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## Steel Drivin' Man: John Henry: the Untold Story of an American Legend

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By Scott Reynolds Nelson

Oxford University Press Inc. Paperback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, Steel Drivin' Man: John Henry: the Untold Story of an American Legend, Scott Reynolds Nelson, The ballad "John Henry" is the most recorded folk song in American history and John Henry-the mighty railroad man who could blast through rock faster than a steam drill-is a towering figure in our culture. But for over a century, no one knew who the original John Henry was-or even if there was a real John Henry. In Steel Drivin' Man, Scott Reynolds Nelson recounts the true story of the man behind the iconic American hero, telling the poignant tale of a young Virginia convict who died working on one of the most dangerous enterprises of the time, the first rail route through the Appalachian Mountains. Using census data, penitentiary reports, and railroad company reports, Nelson reveals how John Henry, victimized by Virginia's notorious Black Codes, was shipped to the infamous Richmond Penitentiary to become prisoner number 497, and was forced to labor on the mile-long Lewis Tunnel for the C&O railroad. Nelson even confirms the legendary contest between John Henry and the steam drill (there was indeed a steam drill used to dig the...



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### Reviews

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