



The Norton Trilogy

Jack L. August Jr.

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From the author of *Dividing Western Waters* comes a book on the development of the arid West--in particular the development of Arizona--as seen through the experiences of three generations of John Ruddle Nortons of Arizona. From the administration of Teddy Roosevelt and the earliest reclamation acts to the monumental case between California and Arizona that would determine how the life-giving waters of the Colorado River would be divided, the Nortons were at the center of Arizona's development into a vital population and agricultural center. Pioneers like the Nortons shaped the very landscape of the western United States--a region that would help to supply the United States with cotton, vegetables, and livestock throughout World War I, the Great Depression, and World War II. *The Norton Trilogy* follows the lives of John R. Norton (1854-1923) and the beginnings of Arizona farming; John R. Norton, Jr. (1901-1987) and his expansions into diverse crops; and John R. Norton III (1929-present) and the shaping of modern agribusiness as it responded to new water irrigation policies.

As the author points out, "Several themes run through *The Norton Trilogy*: the most important is the interplay between human values and the waterscape. Technology, of course, played a monumental role in this drama, for dynamite, bulldozers, and reinforced concrete impacted the region's water and shaped the agricultural economy more than any Indian's digging stick. Another theme is the central role played by government--local, state, regional, and national--in shaping water policies. The biographical profiles of each John Norton addressed in this work reveal much about the history of Arizona and the central role that the quest for water has played in the growth and development of the region."

Although the book focuses largely on the state of Arizona, and specifically on one Arizonan family, the story is a template of the hardworking American ideal. Senator John Kyl, a colleague of John Norton III, writes in the foreword, "The Nortons, who never suffered from lack of a work ethic, have made Arizona and the nation a better place. This book is as much an American story as it is an Arizona one." Readers everywhere will be captivated by the generation-to-generation struggles of a family business and how these failures and successes are affected by interstate politics and public policy.

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