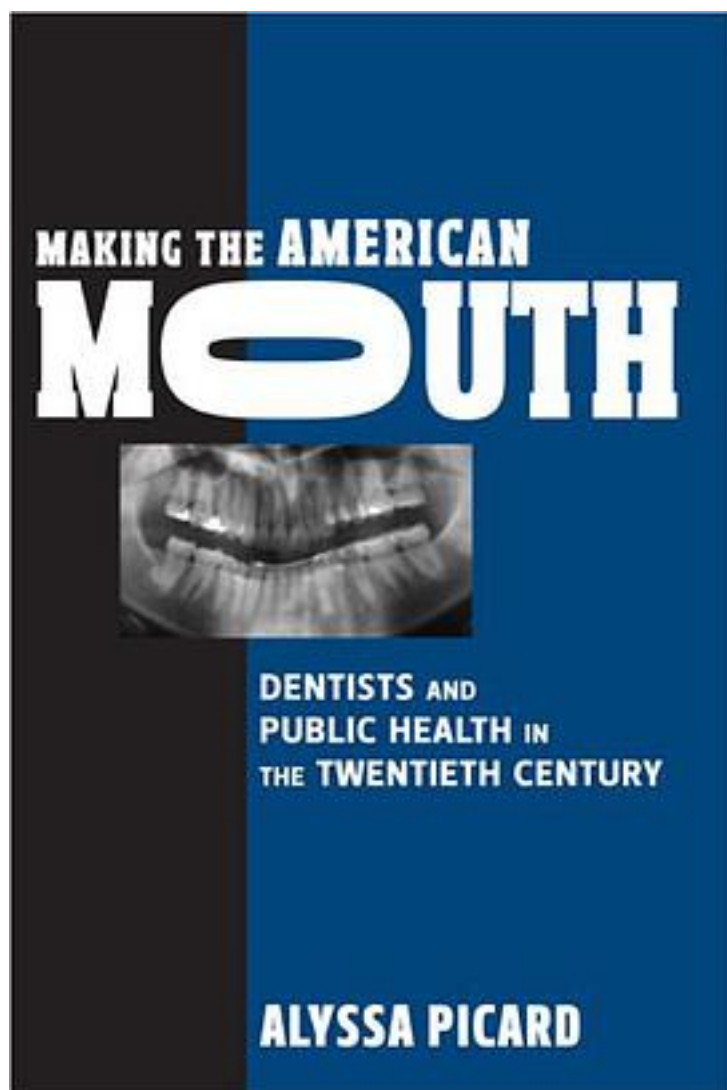


Making the American Mouth



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著者:Picard, Alyssa

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Why are Americans so uniquely obsessed with teeth? Perfect white, straight teeth. Making the American Mouth is at once a history of United States dentistry and a study of a billion-dollar industry. Alyssa Picard chronicles the forces that limited Americans access to dental care in the early twentieth century and the ways dentists worked to expand that access and improve the public image of their profession. Comprehensive in scope, this work describes how dentists' early public health commitments withered under the strain of fights over fluoride, midcentury social movements for racial and gender equity, and pressure to insure dental costs. It explains how dentists came to promote cosmetic services, and why Americans were so eager to purchase them. As we move into the twenty-first century, dentists' success in shaping their industry means that for many, the perfect American smile will remain a distant though tantalizing dream.

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