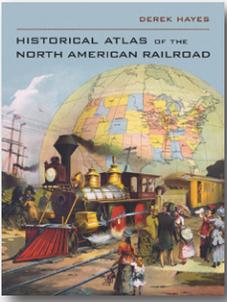


HISTORICAL ATLAS OF THE NORTH AMERICAN RAILROAD



By Derek Hayes.

University of California Press, 2010.
224 pages, maps, illustrations, index.
\$39.95, Hardcover.

ISBN: 978-0-520-26616-2

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Derek Hayes is a prolific author of historical atlases, most of which have focused on regions or specific areas. In the *Historical Atlas of the North American Railroad* he turns his focus to a topic for which cartographic approaches have held a fascination for travelers, railroad enthusiasts and scholars, illustrators, artists, and advertisers from their earliest origins.

The book is organized in a series of topical sections, each beginning on a new page but not formatted as traditional chapters. The sections focus on specific events or developments in railroad history, often examining activities involving a single rail line or competitive activity. Each section includes a narrative text heavily interspersed with railroad maps and illustrations. Some of the former are ingenious pieces of period advertising or artwork from the 19th and 20th centuries, while others depict railroad routes or networks.

From an aesthetic perspective, this atlas has considerable appeal. Published in a large format with a hardcover binding that folds open to enable effective viewing of the entire page, virtually every page has one or more maps or other illustrations, reproduced in color or black and white depending on the nature of the original documents. Sources for all illustrations are provided, and the atlas includes an index. Each topic includes a narrative to place the illustrations in appropriate context. Unfortunately, the atlas includes

neither references nor a bibliography of monographs and articles to which the reader might refer for more details concerning the maps and events described in each section.

A better name for this book might have been *A Compendium of Printed Maps and Illustrations Showing Railroad Routes and Networks*. None of the illustrations included are taken from the broad literature on North American railroad history. The sections focus primarily on eras or time periods in transportation history rather than on evolution of systems or networks over time. If a reader were interested, say, in the evolution of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad network from the inception of each progenitor to the present day, or that of any other major line, maps of this nature are nowhere to be found. If the reader wanted to see the dynamic role of railroads in the development of the Chicago metropolitan area (or any other North American region), this atlas has little to offer. If the reader wanted to see a series of maps showing abandoned railroad lines by decade, or railroad corridors that have been repurposed for mass transit, rails to trails, or other uses, again illustrations depicting these phenomena are not included. Those north of the border may feel that the Canadian contribution to the North American railroad receives limited focus, while Mexico is almost absent from these pages.

The *Historical Atlas of the North American Railroad* is a beautiful book in many respects, attractively produced and economically priced for a book of its nature. A serious railroad historian or hobbyist will find much to enjoy in its pages, but as an ancillary as opposed to a key resource. If faced with a choice between this volume and James Vance, Jr.'s *The North American Railroad: Its Origin, Evolution, and Geography*, the scholar will undoubtedly prefer the latter book. The librarian will need to weigh whether there is an audience sufficient to warrant making this a reference volume as opposed to a book for the stacks.