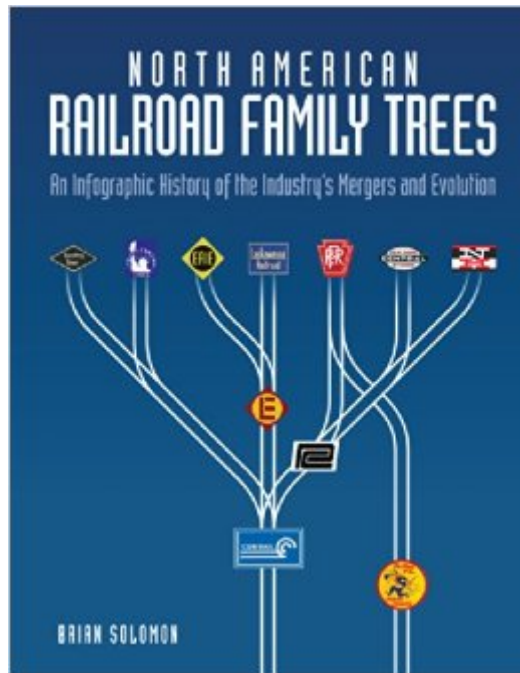


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North American Railroad Family Trees: An Infographic History Of The Industry's Mergers And Evolution



Synopsis

The history of railroading in North America is as much a story of boardroom intrigue as it is a story of the brute force that stamped thousands of miles of train track across a rugged continent. Today's nine U.S. and Canadian Class I railroads are the result of well over a century of convoluted bankruptcies, mergers, acquisitions, and expansions. North American Railroad Family Trees marks the first time in book form that this major aspect of railroad history has been presented in a clear, graphic format, helping the railfan make sense of the many smaller train lines that shaped North American rail as it is today. In these pages, renowned rail author Brian Solomon takes a visual and chronological approach, presenting 50 "family trees" in the style of human lineages. The story begins with the railroads of the "Golden Age" (1890-1930), continuing through the second wave of consolidations between the World Wars, the merger mania of the 1950s through the 1970s, the creation of major passenger networks, and the megamergers of the last three decades that have left railroading close to its current incarnation. Solomon even offers a selection of maps tracing the evolution of the North American rail system and diagrams proposing what-if scenarios for the industry's future. Including chapter-by-chapter narrative overviews of key eras, along with a selection of rare photography and period advertising to lend historical context, North American Railroad Family Trees provides an unprecedented retrospective of the continent's iconic rail network.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

When we build our first model railroads, or play with our early Lionel train layouts, we are trying to reproduce some of the thrill of standing beside tracks and watching the roaring leviathans pulling unimaginably long strings of freight, or shiny streamliners with the glittering varnish trailing them to places of the imagination: mountains, tunnels, snowy valleys, green forests and lakes reflecting the sky while our beloved trains whisk through on rails laid generations before. Later in life, we see change. Our favorite railroads are gone, and the locomotives that now tread their high-iron bear logos and paint we may not have seen except in pictures. What happened to the little branch line that handled the grain elevator in that farm village 20 miles from here, where now there is no trace of wooden ties or steel rails, except the occasional imprints they left in the ground itself? And what of these families we have heard so much about? Vanderbilt, Harriman, the Goulds (elder and younger), Hill, Mellen, Morgan, Hawley. Why were they important? What was the result of their life-work, and how are we to understand these giants who never lifted a hammer or pulled on a throttle? Why do some roads seem always one step from bankruptcy, even though they haul great, fast trains, while other roads may be short, slow, and old-fashioned, but they always seem to do business? Some railroads are built where there is little population, so they don't have the branch-line feeds that help keep other railroads budgets high enough to stay in good repair, yet those roads are just as important to keep a continent linked with a transport system. How to balance those with the roads that have business but nowhere to take it? The answer, of course, is mergers.

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