge, the vice president, took over, and the whole scene changed. The various investigations went on and on for years, but the scandal never seems to have touched Coolidge, and he was elected President in 1924. In spite of all that Teapot Dome revealed, there was so much turmoil in both parties in the 1924 election that Teapot Dome faded into the background. Justice did come, however, and McCartney tells that story, which includes a sordid murder-suicide during an apparent gay affair involving the son of one of the very rich oil men. When you hear of Watergate, Iran-Contra, or Monica Lewinsky, Whitewater, or any of the more recent scandals in Washington, you realize that Teapot Dome was in a class by itself. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. I have been looking for a book describing this often ...By Christopher B. KrohI have been looking for a book describing this often forgotten scandal and one that considered the Harding administration in general. The title says it all in that while there is no doubt Teapot Dome embodied the greed and corruption that often accompanied politics in that era, it is framed within an intense bias against corporations rather than as a careful

consideration of the scandal from a neutral point of view. This book relies on newspapers and the diaries and notes of many individuals associated with the scandal yet does not include the Harding papers. This confuses me because when I visited the Harding historical site earlier this summer I was informed that the stories of the President's papers having been burned apart from one folder were false, that they were housed at OSU and would be soon re-located to a renovated Harding home and museum. If true, then why aren't there any biographies of Harding and why does his story remain so mysterious and incomplete? In turn, this book while providing a strong narrative for the corruption pervasive in that era and presenting a wild and fascinating story leaves too many questions unanswered. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The runaway president By James D. Pleiss The magnitude of Harding's complicit behavior is shocking! The infamous liberty bonds showed up in his safety deposit box subsequent to his selling the newspaper and dying! Harding knew he had compromised his presidency as he and his entourage left on the Voyage of Understanding leading him all the way to Alaska; he also knew his health was waning and so did the Duchess, his wife, who cast a long shadow over her hen-pecked husband; much speculation can be made about what he knew, how much he was aware of Daugherty's duplicitous behavior and whether Daugherty perhaps ordered Burns at the Bureau of Investigation to murder loose lips Jesse Smith; so much posterior covering occurred as to make it seem so plausible that big oil stopped at nothing and controlled Daugherty on such a short leash that the probability of Sinclair and Deheny being implicated in death, betrayal and fearful of nothing is likely; Harding surely knew and was so compromised that he could only get even more drunk and less tolerant of his infamous Duchess, who had a controlling hand in his demise! Very readable and extraordinarily interesting book.

Mix hundreds of millions of dollars in petroleum reserves; rapacious oil barons and crooked politicians; under-the-table payoffs; murder, suicide, and blackmail; White House cronyism; and the excesses of the Jazz Age. The result: the granddaddy of all American political scandals, Teapot Dome. In *The Teapot Dome Scandal*, acclaimed author Laton McCartney tells the amazing, complex, and at times ribald story of how Big Oil handpicked Warren G. Harding, an obscure Ohio senator, to serve as our twenty-third president. Harding and his so-called "oil cabinet" made it possible for the oilmen to secure vast oil reserves that had been set aside for use by the U.S. Navy. In exchange, the oilmen paid off senior government officials, bribed newspaper publishers, and covered the GOP campaign debt. When news of the scandal finally emerged, the consequences were disastrous for the nation and for the principles in the plot to bilk the taxpayers: Harding's administration was hamstrung; Americans' confidence in their government plummeted; Secretary of the Interior Albert Fall was indicted, convicted, and incarcerated; and others implicated in the affair suffered similarly dire fates. Stonewalling by members of Harding's circle kept a lid on the story; witnesses developed "faulty" memories or fled the country, and important documents went missing; but contemporary records newly made available to McCartney reveal a shocking, revelatory picture of just how far-reaching the affair was, how high the stakes, and how powerful the conspirators. In giving us a gimlet-eyed but endlessly entertaining portrait of the men and women who made a tempest of Teapot Dome, Laton McCartney again displays his gift for faithfully rendering history with the narrative touch of an accomplished novelist. From the Hardcover edition.

From Publishers Weekly McCartney (*Friends in High Places: The Bechtel Story*) does an efficient job of narrating 20th-century America's first great federal corruption scandal. Petroleum preserves (or domes) were set aside on public lands in California and Wyoming, to be kept until needed by the navy. During 1921, President Harding's secretary of the interior, Albert Fall, took control of the lands from Secretary of the Navy Edwin Denby and leased two domes—Teapot Dome in Wyoming and California's Elk Hills—to Harry Sinclair's Mammoth Oil Co. and Edward Doheny's Pan-American Petroleum and Transport Co., respectively. Concurrently, Fall received personal payments from the two men totaling \$404,000, some of which he distributed to underlings who helped with the transactions. Scandal ensued, continuing through the presidency of Harding's successor, Calvin Coolidge. Congressional investigations were held; Coolidge appointed special prosecutors, and in 1929 a federal court found Fall guilty of bribery, fining him \$100,000 and sentencing him to a year in prison. Though McCartney adds nothing new to the story, he has a solid grasp of it in this retelling. (Feb. 5) Copyright copy; Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. "A terrific tale that resonates nearly a century on, at a time when many people are still wondering about the connections between Big Oil and politicians at the highest levels."—Jon Meacham, author of *Franklin and Winston* "This is a story that has it all—a Jazz Age background, a pleasure-loving president surrounded by booze and chorus girls, boomtown capitalists from the Wild West, [and] conniving politicians. . . . [Laton McCartney has] a certain zest for Teapot's sordid comedy [and] delivers fresh, arresting portraits of the main players, some of them lovable rogues, others beady-eyed scoundrels."—*The New York Times* "The most thorough treatment of the scandals to date."—*Los Angeles Times Book* "Titillating, tantalizing. . . . The book reads like a novel. McCartney's cast of characters jumps off the page."—*Baltimore Sun* "A cautionary tale of what happens when corrupt and indifferent public officials give an industry undue influence over public policy."—*The Denver Post* "Fascinating

reading. rdquo; ndash; St. Louis Post-Dispatch From the Trade Paperback edition. About the Author LATON MCCARTNEY is the author of the national bestseller *Friends in High Places*. He divides his time between Wyoming and New York City.