

## Book Reviews

*Rock Island Motive Power, 1933-1955*, by Lloyd E. Stagner. Boulder, CO: Pruett Publishing Company, 1980. pp. vi, 207. Photographs, maps, notes. \$24.95.

Huddie "Leadbelly" Leadbetter properly defined the Rock Island: It was a "mighty fine line." The inception, construction, and even the eventual collapse of the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific, as the railroad was officially known, were all dramatic. Iowa was particularly important for the Rock Island and the railroad was of equal importance to the Hawkeye State. No other railroad so thoroughly sprawled itself over Iowa; no other carrier was so important to the state's capital city. A strong symbiotic relationship was the natural result.

Small wonder, then, that the collapse of the company in 1979 has resulted in a great thirst for knowledge of the road's history. Lloyd Stagner has addressed a single aspect—the company's motive power from the Great Depression through dieselization in the mid-1950s. He does not deal with corporate strategy nor does he attempt analysis. The incidental materials, recollections, and locomotive assignment data are the most important historical elements of the book. The work is heavily illustrated but the layout is uninspired. Moreover, there is no balance in the geographic origins of photographs; only 22 of the book's nearly 350 views are from Iowa—the hub of the CRI&P.

*Rock Island Motive Power* will not slake our thirst for knowledge of the "mighty fine line." However, rail buffs, modelers, and many of the general reading public will find this book of interest.

Don L. Hofsommer  
Wayland College  
Plainview, TX

*Small Town America: A Narrative History, 1620-The Present*, by Richard Lingeman. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1980. pp. 547. Bibliography, index. \$15.95.

Richard Lingeman's book is a superb addition to scholarship on the American small town and deserves to be placed alongside such noted volumes as Lewis Atherton's *Main Street on the Middle Border* and Page Smith's *As a City Upon a Hill*. Indeed, broader in scope than either of those earlier studies, *Small Town America* is an encyclopedic social history that is the most valuable work in its field.

Copyright of Annals of Iowa is the property of State of Iowa, by & through the State Historical Society of Iowa and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.