

A RAILROAD ATLAS OF THE UNITED STATES IN 1946 – VOLUME 3: INDIANA, LOWER MICHIGAN, AND OHIO

by Richard C. Carpenter.

Creating the American Landscape Series. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008. xxii, 329 pp, maps, appendix, indexes. Price \$65.00 (available new online for \$40.95). Hardcover. ISBN 0-8018-9002-0.

Review by: Russell S. Kirby, University of South Florida

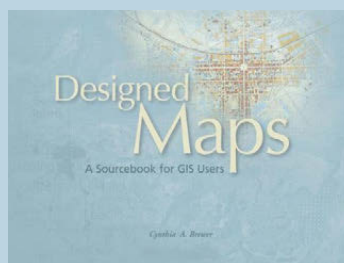
Richard Carpenter has set for himself a seemingly monumental task – to document, using large scale maps, all of the railroad lines in operation in the continental United States in the year 1946. This certainly compares in complexity and detail with the late Frederic G. Cassady's *Dictionary of American Regional English* project, which also contains thousands of maps and will soon culminate in a final volume. Unfortunately, Carpenter's project also shares many of the less fortunate features of that undertaking. Cassady began his project in the mid-1960s, with the first volume eventually appearing in 1985 and the final volume's publication projected for 2010, well over 40 years after the project was initiated. Carpenter has now published the third volume in his undertaking, with volume 1 (the Mid-Atlantic States) appearing in 2003, volume 2 (New York and New England) in 2005, and volume 3 (the eastern half of the Old Northwest) in 2008. While this reviewer cannot divine Carpenter's grand plan, it would seem unlikely that this project can be completed in fewer than 8 or 10 additional volumes, which, given his pace, may require another 20 years of effort to bring to fruition.

The Railroad Atlas is definitely a labor of love. The basic mapping unit throughout is the 30-by-30 minute quadrangle, based on the USGS 1:250,000 map coverage of the continental US. With additional detail maps (for example, within the city of Chicago) and reference maps to orient the reader to selected quadrangles, this volume has approximately 250 maps, all apparently drawn in color by hand using the same scheme of map elements and features.

The details of Carpenter's approach are well explicated in Gordon Kennedy's review (*CP*, Number 55, pp. 67-69); for the most part both the superlatives and criticisms made in regard to *Volume 2* still stand. The bigger question for this reviewer is why a multi-volume hard-copy railroad atlas of the U.S. in 1946? Other mechanisms would provide considerably greater

flexibility and utility to readers, be they railroad enthusiasts, business historians, historical geographers, or others with interests in the subject. Two examples come readily to mind. The atlas could be published as a web-enabled application, allowing the reader to select the region of interest, and print the relevant maps, perhaps at the scale Carpenter has selected but perhaps at other scales as well. Or, the atlas could be a GIS-enabled tool, one that would allow the reader to customize the subject of interest, perhaps highlighting a particular railroad company in relation to its competitors in a catchment area. While it is true that 1946 approximates the apex of the American railroad network, a GIS-enabled tool might define, for each segment of railroad line, and each railroad feature, when it was constructed or modified, during what time period it was owned by each company, when it was decommissioned, and the current status of the right-of-way. The researcher or enthusiast could bring additional data into the application, to map traffic volumes, passenger service frequencies, unit trains, and other measures of the economic activity generated by each line. While it is theoretically possible for a reader to use the *Railroad Atlas* to support some of these activities, the print format and static approach severely limits its broader utility.

None of the foregoing should detract in any way from Carpenter's achievement. Volume 3, like the first two volumes, is informative, attractively produced, and contains a wealth of detail to interest those of us who are railroad scholars or rail enthusiasts. In an era when America is once again considering the potential of high-speed trains for inter-urban routes, the *Railroad Atlas* reminds us that the paradise we find may indeed be one we only recently lost.



DESIGNED MAPS: A SOURCEBOOK FOR GIS USERS

by Cynthia A. Brewer

2008 ESRI Press, Redlands, CA. 167 pages
Price \$40. Paperback.
ISBN: 9781589481602

Review by: Ian Muehlenhaus, University of Wisconsin – River Falls

A book such as Cynthia Brewer's *Designed Maps* is long overdue. Aside from several annual bound collections, there have been relatively few widely distributed anthologies of superbly crafted maps to inspire cartographers. Though I was skeptical that a single, relatively slim anthology could do the topic justice—that