



**The Globalization of American Infrastructure:
The Shipping Container and Freight
Transportation (Routledge Studies in Science,
Technology and Society)**

Matthew Heins

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This book gives an account of how the U.S. freight transportation system has been impacted and “globalized,” since the 1950s, by the presence of the shipping container. A globally standardized object, the container carries cargo moving in international trade, and it utilizes and fits within the existing transportation infrastructures of shipping, trucking and railroads. In this way it binds them together into a nearly seamless worldwide logistics network. This process occurs not only in ocean shipping and at ports, but also deep within national territories. In its dependence on existing infrastructural systems, though, the network of container movement as it pervades domestic space is shaped by the history and geography of the nation-state. This global network is not invariably imposed in a top-down manner—to a large degree, it is cobbled together out of national, regional and local systems. Heins describes this in the American context, examining the freight transportation infrastructures of railroads, trucking and inland waterways, and also the terminals where containers are transferred between train and truck. The book provides a detailed historical narrative, and is also theoretically informed by the contemporary literature on infrastructure and globalization.

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