

American Railroads: Decline and Renaissance in the Twentieth Century, by Robert E. Gallamore and John R. Meyer. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014. xiii, 506 pp. Maps, tables, graphs, sidebars, illustrations, notes, index. \$55.00 hardcover.

Reviewer Jeff Schramm is associate professor of history at Missouri University of Science and Technology in Rolla, Missouri. He is the author of *Out of Steam: Dieselization and American Railroads, 1920–1960* (2010).

At the beginning of the twentieth century Iowa was covered with a network of railroad lines owned and operated by dozens of companies, large and small. The oft-repeated claim that no point in the state was more than ten miles from a railroad was not an exaggeration. Today many of those lines are just a memory or, perhaps, a bike path. Yet all one has to do is stand beside the Union Pacific mainline near the new Kate Shelley Bridge and watch the parade of trains to realize that railroading is still a vibrant industry in Iowa. For those curious about the broad business and economic history of railroads over the past 120 years and with a little prior knowledge of economics and history, this book will enlighten and inform.

To attempt to write a broad and comprehensive business and economic history of railroads in the twentieth century is a huge undertaking but one that Gallamore and Meyer take on with vigor and at which they ultimately succeed. Gallamore has served the railroad industry in some way for over 40 years, including stints in government and industry and finally as director of the Transportation Center and professor in the Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University. Meyer was Gallamore's mentor at Harvard, where he was a professor in the John F. Kennedy School of Government. Both have been intimately involved with railroads since the 1960s and bring an insider's perspective to the book.

This monumental work begins with a thumbnail sketch of the history of railroads as a business and economic entity from the late 1800s to the present. Subsequent chapters dive into greater detail on specific topics such as government regulation of rates and services, policy implications of competition or consolidation, rival freight modes and competition from motor trucks and river barges, the decline of passenger service, the mid-century merger craze, the critical time of the 1970s and the government reform and revitalization acts, the history of the government-created northeastern railroad (Conrail) that resulted from the crisis of the 1970s, the Staggers Rail Act and deregulation in the 1980s, the consolidation of railroads in the last quarter of the century, and Amtrak and the ongoing challenges of passenger railroading. Technological

changes such as new signals and control systems, mechanized maintenance of way equipment, and, most importantly, diesel locomotives are detailed in the next chapter. A concluding chapter puts the previous chapters into a larger perspective, and an afterword takes the conclusions made and extrapolates into policy prescriptions for the future. Each chapter could stand alone, but together they provide a broad and deep understanding of the large-scale economic and political challenges and opportunities railroads faced during the twentieth century. Each chapter is complemented with charts, graphs, maps, and photos that enhance the text and provide additional helpful information. The illustrations are in black and white only but are generally readable and adequately sized. Text boxes with additional information also complement each chapter and allow readers to explore some topics in greater detail than the main text does. The book is extensively researched with ample endnotes and a useful index.

For those looking for information on the social impact of railroads or more information about what great-grandfather did while working for the Milwaukee Road, this book will not answer your questions. The casual reader looking for an easily readable overview of railroad history will likely be put off by the sometimes dense language and technical terminology. However, for those interested in whatever happened to railroads like the Rock Island, or the Burlington, or the Chicago & North Western, this book delivers. An economic, business, and policy history above all, this work will not satisfy those looking for social, cultural, or labor specifics. But social or cultural history is not what this book set out to be. It is a masterful synthesis of an immense amount of information about an essential and dynamic American industry – one that shaped, and continues to shape, not only Iowa and the Midwest, but the country as a whole. This work will likely become the standard reference work on the economic history of American railroads in the twentieth century.

Jewish Federation of Greater Des Moines 100th Anniversary, 1914–2014: Celebrating a Century of Benevolence. Waukee: Jewish Federation of Greater Des Moines, 2014. 52 pp. Illustrations.

Reviewer Oliver Pollak is professor of history emeritus at the University of Nebraska Omaha. He has researched and written about the history of Jews in Nebraska and Des Moines.

Dubuque witnessed the arrival of Iowa's first Jews in 1833. Jews were in Des Moines as early as 1848. Now, about half of Iowa's 6,300 Jews live in Des Moines. They came from Germany, Russia, Poland, and Lithuania. They maintained religious and communal identity by establishing