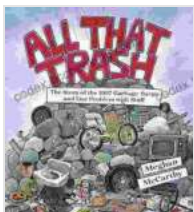


# The Tale of the 1987 Garbage Barge and Our Stuff Dilemma

In 1987, a garbage barge embarked on an unprecedented voyage that would forever alter the way we think about waste.



## All That Trash: The Story of the 1987 Garbage Barge and Our Problem with Stuff by Meghan McCarthy

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

Language : English

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Print length : 48 pages



Loaded with 3,168 tons of refuse, the barge set sail from Islip, New York, on June 2, destined for a landfill in North Carolina. But fate had other plans. Six weeks into its journey, the barge was denied entry into its intended destination and several other states along the Atlantic coast.

For the next seven months, the garbage barge became a drifting symbol of our nation's waste problem. It meandered up and down the coast, its stench and the sight of its overflowing trash evoking a sense of shame and disgust.

Finally, in December, the barge returned to Islip, where its contents were incinerated. The journey had cost taxpayers millions of dollars and had become an international embarrassment.

The 1987 garbage barge incident was a turning point in the history of waste management. It forced us to confront the fact that we were producing too much trash and that we needed to find better ways to deal with it.

In the years since the barge incident, we have made some progress in reducing our waste production. We have implemented recycling programs, banned certain types of single-use plastics, and started to think more carefully about the things we buy.

But we still have a long way to go. The United States produces more trash per person than any other country in the world. In 2018, we generated 267.8 million tons of municipal solid waste, or about 4.5 pounds per person per day.

Much of this waste ends up in landfills, where it can take hundreds of years to decompose. Landfills also produce methane, a greenhouse gas that contributes to climate change.

We need to find better ways to deal with our waste. We need to reduce the amount we produce, reuse what we can, and recycle what we cannot.

The story of the 1987 garbage barge is a reminder that we cannot continue to ignore our waste problem. We need to take action now to create a more sustainable future.

### **The Story of the 1987 Garbage Barge**

The story of the 1987 garbage barge is a complex one, with many different factors contributing to its ultimate fate.

One factor was the changing nature of waste management in the United States. In the early 1980s, many cities and towns were running out of space in their landfills. As a result, they began to ship their garbage to landfills in other states.

This practice, known as "waste exportation," was becoming increasingly common, and it was putting a strain on the landfills in receiving states. In 1987, North Carolina passed a law banning the importation of out-of-state garbage.

This law was a major blow to the garbage barge's journey. The barge was already en route to North Carolina when the law was passed, and it was forced to turn around and find another destination.

The barge then tried to dock in several other states, but it was denied entry in each case. The barge's captain, William Niblock, became increasingly desperate as the weeks turned into months.

Finally, in December, the barge returned to Islip, where its contents were incinerated. The journey had cost taxpayers millions of dollars and had become an international embarrassment.

### **The Impact of the Garbage Barge**

The 1987 garbage barge incident had a profound impact on the way we think about waste.

Before the incident, many people did not realize the extent of our waste problem. The barge's journey brought the issue to the forefront of public consciousness and forced us to confront the fact that we were producing too much trash.

The incident also led to a number of changes in waste management policy. Many states passed laws banning the importation of out-of-state garbage, and there was a growing emphasis on recycling and waste reduction.

The 1987 garbage barge incident was a turning point in the history of waste management. It forced us to confront our waste problem and it led to a number of changes in policy.

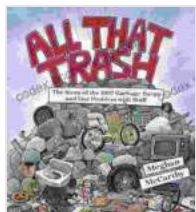
### **The Legacy of the Garbage Barge**

The legacy of the 1987 garbage barge is still felt today.

The incident is a reminder that we cannot continue to ignore our waste problem. We need to take action now to create a more sustainable future.

We need to reduce the amount of waste we produce, reuse what we can, and recycle what we cannot. We also need to invest in new technologies that can help us to convert waste into energy.

The 1987 garbage barge incident was a wake-up call. It is time for us to take action and create a more sustainable future.



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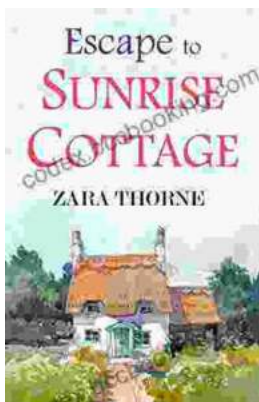
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