AFRICAN TRAIN
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African Train

In 1893, the king of kings of Ethiopia, Ménilik II, decides to open his kingdom on the sea. He entrusts one of his advisers, the Swiss engineer Alfred Ilg, and the French “négociant” Léon Chefneux with the construction of a railroad that would run from Djibouti to the capital. This marks the start of an extraordinary industrial adventure and the birth of one of the first African trains. This book traces some milestones of this history, with a rich iconography, for a large part unpublished, showing the early stages of the construction until the formal opening of the train station in Addis Ababa by Haïlé Sélassié in December 1929.

The author photographed the last railroad workers and the rail workshops in Dire Dawa, a town born from the train.

Flip through the book: africantrain.org

Hugues Fontaine


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